



EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Local Development Framework

SOHAM

Conservation Area

Supplementary Planning Document

FEBRUARY 2008



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Soham lies within the District of East Cambridgeshire, 5 miles south east of Ely, 6 miles northwest of Newmarket and 12 miles northeast of Cambridge. Soham Conservation Area was designated in 1974.
- 1.2 This document aims to fulfill East Cambridgeshire District Council's duty to 'draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement' of these areas as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2 Public Consultation

- 2.1 The public consultation will be carried out in compliance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (17/10/06).

3 What are Conservation Areas?

- 3.1 Conservation Areas were introduced in the Civic Amenity Act 1967 and have evolved through a number of subsequent Acts, concluding with the present Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and adopted government guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15.
- 3.2 The definition of a conservation area is an *"area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"*.
- 3.3 The Local Planning Authority has a duty to determine which parts of their district are areas of special architectural or historic interest. Having established a Conservation Area, they are also required to carry out a periodic review of the designation and boundaries of the area. This is to ensure the area is still considered to be of value and to consider whether any areas have been overlooked or changes have occurred which need the boundaries to be redrawn. Any pressures for change in the area can thus be identified and enhancement opportunities highlighted.
- 3.4 When a Conservation Area has been designated, it increased the Council's controls, with planning applications judged by their impact on the character and appearance of the area. Greater controls over the demolition of buildings and structures are imposed, whilst the rights that owners have to do works to their properties without the need to obtain planning permission (known as 'permitted development rights') are reduced, or removed altogether. Stricter controls are also exercised over the design of new buildings, and owners must give the Council six weeks notice of their intention to carry out works to trees. Planning applications affecting a Conservation Area must be advertised on site, and in the local press, to give the public an opportunity to comment.

4 What is a Conservation Area Appraisal?

- 4.1 The object of this appraisal is to describe the special character of the historic areas of Soham. Information gained from this study will be

used to draw up a new boundary for the Conservation Area, and provide design guidance relating to new developments, replacement and new shop fronts and extensions to existing buildings within the Conservation Area.

- 4.2 As with many towns and cities Soham is made up of distinct areas of land use, and this document will look at the character of each area separately. The section on each area will look at the hard and soft landscaping; important views; boundary treatments; the scale of buildings and construction materials and methods.
- 4.3 This will help to provide the evidence for the design guidance for each individual area. By dividing up the document in this way, it will make it easily accessible and understandable for the stakeholders of Soham.

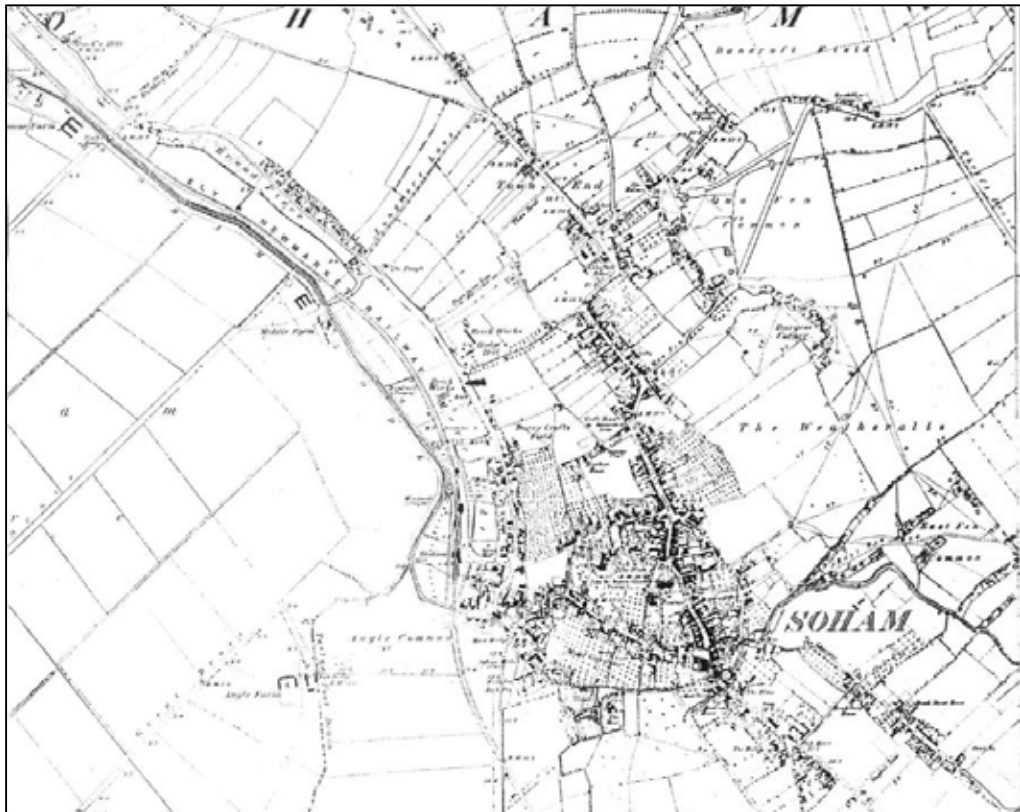
5 Overview of the area

- 5.1 Soham is essentially a linear village that has resulted from its growth along the route from Fordham to Ely. It is wider at certain points, in particular at St Andrew's Church around which the streets reputedly follow the enclosure of a Saxon Cathedral. Modern development has expanded the village, encroaching further upon the Commons to the east and west towards the old railway.
- 5.2 The Conservation Area boundary includes the historic north-south route around which the town has grown and the 'back lanes' that run east and west from the central spine. The main space within the Conservation Area is the churchyard and adjacent Recreation Ground that are a pleasant green respite from the busy commercial streets; the churchyard a quiet secluded area whilst the Recreation Ground is an open grassed area of activity.
- 5.3 Because Soham is virtually level, the Church, although it is the focal point of the village, is not as dominant as it could be and is only visible at certain points from the village. Longer views of the Church are rare and it tends to appear quite suddenly at the end of roads such as Market Street and Churchgate Street.
- 5.4 The Conservation Area is predominantly residential, with the main commercial streets being Churchgate Street and High Street, although the odd commercial property is found along Hall Street and Pratt Street. Nonconformist Chapels and their associated Sunday Schools and Manses tend to be located just off the central spine, the exception being the former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, which is on Churchgate Street.
- 5.5 A large number of inns and alehouses used to line Soham's streets, and their past use is often still apparent in the external features of many of the surviving buildings. Part of the substantial brewery that opened in the 1880s (and was worked until the 1930s) still survives off Paddock Street, but is now converted. Only a handful of the large

number of inns and alehouses are however still in use as public houses; most are now dwellings.

- 5.6 Relatively few houses survive from before 1800, as many older houses were lost to the fires that often ravaged Soham's streets in the mid 19th century. Subsequent rebuilding has meant that the visible elements along the older village streets are mostly continuous frontages of 19th century grey-brick houses with slated roofs standing close together. The larger ones, which are interspersed with smaller cottages, have standard 3-bayed fronts and doorways with often-belated classical details. Further out to the north and south, wealthier villagers erected substantial houses in brick, sometimes stone-dressed, in styles verging towards the Italianate.
- 5.7 The scale of development within the village is reasonably consistent at 2 storeys, although the scale increases towards the commercial streets with some of the grander properties rising to tall 2.5 or 3 storeys in height. The streets also become correspondingly busier with both people and vehicular traffic.

6 Historical/Archaeological development



1887 OS Map

- 6.1 Soham ('lakeside settlement') developed on the edge of Soham Mere, a large inland sea. It was a relatively substantial settlement by the 11th century centred on a Minster Church reputedly founded by St Felix in the 7th century and where his remains were buried before they were removed to Ramsey in 1026. The abbey was destroyed in a Viking raid in the 9th century, but was not rebuilt. In the 10th century, Luttingus a Saxon nobleman reputedly built a Cathedral and Palace on the site of the present day church and adjacent land. Traces of the Saxon Cathedral are said to still exist within the fabric of St Andrew's Church and the Bishops Palace existed as a picturesque ruin until the mid 19th century.
- 6.2 The 'new' Church of St Andrew has its origins in the 12th century and was altered and expanded in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. The church of Soham belonged to the royal demesne manor throughout the 12th century until Richard I in 1189 gave the parish church in free alms to the Poitevin Cisterian Abbey of Le Pin (Vienne). In 1285, however, Le Pin arranged to cede its Soham estate to its fellow Cisterian Abbey of Rewley who in turn ceded possession in 1451 to Pembroke College, Cambridge with whom it still rests.
- 6.3 In the late Saxon period Soham's wealthy royal manor was the main manor of the village. It is probable that at this time the settlement was linear along Pratt Street/High Street, thus creating an outline of the modern town. By 1086, Soham comprised three manors, the main one belonging to the king, a smaller one belonging to Ely and a third in secular ownership. Before 1066 the royal manor had been part of King Edward's ancient demesne, and in 1086 was still possessed by King William. It remained with succeeding kings until the late 12th century.
- 6.4 The medieval village of Soham expanded the linear Saxon village, stretching from north to south amid extensive closes and crofts along a long street, which from the 12th century formed part of a route from Fordham to Ely. In the 1650s, the most densely inhabited part of the village was Churchgate Street.
- 6.5 The River Snail was partially canalised in the medieval period and the mere side became a focus for activity; its importance as a source of natural resources reflected in the growth of settlement along its shores. Soham appears to have been a wealthy town in the medieval period that saw it flourish as a centre of trade with the establishment of an island port. The manor of the rectory alone was of sufficient worth to be granted to overseas lords and for them to take an interest in it.
- 6.6 Where the River Snail entered the mere, a mill complex arose (milling is recorded in the Domesday Book). A survey undertaken in 1656 demonstrated that the area around Mill Corner was intensively settled, but the main areas of activity were the High Street and Pratt Street along with Paddock Street; the area around Clay Street was another

centre. Elsewhere, properties sat within their own plots along the mere and to the north and west.

- 6.7 Soham's medieval open field system surrounding the urban core was never enclosed. The system was of the form usually found in the Midlands, with three fields and common lands. The result was that until the 16th century most villagers grazed cattle with little land cultivated for arable crops, although this increased gradually in the late 18th century. The commons were confirmed by a Decree of the Court of the Exchequer in 1686; on behalf of the Lord (or Lady) of the Manor, they are administered by the Town Council today.
- 6.8 By the 17th century, early modern population growth had resulted in encroachments on the common land, but the overall shape of the village changed little between the mid 17th century and the early 19th century, although by the 1840s, development on the main streets had become denser. The overall impression was of a small yet thriving town.
- 6.9 From the 18th century to the early 20th century, Soham usually had a water mill (standing by 1700) and at least two or three windmills north and south of the village for grinding corn. In 1811 the mereside water mill was rebuilt in brick, but was destroyed by the fire in 1945; it was rebuilt again in 1946 and was called Lion Mills by 1976.
- 6.10 Soham's connections northward by navigation along Soham Lode and through the Ouse to Kings Lynn were still important in the mid 19th century when they provided a channel for the export of farm produce and the import of coal. Soham had to wait for its railway until the Ely-Newmarket line was built in 1879. A station was then opened close to the Lode, off a square laid out beyond the junction of Clay Street and Cock Lane (renamed Station Road by 1881).
- 6.11 The 19th century station was destroyed in 1944 when a long train carrying explosives blew up because of a fire. The incident destroyed several nearby buildings and damaged c760 houses in the village. The temporary station put up in its place was demolished in the late 1960s, although the line remains in use. The bypass was built in 1980-81.
- 6.12 By 1900 Soham village has attained the shape that it retained into the mid 20th century. The long central spine, the main street and its side streets, were flanked by lines of poorer houses on the mere and common edges, with some infilling, but little growth. From 1945 the Council built extensively in the parish; new building was most rapid between the late 1960s and early 1980s and mostly located in the central and northern parts of the village. Other new estates, mainly private, continued Soham's expansion with ribbon development towards the Ely Road.



High Street c.1930

7 Geology and Landscape Setting

- 7.1 The parish of Soham lies on the border between the Isle of Ely and the southern part of Cambridgeshire, at its northeastern angle. Soham's eastern and western boundaries largely follow existing or former curving fen watercourses. To the north Soham is divided from Ely parish by the Crooked Drain (so called by the late 19th century) that curves south and further west, the modern southern boundary follows the division for tithe collection, which ran in places across shared open fields.
- 7.2 Most of Soham parish lies within the fens. It is virtually level at significantly below 10m above sea level. It lies mostly upon gault, although in the far southeast it lies upon the Lower Chalk and in the far west upon greensand and Ampthill clay. The gault is exposed southwest and north of the village, upon land later used as arable, but elsewhere is overlaid with gravels east of the village and with alluvium to its north and west.
- 7.3 Entering the village from the south, the central spine route veers off from the new bypass that skirts around the eastern edge of the village and borders the Commons. The initial feeling upon entering Soham is of going into the suburbs of a larger town with the very suburban Local Authority estates dominating the townscape. It is quite a distance before the village centre is reached.
- 7.4 The shrubs that line the road limit views east across the Commons from the bypass, but glimpses of the open grazing land with outcrops of buildings encroaching upon the Commons can be gained.

- 7.5 From the west, views are across open farmland with the Mill complex dominating the foreground and elements of the former railway still visible. Although the River Snail has been partially canalised for the mill's use, it creates a picturesque setting in this rural location. Entering the village from the north has a very different feel, as development is sparser with modern housing more apparent and an industrial estate containing offices and light industrial units.

8 Archaeology

- 8.1 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments and very little evidence of prehistoric activity within the urban core of Soham and little Roman material apart from a cemetery beneath White Hart Lane. A Roman villa is, however, known to have existed on the mainland towards Wicken and also out at Barway where a more extensive rural settlement is known. The modern town of Soham dates largely from Anglo-Saxon times from which there are three distinct phases of activity; the pagan period (early Saxon), Middle Saxon and Late Saxon.
- 8.2 Three pagan period cemeteries exist in the area; one in the historic core of Soham, and two adjacent elsewhere in the town. The enclosure associated with the early abbey church reputedly founded by Bishop Felix with the patronage of the king or a noble in the 7th century is probably fossilised in the street pattern of modern Soham. Excavations have shown that boundary ditches existed in the later 10th century which appear to respect the alignment of both High Street and Station Road suggesting that these elements of the streetscape were in place by then.
- 8.3 The medieval period expanded on the late Saxon period core that already existed and property boundaries along the High Street preserve the outline of tenements and burgess plots. There is a moated enclosure by the mill complex that developed where the River Snail entered Soham Mere.
- 8.4 The main survival of medieval Soham is in the field system. The town is unique in having an almost intact open field system surrounding the urban core, and was never enclosed. The two main fields (No Ditch Field and North Field) are amongst the finest remains of medieval agriculture in the country. Today Soham still has three commons, at Angles Common, East Fen and Qua Fen; it also has the South and North Horse Fens.

9 Townscape Analysis

9.1 Townsend

9.1.1 Townsend is a northern extension of Hall Street and was known by its modern name by the 17th century when it was virtually uninhabited. It adjoins the north end of Hall Street at a right angle and continues north out of the village. The only property along this road within the Conservation Area boundary is No.2, a modest 2-storey white painted 19th century property. On the opposite side of the road is a stretch of hedge that screens the modern housing estate behind from views north along Hall Street.



9.2 Hall Street

9.2.1 Following the bend in the road from Townsend, the road leads into the north end of Hall Street. It is almost exclusively residential except for the funeral director's premises and small takeaway unit at the street's junction with Speed Lane. The predominant building line is parallel to the south and on, or near to, the back of the footpath.



9.2.2 Upon entering the Conservation Area from Townsend, No.65 on the western side of Hall Street, faces diagonally across the junction of these roads and catches the eye with its shutters that frame its modern casement windows. It is a substantial dwelling of gault brick, probably with an earlier timber framed core.



9.2.3 The first property, No.72 on the east side of Hall Street has a shop unit at ground floor. In contrast to the attractive No.65 on the other side of the road, it is an unpromising entrance to the conservation area as it has been substantially altered with very little of interest remaining. There is also a proliferation of signage and advertising boards clustered around the front of the building.

9.2.4 The northern end of the street is, however, predominantly lined on its eastern side with the double fronted, gault brick and hipped slate roof dwellings that are found throughout the village as a result of rebuilding after fires. Nos.62/64 are two fine examples of this building type and are Grade II Listed. The use of flint on the lesser elevations of this building type is relatively common at this point in the village.



9.2.5 The middle section of Hall Street is more mixed in character, containing a variety of generally smaller, and often altered, traditional dwellings, interspersed with the larger gault brick houses and some more recent infill. The modern housing estates that surround Soham's historic central spine also intrude into the streetscape in places.

9.2.6 The views south along this northern stretch of Hall Street is terminated by Nos.6/8, a large house occupying the prominent corner position at the bend in Hall Street where Speed Lane diverges from it. Croft House at the southern end of Hall Street provides a similar function in views north along Pratt Street.



9.2.7 Hall Street, already a fairly generous width, opens up at its convergence with Bushel Lane and Speed Lane, and this junction is marked by the only other two commercial properties in the street. On the western side are the premises of a funeral directors and a small takeaway unit has been inserted into the end property of Cranby Terrace on the eastern side. The unenclosed tarmac forecourt of the funeral directors, together with the adjacent lawned area, increases this open feeling.



9.2.8 The tighter building line is restored at the bend in Hall Street by the tall single storey thatched building, within the premises of the funeral directors, and by the Grade II Listed Nos.19 and 21 Hall Street, which sit on the southern stretch of Hall Street, after the bend.

9.2.9 The eastern side of this southern stretch of Hall Street is mostly lined by 20th century bungalows, but the western side is of more interest and is terminated by Croft House and its large grounds which contain several flint built outbuildings of interest, one of which lines Hall Street.



9.2.10 A number of Soham's formerly numerous inns are found on Hall Street; the most recent to be lost was the Grade II Listed Bushel and Strike Public House, now in residential use. Nos.21 and 38 were formerly the Black Horse and The Yew Tree respectively, and the modern No.37 stands on the site of The King's Head Public House. No.41 Hall Street was once The Globe Public House and is also the only building fronting Hall Street to sit gable end on.



Age	Mostly 19 th century with some 18 th century and 20 th century
Wall Materials	Mostly gault brick (sometimes painted on rendered) with secondary flint elevations. Older properties timber-framed and plastered.
Roof Materials	Mostly slate, latterly replaced with concrete tiles. Limited use of red tile/pantile on older properties.
Windows and Doors	Some surviving sliding sash windows on gault brick properties, many replaced with PVCu or with modern casements. Casements to most other properties are modern. Recessed timber panelled doors.
Scale	Almost exclusively 2 storeys, some earlier cottages 1 storey and attic.
Features	Chimneystacks; flat hood and Classical surrounds, and arches to doors.

9.3 Bushel Lane (south side)

9.3.1 Bushel Lane was known as Qua Fen Lane until the early 19th century when it gained its present name. It runs east from the junction of Hall Street and Speedy Lane and was very little developed until the latter half of the 20th century. One of the earlier buildings along the street is the Salvation Army Hall on the south side of the lane and which was built in the first half of the 20th century.



9.4 Speed Lane (east side)

9.4.1 Speed Lane continues the southeastern line of Hall Street that curves more to the southwest at its junction with the lane. The east side is well enclosed with the buildings tight on the back of the road, whilst the west (later) side is more open with buildings sitting behind front

gardens. Looking south, the aspect is also open towards the later 20th century development of Soham. Speed Lane is currently outside the Conservation Area, but it is proposed to bring Nos.5-19 (odds) within the boundary as they continue the rhythm of Cranby Terrace on Hall Street and, although altered, have good detailing.

Age	19 th century with some 20 th century
Wall Materials	Mixed – red and gault brick and timber framed and plastered
Roof Materials	Slate
Windows/ Doors	Modern PVCu or timber casements
Scale	1.5 – 2 storeys
Features	Cat slide dormers and chimneystacks

9.5 Berrycroft

9.5.1 Berrycroft presumably gained its name, as it was originally little more than a lane that led to Burry Croft's field in the 19th century. However, in 1851 the Methodists established a Chapel (on the south side of the lane) that was rebuilt in 1869 in grey brick with red brick 'trimmings'. The lane remains little more than an enlarged footpath, albeit surfaced in tarmac and used by vehicles to gain access to the buildings that line it.



9.5.2 Although the lane is narrow and lined by buildings, the positioning of the buildings gable end-on and the generally informal timber-post fence or hedge boundaries, lends the lane a more open feel than might be expected. The lane opens up a little more at its intersection with a public footpath that runs north. Corner House sits at this intersection, enclosing the space and is the focus of views west into the lane from Hall Street.



9.5.3 All but the first couple of properties of Berrycroft at the junction with Hall Street/Pratt Street are outside the conservation area boundary. However, it is proposed to extend the conservation area to include the Methodist Church, its Sunday school and Manse, together with other properties of interest. The lane continues west as a footpath leading to the modern housing estates that have subsumed the village.

Age	19 th century – including Methodist Church and Sunday School
Wall Materials	Predominantly gault brick
Roof Materials	Predominantly slate
Windows/Doors	Multi-paned metal framed narrow arched windows to church and school. Modern PVCu and timber casements to residential properties
Scale	2 storeys
Features	Chimneystacks, red brick detailing to church and school

9.6 Pratt Street (east side)

9.6.1 Returning to the main north-south route of the village, Pratt Street forms the central section, continuing the line of Hall Street after the curve in the road at Croft House that blocks views north. Pratt Street is a short straight road that merges into Churchgate Street at its southern end. It is again almost exclusively residential with the exception of the small cluster of commercial uses at its junction with Churchgate Street where the village becomes more commercial in character.



9.6.2 The gault brick double-fronted houses that line Hall Street continue into Pratt Street, but here they are larger and tend to be earlier, reflecting their location closer to the village centre. A number of larger and/or older vernacular properties, most of which are listed, also survive along Pratt Street. One of these is the substantial Grade II Listed No.20 Hall Street, the trees in the garden of which are a strong feature in views along the street.



- 9.6.3 The southern end of the street opens up in a similar manner to the junction of Hall Street and Speed Lane, where the main north-south route through the village meets Paddock Street, which diverges in a more easterly direction. This forms a triangular promontory on which The Vicarage sits, facing northwards up Pratt Street, in much the same way as No.6/8 Hall Street faces north along Hall Street. A westerly route, Station Road, also runs off this junction.
- 9.6.4 The west side of the street has an almost continuous built frontage with smaller buildings sitting parallel to the street. The original long plots, which survive to a greater degree in Hall Street, have mostly disappeared, encroached upon by the Guntons Close housing estate that intrudes into Pratt Street at its northern end.
- 9.6.5 The east side, in contrast, is lined by much larger properties that do not always fill the width of their larger plots. Although they often sit on, or near to, the back of the footpath, trees and other vegetation in their rear gardens emphasise the small gaps between the buildings, creating a more broken street frontage.



Age	Mostly 19 th century, some 18 th and 20 th century
Wall Materials	Mostly gault brick (sometimes painted or rendered)
Roof Materials	Predominantly slate, some replaced with artificial slate or concrete tiles. One tiled roof
Windows/Doors	Sliding sashes survive on many properties, although some have been replaced in PVCu or timber casements. Some early timber panelled doors, but mostly modern
Scale	Predominantly 2 storeys, one 1.5 storey cottage
Features	Parapets, tumbled gables, chimneystacks, and flat hood and Classical door surrounds

9.7 Station Road

9.7.1 Station Road was originally known as Cock Lane, but gained importance with the opening of the railway station in 1879 and was renamed in 1881. The Station was on the western edge of the village and Station Road is therefore a long road, connecting the main thoroughfare of the town with the station. It kinks at its junction with Fountain Lane and Gardeners Lane and ends in a square that used to form the entrance to the station building before it was demolished.

9.7.2 Despite the road's formerly important function, it remains a narrow lane until it meets Fountain Lane, and has a low-key, predominantly residential character. It does, however, contain the Grade II Listed United Reformed Church and its Sunday school, one of a number of Non-Conformist structures in the village. Mostly mostly 19th century gault brick dwellings of various sizes and forms line the rest of the north side of the north side of the street.



9.7.3 The south side is predominantly modern with the exception of No.45, an attractive 19th century house of similar detailing to those on the northern side of the street. The adjacent bowling green is an important community facility and the open space adds to the low-key character of the former lane.

9.7.4 A row of former almshouses marks the point where the road opens up and its character changes to become more 'suburban'. The almshouses close views from the south from Fountain Lane and contrast sharply with the modern development on Fountain Lane and the mid 20th century bungalows on the south side of Station Road.



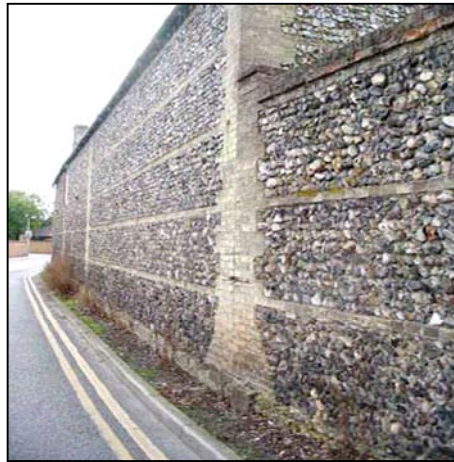
9.7.5 The traditional buildings on this western stretch of Station Road reflect the change in character with more urban building types predominating. The gault brick 'villas' and terraces reflecting the road's increased importance and proximity in the late 19th century/ early 20th century to the railway station. The former Angel Public House adjacent to the almshouses would presumably have served rail travellers.

Age	19 th century, including Baptist Church, and some 20 th century infill.
Wall Materials	Gault brick (some painted). Modern properties of varying brick types
Roof Materials	Slate, concrete tiles on modern buildings
Windows/Doors	Sliding sash windows, a few timber casement replacements
Scale	2 storeys
Features	Segmental window and door arches, chimneystacks, decorative bargeboards. Flat hood and Classical door surrounds.

9.8 Paddock Street

9.8.1 At the southern end of Pratt Street, Paddock Street (almost back lane to the linear settlement) veers off to the southeast along the boundary wall of the vicarage. This c.2m high flint wall tightly defines the western edge of Paddock Street and follows the sweep in the road, drawing the eye down the street. The eastern side of the street in contrast has a

more open aspect with modern buildings set back slightly and, further south along the street, less significant and lower boundary walls.



9.8.2 The street is predominantly residential, but the presence of the former brewery (now offices) and the former Billiard Room (now a residence) at the street's intersection with Market Street, indicate the more commercial nature of the village at this point. The Billiard Room and the adjacent buildings form an attractive and varied building group, which complement Cowell Terrace on White Hart Lane. This group includes the Grade II Listed Nos.33 and 35, which are two of the very few thatched buildings in Soham.



9.8.3 Views from the south end of Paddock Street, at its junction with White Hart Lane, are mixed with 1950s housing to the south, remnants of more traditional properties to the east and large mature trees to the north, behind the properties along the eastern side of Paddock Street. The western side of the street also has quite a mixed streetscape.

Age	18 th –20 th century
Wall Materials	Mixed – modern yellow and brown brick, gault brick, timber framed and plastered, and render
Roof Materials	Mixed – slate, concrete tiles, thatch and red pantiles
Windows/Doors	Mostly modern timber casements, some PVCu. Horizontal sliding sashes to 33 & 35 – vertical sliding sashes to 42. Modern timber or PVCu doors
Scale	1.5 – 2 storey
Features	Decorative doorway to 42, hipped dormers to 33 & 35 and chimneystacks

9.9 Churchgate Street

9.9.1 Churchgate Street, as its name suggests, leads south from Pratt Street towards St Andrews Church, a good view of which suddenly appears when looking south along Churchgate Street. It forms the northern end of the commercial heart of the village and, as a result, has a much busier character than most other streets in the village; the variety of shop fronts adding incident and activity to the street scene.



9.9.2 Two substantial residential buildings sit at the northern end of the street; the Vicarage and the former Grammar School, now subdivided into flats. Adjoining the Vicarage on the east side of the road are the only other residential buildings on the street, Nos. 20-30 (evens), a row of 19th century gault brick houses.

9.9.3 The commercial properties are mixed in quality and style. The west side is of more interest, containing the attractive rebuilt Grade II Listed

The Fountain Public House and No.5, the converted Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and some 19th century and early 20th century buildings. The road curves where it meets St Andrew's Church that encompasses the southern end of this side of the road.



9.9.4 The attractive range of 19th century buildings opposite St Mary's Church includes the Grade II Listed Nos.2, 4 and 6. Churchgate Street opens up at this point and the churchyard provides a foil to the comparative tightness of the northern stretch of the street. This well treed space allows views across it to the recreation ground beyond on Fountain Lane.



Age	16 th – 20 th century
Wall Materials	Timber-framed and plaster, gault brick (some painted or rendered) and some red brick
Roof Materials	Slate, concrete tiles and red clay plain tiles
Windows/Doors	Mostly sliding sashes and modern timber casements. Some earlier casements and much PVCu
Scale	Predominantly 2 storeys; one 2.5 storeys and one single storey building
Features	Mixture of good traditional shop fronts and inappropriate modern replacements, and chimneystacks.

9.10 Market Street

9.10.1 Market Street is a short east-west street connecting Paddock Street to Churchgate/High Street. It was known as Crown Lane until the early 20th century when it became known as Market Place and subsequently Market Street. Currently only the western half of the street is within the conservation area, but it is proposed to include the whole street.

9.10.2 Two large buildings, both of which formerly played an important part in the life of the village, dominate the north side of the street. The former Crown Hotel, now in residential use, defines the corner of Market and Churchgate Streets, and is prominent in views north from the churchyard. The following building was once the Town Hall, once also used as the County Court and now a club.



9.10.3 After the tight building line of the former Crown Hotel and Town Hall, the open forecourt of the large single storey vehicle repair garage forms a negative contrast. The gable end of the former brewery encloses the street again at its eastern end. The south side of the street follows a similar pattern to the north side, with the two ends relatively confined whilst the middle section of the street is quite open.

9.10.4 The trees in the rear gardens of the High Street properties together with the large mature trees of the Churchyard form a significant group in views west from Market Street. A parking area to the rear of No.10 High Street is partially screened from the street behind a timber-fence that helps to enclose the street at this point. A high hedge screens the rear elevations of the other properties along High Street.



Age	17 th -20 th century
Wall Materials	Plaster, gault and other brick
Roof Materials	Slate
Windows/Doors	Sliding sashes and modern timber casements
Scale	1-2 storeys

9.11 White Hart Lane

9.11.1 White Hart Lane is another short east-west street linking Churchgate/ High Street with the 'back lane' of the village, Paddock Street. It is tightly enclosed on its northern side by older buildings lining the street, whilst the southern side is more open, as it mainly contains later buildings. Views west along the street are of St Andrews Church, which rises above the buildings because the land ascends slightly towards the High Street.



9.11.2 Starting at the western end of the street, the lane is very narrow at this point and tightly constrained by buildings. Another former inn encloses the corner of the street on the north side and gives the street its name; the painted sign of the White Hart Inn can still be seen on the wall. The lane is entirely residential now and is terminated on its northern side by the very attractive Cowell Terrace, much of which retains original windows and doors.

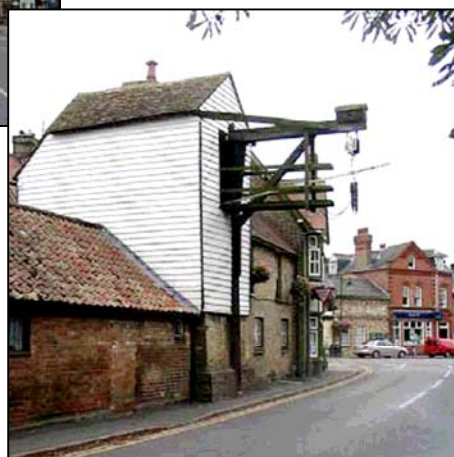


Age	19 th century / early 20 th century
Wall Materials	Predominantly gault brick
Roof Materials	Predominantly slate
Windows/Doors	Many original sliding sashes, some modern timber casements and some PVCu
Scale	2 storeys
Features	Well detailed bay windows and original timber doors on Cowell Terrace and chimneystacks

9.12 Fountain Lane

9.12.1 The only structures currently within the conservation area on Fountain Lane are the Grade II Listed The Fountain Public House and the Grade II Listed steelyard behind it on the north side of the lane. The Fountain Public House was originally known as the White Lion and incorporates part of the rear range of the original 16th century Inn which was destroyed by fire in 1910.

9.12.2 To the rear of The Fountain Inn is the steelyard, a device for weighing wagons, which is probably 18th century in origin. Part of the main arm and post, which are the most visible aspects of the structure from the street, are original. It is an eye-catching focal point in views west into Fountain Lane and Churchgate Street.



9.12.3 The village's main recreation ground is accessed through the public car part on the south side of the Lane. The Walter Gideon pavilion in the north east corner of the recreation ground is all that remains of a 19th

century mansion of the Place Estate and of which the recreation ground is the diminished grounds.



9.13 High Street

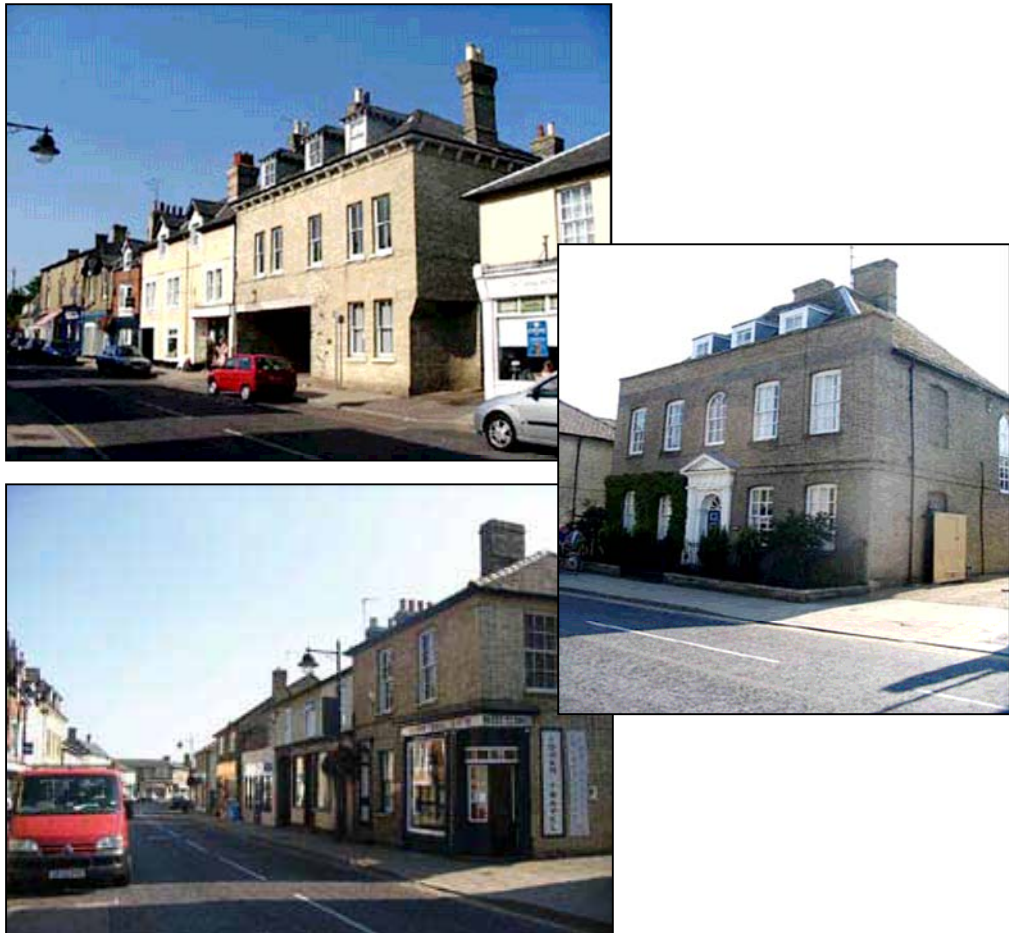
9.13.1 The north end of the High Street is dominated by St Andrews Church, which sits within its well-treed churchyard, bounded by a good boundary wall. St Andrews Church is the dominant feature in the townscape of Soham with its tower forming a landmark and its churchyard providing an attractive green space in the heart of the village. The church is a fine example of the architecture of the period and reflects the strength of patronage in the area at the time.



9.13.2 The majority of the street is, however, characterised by commercial properties with residential above. The road forms a continuation of the main north-south route through the village and is busy with vehicular

traffic as a result. It also consequently has more street furniture such as bus stops and bollards with space for parking allocated along the roadside.

9.13.3 High Street is wider than most other streets in Soham, but does not feel so, as it is cluttered with the paraphernalia associated with the parking bays and commercial activities that line it. The tallest properties, the Grade II* Listed Manor House and Ranthorne House, in Soham are also found along the street, helping to enclose the wider space. The tight building line, with virtually no gaps between buildings increases the sense of enclosure.



9.13.4 The road narrows at both ends. The churchyard restricts the north end; the south end constricts as the road meets Brook Dam Lane with Nos.12 and 14 High Street forming the pinch point. The street continues south to Brook Dam at which point it becomes Sand Street. High Street gains a more residential character as its southern end with the introduction of a 19th century terrace as the commercial centre of the village is exited.

Age	17 th -20 th century
Wall Materials	Gault brick (some painted or rendered), some red brick and modern brown brick
Roof Materials	Slate, plain clay tile and concrete tiles, some red clay pantile; Red Lion thatched
Windows/Doors	Multi-paned sliding sashes, modern timber casements and very little PVCu. Mostly modern doors, but some timber panelled
Scale	1-3 storeys
Features	Half dormers and chimneystacks. Many good traditional shop fronts.

9.14 Brook Dam Lane

9.14.1 Brook Dam Lane is a short street that leads east from the High Street towards Brook Dam that gives the street its name. Most of the north side of the street is taken up by the modern development, Rathorne Mews, however, Nos.1-5 to the east of Rathorne Mews are of interest, enclosing the street before it opens up into more modern development.



9.14.2 The southern side of the street is also mostly taken up by modern development and, in addition, a modern takeaway outlet. A vehicular access to the west of the takeaway leads to another modern housing development. It is proposed to remove all of these properties, but to retain Nos. 2-4 Brook Dam Lane that adjoins the rear of Nos.12-14 High Street and are of similar age and form.

9.15 Red Lion Square



9.15.1 Red Lion Square is a small open space, today centred on the War Memorial, but it used to contain a smithy on the southern side. It is essentially a wide road junction with the War Memorial in a small paved island in the centre facing the High Street. Currently only the Red Lion Public House and the outbuilding to the rear, together with the long building on the corner of the Square and High Street are within the conservation area. It is proposed to extend it west to include the whole of Red Lion Square.



9.15.2 The 19th century gault brick building sits gable end on the Square at its western end, enclosing the forecourt of the Baptist Church. This building, together with the early 20th century property opposite, pinches the Square at this point, forming an entrance to Clay Street that runs west towards the mills area of the village. Closing views east from Red Lion Square is the Grade II Listed No.8 High Street which is currently vacant, and in need of some maintenance.



Age	19 th -20 th century
Wall Materials	Gault brick and render
Roof Materials	Slate
Windows/Doors	Mostly PVCu, some sliding sash windows. Mostly modern timber doors. Early timber panelled door to Baptist Church
Scale	2-3 storeys
Features	Flat hood door surround and Classical detailing to Baptist Church

9.16 Sand Street

9.16.1 Sand Street is essentially a southern extension of High Street that ends at Brook Dam. Several professional men lived in Sand Street during the mid 19th century and as a result a number of architecturally ambitious brick houses from that period line the road. Few buildings stand directly on the back of the footpath and the more generous plot sizes means that there are large gaps in the building line. The entirely residential nature of the street indicated the end of the village centre, and the start of the southern 'suburbs'.



Age	Late 18 th -19 th century
Wall Materials	Gault brick, stone or red brick detailing
Roof Materials	Slate; No.1 has clay fish-scale tiles
Windows/Doors	Sliding sashes, some PVCu replacements. Modern and early timber panelled doors
Scale	1.5-2 storey
Features	Decorative bargeboards and eaves, red brick detailing. Classical detailing and chimneystacks.

9.17 Clay Street (north side)

9.17.1 Clay Street runs west from Red Lion Square along the south side of the Recreation Ground and towards the Mills on the western edge of the village. It is an old street (formerly known as Bull Lane), but has seen much infilling during the 20th century, particularly on its northern side along the edge of the Recreation Ground. It was the location of many of the village's smithies and two of its schools. Today, although it is predominantly residential, it is almost a secondary street to the main

north-south street(s) of the village, containing a supermarket and library.



9.17.2 Clay Street's increased importance latterly is evident in the street signage and markings which give it a much more urban appearance than other, predominantly residential, streets in the village. It is mixed in character with the street's wide range of former activities evident in the variety of traditional building styles. An inconsistent building line with varying gaps between buildings adds to the mixed character.



9.17.3 One such large gap in the building line allows access to the Budgens supermarket, which presents a blank elevation in views into its car park. Beyond, the tower of St Andrews Church is visible above the shop; a number of trees (with Tree Preservation Orders) soften the starkness of this area. To the west of Budgens is a modern housing development that has been built in the rectory close of St Andrew's House, the former vicarage.



9.17.4 At the western end of the south side of Clay Street, No.3a is the sole remainder of a group of 19th century workshops. Across the entrance to Ennion Close, is the Library, formerly an infant school. It is of a similar, but plainer (and altered), construction to the other former school further east along the street. The former Church of England School and School House are unashamedly Gothic in their detailing and form an attractive incident in the street scene. Both former schools have low flint boundary walls.



9.17.5 Clay Street is the link between the main village and the mills sub-area, and as a result the street has a very different character at its western end. It is entirely residential and is of a much lower density with grass verges creating a much more rural feel. Views of the, now redundant, Lion Mills complex also begin to dominate the skyline.

Age	18 th –20 th century
Wall Materials	Gault brick, some red brick, some timber-framed and plastered; limited use of flint.
Roof Materials	Slate, clay pantiles and plain tiles, some concrete tiles
Windows/Doors	Mixture of sliding sashes, timber casements and PVCu. Doors mostly modern
Scale	1.5 – 2 storey
Features	Fanlights, Classical door surrounds, red brick detailing and chimneystacks.

9.18 Mill Corner

9.18.1 Mill Corner, as its name suggests is a small, now predominantly residential, area centred around the mill complex on the western,

mereside, boundary of Soham. It is distinct from the main village, with a different settlement pattern, and has a more rural, secluded character with grass verges and trees forming a verdant setting to many of the buildings.



9.18.2 Mill Corner loops off with west end of Clay Street with two small offshoots forming a continuation of Clay Street and a small cut-through between Thomas Mews and Clay Street. Building types are mixed in both age and size. Flint is more commonly found here than in the main village, but is still a relatively rare occurrence. The flint walls of the old mill building adjacent to Soham Lode is referenced in the construction of its residential extension and the adjacent semi-detached pair of new houses.



9.18.3 The view south from Clay Street down the eastern loop of Mill Corner is of 19th century mill workers cottages, with the huge metal grain stores of the mill looming behind. The buildings on the west side of the street follow the curve of the road, leading the eye towards Horse Bridge and the open Commons beyond.



9.18.4 The street opens up at Horse Bridge where it turns sharply north, returning to Clay Street. This is also the access point to the mill complex and the enormity of the mill buildings is evident, although a couple of 19th century, 2 storeys, presumably office buildings stand in the foreground. The mature trees that line the mill area's western border with Soham Lode soften the immediate foreground outside the gates, however.



9.18.5 The western half of Mill Corner, particularly on the northern returns to Clay Street has a more scattered settlement pattern with no distinguishable building line. The inner side of the 'loop' is predominantly modern with wide mixture of building styles, and also includes the small pumping station.

9.18.6 The small off shoot of Mill Corner effectively terminates Clay Street at its western end. The large industrial units and their associated car parking which line the northwestern end of Mill Corner unfortunately mar the setting of this small cluster of buildings.



Age	19 th – 20 th century
Wall Materials	Gault brick, modern brick and some render; limited use of flint
Roof Materials	Slate (natural and artificial), clay pantiles and concrete interlocking tiles
Windows/Doors	3/3 sashes common, many timber casements, some PVCu
Scale	Predominantly 2 storeys, some bungalows / 1.5 storeys; only mill is 4 storeys
Features	Red brick detailing, arched window heads and chimneystacks

9.19 Angle Common

9.19.1 This open area of common is bounded by the railway line on its western side and is encroached upon by two small clusters of buildings to the north and south. It is accessed by Horse Bridge, to the south of which, Soham Lode opens up to form a 'pond' adjacent to the mill. Although, man-made, it is a very natural and pleasant space with grassy banks on the common side and lined with overhanging trees. It gives the mills an almost rustic appearance.



9.19.2 Adjacent to the secondary access to the mills, stands millcote, two small 2 storey 19th century gault brick and slate roof properties which are dwarfed by the mills towering behind. Numerous views of the red brick oldest part of the mills are gained across Soham Lode and through the scattered mature trees that line it.



9.19.3 The nine properties that comprise the odd numbers of Angle Common are arranged in two parallel lines and are a mixture of detached buildings, with two pairs of semi-detached houses; one pair is 19th century and the other probably late 18th century in origin. No.9 Angle Common is a particularly attractive and little altered modest 2-storey house with 3/3 sliding sash windows. Cat slide windows are found on Nos.3-7 (odds).

9.19.4 To the north of Horse Bridge, the view is unrestricted by trees and the rear of the converted flint built old mill and adjacent buildings is clearly visible. The adjacent modern Thomas Mews development is hidden behind the short strip of buildings that make up the even numbers of Angle Common. These are arranged in pairs of 19th century cottages with the only exception being No.14, a modern detached property.





Age	Mostly 19 th century
Wall Materials	Gault brick, render and modern brick
Roof Materials	Clay pantiles and concrete tiles; No.14 has pyramidal slate roof
Windows/Doors	Casements – modern timber or PVCu; No.9 has sliding 3/3 sashes
Scale	1.5 – 2 storeys
Features	Cat slide dormers and chimneystacks

10 Key Characteristics

10.1 Scale

Generally 2 storeys with more modest properties of 1.5 storeys in the predominantly residential northern end of the town, rising to 2.5 and 3 storeys in parts of the commercial heart of the town along High Street and Red Lion Square. Except for the few larger residential/commercial properties, St Andrew's Church and the Nonconformist Chapels are the only buildings of a large scale within the Conservation Area.



10.2 Form

Typically larger symmetrical 3 bay, 2 storey houses with central doorways, interspersed with smaller cottages of either 2 storeys and 2 bays or, less commonly 1.5 storeys and 2/3 bays. Greater variety is found along the commercial streets where the properties tend to be

higher and larger with more complex plan forms, particularly in late 19th/ early 20th century buildings.

10.3 Wall Materials

Predominantly gault brick with occasional use of flint for secondary elevations; walls are frequently rendered or more recently painted. Exceptions are the two former schools on Clay Street that are principally of flint and the small enclave of flint built buildings in the mill area. Older vernacular buildings are timber framed and plastered, often with later narrow yellow brick casing. Red brick is much less common and is generally only used on later 19th or 20th century buildings, although it is used for detailing on older buildings, particularly the Nonconformist Chapels. St Andrew's Church is the sole stone building within the conservation area, although stone detailing is found, particularly on grander 18th/19th century properties, throughout.



10.4 Roofing Materials

Generally slate sometimes replaced by concrete tiles or artificial slate; these are most common on the 19th century buildings. Red clay tiles or pantiles tend to be used on older buildings and on Angle Common, although some 19th century buildings also have them. Thatch only survives on a couple of vernacular buildings and is of combed wheat reed. Modern properties have concrete tiles. Outbuildings tend to have pantiled roofs, except those of the grander properties that have slate to match the main house.



10.5 Roof forms

For the most part slate roofs are of a shallow pitch and often hipped. Steeper pitches often indicate that the property was originally thatched, although steeper pitches are also typical of tiled roofs. Parapets, particularly on gables, are relatively common and lean to additions and gables add incident to the simple roof forms, but are not frequently used. A number of properties have dormers and those in the 1.5 storey properties tend to be cat-slides, but a few are gabled or flat. Dormers in grander properties are a mixture of half, hipped or flat.



10.6 Location on the plot

Most traditional properties sit on, or near to, the back of the footpath and parallel to the road with a wide frontage, although the 19th century terraces have deeper plans and narrow frontages. Properties rarely sit gable end onto the street, with the exception of some of the Nonconformist Chapels, and where gables do face the road; it is often only part of a building. Later and grander buildings are sometimes set further back from the street behind small front gardens. Properties within the mill sub-area tend to sit further back from the street, often behind quite deep front gardens.



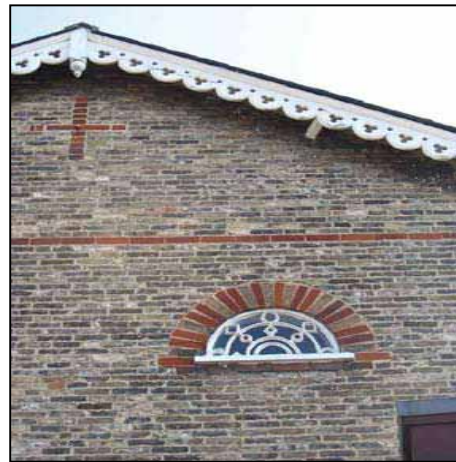
10.7 Streets

There is a definite street hierarchy within Soham with the status of streets reflected by their width and the properties lining them. The main

central spine route of Sand / High / Churchgate / Pratt and Hall Street is the widest (although it narrows at Churchgate Street) and contains the majority of the village's commercial uses. It is, therefore, the main, most important road, within the village. Secondary streets include Station Road and Clay Street which have increased in importance from little more than back lanes to roads linking the centre of the village to the railway station, mill complex and latterly, providing access to Budgens and the library in the case of Clay Street. Routes such as Berrycroft and Paddock Street are minor 'lane' and are markedly narrower than the other roads.

10.8 Windows and doors

Sash windows (most commonly of the 2/2 or 6/6 variety) survive on many buildings, but many more have been replaced with modern casements or PVCu mock sashes. Buildings within the mill sub-area commonly have 3/3 sash windows. Early casements are very rare and most casement windows within the Conservation Area are later replacements. Traditional windows are recessed, but most replacement windows are set flush. Many of the gault brick villas that characterise the main streets have central recessed panelled timber doors, often with either rectangular or semi-circular fanlights. A number of good traditional shop fronts with relate well to the original buildings survive along the commercial streets, although many have been altered.



10.9 Details

Segmental and gauged brick arches are commonly used for window heads; stone is used more frequently for cills and for window heads in later properties. More elaborate window head details are found along the grander commercial properties of the High Street. Shutters are found on a few properties, but are not a common feature. Elaborate door cases and surrounds are found on most of the higher status buildings within the conservation area, particularly on the double-fronted 19th century gault brick houses. Doorways often have pediments, Classical details, arches, entablatures, and moulded architraves or flat hoods. Chimneys are a feature of all traditional buildings and usually have banding or corbelling detailing.

10.10 Boundary Treatments

Because many buildings sit on the back of the footpath, boundary treatments are not a particular feature of Soham. However, where buildings sit behind small front gardens these are often enclosed with simple low brick walls, with railings set upon them in the case of a few grand buildings. The most important boundary in the village is the curving flint wall of the Vicarage on Churchgate Street and the high gault brick wall that continues its line along Paddock Street. Flint is also occasionally found on other boundary walls, e.g. the Library and St Andrew's Church. Boundary treatments are more common within the mill sub-area because of the deeper front gardens. They tend to be more rural in style with hedges and simple-timber post fences; some have low brick walls.



10.11 Vistas

Key views are of St Andrew's Church although these are limited to certain points along the High Street, Clay Street, Churchgate Street and White Hart Lane because of the flatness of the landscape. Higher status buildings such as Croft House and No.8 High Street often close views along streets. The mills complex dominated views in this are of the village, looming behind buildings.



10.12 Mature Trees

The most significant groups within the main village are those within the Recreation Ground and the Churchyard of St Andrews, which together provide a verdant backdrop to buildings in views west and from Clay Street. Other significant trees are typically found in the grounds of the more substantial residences such as the Vicarage on Churchgate Street and The Beeches on Clay Street, but street vegetation is not common in Soham. The trees that line the millpond on Angle Common form an attractive group that soften the boundary of the mill complex.



10.13 Spaces

The key spaces within the main village are St Andrew's Churchyard and the Recreation Ground that form a green heart at the centre of the village. Their boundaries are an important remnant of the enclosure associated with the 7th century St Felix's abbey church and the later 10th century Saxon Cathedral and Bishop's Palace. Today the Recreation Ground is a well used community facility, providing a more formal leisure resource than the commons on the outside of the village. In contrast, the Churchyard is a quiet secluded space.

Angle Common on the western boundary of the village, by the mill complex forms the rural setting to the cluster of dwellings that encroach upon it. Grass verges and the open space at the entrance to the mills in Mill Corner complement the lower density of this area of the conservation area. The only other spaces of note within the main village are Red Lion Square, which is very urban in contrast and is really little more than a traffic junction, and the area in front of the Vicarage that was once Cross Green.



11 Proposed Boundary Changes

A number of original drafting errors on the conservation area boundary were noticed during the surveying and writing up of this document. The boundary has therefore been slightly amended in a small number of places, primarily at the northern end of the conservation area, to reflect current property boundaries.

11.1 Additions

11.1.1 Nos.2-8 (evens) Hall Street are the only buildings in Hall Street (except Nos.2a-f which are modern bungalows) that are currently outside the conservation area. The building line of Nos.10-28 Hall Street, Cranby Terrace, is continued southeast by Nos.5-9 (odds) Speed Lane. Nos.6-8 Hall Street sit on the junction between Hall Street and Speed Lane and Nos.2-4 Hall Street follow the south western line taken by Hall Street at this point. All these buildings and the Salvation Army Hall on Bushel Lane are proposed for inclusion within the conservation area as they are of sufficient interest, dating from the 19th or early 20th century with good detailing and are of a similar character to other buildings within the conservation area.

11.1.2 The south side of Berrycroft from its junction with Hall / Pratt Street to the 19th century gault brick building to the west of 'Mansfield' includes the 19th century Methodist Church and Sunday School and on the opposite side of the road the Corner House, a 19th century cottage. Berrycroft is an attractive lane lined by buildings of quality, but it still retains its rural feel with hedges defining most property boundaries. The Methodist Chapel and associated buildings are also an important part of Soham's Nonconformist past. It is proposed to include these buildings within the conservation area.

11.1.3 Station Road grew in importance when it was renamed from Cock Lane with the opening of the railway to the west of the village centre. It is therefore an important part of Soham's development and also contains another example of Soham's Nonconformist history, the United Reform Church and Sunday school. It contains an attractive assortment of 19th century buildings including a former almshouse range and the Manse to the United Reform Church. It is therefore proposed to include Nos.8-72 (evens) and No.45 Station Road within the conservation area.

11.1.4 It is proposed to bring the whole of Market Street and White Hart Lane within the conservation area boundary and to extend the boundary south along Paddock Street to include Nos.23-39 (odds) and No.42 Paddock Street. This will include a number of good quality buildings of a more commercial nature within the conservation area. No.5 Market Street for example is a former public house and No.31 Paddock Street is a former Billiard Room whilst Nos.9-19 White Hart Lane and No.42 Paddock Street form a very attractive and decorative 19th century terrace.

- 11.1.5 The boundary of the Recreation Ground accessed from Fountain Lane is said to follow at least part of the boundary of a Saxon ecclesiastical enclosure and in the 19th century was The Place Estate. Today the remains of the mansion are in use as a pavilion and the 11 acres of the estate that remain are an important open green space with good mature trees in the heart of the village. It is therefore proposed to include the Recreation Ground within the conservation area.
- 11.1.6 Clay Street contains a variety of buildings, the most striking of which are the two former schools now converted into private residences and a library. There are also 19th century terraces and a mixture of houses from different periods including a former public house. Clay Street runs east into Red Lion Square, the western side of which is currently outside the conservation area. It is therefore proposed to include the whole of Clay Street, No.2 College Road and the Baptist Church on Red Lion Square within the conservation area.
- 11.1.7 Nos.3 & 5 Brook Dam Lane are a pair of 19th century properties which form a short terrace with No.1 Brook Dam Lane and help to enclose the street before it opens up into more modern development. No.3 retains its plate sash windows and both properties have ridge stacks. It is therefore proposed to include Nos.3 & 5 Brook Dam Lane within the conservation area.
- 11.1.8 Sand Street contains many fine detached houses from the 19th century and early 20th century houses as well a former lodge house and a 19th century terrace. The double fronted properties are more ornate version of the gault brick villas found further north within the conservation area and the other buildings along the northern end of Sand Street are also of good quality retaining many traditional features. It is therefore proposed to include Nos.2-18 (evens) and Nos.1-13 Sand Street within the conservation area.
- 11.1.9 The distinct sub-area around the mills on the village's western edge has a very different character to that of the main village, but is an important part of the village's development and has been settled since early in the village's history. The cluster of buildings that surround the mills and the scattering of buildings that encroach upon Angle Common form an attractive group, dominated by the mill complex. The 'pond' formed by Soham Lode adjacent to the mill is framed by overhanging trees and, together with the backdrop of Angle Common, creates an attractive rural feel. It is therefore proposed to include the area covering Nos.1-17 Angle Common, and the whole of Mill Corner within the conservation area.

11.2 Removals

- 11.2.1 Fox Wood South, Rosemary Gardens, Honeysuckle Close, Yew Trees and Guntons Close are all modern housing estates and infill developments that have been built after the original designation of the conservation area boundary and lack the character of the traditional

properties. It is proposed to remove all these properties from the conservation area except those that front the main road, Hall/Pratt Street in order to maintain a continuous built frontage.

- 11.1.2 No.7 Station Road, Staploe Mews (High Street) and Nos.6-30 (evens) Brook Dam Lane are also modern infill developments off Churchgate / High Street which lack the character of the surrounding traditional properties. It is therefore proposed to remove these buildings from the conservation area.

12 Enhancement Opportunities

- 12.1 Many properties in the village have had their original timber windows and doors replaced in modern materials such as PVCu or in modern styles, often changing the vertical/horizontal emphasis of the buildings' elevations in the process. Owners of these properties should be encouraged to reinstate traditional fenestration patterns and materials. The District Council may seek to make 'Article 4(2) Directions' to retain traditional detailing on the exterior of non-listed buildings within the conservation areas, where such details have not already been lost.
- 12.2 Red Lion Square is little more than a traffic junction with the War Memorial sitting in an island at the intersection with High Street. The plastic traffic bollards around the Memorial are inappropriate to the setting for this listed monument. In order to create a more pedestrian friendly space and improve the setting of the Memorial, the 'island' or pavements could be enlarged and the traffic bollards removed or replaced in a more appropriate design.
- 12.3 There are many good traditional shop fronts along the High Street and Churchgate Street, but there are also some poor modern ones. Shopkeepers should be encouraged to use materials and designs appropriate to the building, replacing inappropriate signage and shop fronts and retaining good shop fronts wherever possible.
- 12.4 A number of the shop units and/or the floors above them are vacant. Where the retail use is still viable, but only on the ground floor, residential use above will be actively encouraged. However, if a retail use for the property is no longer feasible (a fact which will have to be robustly proven) any elements of an original or appropriate shop front should be retained in the conversion to alternative use.
- 12.5 The forecourts of the funeral directors, No.23 Hall Street and No.50 High Street are both open tarmac areas with no, or poor, front boundaries, whilst the front of the Old Grammar School on Churchgate Street is littered with cars in differing states of disuse. All these areas could benefit from more appropriate treatments such as soft landscaping and the reinstatement of front boundary walls or railings.
- 12.6 The Market Street garage sites and No.43 High Street offer redevelopment opportunities and the chance to enhance these areas of

the conservation area. The deep single storey flat roofed Co-op building along the High Street sits uncomfortably with the adjacent Church and the old garage buildings on Market Street provide an opportunity to reinstate the building line and create a 'street' again.

- 12.7 The District Council may make discretionary grants available towards the repair of certain historic buildings and structures within the District. These grants are made available to encourage the use of traditional materials and craft techniques and are generally targeted at Listed Buildings, though visually prominent non-listed buildings within conservation areas may also be eligible for grant aid. More specific advice on the availability of grants, as well as on appropriate materials and detailing, is available from the Conservation Section within Development Services at the District Council.

13 References

Acknowledgement

The archaeological information has been compiled from the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment and the Victoria County History of Cambridgeshire.

The Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record data is based on known information. Information held is constantly being updated and amended, so for more information please contact:

Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record
Cambridgeshire County Council
Box ELH1108
Cambridgeshire County Council
Shire Hall
Cambridge
CB3 0AP

Tel: 01223 717312 / 712335

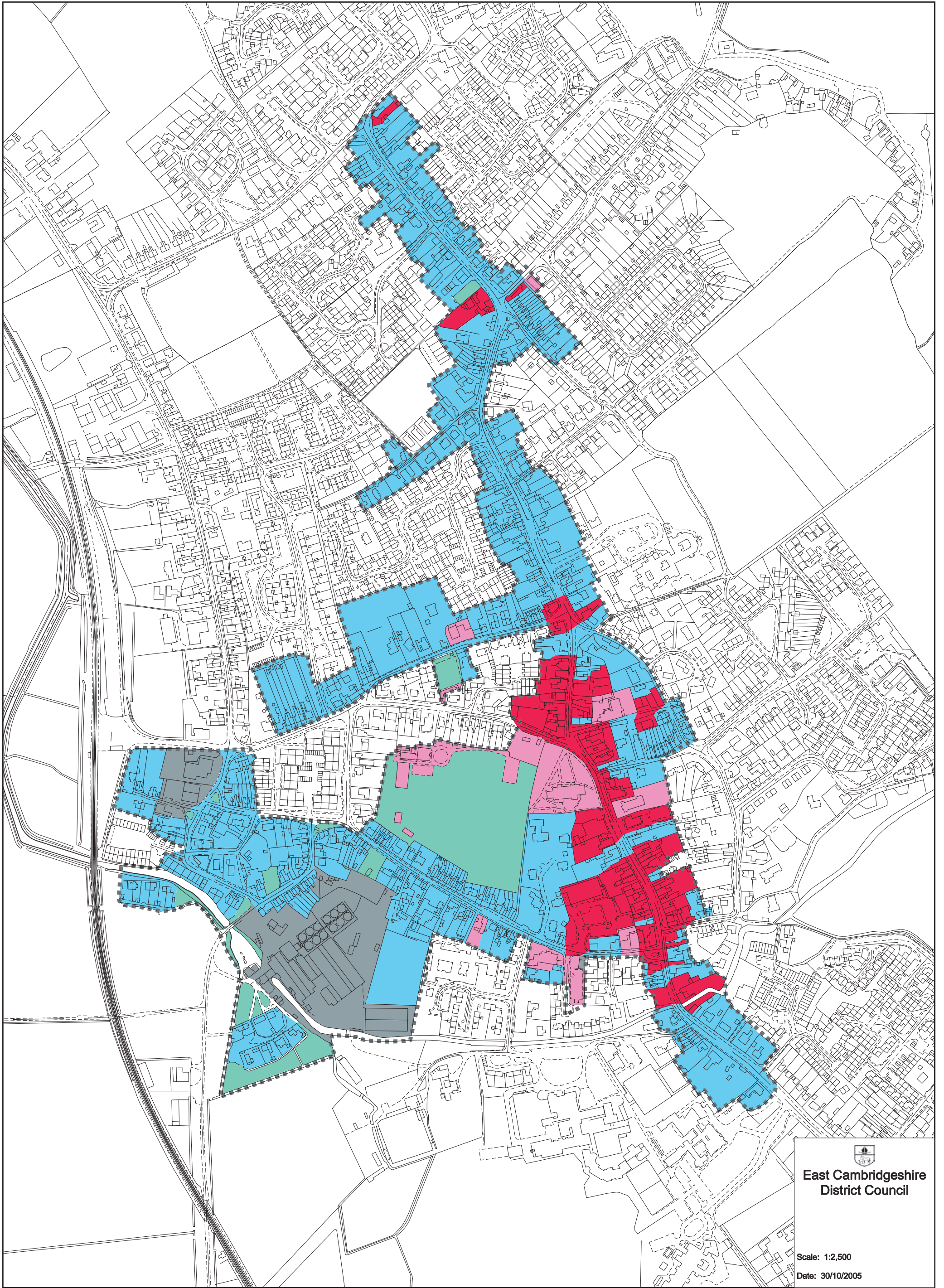
Fax: 01223 362425

Email: arch.her@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX A

MAPS

Land Use Map

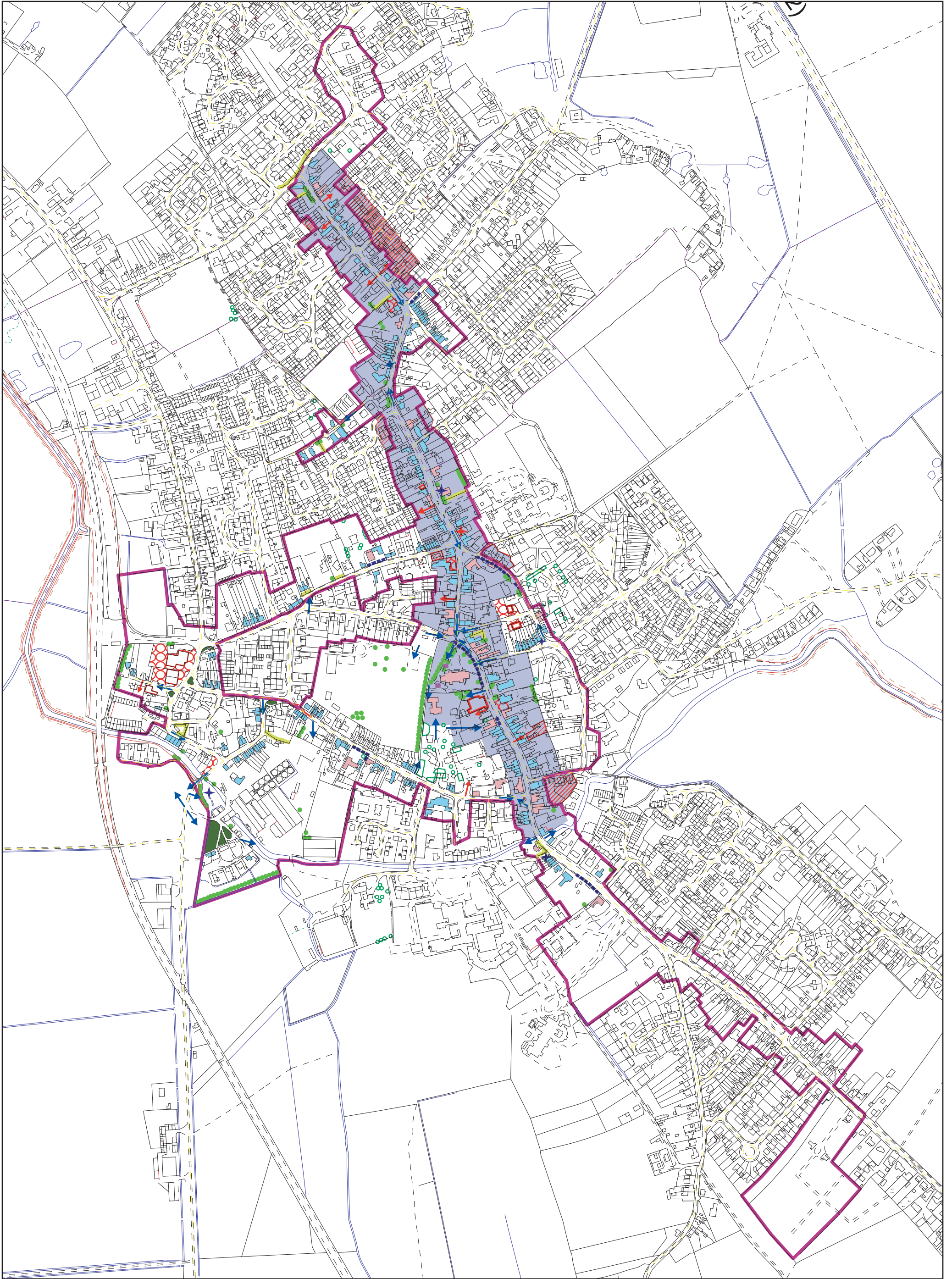



East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Scale: 1:2,500
Date: 30/10/2005



Conservation Area Map



APPENDIX B

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

Cambridgeshire Structure Plan (adopted October 2003)

- P1/2** Protection of sites of archaeological, historic or architectural value
P7/6 Local Authorities will protect and enhance the distinctiveness of the historic built environment.

East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy (adopted October 2009)

This section summarises the main Core Strategy policies that are relevant to the conservation areas.

Policy EN 2

Design

All development will be designed to a high quality, reinforcing local distinctiveness. Design which fails to have regard to local context and does not preserve or enhance the character, appearance and quality of an area will not be acceptable.

New development proposals, extensions and alterations to existing buildings and structures will be expected to:

- a. Have regard to the East Cambridgeshire Design Guide;
- b. Incorporate the sustainable construction principles contained in Policy EN3;
- c. Make efficient use of land while respecting the density, character, landscape and biodiversity of the surrounding area;
- d. Be developed in a comprehensive way, avoiding piecemeal development;
- e. Retain existing important landscaping and natural and historic features and include landscape enhancement schemes that are compatible with the Council's Landscape Guidelines for recreation and biodiversity;
- f. Ensure that the scale, massing and materials of buildings relate sympathetically to the surrounding area;
- g. Provide structure by making use of existing views, vistas and landmarks and creating new ones;
- h. Create safe environments addressing crime prevention and community safety;
- i. Make a clear distinction between public and private spaces, and enhance the public realm;
- j. Ensure that places and buildings are accessible to all, including the elderly and those with impaired mobility;
- k. Provide enclosure to street and spaces through the grouping, positioning and height of buildings and landscape features, and road layouts;
- l. Incorporate the highway and access principles contained in Policy S6;
- m. Ensure that car parking is discrete and accessible and provided in accordance with Policy S7;
- n. Provide adequate waste and recycling storage/collection areas;
- o. Where appropriate, contain a variety and mix of uses, buildings and landscaping;

- p. Ensure there is no significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers, and that occupiers of new dwellings are provided with acceptable residential amenity;
- q. Ensure that there is no detrimental effect on the appreciation of Ely as an historic cathedral city in the quality of the approaches and the quality of views of the cathedral distant and close to.

The Council may require the submission of development briefs for certain proposals, and will notify developers of this requirement at an early stage in the conception of proposals.

EN2 - Design

- Well-designed, safe and attractive new development that respects its surroundings can help to raise the quality of the built environment and have a significant impact on everyday life. Good design is a key element in sustainable development and it is a strongly held aspiration of the Council to raise the standard of design in all proposals to assist vitality, and create a 'sense of place' in communities and neighbourhoods.
- The Government requires Design and Access Statements to be submitted with most planning applications. These Statements are intended to demonstrate how a proposal is functional, attractive and accessible to all. Comprehensive guidance on the format and content of a Statement is provided on the Council's website. Further information on design can be found in 'Building for Life' published by CABI, which includes advice on character, public space, design and construction, and the surrounding environment and community. Also helpful in street design is the Government publication 'Manual for Streets' which gives advice on the creation of high quality residential streets. The Council encourages developers to incorporate these principals in their proposals. Developers are also encouraged to go beyond minimum access standards contained in Building Regulations to provide higher standards of accessibility for all within public spaces and individual buildings.
- Development must be of the appropriate scale, design and materials for its location and conform to the design principals set out in the policy below. All new buildings and spaces must enhance and respect their surroundings and contribute towards local identity, whilst securing and maintaining a high level of general amenity for residents and workers in the district. The particular importance of design in areas of historic conservation is detailed in Policy EN5.
- The importance of new developments complementing and relating to their surroundings, whilst being safe and accessible to all, is established in the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy. The objectives also seek to mitigate the impacts of climate change, and the environmental performance of new buildings is addressed in Policy EN3 'Sustainable East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy construction and

energy efficiency'. Good design can reduce energy consumption and improve sustainability and the Council will actively promote development incorporating new technology and contemporary design where it provides appropriate visual context or contrast in respect of its surroundings.

- Crime, and the fear of crime, is amongst the top concerns of local communities, and these concerns are reflected in the strategic objectives of this plan. Design can make a significant contribution towards reducing the scope for crime, and create more pleasant and reassuring environments in which to live and work. In addition to appropriate design of buildings, open spaces must be safe and believed to be safe so that their full enjoyment for play, walking, sport and general amenity can be fully utilised and appreciated. Increasing natural surveillance, layout of roads and paths, planting, positioning and use of open space, and secure standards of doors and windows are areas for particular consideration. In town centers covered by CCTV systems developers will be required to consider these facilities in their design and/or contribute to the siting/re-siting of cameras where appropriate. National guidance to assist in designing out crime is contained in 'Secured by Design', and developers are advised to contact Cambridgeshire Constabulary for further advice.
- Good design can help to ensure that the best use is made of land, as required by Government guidance in PPS3. The piecemeal incremental development of an area with no regard to an overall plan or concept development of a large site can result in an unsatisfactory form of development by preventing proper consideration of how various elements, such as landscaping, open space and footpaths, fit together, thus preventing a holistic approach to design. Piecemeal development schemes that would prevent adjacent land or other nearby sites from coming forward – for example, by impeding future access, will also be resisted. However, phased development will be supported where it is related to a comprehensive scheme/master plan which addresses overall infrastructure provision, access and internal circulation by pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles, landscaping, open space and play space provision, and affordable housing.
- Good connectivity and movement between spaces requires a high standard of design. The Council is committed to reducing dependence on the car, minimising the impact of car parking, and improving accessibility for pedestrians, people with impaired mobility, cyclists, horse riders and public transport. All development proposals will be required to incorporate safe, attractive and convenient road design, access and parking arrangements and pedestrian routes as detailed in Policies S7 and S8. The advice of the County Highways Authority will be sought in relation to these issues. Development schemes should aim to protect and enhance existing links and look for opportunities to improve and expand them.

- For large and more complex schemes the Council will require a more detailed development brief to be submitted in advance of an application, and shared with the local community. Such information will show how the design has evolved and how design-related considerations have been addressed. It will also provide an opportunity for engagement of the local community at an early stage, and enable the Council to check that key issues have been addressed, thus helping to speed up the planning application process. It is not appropriate to be precise about when a development brief may be required, as much depends on the nature of the site and the proposal. Developers will need to discuss the issue with the Council at an early stage in proceedings.
- It is proposed to produce an East Cambridgeshire Design Guide to be adopted as SPD. This will contain more detailed guidance on how design should compliment local architectural traditions, and how sustainable construction techniques can be incorporated within the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy context of the quality and character of the existing built heritage. Other detailed local context information can be found in Conservation Area Appraisals, the Ely Environmental Capacity Study, the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines and Parish Plans, and these should be taken into account. Reviews of these documents will occur during the lifetime of the LDF and the most up to date material should be referred to.
- Guidance on the appropriate design of shop fronts and advertisements will be set out in the Shop fronts and Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document. Further general design guidance can be found in Government guidance document 'By Design', the companion to PPS1.

Policy EN 5

Historic conservation

Development proposals, within, or affecting a Conservation Area should:

- Be of a particularly high standard of design and materials that will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area;
- Retain attractive traditional features such as original doors, windows and boundary walls;
- Only involve the demolition of buildings where:
 - They are of little or no importance to the architectural, historic or visual character or appearance of the area; or
 - They are structurally unsound (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect) and beyond reasonable repair, and measures to sustain an existing use or find an alternative use have been explored and failed; and in all cases
 - Detailed proposals for reconstruction or redevelopment have received planning permission.

Proposals to extend alter or change the use of a Listed Building, or which affect the setting of a Listed Building will only be permitted where they would:

- Preserve the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses; and
- Support the long-term preservation of the building.

Proposals to demolish all or part of a Listed Building will only be permitted in very exceptional cases where:

- The building is structurally unsound (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect) and beyond all reasonable repair; and
- All possible measures to sustain an existing use or find an alternative use have been explored and failed, and preservation in charitable or community ownership is not possible or sustainable; or
- Where redevelopment would bring wider public benefits; and
- Preservation in a charitable or community ownership is not possible or suitable; and
- Detailed proposals for reconstruction or redevelopment have received planning permission.

The Council will take action to enforce repair of Listed Buildings where appropriate.

EN5 - Historic conservation

- East Cambridgeshire contains a great wealth and variety of buildings and areas that are of special importance to the character and appearance of towns and villages, the most famous being Ely Cathedral. Just as the landscape changes from open fen in the north to more undulating areas of chalk and clay hills in the south, the character of buildings and settlements also change, reflecting the considerable diversity of the area. Certain proposals affecting Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings are subject to specific consent procedures, and PPG15 sets out the detailed considerations that must be followed in these applications. The Core Strategy aims to ensure that the built heritage is conserved and enhanced by sympathetic preservation and high quality design.

Conservation Areas

- The Council has designated 29 Conservation Areas in the district. These are listed in Appendix 5 and the boundaries are shown on the accompanying Proposals Map. These areas have been designated due to their particular architectural or historic interest, taking account of the overall quality of the area, mix and style of buildings, quality of open spaces, and other features which contribute to the overall character. The Council is currently undertaking a programme of Conservation Area reviews, looking at their boundaries, character and general condition through the production of Conservation Area Appraisals. In addition to the review of existing Conservation Areas the programme also includes the designation of new Conservation Areas. The Conservation Area Appraisals for both the revised and new Conservation Areas will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents to the LDF.

- Designation emphasises the special care that must be taken over the design, layout and materials of development proposals to ensure the character and appearance of these areas is retained and enhanced. Traditional features and locally characteristic designs should be recognised and reflected in development proposals. However, new development does not always have to mimic the past, and high quality designed schemes which provide a successful visual contrast with their surroundings may also preserve and enhance character.
- Demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas will be resisted, except in very exceptional cases where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the building is structurally unsound or of little or no importance to the character and appearance of the area. In all circumstances, demolition will only be allowed if planning permission has already been obtained for the redevelopment of the site, to ensure the special character of the area is preserved or enhanced.
- Where necessary, the Council will use Urgent Works and Repairs Notices, Section 215 notices and Article 4 Directions to maintain and enhance the quality of Conservation Areas.

Listed Buildings

- Buildings are listed by English Heritage in national recognition of their special architectural or historic interest, and any works which affect the character of a Listed Building require Listed Building Consent. Within the district there are almost 930 Listed Buildings, about 100 of which are Grade I or Grade II*. The high ratio of Grade I and II* is due in part to Anglesey Abbey and the Ely Cathedral complex. The main aim of listing is to prevent alterations which are detrimental to the special character of the building or structure, including the interior. The Council is committed to identifying Listed Buildings at risk and encouraging their repair and reuse, and will take formal action to enforce repair, where appropriate. The East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy setting of a Listed Building is also important, and proposals which detract from the setting will be resisted. Similarly, where a Listed Building has landscape value, contributing to the wider setting of a settlement or the countryside, it will be necessary to demonstrate that development proposals do not adversely affect character or views.
- There is a strong presumption in favour of the preservation of Listed Buildings and demolition will be approved only in the most exceptional circumstances as set out in Policy EN5, after applicants have demonstrated that every effort has been made to keep the building. If demolition is permitted, the Council is likely to require an appropriate archive of the features and fabric that would be lost. Often the best way of preserving a Listed Building will be by securing an active, economically viable use, and sympathetic consideration will be given to proposals which help to secure the long term future of the building. Such proposals will only be acceptable where there is no detriment to the structure, character, appearance or setting of the building.

Locally Listed Buildings

- Government policy in PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' 2004 gives provision for local authorities to draw up lists of locally important buildings which make a valuable contribution to the local scene or local history, but which do not merit national listing. These will be given additional protection and their status will be a material consideration, but they will not enjoy the full protection of statutory listing. A local list will be developed by the Council in conjunction with local amenity groups.

Archaeological Sites and Monuments

- East Cambridgeshire has a rich and varied archaeological heritage. In the north of the district, settlement from the early pre-historic period focused on the dry land of the Isle of Ely and surrounding fen margins, although well preserved artefacts and organic remains may occur in the areas of fen. Extensive evidence of Roman activity survives throughout the district, and in addition to the historic City of Ely, numerous medieval villages and towns survive to the present day. The Council wishes to make every effort to safeguard this archaeological heritage, which is vulnerable to modern development and land use. Known sites of national importance are designated as 'Scheduled Ancient Monuments', and these are shown on the Proposals Map and listed in Appendix 5. Other sites of regional or local significance are listed in the County Historic Environment Record, maintained by Cambridgeshire County Council. As most archaeological remains are yet to be discovered it is crucial that sites of potential interest are appropriately assessed. Development adversely affecting a site of known or identified national importance will be resisted and the impact of development on all types of remains should be minimised. There will usually be a presumption in favour of in-situ preservation of remains, unless it can be shown that the recording of remains, assessment, analysis, report, publication and deposition of archive is more appropriate. Such recording should take place before development starts. The Council will be guided in these issues by Government advice contained in PPG16 'Archaeology and Planning' (1990), and advice from the Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Department.

Historic Parks and Gardens

- The District contains a number of areas of historic parkland and gardens that form an important part of the county's heritage and environment. The most significant sites are identified within English Heritage's 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest' and as advised by the County Council's Archaeology Team (and reflected in the list in the East Cambridgeshire District Local Plan).
- The registers have no statutory status but PPG15 states that the planning system should be used to protect the character, appearance, amenity value and setting of these sites.

APPENDIX C

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL GUIDANCE

1 Introduction

- 1.1 These policies should be read in conjunction with the East Cambridgeshire District Council Core Strategy adopted in October 2009. The relevant policies are provided above in Appendix A.
- 1.2 This guidance should be considered in the context of the relevant national legislation and policy documents, in particular:
 - Planning Policy Guidance note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment
 - Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- 1.3 This guidance and the associated Conservation Area Appraisal for the area should be read in conjunction with the supporting policies in the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan (adopted June 2000), but especially Policies 199-202 that relate specifically to Soham.
- 1.4 Conservation Area designation is not intended to ‘pickle’ an area by preventing all new development. Soham has evolved over centuries and this guidance therefore seeks to ensure that the area continues to thrive and allows change, but without prejudicing the key features which define the character and appearance of the area.
- 1.5 The underlying principle of this guidance is to ensure that Soham continues to develop in a considered way that will retain its essential character. Sustainability should, therefore, be at the heart of any development proposals that should be durable, adaptable and of high quality.

2 Submission of Applications

2.1 Outline Planning Applications

Outline applications for development within the Conservation Area will not be accepted unless they contain sufficient supporting information by which the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area can be judged.

2.2 Full Planning Applications for New Buildings

These will need to include sufficient detail by which the full impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the area can be judged. This will need to include consideration of the issues raised in the Conservation Area Appraisal (especially the ‘Key Characteristics’ Section) and a design statement that clearly sets out how the proposal is felt to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area.

2.3 Listed Building Consent

This is required for any works, which affect the architectural or historic interest of the interior or exterior of any, listed building and any building constructed before 1 July 1948 that stands within its curtilage. Applications must include a statement that demonstrates an understanding of the aspects of the building to be affected, describes why the work is needed, explains why any alternative options were

discounted and considers how the damage to any historic fabric will be minimised.

2.4 Conservation Area Consent

This is required for the demolition of any unlisted building within the Conservation Area. In order to justify the works, a statement will need to be provided which considers the issues in Section 4 of this guidance. Where a building is to be replaced by a new structure, consideration of how the building will contribute to the character and appearance of the area will need to be included in a Design Statement to accompany any planning application.

3 Demolition of buildings

- 3.1 There will be a general presumption against demolition of Listed Buildings (including their outbuildings), Buildings of Local Interest and other significant buildings that are identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 3.2 The demolition of such buildings will only be approved where it can be demonstrated that:-
- The building is structurally unsound and repairs would involve the significant loss or alteration of the original structure and any elements of particular historic interest; or
 - It cannot continue in its current use, and it is not capable of being converted to a suitable new use in its current form; and
 - The building has been offered for sale on the open market at the market price for at least six months and that no reasonable offer has been received; and
 - Any proposed replacement building will make an equal or greater contribution to the character and appearance of the area; and
 - Demolition would not result in a long-term cleared site to the detriment of adjacent Listed Buildings or the Conservation area.
- 3.3 The demolition of other buildings in the area will be approved provided that:-
- The building(s) is/are identified as making either a negative or insignificant contribution to the character or appearance of the area.
 - Any replacement building or feature will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. A design statement that describes how the new building respects the 'Key Characteristics' of the area as defined in the Conservation Area Appraisal must accompany any application for a replacement building.
 - To avoid unsightly gaps in the Conservation Area, a condition will be imposed on any grant of Conservation Area Consent that prevents the demolition until a contract has been let for the redevelopment of the site.

4 Extending existing buildings

- 4.1 Extensions should always relate well to the proportions, form, massing and character of the existing building. Appropriately designed extensions will complement the original building, whilst being of interest in themselves.
- 4.2 In order to maintain the character of the original building, extensions should be subordinate and preferably of a simple design and/or construction. Innovative contemporary design of high quality will be encouraged where a successful contrast with the original building can be achieved.
- 4.3 Generally, however, taking inspiration from the architectural detailing of the existing house often achieves the most successful design. The scale of the extension should respect the existing building and should not be bulky, wrongly orientated or poorly detailed.

Rear Extensions

- 4.4 These are the most common type of extension as they usually offer the greatest degree of flexibility and privacy. Care is needed, however, to ensure that the effect upon neighbouring properties is kept to a minimum, i.e. an extension should not dominate the neighbour's house or garden or affect their light quality. In order to achieve this, two storey extensions on common boundaries are unlikely to be approved.
- 4.5 The eaves level of a rear extension should be kept as low as possible and particular care should be taken to ensure the ridgeline of the new roof does not interfere with the existing roof; it should not be visible from the front of the building.

Side Extensions

- 4.6 These are appropriate where there is sufficient space between the existing property and its neighbour to retain a reasonable separation between the buildings so that 'terracing' does not occur. This is particularly important along the main north-south routes where there are many detached gault brick villas, but often with little space between them.
- 4.7 When the house is of a symmetrical composition, as many of Soham's properties are, or it is one half of a semi-detached pair, side extensions should be avoided, unless the design of the extension will retain the symmetry. With semi-detached properties, neighbours should consider undertaking similarly proportioned extensions together.
- 4.8 When side extensions are appropriate, they need to relate well to the front of the existing house as they will often have a big impact on the appearance of the house and the street. The fenestration pattern is especially important with side extensions because the windows are often the dominant feature of buildings and it is therefore important that these are repeated in extensions.

- 4.9 The walls of the extension should be recessed slightly from those of the existing building so that the original form of the dwelling is still visible. This also helps to soften the junction between old and new, which, particularly if there is a change in materials, can look awkward if directly adjacent.
- 4.10 In the case of modest 1.5 storey buildings, a traditional lean-to extension may be more appropriate than trying to mimic the form of the main house as this is the traditional method of extending such buildings. Generally, however, side extensions should replicate the form of the main roof; this is particularly important with the hipped roofs that characterise many of the 2 storey properties in Soham. Attempting to mix roof forms will result in complicated and often clumsy roof junctions and will damage the architectural composition of the property.

Front Extensions

- 4.11 These should generally be avoided as they will often be highly visible in the public realm and disrupt the most important elevation of a building. Porches will rarely be acceptable (usually only on more recent houses), but are subject to the same guidelines as other extensions and should not be erected where they will destroy/hide the central doorways with moulded architraves, pediments, flat hoods or classical details, etc. that are commonly found on traditional properties throughout Soham.

Roof Extensions

- 4.12 These are a popular way of providing more accommodation, but can pose considerable challenges in order to avoid damaging the character of the property.
- 4.13 Roof extensions should relate well to the existing building's roof form and should reflect or complement the character of the property and the area. Ridgelines and chimneystacks, in particular, are often a key part of a building's character and they should not be altered unless it can be demonstrated that this would create a positive feature. The potential for overlooking should also be addressed in the design.
- 4.14 The size and number of dormer windows should be kept to a minimum and they should generally not be placed on the front elevation (or the elevation most visible from the public realm) unless it is appropriate to the design. The style of windows should be influenced by the design, proportion and arrangement of existing windows in the building (see 6.6 Dormers and Roof lights). Roof lights should be of the traditional 'Conservation' type, which lies flush with the roof slope and should also be kept off the front roof slope, particularly on formal buildings.
- 4.15 Early consultation with Building Control will ensure that the requirements for fire escapes, etc. are designed into the extension at an early stage and that their impact on the external appearance of the building is therefore limited.

Materials (& Colours)

- 4.16 Soham has a limited palette of materials illustrated in part 8 of the Conservation Area Appraisal. The predominant building materials are gault brick with contrasting brick detailing and slate roofs or the less frequent use of tiles. This palette should be used as a guide for extensions and alterations. The use of modern materials such as steel, concrete and structural glazing would need to be part of a very high quality design approach in order to provide a successful contrast with the traditional materials in the village.
- 4.17 Traditional colours for the small number of painted; rendered and plastered properties in Soham would have been subdued earthy tones although today the majority of buildings are painted white. Strident colours should not be used to avoid them dominating the traditional domestic buildings.

5 Housing Developments

- 5.1 Soham is designated a Rural Growth Settlement in Policy 5 of the East Cambridgeshire District Local Plan (June 2000). This means that housing development can be in the form of housing estates, housing groups and infilling (as defined by Local Plan Policy 3). However, within the Conservation Area, development is likely to be restricted to housing groups and infilling, simply because of the limited land available.

Context

- 5.2 The Soham Conservation Area Appraisal describes the village's grain, i.e. how the village's existing buildings relate to the street. Section 8 'Key Characteristics' summarises information such as the building heights and line, boundary treatments, materials, detailing, etc. Paying particular attention to the street in which the new building(s) will sit will establish appropriate design principles and ensure that new buildings will respect Soham's existing character.

Building Line / Position on Plot

- 5.3 The majority of properties sit parallel to the street with a wide frontage and tend not to be very deep in plan. Most new buildings should follow this approach. Very few traditional properties sit gable end on to the street and new buildings should therefore only use this form if the site's context requires it.

Form

- 5.4 In order for new buildings to relate well to their neighbours, there must be a consistency between the old and the new; scale is particularly important. Traditional building forms in Soham are typically 2 storeys with shallow pitched (often hipped) roofs and chimneys. The scale of the new building(s) should reflect its location within the Soham Conservation Area, by respecting the increasing scale towards the main commercial streets.

Detailing

- 5.5 The central spine route of Soham and many of the east/west routes that lead off it are lined with double fronted gault brick houses of very similar construction. Central recessed doorways with Classical detailing and recessed hung multi-paned windows are a feature of Soham and should be, if not, replicated, at least respected in the detailing of new buildings.
- 5.6 Architectural details should follow on from the design principles that influenced the basic form of the building and should therefore reflect the style of the property. This should ensure that the building's elevational treatment fits in with the neighbouring properties.

Windows

- 5.7 Generally speaking, these should have a vertical emphasis, be set within reveals and should not be of uPVC. Timber windows with a vertical emphasis, usually achieved by the subdivision of the window into symmetrical panes (typically taller than they are broad), have a much softer visual appearance and allow finer detailing. If maintained properly, they are also more durable than aluminium or uPVC windows.
- 5.8 Most traditional properties in Soham have, or had, multi-paned hung sliding sash windows with recessed reveals, adding depth to the elevations. Only the modest 1.5storey dwellings originally had casements, although they are also often used in dormer windows and are now commonly used in new buildings or as replacement window. Windows in new buildings should be chosen to reflect their status and in particular should avoid a mix of styles.

Dormers and Roof lights

- 5.9 Dormers are found in varying styles within Soham depending upon the status and age of the property (see the 8.0 Key Characteristics of the Appraisal). In general however they should have appropriately sized casement windows (or small sashes) which are in scale with the rest of the building and its windows. Cheeks should be rendered on modest 1.5 storey dwellings or lead lined on 2.5 storey properties unless the context requires a justifiably different appearance.
- 5.10 The number of rooflights should be kept to a minimum and generally be used only on rear roof slopes. Their position should also be influenced by the proportion and arrangement of the other windows. Conservation type rooflights with a vertical emphasis and which lie flush with the roof slope are the most appropriate.

Doors

- 5.11 Doors should maintain a solid appearance and should not have fanlights set within the door itself. Traditional doors are of timber and are usually panelled with semi-circular, or more commonly, rectangular fanlights above. Doorways are always central and recessed in detached 2 storey dwellings, but tend to be to one side in terraces and

semi-detached properties. Larger new buildings should consider using appropriate detailing around doorways to reflect the Classical detailing of many of the traditional villas.

Window/Door heads & cills

- 5.12 These are a traditional feature of buildings. They frame windows and doors, providing visual support, and enliven the façade of a building. Soldier courses are modern and should not be used. Gauged brick arches are commonly found throughout Soham on both higher status and more modest properties. Stone heads are also reasonably common, but are only used on larger properties (usually late C19 / early C20), whilst segmental arches are found on smaller properties, particularly on terraces. Cills are almost universally stone, although modern properties use concrete.

Porches

- 5.13 These are very unlikely to be acceptable as many properties in Soham have a decorative central doorway with attractive, often classical, detailing. Porches should only be added where they will neither damage nor hide such a doorway or where they will not alter the rhythm of the street. They should also complement the architectural style of the property and should be of a simple form.

Eaves, Verges & chimneys

- 5.14 Traditional eaves and verges are simply detailed without soffits, fascias or, usually, bargeboards. Modern boxed eaves and deep fascias or bargeboards have a very heavy appearance and should be avoided on new buildings.
- 5.15 Chimneys are a traditional feature of dwellings and are often paired as end stacks, particularly on hipped roof properties and nearly always found located on the ridge. Their inclusion in the design of new buildings is strongly encouraged.

Materials

- 5.16 Materials should be firmly rooted in the vernacular of the area and should not introduce alien details or materials from other areas, as this will harm local distinctiveness and character. Modern materials can be used successfully in some cases provided the design and construction is of high enough quality and respects the form and scale of Soham's traditional buildings. Whatever approach is used, a limited palette of materials will usually achieve the best result.
- 5.17 Using locally sourced materials is often the most sustainable option too as it reduces the need for transport.

6 Outbuildings and Boundaries

- 6.1 Garages and other outbuildings such as offices and large sheds/summer houses, should relate to the style of the main property, but should remain subordinate to it. Most of these structures will be

located at the rear of properties because of the tight building line of the main streets in Soham and will therefore have little impact upon the street scene. They should however be subject to the same design principles as any other new building.

- 6.2 Undercroft vehicular accesses pose the greatest design problems in Soham because of the pressure to park off the street, but they can have a disproportionate impact on the street scene and on the architectural proportions and detailing of building(s). They should be avoided except where there is no other reasonable way to provide parking for new development and should then be appropriately detailed, usually with the use of a segmental arch
- 6.3 Boundary treatments should reflect the status of the building. There is no consistent boundary treatment within Soham, although simple low walls (of a material to complement the main building) are usually appropriate. Timber fences are a rural treatment and should not be used in the relatively urban context of Soham. For more substantial buildings railings set upon a dwarf brick wall can be used.

7 Landscaping

- 7.1 Street vegetation is not a characteristic of Soham and thus those large trees that do exist serve as points of interest in the largely urban streets. New dwellings should not therefore have large front gardens with substantial planting.
- 7.2 Any existing site features, in particular trees, hedges and boundary walls, should, however, be retained and incorporated in the external treatment of the new dwelling(s). These features add instant maturity to the development and are often important to the townscape.

8 Shop fronts

- 8.1 Churchgate Street and the High Street have developed as the main commercial roads with occasional shop units found along Hall Street and Pratt Street. A number of old shop fronts survive along these streets, but many more have been disfigured by modern alterations or the addition of clumsy signage.
- 8.2 The Local Plan also recognises that because of Soham's location between Ely and Newmarket, Soham's small selection of shops is vulnerable to competition. This is evident as there are a number of units that are vacant and falling into disrepair.
- 8.3 Improving the shop fronts of the town can help to improve the attractiveness of the shopping streets and shopkeepers are encouraged to use the following guidance when considering alterations to their shop fronts. If necessary, a Shop fronts Design Guide will be produced in the future to provide further guidance.

- 8.4 Planning Permission will not be approved to remove good quality shop fronts or any elements of them unless they are beyond repair.
- 8.5 Where some elements of an original shop front survive, the existing elements should be retained and used as the basis for the restoration of the original frontage or incorporated into an appropriate new shop front design. Removal of original features will only be permitted if they are completely rotten or are incapable of being successfully incorporated into a new shop front.
- 8.6 The replacement of inappropriate shop fronts will be encouraged provided that the replacement respects the character of the building, adjacent buildings if part of a group or terrace or the area as a whole. To be acceptable, new designs should:-
- Have a clear structural logic with a clearly defined frame of pilasters, fascia and, where appropriate, stall risers.
 - Relate to the character and proportions of the original building
 - Maintain or improve the ease of access to the building for those with disabilities.
 - Be of appropriate materials.
 - Not stretch across the frontage of more than one building.
 - Provide an appropriately designed separate access where separate living accommodation is to be provided within the upper storeys.
- 8.7 Where change of use is sought for the conversion of a shop back to residential use and elements of an original or appropriate shopfront survive, these will be retained in any conversion unless they are completely beyond repair.

9 Signage

- 9.1 Several buildings in Soham have been disfigured by inappropriate and clumsy signage, particularly those that have been latterly converted into shops. In future to be acceptable, new signage must:-
- Not obliterate, hide or destroy the proportions of the building or any of its architectural features.
 - Have lettering of appropriate size, materials and font type for the building.
 - Be clear and simple to read and not incorporate garish or unsuitable colours.
 - Have only one appropriately designed and located hanging sign for each shop frontage.

Illumination

- 9.2 Advertisement Consent is required for most forms of illuminated signage in the Conservation Area. Clumsy, internally illuminated 'box' signs will not be permitted. To be acceptable, illuminated signs must:-

- Have a discrete light source that does not interfere with the proportions of the building or frontage or damage any architectural features.
- Not affect the amenity of nearby residential uses.
- Have a subdued and consistent light level.

10 Blinds and Canopies

10.1 Blinds and awnings will only be permitted in the Conservation Area when there is a historical precedent and the existing blind box survives, where they can be accommodated without damaging the character of the building or shop frontage and will relate successfully to existing features and detailing of the building.

11 Shop front Security

11.1 When designing a new shop front, consider the likely security needs of the occupier. It is much easier to design in suitable security measures at the outset than attempt to add them to existing frontages.

11.2 Solid external shutters will only be permitted in the Conservation Area where it can be clearly demonstrated that they are the only viable means of security to enable the shopkeeper to retain his livelihood.

11.3 External shutters, of the solid or grille type, will only be permitted when they respect the features and proportions of the shopfront, do not cover the pilasters and fascia and are of an appropriate colour and finish.

12 Change of Use

12.1 Where retail uses remain viable on only the ground floors of properties, 'Living over the Shop' will be actively encouraged to bring vacant upper floors back into use and generate activity at different times of the day. Such uses will be supported provided that:

- Appropriate noise insulation between the living accommodation and the shop below can be provided.
- Where the living accommodation is to be accessed separately from the shop, an appropriate separate entrance can be provided without damaging the character of the building and any original or appropriately designed shop front.
- Adequate waste storage and car and cycle parking can be provided for the occupants.

12.2 The subdivision of large single occupation residential properties into self-contained dwellings will only be supported where this will not result in the loss of suitable family housing and provided that:

- The architectural character and detailing of the original house will be maintained / restored.
- Front garden(s) with appropriate boundaries will be retained / reinstated.
- Adequate car and cycle parking and refuse storage can be provided and suitably screened from public view.

- The living accommodation is of an adequate standard and the occupants have an acceptable level of amenity.
- The appearance of the building will be maintained without the need for disfiguring extensions or alterations.
- The amenity of adjoining residents will not be significantly affected.
- Existing vehicle accesses are adequate, or appropriately sized accesses can be provided without affecting the overall townscape quality of the area, the setting of the building or involving the loss of any important tree or boundary.
- Any important 'lost', altered or dilapidated architectural details will be restored.