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Foreword

The Somersham Boundary Review and Character Assessment have been produced as part of the overall review of the Somersham Conservation Area. The Character Assessment has been structured under separate headings to present each part of the review as clearly as possible.

The **Introduction** provides an overview of the geography and context for the historic development of Somersham. The **Statement of Significance** outlines the main elements of the village's historic core and the areas proposed for inclusion in the revised Conservation Area.

The **Historical Development** section presents the stages of the village's development and building history. It includes historic maps showing how the town has expanded. The **Analysis of the Conservation Area** draws out the distinctive characteristics of the Conservation Area. It then provides a character analysis, spatial analysis, building types study and a design code for the village. The **Character Analysis** looks at the historic development of the area and how this is reflected in built form. The **Building Type Analysis** looks at how the different styles and types of building are distributed. This section refers to building type codes presented in **Annex A** which is located on page 26. The **Building Details and Materials Analysis** highlights typical or distinctive architectural details and materials within the village. The **Design Code** then summarises the above information, showing how the pattern or 'grain' of development in each part of the village affects the appearance of its built form and, therefore, its essential character.

At the end of the document, the **Opportunities for Future Enhancement** section suggests where improvements to the built form or local environment might be made to benefit the overall character of the Conservation Area.

Annex A, as mentioned above, explains the different types of building found in the district and which of these are relevant to Somersham. **Annex B** lists all the scheduled monuments, statutorily listed buildings and buildings of local interest in Somersham. **Annex C** presents District Council policies and references used in the development of the document.

1.0 Introduction, Statement of Significance and Historical Developments

- 1.1 Somersham is a village within the area of Huntingdonshire District Council located approximately 13km north-east of Huntingdon (see Map 1). The Parish contains around 1830 hectares (4522 acres), and the population in 2001 was 3,810 (3,650).¹

Map 1. The geographical setting of Somersham within Huntingdonshire



- 1.2 The modern village of Somersham sits on a flat plateau at an average height of 10 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).
- 1.3 It sits on the First and Second Terrace Gravels within the valley of the River Great Ouse. The gravel plateau falls sharply to the north and east towards Colne and Chatteris fen.
- 1.4 The village is centred on the High Street, Parkhall Road and Church Street and includes the parks lying to the south. There have been several finds dating to the Roman period through chance discovery and quarrying. There have also been Saxon finds, including pottery, to the south of the village, but very little is known about Somersham during this era.
- 1.5 Somersham Conservation Area is one of sixty Conservation Areas in Huntingdonshire. It is Huntingdonshire District Council's intention to produce new, or updated character assessments for all designated Conservation Areas as part of a rolling programme. The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty upon local

planning authorities to formulate proposals for conserving and enhancing Conservation Areas. Following consultation and approval the Character Assessment for Somersham will carry weight as a 'material consideration' in planning decisions.

- 1.6 Conservation Areas are designated for their "special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"². This means that consideration is given to the evolution of the community as well as the physical environment within a Conservation Area. Street patterns, the architectural quality of the buildings, open spaces, trees and other tangible evidence relating to the social and economic development of a settlement are given due weight. In this way every aspect of the historic environment of present day Somersham has been taken into account.
- 1.7 Like other villages in Huntingdonshire, Somersham's built environment developed slowly from the Middle Ages until just after the Second World War. New development during that period was normally contained within the existing settlement pattern, even where the changes were socially and economically significant (for example, the enclosure of the open fields by an Act of Parliament in 1802).
- 1.8 However, after about 1950 peripheral housing estates were developed that departed from this traditional development pattern. For this reason the character analysis for Somersham draws on the settlement morphology prior to 1950.
- 1.9 Within the boundary of the Somersham Conservation Area certain parts may need improvement or be ripe for re-development. Being in the Conservation Area will help developers and planners to ensure that improvements will enhance the character of the town along the lines laid down in this document.³
- 1.10 Conservation Area designation also places some restrictions on minor development works that would, otherwise, be permitted without formal planning applications being made. Further restrictions may be introduced by the Local Planning Authority (or the Secretary of State) that effectively withdraw other permitted development rights in all or part of a Conservation Area in order to conserve the quality of the area.
- 1.11 Furthermore, all trees growing within the boundaries of a Conservation Area are protected and, additionally, permission must be sought prior to the demolition of most buildings.

1. National Census Statistics 2001 (1991).

2. Department of the Environment, Planning Policy Guidance 15, Article 4.17 1994

3. The design code in this document relates to the historic building tradition found in the Somersham area prior to 1950.

Statement of Significance

- 1.12 The manor of Somersham was given to the Abbey of Ely by Brithnoth in 991. It has had a Conservation Area since the 14th October 1974.
- 1.13 Somersham has two Scheduled Ancient Monuments, the site of the Bishop's Palace and the early nineteenth century stone direction post (White Post Obelisk) to the west of the village at the junction of the Somersham-Oldhurst road with the Somersham-St Ives road. There are 49 buildings on the National List, of which one (the Parish Church of St John the Baptist) is Grade 1.
- 1.14 There were 3 tree preservation orders within the area prior to designation. Such orders only applied to trees considered to be at risk at the time and all trees within the Conservation Area are protected. A survey of the most significant trees was made prior to designation.

Historical Development

Medieval Settlement Pattern

- 1.15 Very little is known about Saxon Somersham, despite reference to a manor in the later Saxon period. It was first recorded in 991 as Somersham meaning 'Sumar's homestead' or 'homestead of the South Mere' in the Hurstingsone Hundred.
- 1.16 In 991, Somersham Manor was given to the Abbey of Ely by Duke Brithnoth and confirmed to the Abbey by Edward the Confessor. The Abbots of Ely, thereafter, used Somersham as a residence, prior to the Manor becoming an Episcopal residence or palace when the Bishopric of Ely was created in 1109. About this time, the Bishops of Ely and the Abbots of Ramsey were in constant dispute over common rights in the Soke (a district under a particular local Jurisdiction) of Somersham.
- 1.17 In 1190 a weekly market was granted by Richard I and was probably held where the High Street crosses Church Lane. This is the apparent site of the cross to which fifteenth and sixteenth century wills refer. In 1197 Richard also granted the bishop the right of free chase in the forest of Somersham which was confirmed in 1199 by King John I.
- 1.18 The church of John the Baptist is an important building in Somersham, not only because of its visual prominence within Church Street, but also due to its historical importance, parts of which date back to the 13th century. The church is built of rubble with Barnack limestone dressings with the north and south porches being added in the 14th and 15th centuries respectively. It was restored in 1883 and is sited south of the village centre, between the central crossroads in the village and the site of the palace. A more obvious and topographically more suitable alignment of the High Street would have been to the south of the church, placing it at the central crossroads to the village with the entrance to the Bishop's Palace nearby.



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- 1.19 There is an indication that the crossroads may have originally been located at the junction of Pinfold Lane and Church Street (the former probably continued westwards and linked with the High Street), and a much larger market place existed at the present day crossroads. The implication is that the village of Somersham has moved northwards from its original site to the south of the parish church.

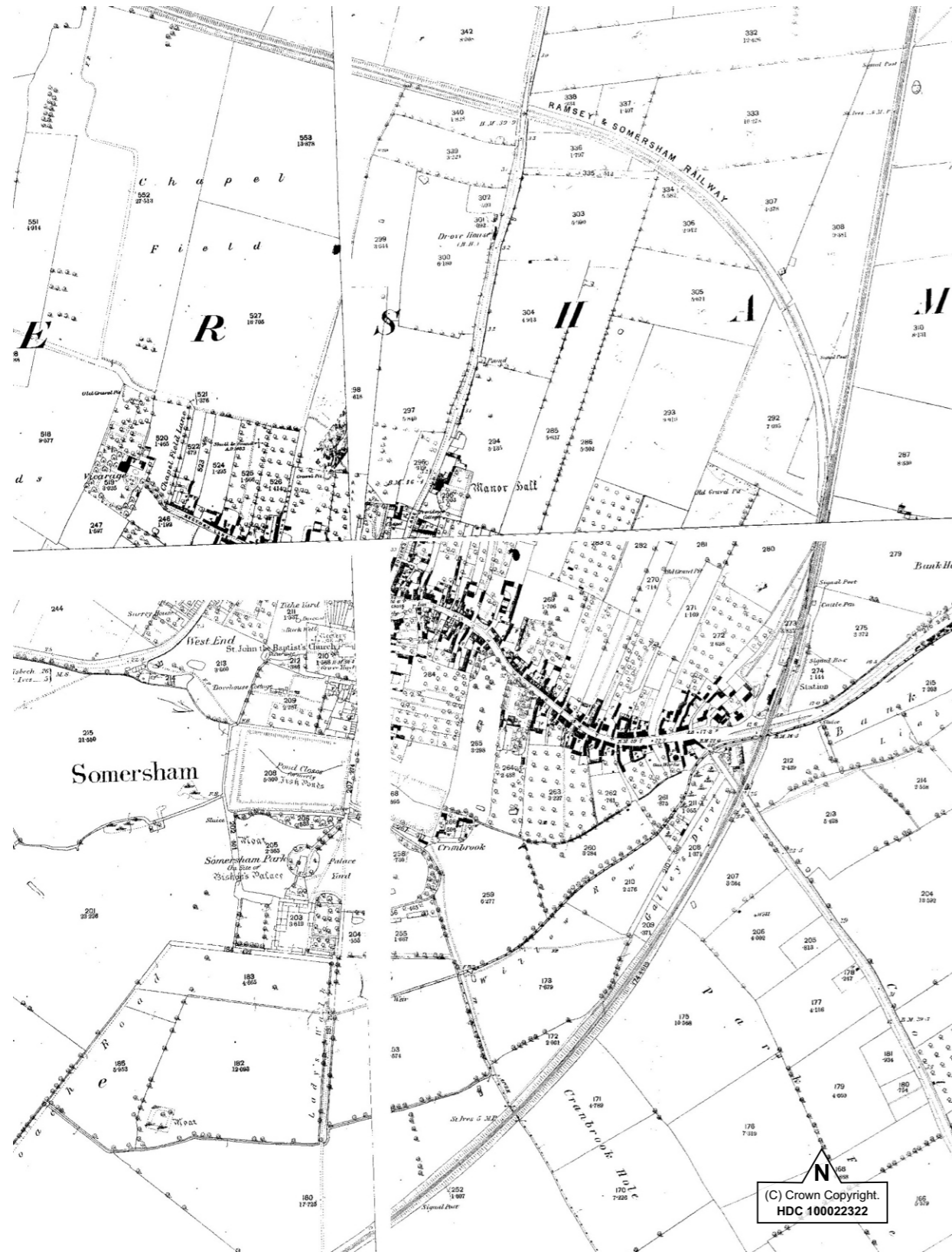
Post-Medieval Development

- 1.20 By 1653, the site of Somersham Palace contained three ponds and covered some 10 acres bounded by a moat. A park, otherwise known as the Chace of Somersham, extended to 621 acres nearby. The Chace probably existed shortly after Somersham became the residence of the Bishops of Ely. From 1197, during the reign of Richard I, until 1762, the Bishops of Ely were granted the right to hunt deer in the forest of Somersham. One interpretation is that the moats, fishponds, roads and even the deer park were part of a deliberate arrangement intended to enhance the visual appearance of the Bishop's Palace and to place it within an entirely man-made and ordered landscape (Bar British Series 209, 1989). The park was disparked in 1762 as a result of the lease on the Manor expiring and the land was enclosed and divided into farms.
- 1.21 More significantly, in 1762, the Palace had fallen into ruin during the lease period and when the lease expired, George, the son of Robert Duke of Manchester, had the remains of the Palace pulled down. The only surviving features of the Episcopal palace are the abutments of the bridge over the north arm of the moat, much of the moat itself, and the 16th century wall to the north and east sides of the garden.
- 1.22 Although nothing remains of the original Somersham Palace, it played a very important role in Somersham's history. Edward III was there in 1334 and James I visited in 1604. In 1533, Somersham was destined to become the place of confinement of Queen Catherine of Aragon, but there was opposition from the Spanish Ambassador and the idea was quashed. Furthermore, in recognition of the importance of the Palace site it was designated a scheduled monument on 27th September 1965 with subsequent amendments on 1st April 1974 and 5th January 1993.
- 1.23 In 1796, a large tract of open heathland between the parishes of St Ives, Somersham, Woodhurst, Colne, Bluntisham and Needingworth, known as Somersham Heath, was also divided and enclosed. At this time, improvements were made to the Somersham to St Ives turnpike road that bisected the Heath. By 1804, this particular turnpike road became a regular mail coach road and in 1836 the 'Defiance' mail coach from London to Wisbech used this route.
- 1.24 During the 18th century, reference was made to a 'Spa' situated on Somesham Heath about three miles from St Ives at the side of Bathe Hill. In his book entitled 'An Account of the Somersham Water, in the County of Huntingdon', published in 1767, Dr Daniel Peter Layard recommended the spa at Somersham, together with the 'Horse Common Water' at Huntingdon and the water at Hail Weston for their medicinal qualities. It appears that the spa may have finally fallen into disuse possibly as early as the 1770s, by which time seaside spas were becoming increasingly popular.

19th Century

- 1.25 The greatest threat to Somersham's existence came in the form of two great fires in the 19th century. The first in 1815 started in the village centre, whilst the second followed soon after in 1824. Much of the present character of Somersham is owing to the extent of these fires and the subsequent redevelopment
- 1.26 The Ramsey and Somersham Railway, which was opened on 16th September 1889, provided an important link with St Ives and ultimately with London via Cambridge. This railway link no longer exists.

Map 2. Somersham 1880 1st edition Ordnance Survey map



Map 3. 1950 Historic map of Somersham with proposed boundary



2.0 The Analysis of the Conservation Area

- 2.1 When the first Conservation Area was designated in October 1974 for Somersham, it principally encompassed those areas with the oldest buildings. The new Conservation Area has been expanded to include the most significant elements that reflect the growth and development of Somersham since the Middle Ages.
- 2.2 This is the result of a major re-assessment of the village and a re-appraisal of the architectural and historic merits of many aspects of the settlement. The resulting boundary is quite broad but reflects the eras through which the village has developed.
- 2.3 It is important to note, however, that the assessment and interpretation of the new and enlarged Conservation Area (in accordance with the statutory and regulatory requirements set by Government and English Heritage) needs to take account of the whole area. Its division into localities and neighbourhoods is intended only to make analysis and understanding more accessible and does not imply that each locality would pass all tests set by statute and regulation as if it were a self-contained Conservation Area in itself.
- 2.4 Table 1 lists the localities within the Conservation Area (as shown on map 4).
- 2.5 This table also gives a written overview of the general character of each locality. This general description is expanded into a detailed analysis of each locality in a plan and table format under the following headings:

Character Analysis

A plan based analysis giving a graphic description of each locality. The symbols used on the maps are described more fully in figure 1, on the inside back cover.

The Main Building Types¹

These are illustrated on the accompanying plan for each locality. The building types help to define the character of each of the neighbourhoods and need to be taken into account when planning enhancements and future development. A full description for each type of building is given in Annex A, page 26.

Building Details & Materials

Examples of significant architectural features are reproduced to illustrate the existing historical built form.

Material. Summary of materials used in the various areas. This illustrates the range of materials most commonly used. It will show where material choice is limited and where more variety may be used.

Detail. This presents some of the architectural detail relevant to each area, for example the most common window and door details present. As with the materials sheet, it will help to show the degree of variety available. It will also show where traditional or modern details predominate.

Design Code

The intention of the Design Code is to establish a generic set of 'principles' that underpin the built character of Somersham. It does not contain an exhaustive set of design 'rules' but it

does identify defining characteristics. By identifying detailed information on characteristics in a quantifiable way it is possible to use this information positively in the design of new development.

The Code is developed in a series of matrices. Each surveyed area is looked at in the following way:

Grain. This is a visual overview of the pattern of development. It illustrates the general characteristics of an area's layout, particularly the arrangement of building plots. This will, at a glance, identify some of the fundamental layout issues that contribute to the place's character.

Plot. Having established the general characteristics of the area, the plot column looks in more detail at the individual streets and building plots. Two pieces of information are conveyed here: firstly, the degree of enclosure and street width (which gives an impression of the street's narrowness or openness); secondly, the typical dimensions of plots in the street and the typical position of the building within that plot (for example, set forward, set back, filling the width of the plot or detached within it etc).

Visual Quality. This describes the visual impact of the area from street level. It also describes form or more detail about the dimensions of the principal blocks, and their heights etc.

Design Code Summary. Each part of the Conservation Area is summarised in turn to highlight the similarities and differences of the area as a whole.

The Recording of Spatial Information

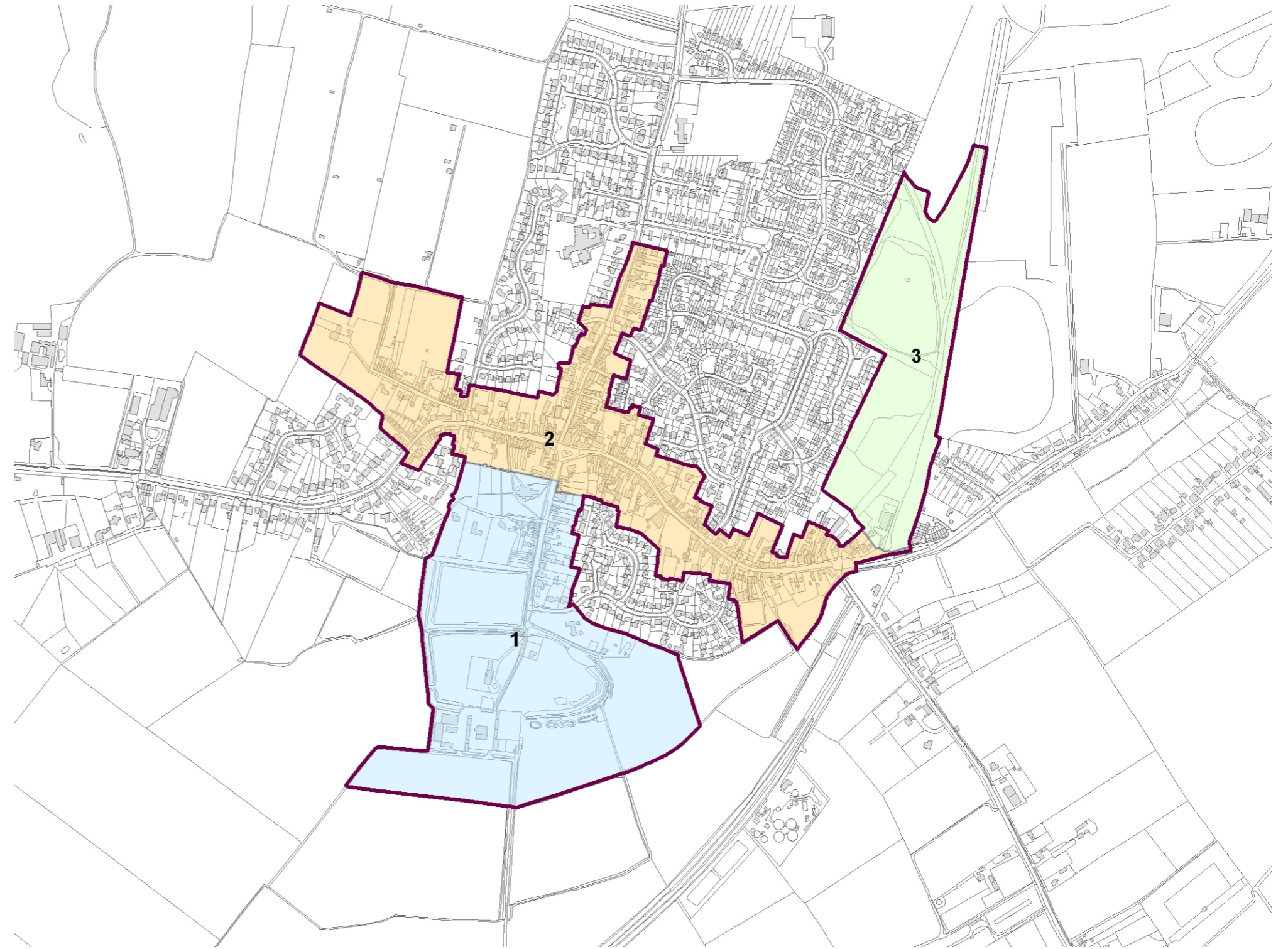
- 2.6 All the information collected on the settlements within the Somersham district for use in this character assessment and displayed in map form have been recorded within Arch View. This is a Geographical Information System (GIS) that allows spatial information to be permanently stored and then displayed at suitable levels of detail and scales as required. The maps used in this document to illustrate local character etc have been chosen to fit the needs of the document but may be enlarged subsequently if more detail needs to be displayed.

¹ Codes (i.e. Ti) are taken from the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment. A full description of each type can be found in this publication.

Table 1. Localities & Neighbourhoods within the Conservation Area

Locality	Somersham		
Neighbourhoods	1. Site of the Former Bishop's Palace, Church Street, Pinfold Lane	2. High Street, Parkhall Road, Chapel Field, Somersham House, Rectory Lane, Shepherd's Terrace	3. County Wildlife Site - Dismantled Railway
Overview	<p>The north ends of Church Street is densely built up with mainly Victorian properties. The space opens up at the area around The Cross. The views south to Somersham Park, site of the former Bishop's Palace, are restricted due to a pinch point created by vegetation. However, once you get beyond the end of Church Street, the village opens up to the undulating landscape beyond.</p> <p>The church is a local landmark building with a spire that is visible from the outskirts of the village.</p>	<p>The village morphology of Somersham is based on the cruciform shape of the High Street, Church Street and Parkhall Road. Where the roads meet at The Cross, is an important open space in the village. The High Street, Parkhall Road and the north side of Rectory Lane are closely built up. The area around The Cross is especially dense.</p> <p>There are some noteworthy historic buildings in the village, including some fine 18th century buildings and a tithe barn that dates back to around 1600. The majority of the architecture is Victorian villas and terraces with cartways as a particular feature. There are also a lot of surviving outbuildings.</p>	<p>The disused railway has become a well used leisure area. It attracts a lot of walkers as well as having a lake for fishing.</p>
Enhancements	<p>The parking in the street is haphazard and at some times chaotic. This could benefit from some element of control.</p>	<p>There are number of disused or run down buildings towards the east end of the High Street, towards Station Approach, that are in need of attention or redevelopment.</p> <p>The creeping advance of UPVc windows and doors should be resisted, especially in businesses or flats, where the Local Planning Authority can impose some control. They are not conducive to the special character of a village Conservation Area.</p> <p>Where possible, historic shopfronts should be maintained for their interest, and soft landscaping should be increased or maintained wherever possible to soften the edges of the heavily built up areas.</p>	<p>The County Wildlife Site is a good use for this piece of land. However it is not shown to its best advantage in the approach from the road. There should be appropriate signage to show what the site has to offer. Also the fencing by the entrance at Station Approach needs to be repaired.</p>

Map 4 The Conservation Area and its Sub Divisions (see Table 1)



Somersham Character Analysis

Site of the Former Bishop's Palace, Church Street and Pinfold Lane

Church Street is the central core of the original settlement, which joined the church with the Bishop's Palace. The strong relationship between the church and the Palace was an important one, hence St John the Baptist is along Church Street, towards the Bishop's Palace, and not at the crossroads with the High Street. This area was the high status end of the settlement.

The character of Church Street is one of straight alignment dominated by the St John the Baptist Parish Church **A**. The walls and gates to the churchyard are classed as structures of local interest and enclose the open space of the graveyard. These elements help to reinforce the linear character of this part of the Conservation Area. This linear form is further characterised by frontage development on the east side, but more importantly by the row of terraced properties on the west side between Pinfold Lane and Pond Closes **B**. Nos. 21 and 23 are mid 19th century grade II listed buildings of gault brick under slate roofs. They have a central arch, **C**, which is a typical feature in Somersham, especially along the High Street, which is important to the character of the village and the Conservation Area.

The dovecote in the extended graveyard to the rear of the church, is important to the views through the Conservation Area. It sits in the open green space and enhances the Conservation Area **D**.

The 18th century former school and school house sit adjacent to the St John the Baptist Parish Church **E**. The building is a soft red brick with interesting graffiti on the porch to the school where former pupils have carved their initials. The school is now an office and the attached school house, no. 5 Church Street, is a private residence. Despite it being one of the oldest properties in the street, it fits in with the linear arrangement of the Victorian villas, and leads onto the open aspect of the church and its grounds, after which the tightly aligned houses again dominate. These lead directly to the Pond Closes associated with the former Bishop's Palace, now Somersham Park.

Pinfold Lane provides a definite 'edge' to the churchyard's southern boundary and creates an interesting interruption to Church Street. The lane kinks at its midpoint concealing the end from view. Most of the properties at the end of the lane are modern in design, however those nearer to Church Street are older properties. The properties have large gardens and open space that draws the eye through the Conservation Area beyond the buildings. The lane has a relaxed, spacious feel.

Somersham Park, at the southernmost end of Church Street, was once a derelict farmhouse that has now been restored **F**. It is an example of an early 19th century farmhouse on a double pile plan. The well landscaped Palace Yard, combined with the Pond Closes, **G**, gives rise to an informal parkland setting. This is in direct contrast to the built up streets that form the centre of the Conservation Area.

To the south of Palace Yard is Park Farm, with good views through to the open countryside beyond the village. Park Farm is an assemblage of old and new farm buildings linked to Church Street by a single access road through Palace Yard. Originally there were three roads to each of the Park Farmhouse, Park Farm and Park Farm Cottage which all met just south of the bridge to Church Street.






















View through Park Farm to countryside beyond



Footpath beside Pond Closes which are located just north of the Bishop's Palace

Quick key to the symbols used on the analysis plans

	Urban space		Glimpse		Landmark building		Intrusion into the street scene
	Green space		Visual leak along building line		Listed building		Back of pavement building line
	Corner building/s		Plantation		Narrow urban space 'pinch point'		Building line set back
	Significant view		Significant tree/s		Street requires enhancements		Spatial orientation
	View stopped		Scheduled ancient monument		Area requires enhancements		



A - Church of St John the Baptist



B - 19-29 Church Street



C - 21-23 Church Street



D - Dovecote



E - The Old School, Church Street



F - Somersham Park



G - Pond Closes, Church Street

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Somersham Character Analysis

High Street

One feature characteristic of Somersham's built heritage is the number of coach arches or wagon ways that are still in existence to give access to backland. Most of the arches that are still in use are along the High Street to the east of The Cross. These are important as an indication of the social history of the village, as are the many outbuildings which either sit behind the main building or, in some cases, gable end onto the pavement edge. These single storey buildings are important to the character of the Conservation Area as they are an indication of the historical development of the village. They relate to the agricultural history of the village that is reflected in the older buildings and their outbuildings. The long plots in which the houses sit have changed little since the Victorian period, as can be seen on the historical maps of the village, and created the settlement pattern.

The long and winding High Street is the important spine to the village, permitting only short range vistas creating both visual interest and expectation **H**. The street is characterised by back of pavement building, mostly in gault brick under slate roofs, but there are exceptions.

The Old Tithe Barn, a timber framed double aisled barn with weather boarded frontage and plain tile roof, dominates the street scene in the western end of the High Street. It was built around 1600 when the Bishop of Ely exchanged the manor and soke of Somersham for Crown properties. Once thatched, it still has the hooks on the exterior for removing the reed should it be in flames, despite it now being tiled.

Views of St John the Baptist Parish Church are mainly concealed by frontage developments in the western end of the High Street. Important views of the church are gained from the entrance both to Church Path **I** (a footpath flanked by walls and linking the church grounds with the High Street) and the yard between Nos. 98 and 100 High Street. The latter view is enhanced by the conical roof of the dovecote situated within the church grounds. The rarity value of these views add to their importance as gaps to be retained as well as benefiting the setting of the buildings and spaces around them.

Continuing east the road opens up at The Cross where the High Street meets Parkhall Road and Church Street. The openness of this area is important to the character the village and is a welcome relief from the dense built up nature of the western end of the High Street. Originally the site of the medieval market, it is of importance both socially and economically. It is accentuated by the shelter which encourages people to stay a while and enjoy the space **J**. The space is important in that it adds to the character of the village.

The area around The Cross accommodates a high proportion of Somersham's listed buildings, the most notable group being the Rose and Crown Public House, and nos. 101, 103 and 105 High Street. The Rose and Crown is a former 18th century red and gault brick house with stucco rendered frontage and tumbled parapet gables, which is an architectural detail repeated elsewhere in the Conservation Area. Nos. 101 (white washed brick), 103 (gault brick with mid 19th century shop frontage) and 105, The Chestnuts, (gault brick with distinctive ground floor semi-circular headed arches to four recessed bays) all contribute to the character of the Somersham Conservation Area providing a strong focal point around The Cross. The George Public House is also an imposing building in this spot with red brick and white rendered exterior and plain tile roof, part of which is turreted and provides considerable visual interest.

Moving away from The Cross, this section of the village is characterised by the contrast between large properties, some of which are set back from the road, with smaller, gault brick, semi-detached and terraced housing. On the north side of the High Street, no. 69, Wisteria House, is an early 19th century gault brick building under a slate roof construction. A mature copper coloured plum tree and distinctive Monkey Puzzle tree are situated in the front garden of this building, which are important landscape features in Somersham's Conservation Area, where there is little soft landscaping in the High Street. The next two buildings are large detached properties which add to the character of the street. No. 67 is 19th century and of a distinctive ochre coloured appearance, whilst no. 65, The Grange, is a two storey, mid 18th century, red brick house with tumbled parapet gable ends and a tall wall to the west which is important to the street scene **K**.




















Located to the rear of No. 65 High Street, and once forming curtilage buildings to The Grange, is a row of outbuildings and an early 18th century threshing barn of red brick and tumbled parapet gables. These buildings are an indication of the previous agricultural nature of the site and sit well within the setting of the Conservation

Area having been sympathetically converted to residential use **L**. The group provides considerable visual and architectural interest within the gap between nos. 65 and 67 High Street.

No. 44 High Street sits in substantial grounds and its landscaped frontage contributes significantly to the street scene, **M**. It has many outbuildings including stables to the side of the site and the house sits well back into the plot. The trees in the frontage form a good natural barrier between the property and the adjacent Centurian Hall and add a splash of green to part of the village that has little soft landscaping. Further east and situated opposite Feoffes Road are three listed, gault brick terraced properties, Nos. 34, 36 and 38 High Street which once again accentuate the linear form of developments in the High Street **N**.

Towards the far eastern end of the High Street the character of the Conservation Area changes. The last listed building is 22 High Street which originally dates from the late 17th century and has exposed timber framing with a 19th century gault brick extension to the side. It was renovated in the 1980s. Beyond this, the building line is less regular, with properties on the north side of the High Street being on raised plots. There are a number of disused and almost derelict buildings. Of particular interest is the warehouse at the former gas works which is currently boarded up and fenced off. Until the approved permission for this site is implemented, it will be an unattractive plot within the Conservation Area. It is important that this site is included within the Conservation Area so that a good scheme will be implemented that maintains the character of Somersham.

When considering Somersham's character, it is important not to overlook the 'pockets' of soft landscape that punctuate the semi-urban form. In particular there is limited foliage along the High Street, therefore where it exists, it positively contributes to the street scene and should be protected and retained. The bowling green set back from the southern side of the High Street, is just such an area. However, there are more areas of private space that contribute to the open spaces within the village and are set back behind the street frontages.

Quick key to the symbols used on the analysis plans			
	Urban space		Glimpse
	Green space		Visual leak along building line
	Corner building/s		Plantation
	Significant view		Significant tree/s
	View stopped		Scheduled ancient monument
	Landmark building		Listed building
	Intrusion into the street scene		Narrow urban space 'pinch point'
	Back of pavement building line		Street requires enhancements
	Building line set back		Area requires enhancements
	Spatial orientation		



I - Tithes Barn, High Street.



H - View along High Street.



N - 34-38 High Street



J - Footpath from High Street to Church



L - Outbuildings to The Grange 65 High Street



K - The Cross, High Street



M - 44 High Street

Somersham Character Analysis

Shepherd's Terrace, Somersham House, Rectory Lane and Chapel Field Lane

Returning to the western end of the village, there are other areas that are important to the character of Somersham. Shepherd's Terrace, **O**, is at right angles to the High Street and is a pleasant row of houses tucked away from the main thoroughfare when entering Somersham from the west. It forms an attractive backdrop to some of the properties on the south side of Rectory Lane, with the pantiled outbuildings at the end of the gardens.

Somersham House and Bramston, Rectory Lane, were formerly one building, The Rectory, **P**. It is a large early 19th century house in established grounds, constructed from gault brick under a slate roof with a well landscaped frontage which screens the house from the street. This vegetation is important in this part of the Conservation Area as it is a link between the built up area of the rest of Rectory Lane and the countryside beyond.

There are two rows of gault brick, late Victorian terraced housing on the north side and either end of Rectory Lane. This accentuates the linear aspect of this particular part of the Conservation Area. Nos. 19 and 21 are located between the two blocks and are buildings of local interest. St Saviours Cottages **Q**, located at the eastern end of Rectory Lane, is considered the more significant of the two blocks.

In contrast, the south side of Rectory Lane is marked by modern development set back from the road with landscaped frontages, causing a fragmentation of style and character. No.4 Rectory Lane is a single storey, rendered building with a gable end on the road frontage and located forward of properties on either side. The garden to this property provides a break in the development on the south side allowing open views towards the backs of properties fronting the High Street and Shepherd's Terrace, **R**. Rectory Lane is an area where the transition between rural and urban has taken place, and it has become a distinctive sub-area to the main Conservation Area. It is important to the village that this area maintains its character.

Chapel Field Lane leads from Rectory Lane out towards the small holdings and allotments that are on the outskirts of the village. Dating back to the beginning of the 20th century, these are important social and economic indicators after the enclosure of the open fields and are part of the planned development of the village. The trees and hedgerows in this area give a strongly defined edge between the looser urban feel and the countryside beyond **S**. There are good views from here looking back across the village to the dominating spire of St John the Baptist.



Chapel Field Lane is on the very edge of the village and leads out to the allotments and countryside beyond.



19 Rectory Lane shows possible evidence that it has been refronted and that the original mansard roof has been raised. Although the property is not listed, it is classified as a Building of Local Interest.

Quick key to the symbols used on the analysis plans			
	Urban space		Glimpse
	Green space		Visual leak along building line
	Landmark building		Listed building
	Corner building/s		Narrow urban space 'pinch point'
	Plantation		Street requires enhancements
	Significant view		Significant tree/s
	View stopped		Scheduled ancient monument
	Intrusion into the street scene		Area requires enhancements
	Back of pavement building line		Spatial orientation
	Building line set back		



P - Somersham House



S - View from Chapel Field



Q - Shepherds Terrace



O - 1-15 Rectory Lane

Somersham Character Analysis

Parkhall Road




















This road forms the northern arm of the crossroads at the centre of the village, and goes out into the open fen land. It is structurally important as it links the heart of the village with the agricultural fen land beyond. The road has a mixture of buildings from different eras along it, **T**, with a number of trees to the front of the newer developments that help to soften the edges.

There are two listed buildings in Parkhall Road. Nos 21 and 23 are early 18th century red brick houses with a plain tiled and cement tiled roofs **U**. Formerly The Manor Hall, it was rebuilt circa 1720 and divided into two properties sometime after that. The other is the Wesleyan Chapel, **V**, which is on the west side of the road. This is constructed from gault brick with a slate roof. Other buildings of note include the Victorian semis, **T1**, and nos. 7 to 15, **W**, which have landscaped frontages and create a terraced effect.

Despite these buildings and the distant view of the Parish Church, the character of Parkhall Road has a distinctive modern feel due to the proliferation of new development on both sides of the road in recent years. However as the landscaping of these developments has matured, the character of the Conservation Area has been improved in this locality and its extension along Parkhall Road would ensure that any future development takes this into consideration.



21 - 23 Parkhall Road is a distinctive red brick building, originally three storeys, now two. Built as Manor Hall, it was one property and was rebuilt circa 1720.

Quick key to the symbols used on the analysis plans			
	Urban space		Glimpse
	Green space		Visual leak along building line
	Corner building/s		Plantation
	Significant view		Significant tree/s
	View stopped		Scheduled ancient monument
	Landmark building		Listed building
	Intrusion into the street scene		Narrow urban space 'pinch point'
	Back of pavement building line		Street requires enhancements
	Building line set back		Area requires enhancements
	Spatial orientation		



T1 - 29 Parkhall Road



T2 - Meridian Close



U - 21-23 Parkhall Road.



V - Wesleyan Chapel



W - 15 Parkhall Road

County Wildlife Site - Dismantled Railway

Where the village ended in the early 1900s, Somersham had its own railway station. The line of the Great Northern and Great Eastern Joint Railway formed a 'barrier' to the eastern edge of the village where the built form stopped. The railway was closed as a result of the Beeching's Cuts. The Beeching Report of the early 1960s, *The Reshaping of British Railways*, saw the loss of over 4,000 miles of railway line and 3,000 stations in a decade.

The site of the dismantled railway line is now a County Wildlife Site **X**. This is a pleasurable area for leisure activities including walking, and fishing in the lake **Y**. The site is also used for grazing of horses and there are ponds with views across to the village **Z**. It is a scenic, wooded area, **AA**, between the built up urban land behind the High Street and the open countryside beyond. The edge of the Conservation Area leads the eye to the open farmland across the fen **BB**. The different character of the wildlife site enhances that of the Conservation Area as a whole by being a welcome contrast to the built up section of the village and is an indicator of its agricultural past.



The County Wildlife Site forms a soft edge to the boundary to the Conservation Area. It is well used as a leisure area and contributes greatly to the character of the area.

Quick key to the symbols used on the analysis plans			
	Urban space		Glimpse
	Green space		Landmark building
	Corner building/s		Listed building
	Significant view		Narrow urban space 'pinch point'
	View stopped		Street requires enhancements
	Visual leak along building line		Scheduled ancient monument
	Plantation		Intrusion into the street scene
	Significant tree/s		Back of pavement building line
			Building line set back
			Spatial orientation



X - View of Disused Railway



AA -View of Disused Railway



Y -View of Lake



BB -View from Disused Railway



Z -View of Ponds

Somersham Building Type Analysis

The following building type analysis is divided between two of the three localities identified in table 1 and map 4. Neighbourhood area 3 has no buildings. Please refer to Annex A for a further explanation and description of the building types mentioned here.

Site of the Former Bishop's Palace, Church Street and Pinfold Lane

Somersham Park, on the site of the Former Bishop's Palace, has been considerably renovated to its late 18th early/19th century, grand house style [T4]; towards The Cross the properties are mainly Victorian terraces or small villas [T3; T4]; there are some exceptions such as the former school and attached school house [T6]. The church is 13th century [T10a]. Pinfold Lane is late 20th century housing.

High Street

Building types vary greatly in the High Street and include housing types [T1a; T1b, T2; T3; T4; T6]. There are also industrial buildings and outbuildings [T9a], and the non-conformist Chapel [T10b].

Shepherd's Terrace, Somersham House, Rectory Lane and Chapel Field Lane

The building types in this area are mainly Victorian [T3] and modern 20th century housing. Somersham House is on its own [T6].

Parkhall Road

There are a number of building types in Parkhall Road [T2; T4] and modern 20th century detached buildings. There is also a converted Chapel [T10b].



Map showing Listed buildings by category

Based on the Ordnance Survey mapping.(c) Crown Copyright.

Somersham Building Details and Materials

The main building material in Somersham is brick. The majority is gault brick, but there are some red brick buildings too. The gault brick is generally under a slate roof, and the red brick has a plain clay tile roof. Of the surviving contemporary timber windows, they are mainly vertically hung sashes.





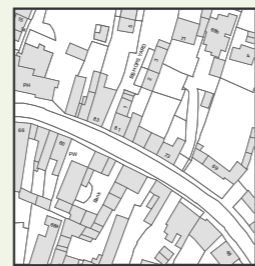



There are some good examples of traditional shop fronts in the village, along the High Street as well as other details such as tumble gables, catslide dormers and old red brick walls.

An important detail in the Victorian terraces are the coach arches or waggon ways that are still in existence. These are an indication of the former economic history of the village.



Some of the building details and materials found in the main historic streets of Somersham.



Grain	Plot	Visual quality	Summary
Neighbourhood streets: Site of the Former Bishop's Palace, Church Street, Pinfold Lane			
 <p>The area around the former Bishop's Palace is very open. Church Street, gets a lot closer grained towards The Cross where it meets the High Street.</p>	 <p>Along Church Street the plots are irregular and typically rectangular in shape. The majority of the buildings are straight onto the pavement edge. Pinfold Lane properties are in larger, more open, plots.</p>	 <p>The parish church is a strong visual attraction along Church Street. From The Cross looking down, the street opens out to the countryside beyond the Former Bishop's Palace.</p>	<p>This is part of the original medieval settlement of the village and is important to its character. The setting of the Former Bishop's Palace is within open spaces and has a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and historic buildings. The Victorian charm of Church Street and the raised site of the parish church which is a strong visual aspect of the area, need to be maintained. Pinfold Lane should remain as properties in large plots with good views of the church and the countryside to the south.</p>
Neighbourhood streets: High Street, Parkhall Road, Chapel Field, Somersham House, Rectory Lane, Shepherd's Terrace			
 <p>The High Street has a very tight grain with the majority of the properties being edge of pavement. Parkhall Road gets a little more open with more front gardens and some open spaces near the modern developments. Shepherd's Terrace is one row of buildings and Rectory Lane has a combination due to the modern developments on one side of the street, and the Victorian terracing on the other</p>	 <p>The plots go back from the pavement and vary in size from long and thin for the Victorian terracing to large open spaces or gardens to the individual Town Houses.</p>	 <p>The visual quality of these streets varies. The west end of the High Street has a number of quality properties. The east end, towards the edge of the village, it becomes more varied with a number of outbuildings and vacant plots in need of some attention. The proliferation of UPVC replacement windows and the loss of traditional shopfronts is affecting the visual quality of the High Street.</p>	<p>The high density that exists in parts of High Street are typical of the era in which the majority of the buildings were erected. There are a number of unlisted properties that are changing their windows to UPVC rather than retaining the timber ones. There are also a number of traditional shopfronts that are being lost. This trend is disappointing and detracts from the character of the Conservation Area. Where possible these changes should be resisted.</p>
Neighbourhood streets: County Wildlife Site - Dismantled Railway			
 <p>The County Wildlife Site is an open, wooded space with areas of water.</p>	<p>There are no individual property plots on this area.</p>	 <p>This area has a good visual quality with views over the lake and out into the open countryside.</p>	<p>This is a good resource for the village which should be maintained as a wild area that contrasts with the built up nature of the village.</p>

3.0 Opportunities for Future Enhancement

- 3.1 National guidance on the constitution of Conservation Areas emphasises the important role that they can play in the enhancement of our historic built environment and landscape. Somersham's urban environment would benefit where future development is sensitive to the particular requirements of the historic components within the village.
- 3.2 Small-scale enhancement within the different localities and neighbourhoods involving elements such as street improvements are discussed above. However, it is worth re-stating the need for improvement to paving, street furniture and signage along most of the principal highways; greater attention to local materials and form as well as the decluttering of signage is needed. Many shop fronts have lost much of their local character over the years and this trend could be reversed with imagination and effort. Similarly, the issue of parking ought to be addressed, balancing the needs of traders and their customers with environmental improvements.

Other documents are produced to help to maintain Somersham's Character within the Conservation Area:

Urban Design Frameworks: These are major sites in sensitive areas, usually involving complex development issues and often including land in multiple occupancy. These sites require development strategies if they are to reach their full potential. Failure in these areas would have a seriously negative impact on Somersham's historic environment.

Development Briefs: These look at sites that may become the subject of future applications for residential development. It is anticipated that plans for these sites would conform to the design code set out in this document.

Negative or Neutral Areas: Where negative or neutral areas are identified the judgement is made purely in terms of the character of the Conservation Area. Whilst in some cases such sites may be suffering from neglect as well, in many cases the buildings associated with these sites will be structurally sound or recently built.

Enhancement Areas: Some areas that retain a significant degree of their historic fabric and form have, none the less, suffered from an unnecessary amount of poor development decisions. These areas require a concerted effort if they are to be brought back to their full potential. In these cases owners and residents should be consulted with a view to formulating policies to effect positive change.

Heritage and Tourism Areas: These areas have been identified as ones of particular significance to visitors and those concerned with local heritage issues. Future treatment of these sites will need especial sensitivity.



Annex A: Building Types

T1a Medieval Timber Framed House

Medieval timber framed houses, frequently dating from the mid to late 16th Century. The type is often rendered, or faced in brickwork, and re-fenestrated in later periods, disguising its medieval origins.

Key Characteristics

- Oak framing (often reused) infilled with wattle and daub and covered with lime plaster/render
- Two storeys, some with later dormer windows added to create attic rooms
- Picturesque roofs; with steep pitches, numerous gables and large, sometimes ornate, red brick chimneystacks. Roof coverings depend on location, but the predominant types include plain gault-clay tiles and thatch
- Overhanging eaves
- Frequently built with L and H plan forms, with additive ranges of outbuildings
- Jettying at ground and first floors, with bay-windows to some grander examples
- Originally, windows (mullioned, with leaded lights) were set within the framing, but these were generally replaced by timber sliding sashes or casements in later periods
- Medium to low density housing, depending on plot size
- Varied form and scale, but usually detached, built within settlement boundaries commonly associated with burgage plots, and frequently set at back of pavement creating a well defined street pattern

T1b Vernacular Cottages

Natural materials made from local geological deposits (for example, gault clays and limestone) together with reeds and straw from the nearby Fens and local farms, has generated the palette of traditional building materials for vernacular buildings. This, together with building techniques developed by the local population over many centuries, has created simple and charming vernacular cottages typically dating from the late 16th to 18th centuries.

Key Characteristics

- Long, low double-fronted single, 1.5 or 2 storey cottages
- Simple flat-fronted building form, generally eaves to the road
- Buff or rosy-buff brick or stone built, depending on location. Rendered and painted timber framing is common throughout the District
- Shallow plan depth with a simple steeply pitched roof and outbuildings
- Clay plain or pantiles, thatch or Collyweston-slate roof coverings, depending on location

- Eaves and gables are generally clipped close to the building, except for the deep overhangs found on thatched roofs
- Originally built with small, horizontally proportioned window openings with casement or horizontally sliding sash windows. Flat or segmental brick lintels
- Dormer windows are a common feature, with pitched, cat slide or eyebrow roofs, depending on material and location
- Panelled or ledged and braced doors, with some later simple timber porches or canopies
- Large brick chimneystacks were positioned first centrally and later at the gable ends
- Within settlements, cottages are generally terraced and set at the back of the pavement, creating well-defined streets and space

Typical Local Variations

Long low houses built of rosy buff and dark buff brickwork. Roofs are typically thatch or Cambridgeshire mix plain tiles, with pantiles frequently found on outbuildings

T2 18th - Early 20th Century Town House

The Town House building type is found throughout the district; its adaptability to a wide range of scales, materials and uses creates the variety, and strong architectural cohesion of the historic centres of the towns and larger villages. This classically inspired style creates well-defined and elegant streets and public spaces.

During the 18th century it became fashionable to 'modernise' earlier vernacular houses, and it is common to find medieval buildings re-elevated behind Town House facades.

Key Characteristics

- Predominately terraced form, 2 to 3.5 storeys, generally double stacked with central gutter
- Flat fronted and symmetrical, 2-4 bays wide, vertically proportioned facades
- Vertically proportioned window openings, with flat brick or stone lintels, and timber vertical-sliding sash windows
- Roofscape minimised by the use of parapets, shallow and double pitched roofs with the eaves to road. Cambridgeshire peg tiles and slate are the most common roof coverings
- Stone detailing, often painted, including cills, string courses, architraves etc.
- Drive-through archways, gaining access to the rear are a common feature, especially in former coaching towns
- 6 and 4 panelled doors, with door-surrounds and glazed fanlights or door canopies
- The terraced form, often built at back of pavement creates a well-defined street frontage of urban character

- High-medium density, depending on the numbers of storeys, bays, and plot width. Generally built with additive ranges of outbuildings
- Originally built as dwellings, some with shops on the ground floor. The majority are now in commercial and office use

Local Variations

The market towns of Huntingdonshire contain Town Houses in their historic centres. Built of warm soft red, dark buff and pale buff brick depending on age. Roofs are typically gault-clay plain tiles, although slate is found on later properties.

T3 18th - Early 20th Century Terraced House

The agricultural and industrial revolutions precipitated major growth of towns in the 18th and 19th centuries. Streets of small terraced houses were built on the edges of the historic towns throughout the district. The type is ubiquitous throughout the country. Although influenced by local materials the advent of the railways improved transportation and encouraged the use of non-local materials, especially mass-produced bricks and Welsh slate for roofs. The majority of terraced houses in the district are built at the back of pavement, however there are examples of a larger version of this type with small front gardens, which creates a wider, greener and more relaxed streetscape

Key Characteristics

- Small, generally flat fronted houses; bay windows are a feature on larger examples
- Brick built, occasionally with contrasting brick detailing, such as string courses and door and window surrounds
- Vertically proportioned window openings, with flat and segmental brick arches, and stone cills
- Vertical sliding sash windows and timber panelled doors, typically with glazed fanlights over
- Eaves and gables are generally undecorated and generally clipped close to the building
- Chimneystacks are usually positioned on the party wall
- Simple pitched roofs with slate roof covering
- High density terraced form, laid out in long straight streets, creating a distinctive urban character
- Parking on street

T4 18th - Early 20th Century Villas and Semis

This building type is found in the larger villages and towns of the district, where it forms the wealthier 18th - early 20th Century fringes to the historic centres. The classic simple architecture of the Georgian period became increasingly eclectic and decorative during the Victorian and Edwardian eras. Although influenced by local building materials, improved

transportation brought non-local materials, especially mass-produced bricks and Welsh slate.

The villa form became a popular antithesis to the narrow streets of small working-class erected housing during the Victorian and Edwardian periods. The semi-detached form, creating the illusion of detached villas, is also found in some locations.

Key Characteristics

- Medium to large brick-built, detached or semi-detached houses
- Decorative, contrasting brickwork string courses, eaves courses, lintels and window reveals
- Canted and square bay windows are a feature, often with stone mullions, now generally painted white
- Decorative stone detailing, including mullions, copings, padstones and plaques
- Vertical window openings with stone cills, flat and segmental brick lintels, and sliding sash windows
- Fairly low-pitched slate covered roofs, some with Italianate hipped roofs. Prominent brick stacks and chimneys
- Large houses are set in spacious grounds. Urban examples have small front gardens that create a greener, more suburban street character

T5 19th Century Picturesque

During the Victorian era it became fashionable for wealthy and philanthropic landowners to build housing and other facilities for their tenants, and the local community. The predominant style was based on a Gothicised version of the idealised 'English' cottage, often creating picturesque groups or even whole villages. Generally, materials were of local origin, excepting more decorative elements such as cast iron windows and ornate rainwater goods.

The type is found in small numbers throughout the district.

Key Characteristics

- Generally symmetrical but with intricate plan forms, layouts and elevations
- Architectural detailing used for decorative effect, such as buttresses, dentil courses, mouldings, bargeboards and string courses
- Picturesque rooflines, with tall decorated chimney stacks, numerous gables, finials and decorated ridge tiles
- Steep roof pitches, with slate or gault clay plain-tile roof coverings. Dormer windows are a feature on cottages
- Strongly mullioned windows often with decorative lattice-work glazing patterns

- Generally set back from the road with small front gardens and low walls to the front boundaries. Alms-houses often with courtyards defined by railings
- Originally built for a range of uses, including schools, estate offices, village halls, almshouses and estate workers cottages. The majority are now in residential use
- Medium to low density depending on use and plot size

T6 18th - Early 20th Century Grand House

The agricultural and industrial revolutions brought new wealth to the district, and many of the wealthy built themselves grand houses, based on the classically inspired stately homes of the aristocracy. Later Victorian examples are influenced by non-classical traditions, and are often less symmetrical displaying stylistic motifs such as gothic arches, round towers, tile hanging and decorative bargeboards. Designed to be seen, and to impress, they are often found on settlement edges throughout the district.

Key Characteristics

- Large, detached houses with symmetrical, wide-fronted facades, usually on expansive plots
- Georgian examples are wide-fronted, with tall floor to ceiling heights, creating an imposing scale
- Vertically proportioned window openings vertically aligned, frequently graduating in height up the façade, with flat-arch stone or 'red-rubber' brick lintels
- Timber vertical-sliding sash windows. Georgian examples generally follow 9, and 16 pane patterns. Victorian sliding sash windows incorporate larger pane sizes
- Roofscape views are minimised through the use of parapets and shallow double-pitched roofs, with the eaves to road. Mansard roofs are found on some examples
- Decorative dentil eaves courses or painted timber cornice eaves detail
- Brick or stone detailing, often painted, including cills, string courses, keystones and quoins
- 6 and 4 panelled doors, with decorative-glazed fanlights or door canopies
- The grand detached forms, usually set back from the road behind railings or walls, create a restful, stately and less urban character
- Frequently set in gardens, with dark evergreen planting, with a backdrop of mature trees

Local Variations

The form, detailing and proportions remain fairly constant throughout the district, but materials vary with location.

T7a Arts & Craft Influenced Housing

The Arts and Craft Movement in the late 19th century, and the Garden Cities of the early 20th century exerted considerable influence on housing until the 1950s. This applied especially to social housing throughout the district, where estates of this housing type are found on the peripheries of the larger towns. 'The Garden City' cottage aesthetic, and the vision of a green and leafy arcadia became increasingly compromised through increased densities and mass production, but the architectural style and geometrical layouts still retain vestiges of the original influences.

The type is found throughout the country, and does not generally show regional variations.

Key Characteristics

- Geometric, regular layouts with crescents, cul de sacs, and orthogonal junctions
- Semi detached and short terraces of simple flat fronted properties
- Clipped privet hedge front boundaries, often with timber gates, and small front gardens
- Shallow pitched, double-hipped roofs, with slate or plain tiled roof coverings. Simple chimneys on ridge line
- Originally, multi-paned painted timber casement windows, with soldier-course brick lintels
- Timber front doors with small canopies
- Built of red mass-produced brickwork, frequently roughcast-rendered, and painted cream or pastel colours
- Simple string courses of soldier brickwork or render
- Semi detached form, hedges and grass verges to some streets, create a suburban character
- Parking generally on street

T7b 1920s and Inter-war Suburbia

The poor living conditions of the urban poor in the 19th century, and growing wealth and mobility resulted in the massive growth of suburbia in the 1920 and 30s. A few properties in the district retain influences of the 'Art Deco' of the 1920s. The Arts and Crafts movement also heavily influenced the architectural style of the period, using motifs such as timber framing, tile hanging, leaded lights and stained glass to invoke the idyll of the 'English Cottage'. This building type is found in small numbers throughout the district.

Key characteristics

- Simple rectangular semi-detached plan form
- Fairly rectilinear street pattern
- Shallow pitched, double-hipped roofs, with slate or plain tiled roof coverings. Chimneys

generally on the ridgeline

- Originally painted metal, and later timber casement windows, some with latticed-lights or stained glass panels
- Mass-produced red brickwork and painted roughcast render
- Decorative gables with timber-framing effect, frequently painted black and white
- Double height bay windows, with rendered or tile-hung panel, are a defining characteristic of the type
- Recessed porches with tiled floors, and glazed front doors, often with stained glass panels
- Semi detached form, hedges and grass verges to some streets, create the archetypal 'suburban' character
- Medium-low density
- Parking off street, generally between properties

T8 Agricultural Buildings

This building type is found dispersed throughout the rural areas of the district, but also within some of the older villages, and coalesced into the suburban fringes of the larger settlements. The majority date from the time of the 17th-19th Century Enclosure Acts, with some remaining examples from the medieval period.

Late 20th century intensification of farming practices have necessitated large-scaled, industrial type barns, stores and silos which have come to dominate many traditional farmsteads, and often their landscape setting.

Key Characteristics

- Large farmhouses (see vernacular cottages and T6), generally set close to the road, with long, low additive ranges of farm buildings set to the side and rear
- Traditional buildings are small-scale, built of stone, buff and red brick or timber-framed clad with timber weatherboarding, depending on location
- Roofs are generally simple pitched construction, covered with thatch, clay plain or pantiles, and picturesque in appearance
- Modern buildings are large-scale steel-framed single span structures, usually clad in profiled steel sheet, coloured grey

Local Variations

Timber weather boarded barns and outbuildings, many of which now have corrugated iron roofs. Later examples use red brick with slate roofs.

T9a 19th & Early 20th Century Industrial Buildings

Huntingdonshire has a rich heritage of these industrial buildings. There was a wide range of buildings that included mills, malt houses, breweries, small workshops and others. Many buildings were associated with the railways, including warehousing and goods sheds (now mostly demolished).

Key Characteristics

- Large scale, visually prominent, discreet and freestanding structures with ancillary buildings
- Sometimes positioned in the floodplain. Often surrounded by willows
- 3-6 storeys tall. Generally built of buff brick, with slate covered or plain tiled roofs
- Projecting timber weather boarded loading-bays, and pulley houses
- Simple, robust symmetrical elevations with segmental-arched window openings, and loading bays positioned vertically one above another
- Rudimentary neo-classical detailing, such as pilasters and Italianate porticos are a feature on later examples. 'Gothic' detailed examples are also found
- Originally built as mills and warehouses, the majority are now converted for residential use

T10a Parish Churches

Ecclesiastical buildings survive from every century and architectural style -unique monuments to the Districts' history and culture. Buildings range from Norman and Medieval parish churches to the neo-gothic of the Victorian era and the marvellously idiosyncratic Non-Conformist chapels of the 18th-19th centuries. For clarity, key characteristics are listed under two subtypes as below:

Key Characteristics

- Large scale buildings for Christian worship and former monastic complexes, including surviving gate-houses and hospitium, typically built and altered over long periods of time
- Set in a churchyard, often with mature trees, especially yews. Generally, parish churches are located centrally in the town or village, while monastic houses were usually situated on the periphery
- Although many are older, the majority appear externally to be Gothic in style, with large, pointed arched and traceried windows, and stained glass. Moulded string courses and hood mouldings, buttresses, castellated parapets, other structural and decorative architectural devices evolved and were incorporated over time
- Simple, pitched roofs, generally with plain gault-clay roof coverings
- Building materials range from carstone and cobbles to coursed limestone-rubble, and fine ashlar limestone in the north

- Fine, tall spires are a landmark feature of the District. Lancet windows (small pointed window openings) are characteristic of spires in the Northern Wolds. Towers became increasingly common in the 15th-16th centuries and were often added to earlier buildings in the 15th-16th centuries
- Lych gates are characteristic of churches in the area and are defining features of many churchyards. Construction varies from oak with clay tiles to stone structures

T10b Non-Conformist Chapels

Key Characteristics

- Simple, generally unadorned facades, consciously avoiding the gothic architectural references of the established church
- Diverse stylistic influences, typically neo-classical
- Simple rectangular plan form, frequently gabled to the road
- Round headed windows, typically cast-iron frames, with clear or pastel-coloured glass
- Generally built of buff brick, with slate roof covering
- Cast iron railings and small paved forecourts are typical
- Catholic churches and chapels (legally also “non-conformist”) are frequently neo-gothic and ornate

T11a Victorian and Edwardian Civic Buildings

This diverse type forms the focal point for community, civic and working life. It includes places of assembly, police and fire stations, shopping complexes, schools, libraries, administrative centres and office blocks.

Key Characteristics

- Generally, architect designed buildings reflecting status and function
- Medium to large-scale buildings usually discreet in their own plots. Bank buildings often sited at landmark positions within the streetscape to reinforce status
- Variety of architectural styles, including some good examples of Arts and Crafts, and Neo-classical designs
- Diverse good quality materials, including buff and red brick with ashlar masonry and painted render. Dressed stone string courses; ornamental pilasters, cornices and copings are common embellishments
- Pitched, slate covered roofs are typical
- Frequently single storey but of very grand proportions
- Window styles vary with function; school buildings frequently have large vertically proportioned openings, positioned high in the wall

T11b Late 20th Century Civic Buildings

The late twentieth century has witnessed substantial growth in population, changes in building technology and working practices. Large school complexes, for example, have generated an architectural aesthetic for civic buildings of our era; some examples use contemporary styles and materials, while others reflect aspects of the regional vernacular.

Key Characteristics

- Large to medium scale buildings, generally with large areas of associated car parking or hard standing
- Varying number of storeys depending on function
- Amenity shrub planting, small ornamental trees and mown grass typify landscaped areas
- Generally avoid the use of decorative architectural devices, although good design generates pleasing visual effects through the manipulation of form, function and materials
- Mass produced buff and red brick are the most common facing materials, with large areas of glazing also a feature
- Other twentieth century materials found in civic buildings include metal trims and copings, cedar boarding, glulam beams, coloured powder-coated metal window frames and large areas of toughened glass
- Flat roofs were a feature of 1960-70s civic buildings, and low-pitched roofs on later examples. Brown or slate grey concrete roof tiles are typical roof coverings
- Generally, rather shallow detailing with minimum set backs at door and window reveals, creating rather flat, poorly modulated facades



Annex B: Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings

Location	Address	Grade	Type	Wall Material	Roof Material
Chatteris Road	Milestone adjoining No 19	II	Milestone	Limestone	None
Chatteris Road	Milestone, approximately 75 yds north of Mayfield	II	Milestone	Limestone	None
Church Street	Park Farmhouse	II	Farmhouse, moat, palace, chapel	Gault brick	Slate
Church Street	Boundary wall of former enclosed garden, now incorporating Park Farm Cottage and farmyard to Park Farm	II	Wall	Local red brick	None
Church Street	Stables in north-west corner of Park Farmyard	II	Stable	Local red brick	Pantile
Church Street	Park Farm Cottages	II	Cottage	Gault brick, local brick	Slate
Church Street	Nos 2 and 4	II	House, shop	Gault brick, red brick	Slate
Church Street	No 6	II	House	Gault brick	Slate
Church Street	No 18	II	House	Gault brick	Modern tile
Church Street	Nos 1 and 3	II	House, shop	Gault brick	Slate
Church Street	No 5	II	House, school	Red brick	Plain tile
Church Street	Church of St John the Baptist	I	Church	Limestone rubble, pebble, Barnack stone	Plain tile, lead
Church Street	Nos 21 and 23	II	House	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	Nos 20 and 22	II	Cottage	Timber frame, render, gault brick	Thatch
High Street	No 34	II	House	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	No 36	II	House	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	No 38	II	House	Gault brick	Plain tile
High Street	No 44	II	House	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	No 50	II	House, shop	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	No 58	II	House	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	Baptist Church	II	Chapel, gate, railings gate pier	Gault brick, wrought iron	Plain tile
High Street	Nos 60, 62 and 64	II	House	Gault brick	Plain tile, slate
High Street	No 72 (Braunston House)	II	House	Local gault brick	Modern tile
High Street	No 78 (Tollington House)	II	House	Gault brick, Warboys white brick	Slate
High Street	Tithe Barn adjacent to and to the west of no. 96	II	Barn	Timber frame, weatherboard	Corrugated iron
High Street	Dovecote, 100 yds to the rear of No 96	II	Dovecote	Local red brick, gault brick	Plain tile
High Street	No 100	II	House	Gault brick	Plain tile
High Street	No 57	II	House, shop	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	Nos 59 and 61	II	Cottage, shop	Gault brick	Asbestos tile
High Street	No 65 (The Grange)	II	House	Local red brick, gault brick	Plain tile

Location	Address	Grade	Type	Wall Material	Roof Material
High Street	Barn to rear of No 65 (The Grange)	II	Barn	Local red brick	Modern tile
High Street	No 69 (Wisteria House)	II	House	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	No 93	II	House, shop	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	No 95	II	House	Gault brick	Plain tile
High Street	Nos 97A and 97B	II	House, shop	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	No 99 (Rose and Crown Public House)	II	House	Local red brick, gault brick, render	Modern tile
High Street	No 101	II	House, shop	Gault brick	Modern tile
High Street	No 103	II	House	Gault brick	Modern tile, plain tile
High Street	No 105 (The Chestnuts) and boundary wall attached to west running north, and short section returning to east	II	House, wall, gate	Gault brick, limestone, red brick, Warboys white brick, wrought iron	Slate
High Street	No 111	II	House	Local gault brick, render	Slate
High Street	Stable and coach-house to No 117 (Whitehall)	II	Stable, coach-house	Local gault brick, red brick	Corrugated iron
High Street	No 125	II	House	Gault brick	Corrugated asbestos
Parkhall Road	Wesleyan Chapel	II	Chapel, gate	Gault brick, wrought iron	Slate
Parkhall Road	Nos 21 and 23	II	House	Local red brick	Plain tile, modern cement tile
Rectory Lane	The Rectory	II	Rectory, stable, coach-house, wall	Gault brick	Slate
St Ives Road	Milestone adjacent to The Hollow	II	Milestone	Limestone	None
St Ives Road	Milestone, 20 yds north-east of Cuckoo Bridge Cottage	II	Milestone	Limestone	None
The Cross	K6 Telephone kiosk	II	Telephone kiosk	Cast iron	None
Church Street	Wall, north boundary of Churchyard	BLI	Wall	Local red brick, Warboys white brick	None
Church Street	Walls, E and W of N approach to the Church, and gates	BLI	Wall, gate	Red brick, gault brick, wrought iron	None
High Street	Curtilage wall to No 117	BLI	Wall	Local red brick	None
High Street	No 10	BLI	Cottage	Local brick, render	Asbestos tile
High Street	No 102	BLI	House	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	No 135	BLI	House	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	No 21	BLI	Cottage	Local red brick, gault brick, render	Pantile
High Street	No 22	BLI	House	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	No 24	BLI	House	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	No 4	BLI	House	Local brick, gault brick, timber frame, render	Slate, corrugated iron
High Street	No 41	BLI	House	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	No 48	BLI	House	Gault brick	Slate

Location	Address	Grade	Type	Wall Material	Roof Material
High Street	No 5	BLI	House	Gault brick	Modern tile
High Street	No 55	BLI	House	Gault brick	Plain tile
High Street	No 56	BLI	House, stable, shop	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	No 6	BLI	House	Gault brick, red brick	Slate
High Street	No 67	BLI	House	Gault brick, render	Plain tile
High Street	No 81	BLI	House	Gault brick, render	Slate
High Street	Nos 108 and 110	BLI	House	Gault brick	Slate
High Street	Nos 73 and 75	BLI	Cottage, shop	Gault brick	Corrugated iron
High Street	Stables to No 44	BLI	Stable	Gault brick	Pantile
High Street	Workshop to rear of No 41	BLI	Workshop	Gault brick	Pantile
Pinfold Lane	No 4	BLI	House	Gault brick	Asbestos slate
Rectory Lane	Nos 19 and 21	BLI	Cottage	Local red brick, gault brick	Pantile
	Medieval magnate's moated residence (the Bishop of Ely's Palace) with fishponds and a later moated site, south of Somersham	SAM			

NB: BLI stands for Buildings of Local Interest and therefore they are not afforded statutory protection



Annex C: Key Development Plan Policies and Reference Material

Key Development Plan Policies and Government Guidance on Conservation Areas

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (adopted 2003). In particular, Ch. 7: Resources, Environment & Heritage

Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1997). In particular Ch. 7: Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest, and Environment.

Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration (2002)

Regional Planning Guidance 14 (East of England Regional Assembly)

Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2007) Supplementary Planning Guidance

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2007) Supplementary Planning Guide

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Planning Policy Guidance 15, Departments of the Environment and National Heritage, September 1994.

Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, English Heritage, February 2006.

Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, English Heritage, February 2006.

Reference Material

Historic environment Record for Somersham (unpublished draft), Cambridgeshire County Council

Kirby, T. & Oosthuizen, S., (2000) Editors, An Atlas of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire History, Cambridge.

Page, W. et al eds. (1974), Victoria County History of Huntingdonshire, vol. 2, University of London Institute for Historical Research.





Pevsner, N. (1968), The Buildings of England: Bedfordshire, Huntingdon & Peterborough, Harmondsworth.

Royal Commission for Historic Monuments (England) (1926), The Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England: Huntingdonshire, London.

Maps

a. 25 " OS Maps, 1880, 1897, 1900, & 1950

Figure 1. Key (in full) to Symbols used on the analysis plans

	This represents an urban space that has a degree of enclosure
	This represents a green space that has a degree of enclosure
	This represents a corner building/s that spatially link areas or streets (known as a pivotal corner)
	Significant or important view or vista within, into or out of the Conservation Area
	The situation where a building or other structure blocks ("stops") a view
	Indicates where a glimpse (or series of glimpses) of one space may be seen from another
	Indicates where a building line has failed, allowing the visual integrity of the street to "leak" out
	Plantation
	Significant tree/s
	Scheduled Ancient Monument
	A building that forms a landmark within the Conservation Area
	Listed Building
	Urban space that narrows down, inviting the viewer to explore the space beyond: "pinch point"
	Street that would benefit from enhancements, e.g., improved signage or parking arrangements
	An area that would benefit from enhancement
	An intrusion into the historic street scene caused by, for example, inappropriate buildings
	Street characterised by back of pavement building line
	Street characterised by a set back building line
	Spatial orientation