



# Breckland Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment

April 2022

**Tibbalds**  
planning and urban design

**LUC**

## Introduction 3

## Part 1: The architectural and landscape character of Breckland District 4

### The architectural and landscape character of Breckland District 5

Introduction	5
Key Influences	5
Architectural Character	7
Landscape Character	10

## Part 2: Market Towns 16

### Introduction to the Market Towns 17

Attleborough	18
Dereham	22
Swaffham	26
Thetford	30
Watton	34

### Introduction to the Market Town Area-Types 39

Town Centre	40
Town Centre Fringe	44
River Valley	47
Radial Route	48
Formal Suburban	50
Informal Suburban	52
Suburban Bungalow	54
Experimental Suburban	56
Inconsistent Suburban	58
Leafy Detached	60
Out-of-town Industrial / Retail	62

## Character Area-Type Maps 65

Attleborough	65
Dereham	66
Swaffham	67
Thetford	68
Watton	69

## Part 3: Rural Settlements 71

### Rural Settlement Character Assessment 72

Methodology	72
-------------	----

### Hybrid Classification Matrix 76

### Origin Character Type 80

Agricultural Village	80
Market Village	84
Planned Estate Village	86
Planned Village Other	88

### Morphological Village Type 92

Single Focus Nucleated Village	92
Nucleated Polyfocal Village	96
Continuous Rural Row	100
Interrupted Rural Row	104
Dispersed Village	108

### Morphological Landscape Traits 114

Green Edge Village	114
Common Edge Village	115

Quality Assurance	
Project title	Breckland Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment
Document title	Breckland Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment
Client	Breckland District Council
Checked by Project Runner	
Approved by Project Director	
Project number	5833
Location of file on server	5833 4.4 Design Work / Reports and Output

Revision History		
Revision	Date	Status
1	31-01-2022	DRAFT
2	19-02-2022	DRAFT
3	16-03-2022	DRAFT
4	25-03-2022	DRAFT
5	04-04-2022	DRAFT
6	19-04-2022	DRAFT
7	25-04-2022	FINAL

Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design  
 19 Maltings Place  
 169 Tower Bridge Road  
 London SE1 3JB

Telephone  
 020 7089 2121

mail@tibbalds.co.uk  
 www.tibbalds.co.uk

## The purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to provide a consolidated document that describes and analyses the character of Breckland's landscape and settlements.

This will form the baseline as part of the analysis stage in the process outlined in the National Model Design Code, in order to inform the preparation of a new Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

## Background

The landscape and architectural character of different parts of the district has already been assessed in a number of reports at different scales and levels of detail:

- The National Landscape Character Area Profiles: No. 83 South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands (2014); No 84. Mid Norfolk (2014); No 85. The Brecks (2015);
- Breckland District Landscape Character Assessment (2007) and Breckland District Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment (2007), both prepared on behalf of Breckland Council by Land Use Consultants;
- The Norfolk and Suffolk Brecks Character Assessment (2015) prepared by Sheils Flynn on behalf of the Brecks Partnership; and
- The Vernacular Architecture of Breckland (2007) prepared by the Breckland Society.

This document draws on these and other published sources to outline an overarching statement of the distinctive character of the Breckland district. In turn, this provides a context for the more detailed assessment of the towns and village settlements, which has been carried out as part of this study.

## The structure of this study

This document is structured into the following three sections:

- **Part 1:** firstly the overarching statement of character of Breckland, which provides an overview of the architectural and landscape character of the district as a whole.
- **Part 2:** the second section focuses on the market towns
  - starting with character analysis
  - the character area types
- **Part 3:** focuses on the rural settlements

## Methodology

In order to prepare this document extensive site visits and desktop analysis were undertaken in order to inform the draft document.

Public engagement surrounding the production of this document was undertaken in two rounds. An initial questionnaire was distributed to towns and parishes early on in the process to gather views of town and parish councillors and residents about the positive and negative characteristics of their settlements.

After an initial draft of the document was produced, key stakeholders were engaged, including through workshops, gather feedback on the work undertaken and incorporate the specialised knowledge of people who live and work in the settlements studied.

# Part 1: The architectural and landscape character of Breckland District



# The architectural and landscape character of Breckland District

## Introduction

This section draws upon existing assessments of landscape and architectural character of different parts of the district and other published sources to set out an overarching statement of the distinctive character of the Breckland district in terms of its architectural and landscape character.

It outlines:

- some key influences on development in Breckland;
- local architectural character of buildings in Breckland focussing on local vernacular architecture, and the typical building materials and methods of construction associated with it;
- the landscape character found within Breckland District and the variations in landscape and architectural character between the different landscape character areas; and
- the local landscape types and their characteristic features.

Landscape character maps and photographs are taken from the 2007 Breckland Landscape Character Assessment.

## Key Influences

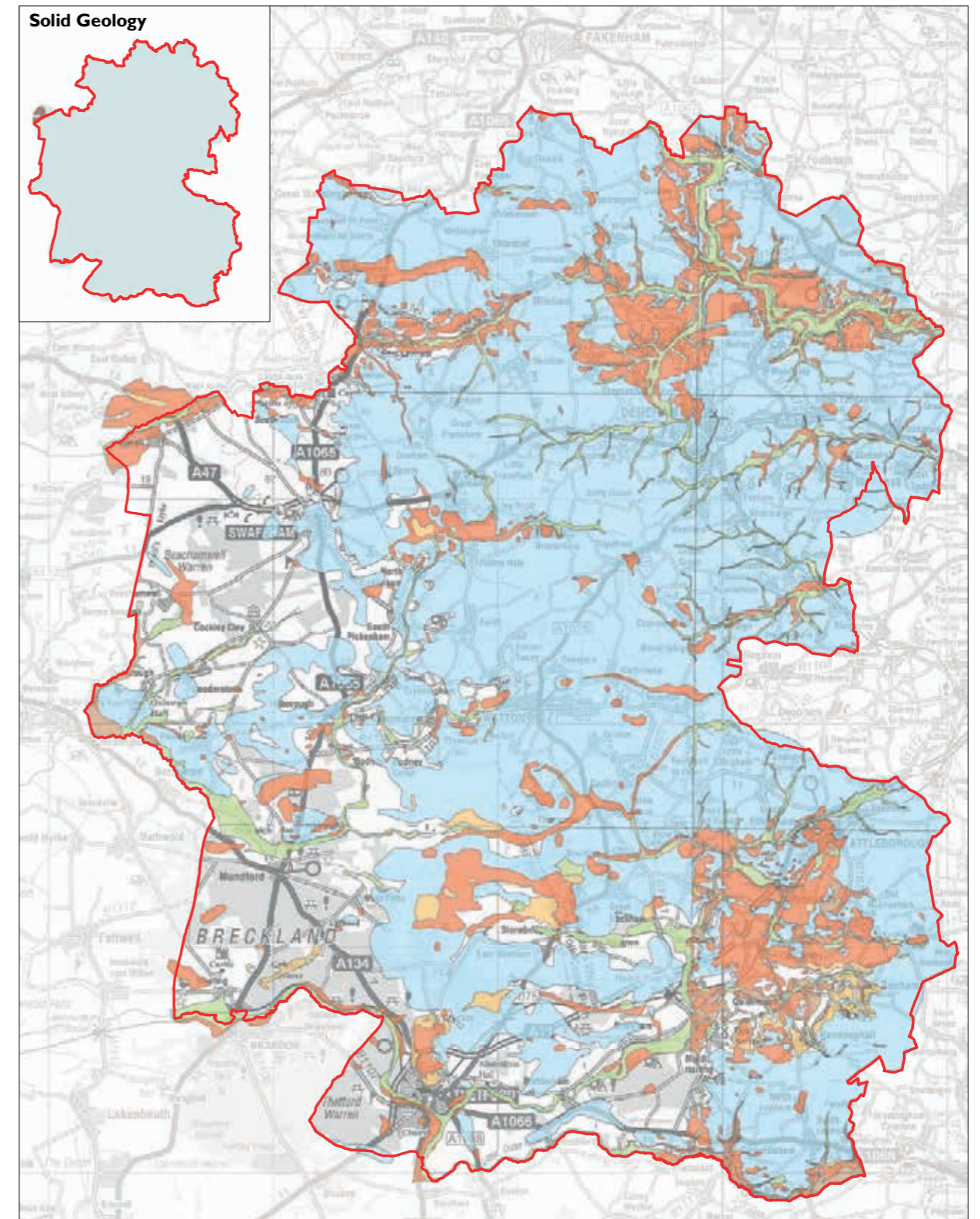
The architectural and landscape character in Breckland District today has been shaped by both physical and human factors over time.

Some key factors include:

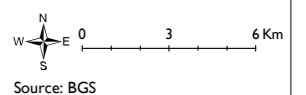
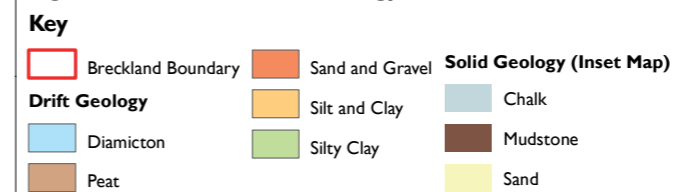
- underlying geology of chalk bedrock, with overlying glacial deposits of chalky boulder clay, sand, diamicton and alluvium. This creates local variation in the landscape. Soils ranging from thin sandy soils and a mosaic of acid and alkaline soils in the west, to chalky boulder clay plateaux further east.
- rivers and streams are chalk-fed, creating globally rare environments of significant ecological and biodiversity value, with the River Nar being a notable example.
- topography, a relatively low plateau that rises gently to the north, with river channels carved into it, and flowing to both east and west.
- the pattern of agriculture, the success of which has varied by soil quality. Historically, to the west, sparse population and poverty on the more barren soils of the Brecks, while to the east a more dispersed pattern of more affluent villages and farmsteads on more fertile land, with wool being more common in the north, and grain production in the south. From the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, wool declined, while arable continued to thrive. Between the 17<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century continued improvements in agriculture, including innovation in crop rotation, improved yields and increased the wealth of farmers and large estates. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, enclosure acts changed the pattern of landholdings

and altered the settlement pattern of villages. Common land was enclosed, to make farms more compact, efficient and productive, benefitting farmers and tradesmen, at the expense of the poor. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century, land improvement by large estates and forestry (Thetford forest) had a significant influence upon the Brecks.

- the pattern of village settlement, primarily based on groups of farmsteads, some with more specialised functions, to provide markets, watermills or grain mills. The historic wealth of wool settlements is often reflected in large churches, whereas in arable villages it is more evident in farmhouses and other buildings. The market villages and market towns served their agricultural hinterland and developed related industries or other functions, for instance workhouses in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century, or schools in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialisation generally enabled materials to be manufactured in large quantities for use nationally rather than on a local basis.
- the pattern of landownership, in particular the extensive land holdings of the 'great estates' such as Cockley Cley, Shadwell, Elveden, Lynford and Euston (part), where forestry and shooting provided significant sources of income from Georgian times onwards, leaving a legacy of woodlands and estate buildings today.
- changes in legislation, such as the Enclosure Act 1773 and the 1834 Poor Laws, which provided a framework for significant change to the pattern of settlement over the following period
- transport connections by road, sea and rail. Most important of which is the Norwich to London road, which directly served the towns Thetford and Attleborough (now by-passed by the A11). There were also turnpikes on major roads, around which villages were established. Connections by sea to the Netherlands enabled the import of materials such as clay pantiles. Railways, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, allowed industrially produced and heavy goods to be cheaply transported into the district, and made small market towns easily accessible.
- changes in affluence and fashion as a result of better transport and communications, both within England and abroad (in particular the Netherlands). This influenced the forms, materials and style of buildings and leading to the refacing or updating of earlier building to reflect changes in taste.
- WW2 brought airfields and a legacy of RAF and USAF bases to the area, such as those at Watton. This brought jobs, people and rapid associated settlement growth.
- London overspill policy led to significant growth primarily in Thetford, but also Attleborough, with LCC architects designing the development of large-scale residential neighbourhoods.
- the barren soils of the Brecks historically led to agricultural failure, most recently in the 1920s when Thetford Forest was planted as commercial forestry. Today the forest, heathland and grassland of the area are recognised internationally as a lowland habitat that supports unique flora and fauna, with many environmental designations (figure 3). The area also has rare geological features (pingos) and archaeological interest (neolithic flint mines).

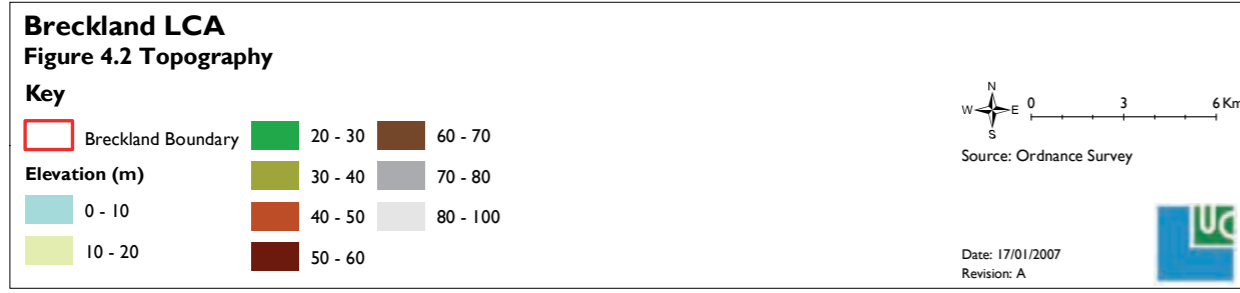
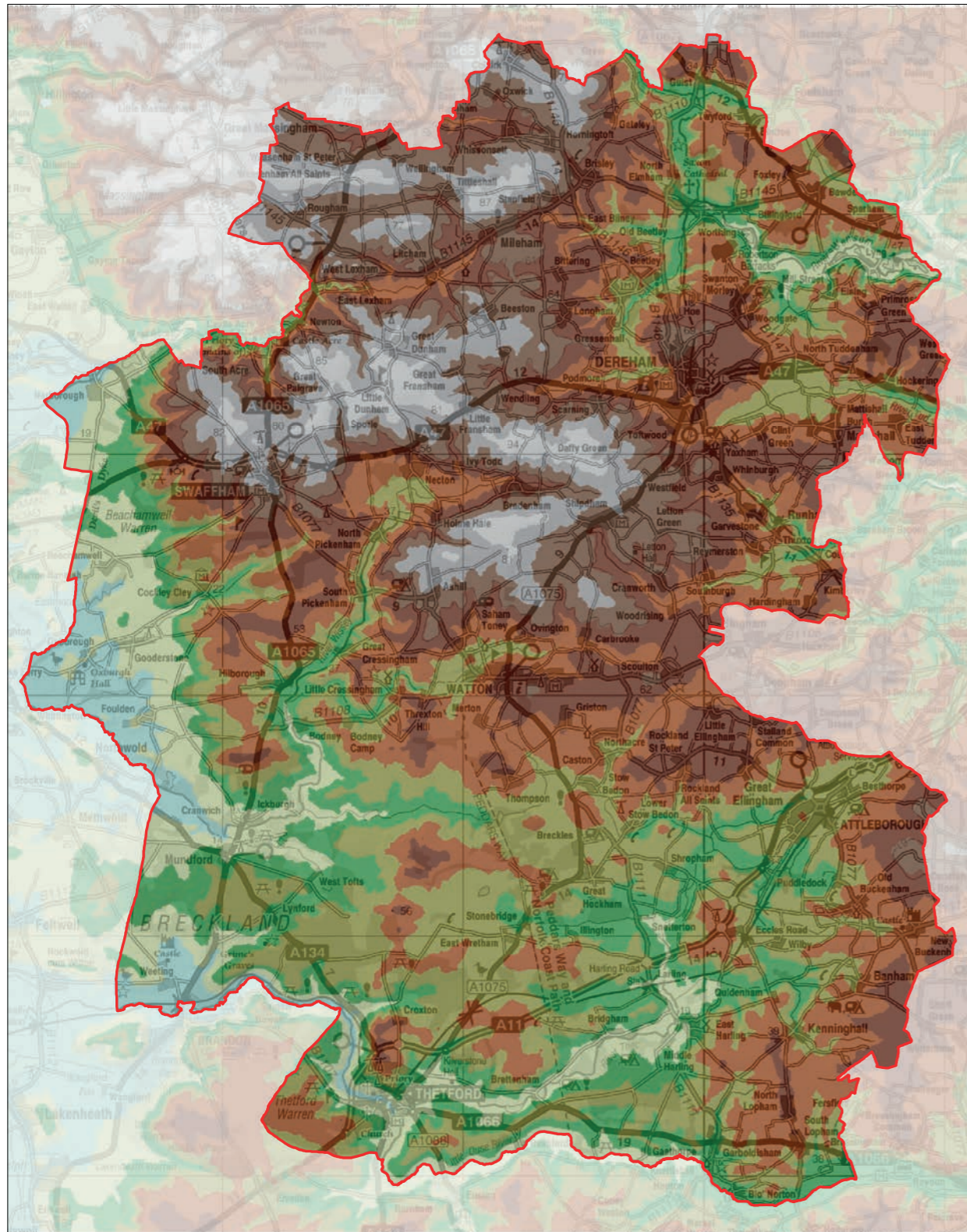


**Breckland LCA**  
**Figure 4.1 Drift and Solid Geology**

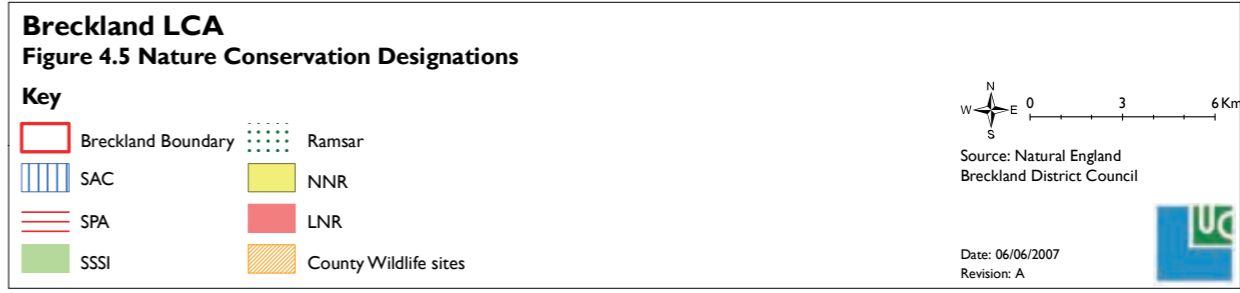
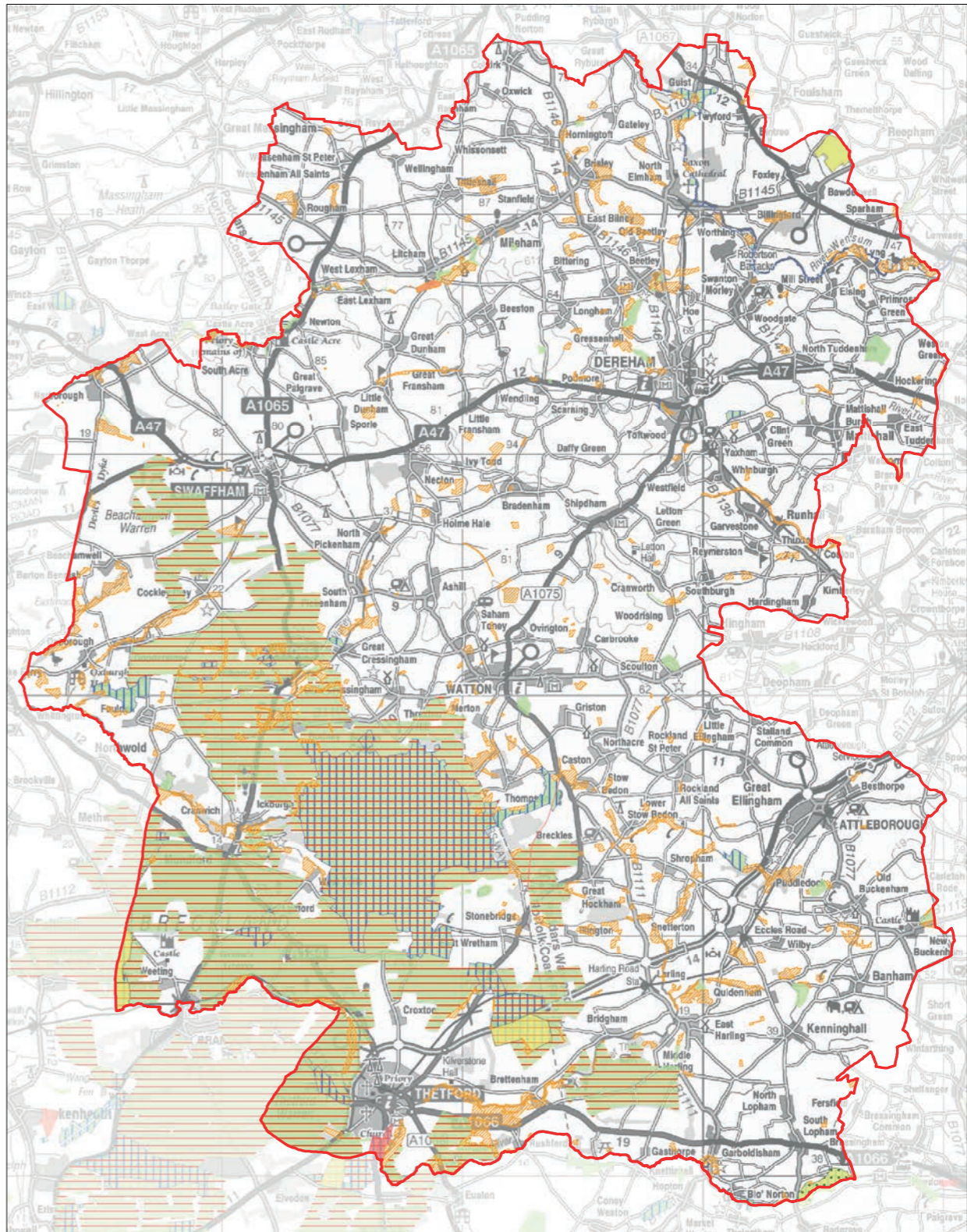


Date: 06/06/2007  
Revision:

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey information with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, Land Use Consultants, Licence Number 100019265  
File: S:\3900\3956 Breckland LCA\GIS\Themes\ArcGIS9\Report\_Maps\3956-01\_008\_007\_Drift\_and\_Solid\_Geology.mxd



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey information with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, Land Use Consultants, Licence Number 100019265  
 File: S:\3900\3956 Breckland LCA\GIS\Themes\ArcGIS9\Report\_Maps\3956-01\_010\_Topography\_RevA.mxd



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey information with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, Land Use Consultants, Licence Number 100019265  
 File: S:\3900\3956 Breckland LCA\GIS\Themes\ArcGIS9\Report\_Maps\3956-01\_014\_Nature\_Conservation.mxd

## Architectural Character

The architectural character of buildings in Breckland District is informed by a number of different but inter-related social, economic and environmental factors, which include:

- their original purpose and function, for instance as homes or for commercial or agricultural use;
- their location and the character of its landscape, which has influenced the local availability of materials;
- the economic success and status of the place, its builders and occupants, whether wealthy or poor;
- their aspirations, for instance to set or follow local or national trends or fashions; and
- the materials, construction methods and technologies available.

These factors and their inter-relationships are also influenced by the period in which buildings were constructed.

Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were generally closely interrelated. Locally available materials influenced the methods of construction, and these either followed the local tradition, or helped shape the local fashion of that period. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, improvements in industrial processes, transport and communications steadily weakened these local inter-relationships until, by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, local vernacular traditions had been completely overtaken by national trends and fashions and, in some cases, growth had led to the coalescence of settlements.

Today Breckland District has many different settlements and buildings of historic and architectural interest, dating from different periods. They still display many of the characteristics of the local vernacular in terms of materials, building forms and methods of construction, although their uses may have changed over time. In some settlements however, the vernacular character has been diluted by the scale, form and characteristics of 20<sup>th</sup> century development.

The resulting rural and urban vernacular architectural character is varied, as a result of the variety of materials and forms of construction associated with Breckland District. It is more subtle and fragile than in places where it is highly consistent, such as the Cotswolds, or those where less 20<sup>th</sup> century development has taken place. However, the vernacular character still contributes significantly to the distinctive architectural character of the area.

Its key characteristic features can be found in the materials used, the construction methods and the building forms, which are outlined in this section. The next section describes the landscape character areas found in Breckland District and then identifies some of the key variations in the local vernacular across different landscape character areas.

### Materials

#### Brick

Brick is one of the most common materials in Breckland District as a whole. In the west of the district, in the Brecks area, it is the most commonly found material. Pre-19<sup>th</sup> century, the Brecks was a relatively poor and sparsely populated area. Few buildings have survived from this time. The majority of its building stock is 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Red brick is the most common Norfolk brick and is found throughout the district. Pre-19<sup>th</sup> century, “Norfolk Reds” were the prevailing brick and were made in local brickfields.

Pale yellow or cream brick was created by mixing clay with lime or chalk. It is colloquially known as gault brick and also known as ‘white’ brick. The materials were available for local manufacture in the west of the district, although Industrialisation and the introduction of railways enabled it to be imported easily in large quantities from Cambridgeshire. Its use is mainly in the south and west of the district with more limited examples in the north.

From the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards high status buildings began to be built in brickwork, with Oxburgh Hall being an early example. It gradually came into more widespread use during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, generally for remodelling purposes, for instance as brick infill panels or to add brick chimney stacks to a building constructed in other materials. Brick was also used on gable ends, with another material on the façade. For example, brick gable ends were combined with timber frame construction.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, brick became highly fashionable for domestic use and many timber frame and clay lump buildings were faced with brickwork. Gault was fashionable in the late-18<sup>th</sup> century and early-19<sup>th</sup> century because its light colour resembled stone. Brick became the dominant building material in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it continued to be used to modernise or upgrade earlier buildings well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Brickwork decoration is found locally and commonly includes:

- brickwork diamonds (diapers);
- decorative chimneys; and
- brick quoins at corners and around the openings, brick dressings and arches on buildings constructed in flint, chalk or another colour of brick, with some being elaborate, to reflect the rustication of stonework.



Red brick façade on clay lump and black pantiled roof. Watton.



Gault brickwork with flint flank wall. Thetford.



Rough flint with red brick dressings on converted agricultural buildings. Beeston.



Knapped flint façade with red brickwork dressings and pantiled roof. Swaffham.

## Clay

Clay is a construction material characteristic of Central Norfolk, including Breckland District. Clay lump is made of unfired blocks of clay mixed with straw and dried naturally. Shuttered clay is made by filling timber or wattle shuttering with loose dry earth, poured and rammed, or with wet clay.

Clay lump was primarily used during the 19<sup>th</sup> century for rural buildings such as cottages, farms and farm buildings, and garden walls. It was also used to replace wattle and daub infill panels in timber framed buildings.

Both clay lump and shuttered clay were originally clay daubed (plastered), latterly tarred, mainly on farm buildings, and limewashed. The use of tar was a by-product from gasworks so limited to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards although there is evidence for wood tar use prior to that time.

Today, clay lump buildings are colourwashed or tarred and many have been faced in brickwork, so the use of clay is not always evident.

## Flint

Flint is another material characteristic of Breckland District. It is either:

- primary, which came from the chalk bedrock and provided black knapped flint; or
- derived, which is field flint and stained with oxides.

It is used in a variety of ways, including:

- Unworked flints laid either randomly or selected by size. It may also be laid in rough courses;
- Knapped flints, sometimes squared and laid in regular courses, or trimmed and shaped to create patterns

Unbroken nodules are generally primary flint. Their colour is generally milky white to grey, while that of knapped flint ranges from grey to black. Black knapped flint is generally associated with higher status church and domestic buildings. Derived flint was used for lower status buildings.

Many church buildings were constructed in flint together with stone. In more modest examples these may be unworked flints with stone dressings, whereas in more prestigious buildings dressed stone is the primary material with infill panels of flint, usually knapped and sometimes shaped, known as flushwork. In domestic buildings, flint was commonly used with brick, for instance a flint façade with brick gable ends, or vice versa. It was also used for agricultural buildings and boundary walls.

## Chalk

A band of chalk underlies much of the west of Breckland District, extending as far east as Swaffham to Thetford. It is a relatively soft stone, known in its more durable form as clunch.

Chalk is a soft stone and was rarely the sole construction material for a building. It was generally laid in courses of relatively square blocks and commonly faced with another material such as render, brick or flint, sometimes in a chequerboard pattern, with corners and mouldings in the harder material. Its use was less common for gable ends or boundary walls.

## Timber and plaster

Timber framing is common in parts of Breckland District and is associated with pre-18<sup>th</sup> century development, although it was in use into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Breckland, timber frames are box frames (no cruck frames) with infill panels. Infill panels were originally wattle and daub.

On most buildings, the timber frames were not expressed, i.e. visible on the facade of the building. Only high status buildings were intended to have expressed timber frames. Close studs, set between the posts of the timber frame, with narrow infill panels, were also a feature of higher status or better quality buildings.

More generally, both timber frames and their infill panels were originally lime plastered.

In many cases, wattle and daub infill panels were replaced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by clay lump, lath and plaster or brickwork, sometimes laid in herringbone patterns.

Some timber frames have been faced in brickwork, so their existence is not immediately evident from the exterior.

Timber weatherboarding was predominantly used for agricultural and service buildings or mills. It is not a common feature for domestic buildings. The boards were generally fitted horizontally with straight boards, however, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the boards were fitted vertically with cover splines. Boarding was either painted, tarred or left fairface.



Timber framing with rendered clay lump infill, red brick chimney stack and thatched roof with pantiles to single storey extension. Great Ellingham.



Timber frame with rendered and colourwashed wattle and daub and thatched roof with gabled dormers. Garboldisham.



Carstone used on façade and boundary wall with gault dressings, Narborough with red brick and chalk wall in backdrop



Chalk and flint on gable end, with knapped flint and gault brick façade and slate roof. Thetford.

## Other building materials used in the north west of Breckland District

Carstone, an iron sandstone is found in a band between Swaffham and Kings Lynn together with chalk, and was used locally as a building material. It is deep golden brown in colour and relatively soft, so not a high quality stone. It was coursed and used for mouldings, or in small pieces, often appearing as dry stone, to face buildings of other construction. It was quarried and used mainly by large estates for their estate buildings.

## Thatch

Thatch is characterised by a steep roof pitch of between 45 and 55 degrees with large overhangs at eaves level. Both long straw and Norfolk reed are traditional materials for thatched roofs in this part of Norfolk dependent on locality.

The use of thatch is associated with pre-19<sup>th</sup> century timber framed or clay lump buildings, although some roofs that were originally thatched have since been replaced with clay tiles.



### Clay tiles

Clay tiles are the typical roofing material of Norfolk. They include both plain clay tiles, made of the same red clay as the local bricks, and clay pantiles.

Clay pantiles were originally imported from Holland. They are also usually red but some were glazed and black in colour. They were commonly used throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in many instances replacing thatched roofs.

The use of clay tiles is also characterised by simple roof forms and a roof pitch of 40 degrees or more.

### Slate

Slate roofs became common in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, initially for larger country houses and then for more modest buildings as transport costs became cheaper. They are associated mainly with 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century masonry buildings rather than those of earlier dates or of timber frame construction. Slate roofs are generally shallower in pitch than thatched or tiled roofs, at 30-35 degrees.

---

## Building forms

### Timber framed construction

Timber framed buildings are characteristically single pile ie single span, shallow plan buildings, with additive forms. The plan depth may be increased with an extension to the roof slope at the rear of the building, known as a catslide roof, to create a single storey lean-to extension.

In Breckland, first floors were rarely jettied. This was associated with buildings of higher status dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century and 17<sup>th</sup> century in particular.

Floor to floor heights are often relatively low and ground floor levels may be below today's external ground level.

The roof forms of timber framed buildings are steeply pitched, some with the pitch shallowing at eaves level.

Bargeboards were used typically to close off the projecting end of a roof and covered in a capping piece. Some 19<sup>th</sup> century examples became elaborate and highly decorative features of the roof.

Dormers are a traditional feature, including both:

- the wedge type (also known as catslide or mono-pitch); and
- the gabled type with the bargeboard set either flush with the façade or into the roof slope.

### Masonry construction

Masonry construction was introduced to higher status buildings, including larger houses in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and then became common for smaller dwellings in many parts of Breckland District. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century it had become the dominant method of construction and form of built development.

Masonry buildings are more commonly double pile, i.e. two spans and two rooms deep, with a deeper rectangular or 'square' plan. However, there are some masonry built single span cottages and improved cottages too.

In Breckland District the roof forms of masonry buildings are most commonly simple gables with some, but relatively few, instances of stepped/ crow stepped gables. Hipped roofs are also found in the district. Hipped roofs with parapets to reduce the visibility of roof structures were fashionable during the late-18<sup>th</sup> century to early-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Gabled dormer windows with bargeboards are common on gabled roofs as are mono-pitch dormers.

Floor to floor heights are often generous relative to today's standards.



Higher status timber frame house with flint and brick base and jettied timber frame and close studs at first floor, pantiled roof. Bawdeswell.



Single pile timber framed cottage with plastered façade and pargetting under eaves. Flint and red brick gable wall with red brick dressings and diapers and thatched roof. Dereham.



Single storey with attic cottages, built in red brick with chequer pattern, pantiled roof with gabled dormers. Mattishall.



Double pile detached house in red brickwork with pantile roof. Shipdham.



Hipped roofs, one with parapets. Thetford.

# Landscape Character

## National Landscape Character Areas

Three landscape character areas broadly describe the landscape of the District. These are:

- The Brecks;
- Mid Norfolk; and
- South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands.

Small pockets of land at the edges of the District fall within the Fens and North West Norfolk Landscape Character Areas to the west, and the Central North Norfolk Landscape Character Area to the east.

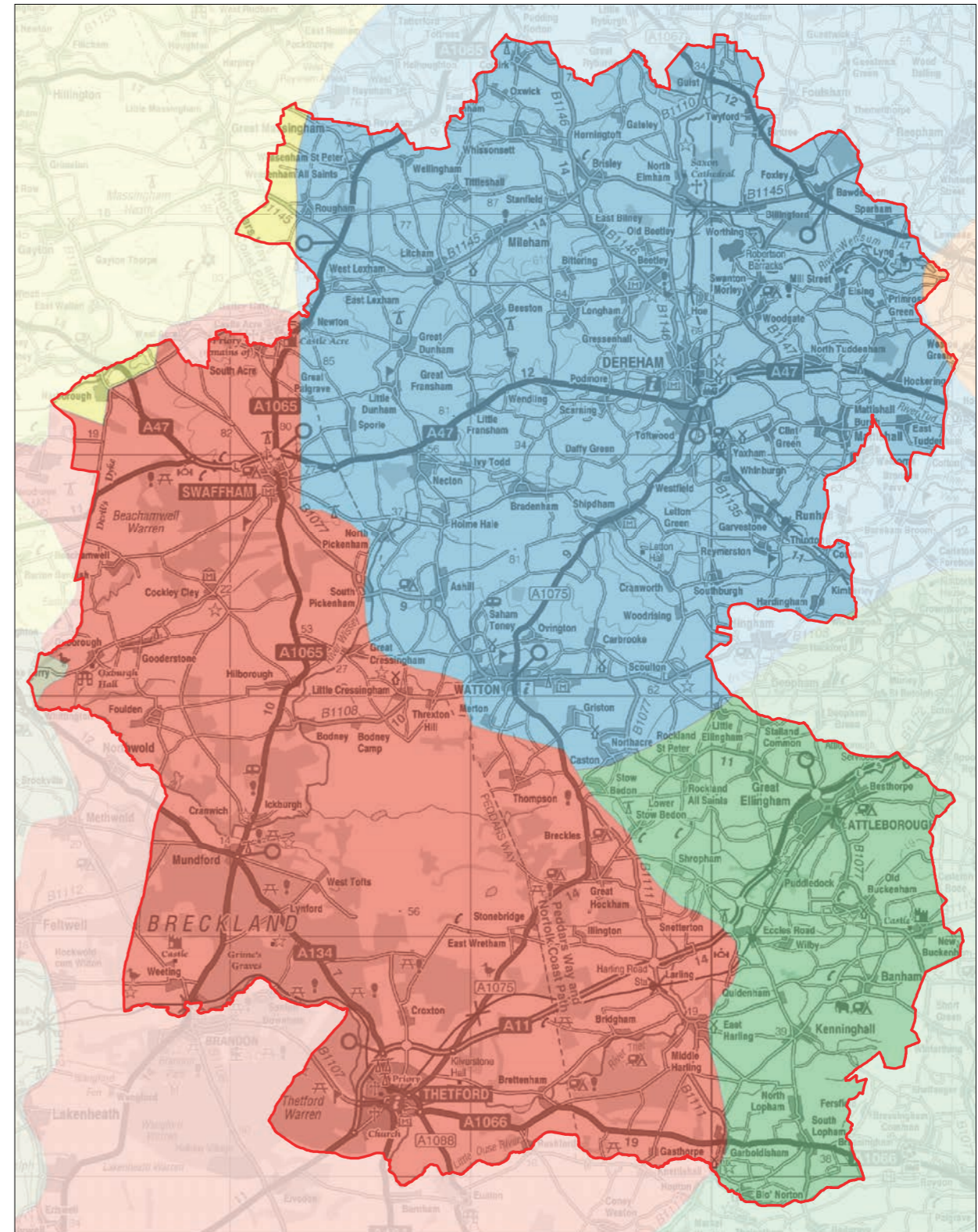
In each of these landscape character areas there is a variety of vernacular architectural character as outlined, although there are some materials and buildings forms that are more typical in one character area than in others.

## The Brecks

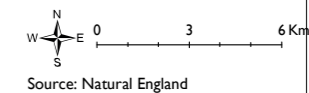
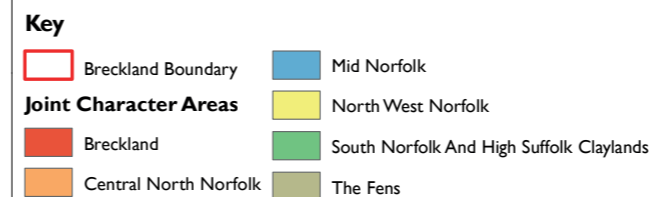
The Brecks is situated in the south west of the District. Its key characteristics are:

- A largely open, gently undulating landscape with a low-lying plateau that rises to the north. Chalk geology is covered by a thin layer of sand and flint. Pingos and other glacial features are found in the valleys.
- Underlying geology and soils support a lowland heathland of international importance in a mosaic with lowland acid and alkaline (calcerous) grassland to bring variation and bio-diversity to the landscape. The Brecks has European value to birdlife and it supports plants and animals that are unique to these habitats. Large areas are covered by international designations - Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar sites. These are complemented by national designations - National Nature Reserve and Sites of Special Scientific Interest as well as local designations.
- Large conifer forestry plantations and shelter belts are set out in a regular geometric pattern, creating a distinct forest landscape, not found elsewhere in lowland England.
- Agriculture is mainly arable with large, regular 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure fields. Often these are defined by Scots pine and beech shelterbelts or hawthorn hedges, indicating that they form part of large estates. Farms are planned and based on courtyards. The character of the landscape is geometric - with regular fields and long, straight roads.

- There is important archaeology, such as Neolithic flint mines, medieval churches, priories and rabbit warrens, 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century estate parklands and estate villages.
- The landscape lost its tree cover by the medieval period, and before the 20<sup>th</sup> century was mainly open heathland of marginal productive use, so relatively unpopulated.
- Today, the main population centre is Thetford in the south of Breckland District with Swaffham being a smaller market town to the north. Both have road links radiating out from the town. Thetford is on the A11 and also on the Norwich to Cambridge rail line.
- Thetford was a significant place of high status in medieval times and its historic importance is reflected in today's built heritage, which includes the ruins of its castle and priory and a number of timber framed buildings.
- Swaffham's wealth was based on sheep farming and the wool trade and its built heritage appears to date primarily from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with 18<sup>th</sup> century façades built in front of older buildings, in many cases.
- Otherwise the settlement pattern is sparse and the landscape is empty with some villages, often sited close together and scattered on low lying land along the river valleys, and occasional farm buildings, churches and hamlets.
- Generally, vernacular buildings typically date from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century with relatively few examples of earlier buildings. This reflects both the historic poverty and sparse population of the area and its associated poor quality of buildings, which have led to the survival of relatively few buildings from earlier periods; and also the period when investment and development did take place as a result of land improvement.



**Breckland LCA**  
Figure 3.1 Joint Character Areas



Date: 06/06/2007  
Revision:



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey information with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, Land Use Consultants, Licence Number 100019265  
File: S:\3900\3956 Breckland LCA\GIS\Themes\ArcGIS9\Report\_Maps\3956-01\_005\_JCA.mxd

- The local vernacular buildings vary but are more typically:
  - masonry in construction, many with double room plan form and simple gabled or hipped roofs;
  - common materials are brickwork (both red and gault) and flint, with pantile or slate roofs, at least in part because of the period in which the Brecks was developed;
  - gault bricks are particularly associated with the Thetford area;
  - brick decoration is common, mainly in the form of brick quoins, particularly on flint or chalk buildings, and also features such as brick diapers or decorative chimneys.
  - there is relatively little timber framed construction and it is not always immediately apparent. It tends to be found in the east;
  - there is some clay lump, widely scattered; and
  - chalk is not unusual, although not always evident on the exterior of buildings;
  - carstone is found at its extreme west.

### Mid Norfolk

Mid Norfolk is situated in the north east of the District. Its key characteristics are:

- A broadly flat plateau dissected by river valleys which create a more intricate landscape. Chalk geology is overlain by gravels, sands and glacial till to create a complex pattern of soils, each with distinct patterns of natural vegetation.
- It is an agricultural landscape, primarily arable with some pasture along the valley floors. Cereals, sugar beet and oilseed rape are the main arable crops.
- It is ancient countryside, much of it enclosed in the medieval period, with a patchwork field system bounded by mixed hedges and hedgerow oaks and curving lanes.
- There are many 18<sup>th</sup> century estates with parkland, and numerous churches which act as prominent features in the landscape.
- There is a pattern of traditional market towns - Dereham and Watton, each with its own settlement pattern - which have main roads connecting them.
- Following fires in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and 17<sup>th</sup> century, both Dereham and Watton's vernacular architecture generally dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Dereham in particular thrived in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and developed new industries, particularly following the introduction of the railways.

- The area also has a mix of villages and many isolated farmsteads connected together by a network of minor roads.
- Generally vernacular buildings date from the late 17<sup>th</sup>- and early-18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, with some earlier timber framed buildings.
- The local vernacular buildings vary but are more typically:
  - masonry construction, both single pile cottages and deeper plan buildings;
  - constructed in red brick and/or flint, often with clay pantile roofs;
  - timber framed buildings are concentrated into the south and east, many now faced with brick and with clay pantile roofs; and
  - there is some clay lump construction mainly in the south.

### South Norfolk and High Suffolk Clayland

South Norfolk and High Suffolk Clayland is situated in the south east of the District. Its key characteristics are:

- Large plateau that is generally flat or only gently undulating. The edges of the plateau have been eroded by watercourses to create steeper slopes.
- Views are generally open. Sometimes woodland, hedges or trees create a sense of enclosure. The small valleys have small scale landscapes and views.
- Archaeological features include Paleolithic, Roman bronze- and iron-age remains, and evidence of medieval and Tudor deer parks. There are estate parklands and Second World War airfields. Medieval churches with round towers and 19<sup>th</sup> century windmills are prominent in the landscape.
- Attleborough is a small market town, situated on the Norwich to London road. In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, a fire destroyed much of the town, so today its vernacular architecture dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. However, most of the town's development is associated with the railway and industrialisation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- There is a scattered pattern of loosely clustered villages and hamlets.
- There are also numerous timber-framed farmhouses (some originally moated) and farm buildings, with a relatively high concentration of pre-1750 farmstead buildings. The farmhouses generally have colourwashed plaster with steeply pitched roofs and a variety of coverings, predominantly clay pantile or thatch. Barns are mainly black painted weatherboard.

- The local vernacular buildings vary but are more typically:
  - timber framing, plastered or often faced with brick, and thatched or clay pantile roofs;
  - masonry construction, mainly red brick buildings with pantile and some slate roofs;
  - some clay lump with rendered walls or a brick facing;
  - There is relatively little flint in this area.



The Brecks - example of local urban vernacular architecture - simple double depth plan form, in knapped flint with gault dressings, with pantiles and slate roofs. Thetford.



Mid-Norfolk - example village street scene with local vernacular materials and architecture - simple forms using flint and red brick, with pantiled and slate roofs. Litcham.



South Norfolk and High Suffolk Clayland - example of vernacular architecture around village green - timber frame with plaster and thatch, and brick and rendered brick with pantiled roofs. Great Hockham.



## Local landscape character types

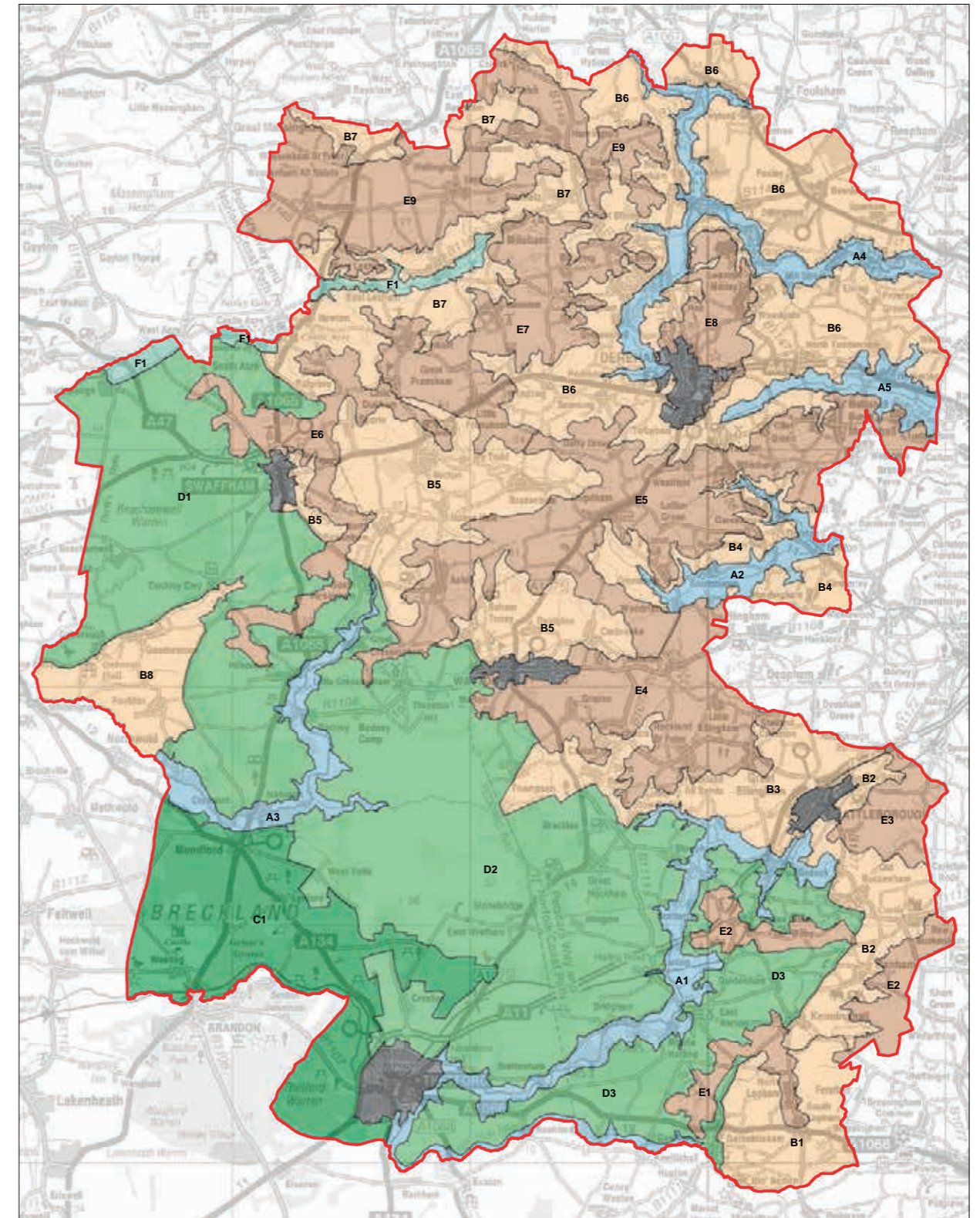
Within Breckland District, there are six distinct landscape types at a local level. These are:

- River valleys
- Chalk river valley
- Settled tributary farmland
- Plateau farmland
- Brecks plantation
- The Brecks heathland with plantation.

Within these landscape types, there are twenty seven different landscape character areas, that describe the unique landscape character of the different geographical parts of Breckland District and these are detailed in the Breckland Landscape Character Assessment (2007).

The key common characteristics of each of the six landscape character types are outlined below.

The Breckland District Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment (2007) by LUC, is a local level Landscape Character Assessment that considers the setting of 17 identified settlements within Breckland District, including the 5 market towns and a number of villages within the district. Its key findings are outlined in Part 2 for each of the market towns.



**Breckland LCA**  
**Figure 7.1 Landscape Classification of Breckland**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Breckland Boundary</li> <li><b>A - River Valleys</b></li> <li>A1: River Thet</li> <li>A2: Upper Yare</li> <li>A3: River Wissey</li> <li>A4: River Wensum and Blackwater</li> <li>A5: Upper Tud</li> <li><b>B - Settled Tributary Farmland</b></li> <li>B1: Little Ouse Tributary Farmland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B2: The Buckenham Tributary Farmland</li> <li>B3: River Thet Tributary Farmland</li> <li>B4: River Blackwater Tributary Farmland</li> <li>B5: River Wissey Tributary Farmland</li> <li>B6: River Wensum and Tud Tributary Farmland</li> <li>B7: River Nar Tributary Farmland</li> <li>B8: Gooderstone to Oxborough Tributary Farmland</li> <li><b>C - The Brecks - Plantations</b></li> <li>C1: The Brecks of Thetford Forest</li> <li><b>D - The Brecks - Heathland with Plantation</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>D1: Swaffham Heath</li> <li>D2: Stanta Heath</li> <li>D3: Harling Heathlands</li> <li><b>E - Plateau Farmland</b></li> <li>E1: Lophams Plateau</li> <li>E2: Snetterton Heath Plateau</li> <li>E3: Old Buckenham Plateau</li> <li>E4: Wayland Plateau</li> <li>E5: Central Breckland Plateau</li> <li>E6: North Pickenham Plateau</li> <li>E7: Beeston Plateau</li> <li>E8: Dereham Plateau</li> <li>E9: Whissonsett Plateau</li> <li><b>F - Chalk Rivers</b></li> <li>F1: River Nar Valley</li> <li>■ Urban</li> </ul>	<p>Source: Land Use Consultants</p> <p>Date: 06/06/2007  Revision: B</p>
---	--	---	--

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey information with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, Land Use Consultants, Licence Number 100019265  
File: S:\3900\3956 Breckland LCA\GIS\Themes\ArcGIS9\Report\_Maps\3956-01\_013\_Landscape\_Classification\_Rev8.mxd

### River valleys

These are broad, gently undulating chalk valleys defined by historic land use, land cover and later sand and gravel extraction that form a distinct landscape type in relation to their landscape context.

Key characteristics:

- Small scale landscapes defined by shallow river valleys with a subtle sense of enclosure and transition to surrounding areas.
- Topography ranges from the valley floor at 10m AOD to 40m AOD.
- Views are often channelled along narrow rural roads or restricted by waterside vegetation or woodland, although there are some views across floodplains. Views out are generally restricted by the valley edges
- Poplars are prominent vertical features along the river banks.
- Dominated by grazing, with small to medium size fields of varied and irregular shape defined by hedges with hedge trees.
- Settlements are infrequent and small, and take the form of hamlets and individual properties.
- The skyline is mainly tree-lined although open in some areas.
- There are few built landmarks, although churches related to the hamlets and mills on the rivers themselves create points of focus and provide surprise views.

The landscape character areas within this type are:

- River Thet
- Upper Yare
- River Wissey
- River Wensum and Blackwater
- Upper Tud

### Chalk river valley

This landscape type is made up of the floodplain and valley sides of the River Nar, which is fed by springs rising from the chalk and, as such, is distinct from the other rivers.

Key characteristics:

- A narrow flood plain following the meandering course of the river.
- Topography of the valley sides rises to approx 50m AOD.
- Visually contained by the valley sides and by hedgerows and woodland associated with parkland.
- Grazing pasture lines the valley floor, which also includes parkland, wet meadows and wet woodland. Small blocks of heathland are also found on the valley sides and there is one area of common land.
- A wooded character is associated with Halls such as Narborough Hall or Lexham Hall, with views to wooded skylines.
- Settlements take the form of isolated Halls and farm houses. Small villages are generally set above flood level at the crest of the valley at East Lexham, West Lexham and South Acre although at Litcham the settlement spreads onto the valley floor.
- Weirs and mills are found along the river course.
- The Nar Valley Way is an important recreational feature that provides public access.

The landscape character areas within this type are:

- River Nar Valley



River valleys - grazing pasture in small fields along the River Thet



Chalk river valley - River Nar



River valleys - view channelled along narrow road and bridge across Upper Yare river



Chalk river valley - mill on the River Nar



Chalk river valley - Narborough Hall set in woodland

### Settled tributary farmland

This farmland makes a transition between the river valleys and the plateau farmland landscape types. It includes a range of wetland features associated with drains and fens as well as larger scale landscapes that are associated with arable farming. The landform is undulating and field boundaries are vegetated. Combined, these create contained landscapes which are visually separate from other landscape types.

Key characteristics:

- Medium scale landscapes with an undulating landform, and variable field patterns and field boundaries.
- Topography varies from 20-50m AOD.
- Predominantly arable farming with medium to large-scale network of geometric fields, although including localised areas of pasture associated with drains and sometimes with fens.
- Remnant hedgerows and hedgerow oaks in many places
- Settled character with dispersed farmsteads and villages.
- Varied skyline with church towers often prominent in views.

The landscape character areas within this type are:

- Little Ouse Tributary Farmland
- The Buckenhams Tributary Farmland
- River Thet Tributary Farmland
- River Blackwater Tributary Farmland
- River Wissey Tributary Farmland
- River Wensum and Tud Tributary Farmland
- River Nar Tributary Farmland
- Gooderstone to Oxborough Tributary Farmland

### Plateau farmland

Predominantly arable agricultural land that is relatively open and large in scale, although it is interspersed with small blocks of woodland. This landscape type is based on geology and topography.

Key characteristics:

- The landform is strikingly flat terrain with a strong sense of exposure. Large scale landscape is predominantly defined by large geometric fields in a simple and regular pattern with straight drainage ditches, short hedges and Scots pine shelter belts on field boundaries.
- Topography is elevated at 40-90m AOD.
- Views are long distance and panoramic.
- Settlements are found throughout the plateau. They are comprised of individual farmsteads, hamlets and small scale villages, which are often centred around a green or village pond. On the edges of the plateau there are some larger scale settlements.
- The skyline is prominent, often uninterrupted giving views of wide-open skies
- Landmarks include village churches. Communication masts and pylons are also prominent features.

The landscape character areas within this type are:

- Lophams Plateau
- Snetterton Heath Plateau
- Old Buckenham Plateau
- Wayland Plateau
- Central Breckland Plateau
- North Pickenham Plateau
- Beeston Plateau
- Dereham Plateau
- Whissonsett Plateau



Settled tributary farmland - arable land with poplars along the river - Little Ouse



Plateau farmland - open views with village in the distance - Whissonsett plateau



Settled tributary farmland - pasture with hamlet in the distance - The Buckenhams



Plateau farmland - flat terrain with distant view of church tower - Snetterton Heath plateau

### **Brecks plantation**

This area is characterised by large scale plantation forestry and a simple composition. A rectilinear road network and bold, uniform plantation blocks create a strong geometric pattern. The plantation blocks contain and channel views to create an intimate spatial scale and quality.

Key characteristics:

- From the 1920s onwards, derelict farmland was acquired from large estates for the planting of Thetford Forest, to provide a strategic timber reserve for the nation and overcome a shortage of timber post-WW1. It is now the largest lowland forest in England.
- Simple large-scale landscape both horizontally and vertically, defined by large and dense coniferous plantations that offer a strong sense of enclosure. The landform slopes gently towards the river valleys but the slopes are disguised by the dense plantations.
- Topography ranges from 10-50m AOD.
- Rectilinear tracks divide the plantation blocks but are only visible at close range so the plantations appear to be continuous. Long straight roads form strong linear corridors through the forest and views are channelled along them.
- The plantation blocks create a simple, repeated pattern that accommodates a range of uses, mainly commercial timber production but also areas for recreation and military training.
- The landscape has little or no settlement, with occasional individual properties and small settlements. Weeting is the only large settlement in the landscape type.
- The skyline is defined by the high canopies and edges of the plantations, which contrast with the sky and form dramatic landmarks.
- There are no built landmarks.

This landscape type is found in:

- The Brecks of Thetford Forest

### **The Brecks heathland with plantation**

This area is characterised by historic heathland interspersed with small-medium scale blocks of mixed plantation woodland. A large part of the heathland has been taken over by the MOD. It has wider range of land uses and a more open and varied character than the Brecks plantation landscape type.

Key characteristics:

- Medium to large scale landscape with a gently undulating landform with subtle slopes, including both river valleys and plateaux rising to the north. Areas of open farmland, with intensively farmed arable fields, heath and also large coniferous plantations, create a variety of openness and enclosure.
- Views are often broken by tree cover.
- Belts of twisted Scots pine mark field boundaries and align with roads to create sculptural features and focal points.
- Warrens are a distinctive feature.
- Settlement is dispersed and low density although the urban edges of Swaffham and Thetford influence these landscapes.
- The skyline is prominent and mostly wooded, defined by coniferous blocks and shelter belt planting.
- Large areas are open and remote with few roads or dwellings.

The landscape character areas within this type are:

- Swaffham Heath
- Stanta Heath
- Harling Heathlands



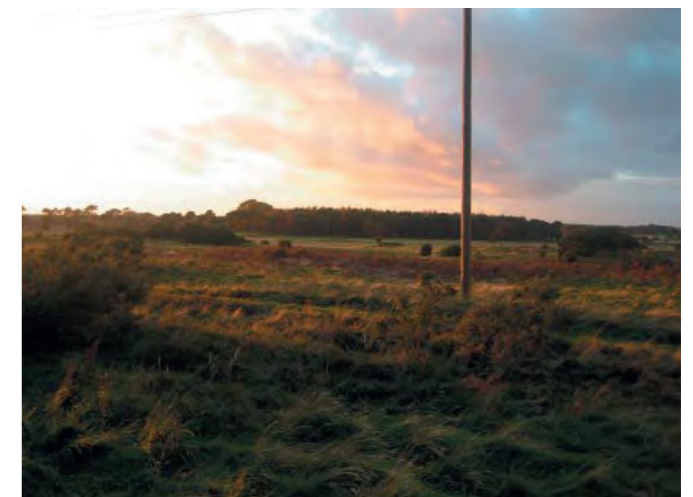
Brecks plantation - strong linear corridor created by road with skyline defined by high canopies



Brecks heathland with plantation - belt of Scots pine marking field boundary of intensive arable land - Swaffham Heath



Brecks plantation - plantations appear to be continuous



Brecks heathland with plantation - heathland - STANTA Heath

# Part 2: Market Towns



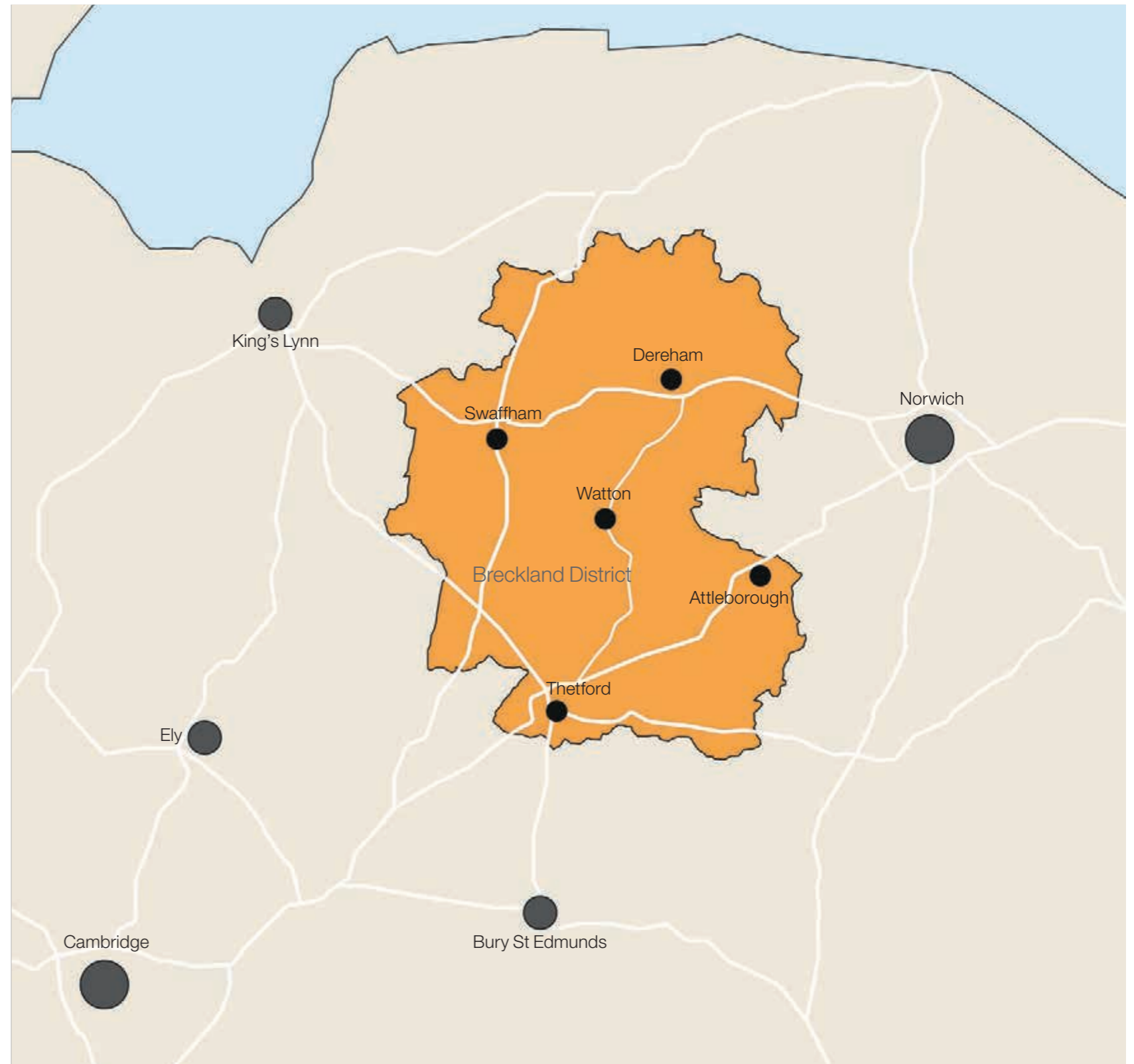


## Introduction to the Market Towns

The settlements in this study include the five market towns in Breckland District:

- Attleborough;
- Dereham;
- Swaffham;
- Thetford; and
- Watton

This chapter looks at the market towns individually, providing an analysis of their development and character today.



Location of market town settlements

## Attleborough

Attleborough is a historic market town located in the south-east of Breckland district with a 2016 population of approximately 11,000.

The topography is low lying and the surrounding landscape is characterised as largely farmland, both settled tributary and plateau, with the River Thet river valley to the south west.

### History

The current settlement dates back to the Saxon period, and there is evidence of permanent settlement in the area since the Bronze Age. The earliest building remaining in the town is St Mary's Church at the east end of the town centre, parts of which were built following the Norman Conquest in the late 11<sup>th</sup> and early 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Attleborough developed on a cross-roads between the important London-Norwich route and a secondary Diss-Swaffham route. Development of the town was clustered around these routes with a historic market place, Market Hill, now Queen's Square, situated at the junction between them. Attleborough's function as a market town and its agricultural hinterland, together with its location as a stop on the journey from London to Norwich brought it continued prosperity from the medieval period onwards, despite much of the town being burned down in 1559. The turnpike introduced in 1695 to link the Great North Road became the second turnpike in the country, and the importance of the town as a stop on a major route was well-established.

The 19th century saw a considerable expansion of the town with the housing stock and population doubling in the first half of the century. However, the church rectory and its landscaped grounds still occupy a significant area immediately to the south of the town centre. The arrival of the railway in 1845 was a significant influence on the town, leading to major commercial and domestic expansion. It extended the town southwards to the station, bringing large employers such as maltings and cider manufacturing, as well as large houses for professionals. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it enabled commuting and created a boundary for the town's development.

After the 1850s the population stagnated due to changes in agriculture and the reversal of the focus of UK ports from the East to the North West and many people moved away. Attleborough experienced another period of considerable growth in the post-war period, as part of the London overspill development, with Cyprus Estate to the north in the 1950s, Arlington Gardens Estate in the late 1960s, and Fairfield, Ollands and Poplar Way in the 1970s. These estates have a consistent character and tend to be formally planned.

Further substantial growth occurred in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, most notably in the north-west and east of the town, mainly residential but with some industrial development. The residential areas tend to be of a more informal layout and are often not well connected to other areas of the town. The town has therefore seen many periods of substantial growth, with another expected doubling of the population with the urban extension to the south of the town.

The A11 trunk route bypasses the town to the north and provides a boundary on the north side of the town between urban/ suburban and rural development.

### Attleborough today

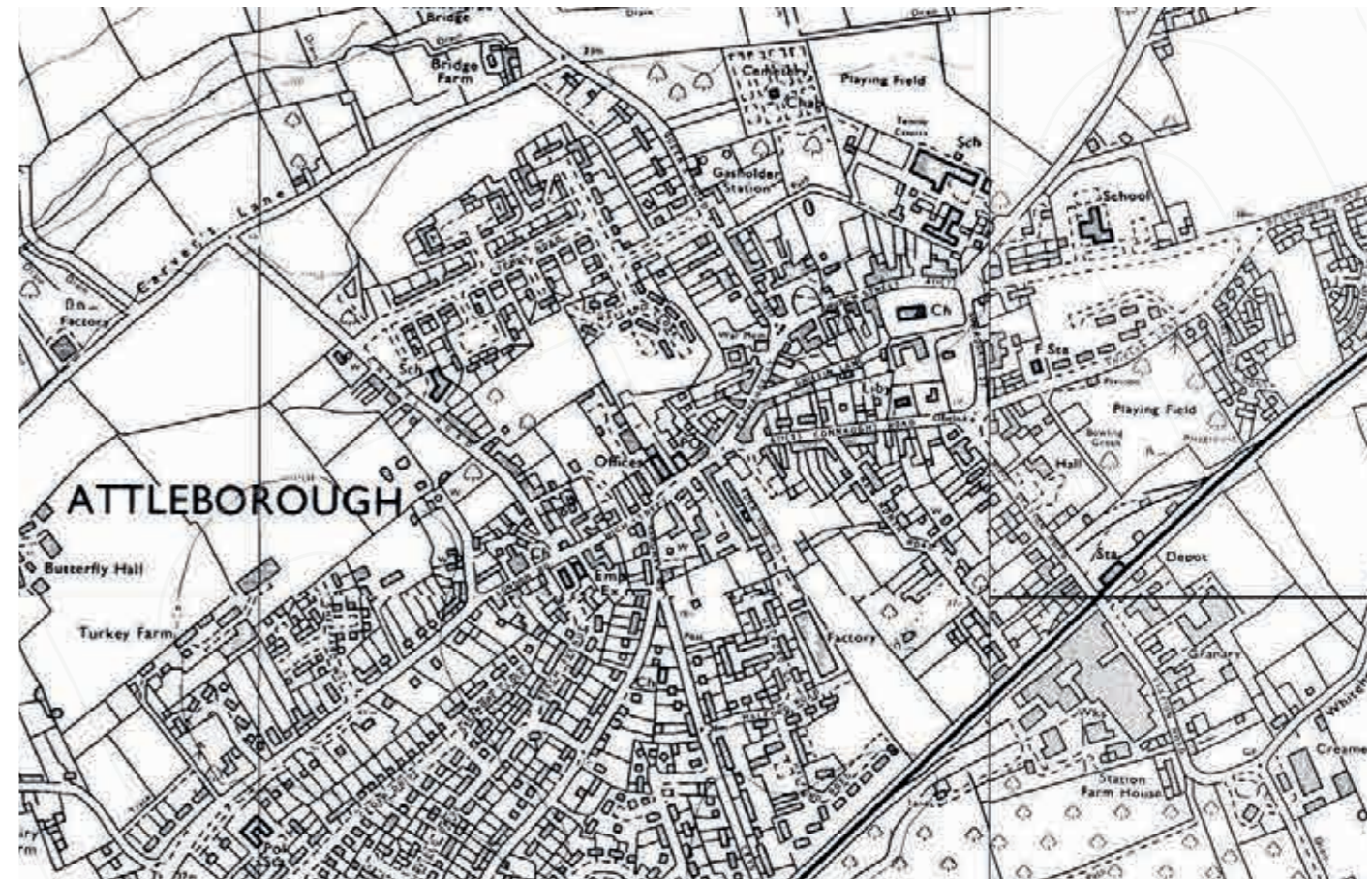
The town centre is structured around the historic core of the High Street, Exchange Street and Church Street. Around the historic core are residential areas with a variety of suburban character, and industrial areas clustered around the station.

In addition to the area-types identified in this study, townscape features, topographical and landscape features, open spaces and views also contribute to the distinctive character of Attleborough. These include:

- A number of historic listed buildings in the town centre, most within the Attleborough Conservation Area, and along the radial routes into the town centre, including the station building. The historic character of the town centre is identified as one of the town's key positive characteristics.
- A small and relatively intimate scale of town centre development, using a variety of generally simple forms, a range of materials and careful details, to create a coherent townscape whole with strong frontages.
- Queen's Square, a key public open space for the town centre that forms a focal point for the town and acts as the setting for a terrace of buildings on its north side that forms a key townscape feature.
- St Mary's Church, a Grade I Listed building, and the green setting of its churchyard at the east end of the town centre.
- Relatively healthy town centre retail and commercial activity with a low vacancy rate for shops and a market.
- Public realm improvements that have provided generous space and an enhanced environment for pedestrians in the town centre.
- Bunn's Bank, a scheduled Ancient Monument to the south of the town.
- Residential streets with some degree of 'green character' – provided by front gardens or verges, with pockets of open space in some neighbourhoods, although street trees are not common.



Attleborough 1884, showing ribbon development along key routes, source: Reproduced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC-BY-NC-SA) licence with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.



Attleborough 1970, showing significant expansion of the town in the post war period, source: Digimap © database right Landmark Information Group Ltd. (All rights reserved 2022)



Queen's Square; the central focal point of the town, which historically, and now recently re-started, hosts the local market. The square provides some of the only publicly accessible green space in the town centre.



Church Street; The eastern end of Church Street hosts St. Mary's Church, a variety of shops, and the library, before transitioning into residential uses further east. The intersection between Church Street and Norwich Road is busy, and marks the start of the gyratory system which circulates through the town centre.



Church Street; the aforementioned church sits in a generous area of open space and mature trees, and dates back to medieval times. The building is the only Grade I Listed building in Attleborough.



Exchange Street; A number of traffic calming measures have been introduced, but there are high rates of traffic and congestion through the town centre impacting on its character.



Queen's Road/Exchange Street; this marks a focal point and key intersection for vehicular access north to the A11, and east to the B1077.



Church Street; the main High Street is busy with a mix of users utilising the local shops and public realm.

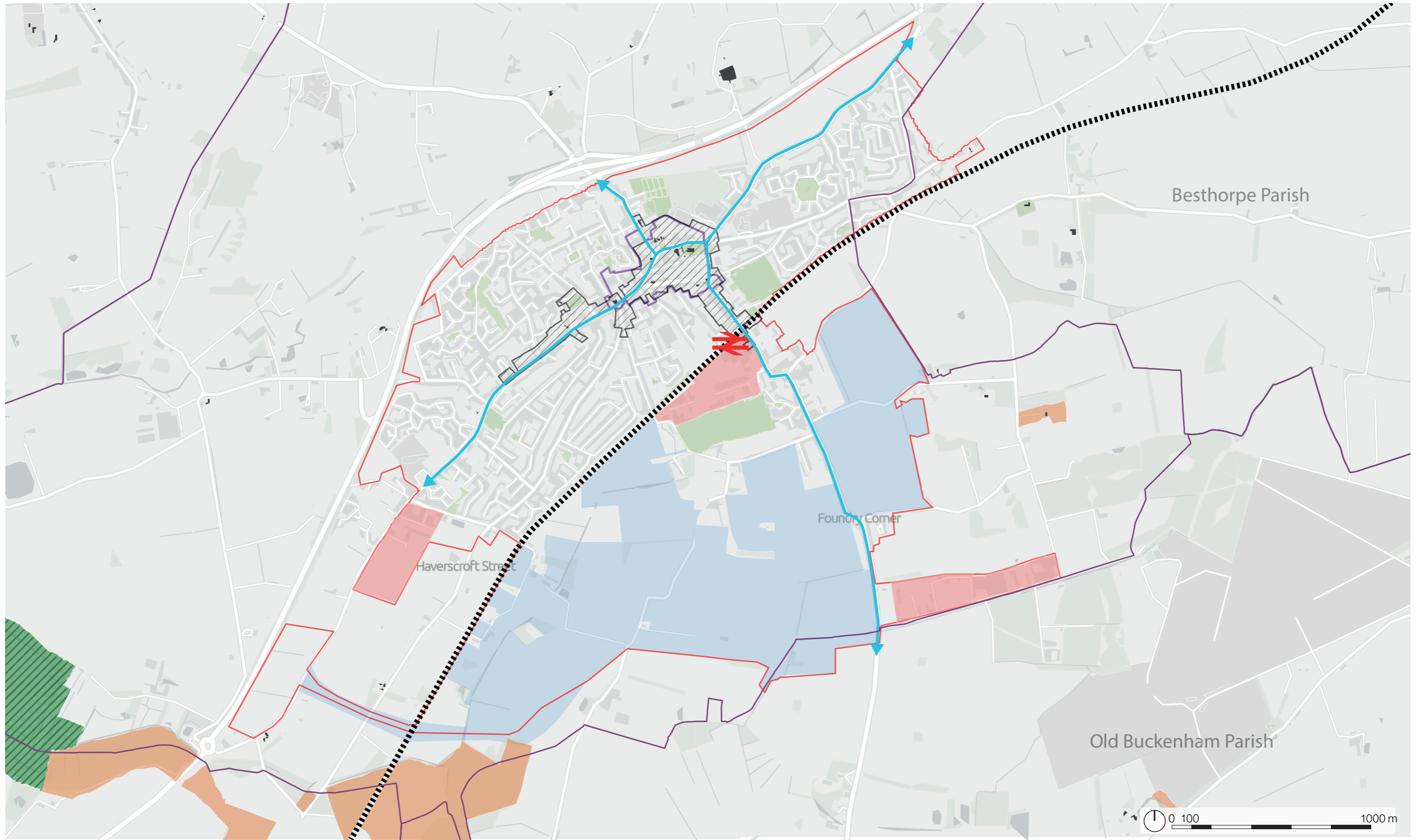


There are many attractive period properties, heritage assets and some listed buildings lining the main routes in and out of the town. Edenside Drive.

## Stakeholder feedback

### Positive characteristics:

- Queen's Square and its successful remodelling
- Community space
- Long high street with wide pavements and lots of shops

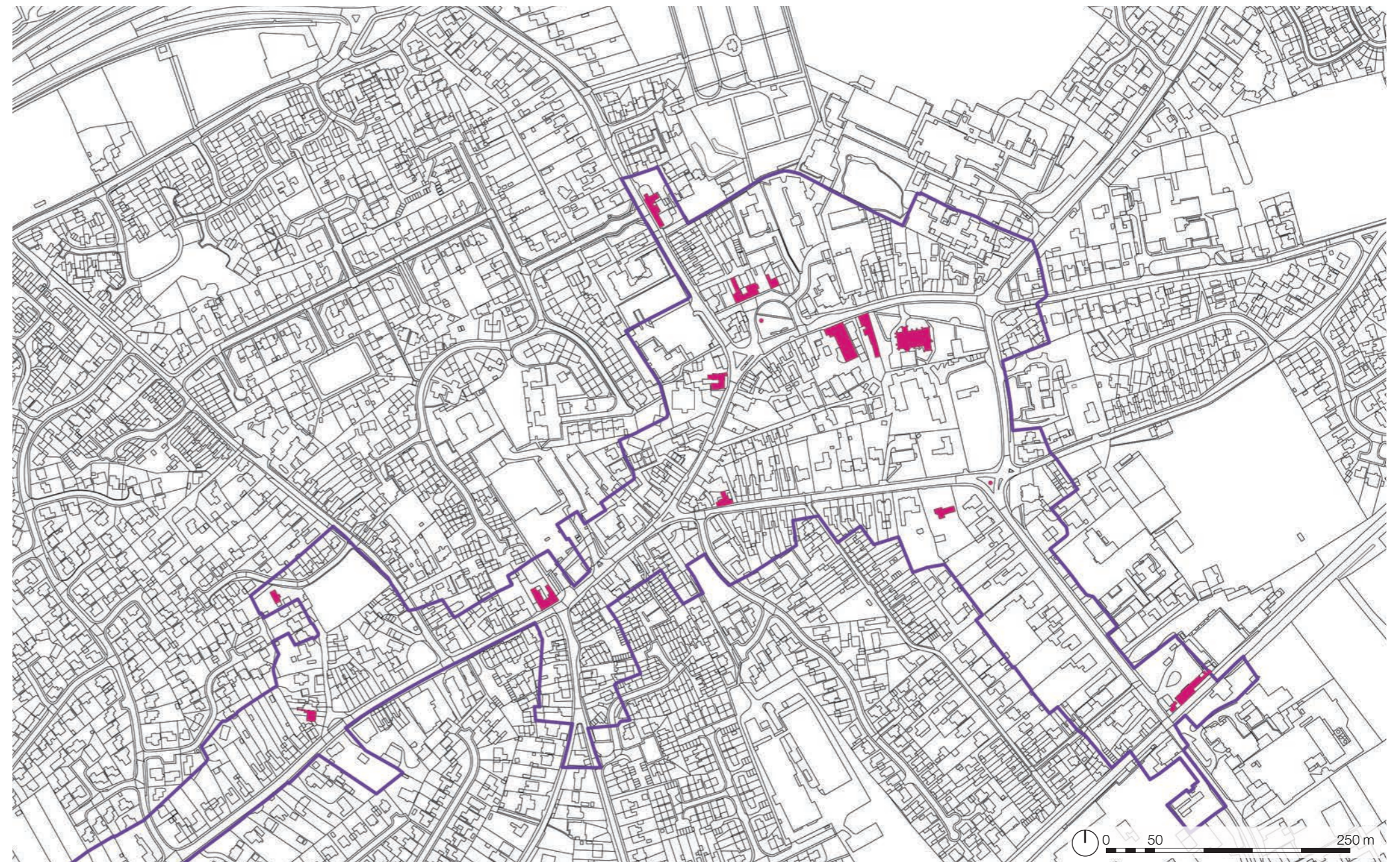


Map of Attleborough showing designations and key characteristics. Parts of the Attleborough settlement boundary and SUE are also in the parishes of Besthorpe and Old Buckenham.

- |                              |                            |                   |                       |                 |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| SSSI                         | Town Centre Boundary       | Listed Building   | County Wildlife Sites | Railway Station |
| Special Area of Conservation | Scheduled Ancient Monument | Conservation Area | Main Vehicular Routes | Railway Line    |
| General Employment Areas     | Settlement Boundary        | Attleborough SUE  | Open Space            | Parish Boundary |

### Areas or issues with potential for change include:

- The railway line currently defines the southern edge of the town with limited crossing points to the proposed areas identified for growth through the Urban Extension. However, the station offers an opportunity to promote sustainable transport to enable positive growth in the town.
- The B1077 route brings traffic into the town centre, and also serves the Gaymer's Industrial Estate, which brings HGVs through the town. As a result there are well documented air and noise pollution issues in the town centre and surrounding residential areas, despite recent public realm improvements. It is hoped that some of these issues will be resolved through the addition of the planned Link Road connecting the B1077 to the A11 to the south of the planned Urban Extension.
- Significant areas of car parking around the town centre, such as at Lidl, Sainsbury's and in Queen's Square, impact upon its character, although they make it convenient to access by car. Their impact is reduced where parking spaces are integrated with the landscape into a positive public space as in Queen's Square.
- Future growth is planned of up to nearly 4,400 homes in a Strategic Urban Extension (SUE) development to the south west of the town, which may impact upon character, although with good walking and cycling links it may also:
  - reinforce the vibrancy of the town centre and the range of services and facilities;
  - provide new parks (such as the Linear Park identified in the Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan), open spaces and play for all Attleborough residents to enjoy.
- Adjoining the built settlement, the landscape setting of Attleborough mainly comprises of moderately sensitive tributary farmland, together with plateau farmland and river valley floor.



Attleborough town centre today, with the Conservation Area outlined in purple and listed buildings highlighted in pink.

### Character area-types

The following character areas have been identified in Attleborough:

- Town centre;
- Town centre fringe;
- Radial route;
- Suburban bungalow;
- Formal suburban;
- Informal suburban;
- Inconsistent suburban; and
- Industrial / retail (out of town)

# Dereham

Dereham lies to the north east of Breckland District, approximately 20 miles from the North Norfolk coastline. The lively market town changed its name from “East Dereham” in the 1990s, and the population is approximately 19,000 (2016).

The topography of Dereham is heavily influenced by Dereham Stream (which eventually feeds the River Wensum) to the west, which is surrounded by a low lying area of common land and meadow, that provides recreational space for the town’s inhabitants. Most of the town centre sits at a higher elevation, and the land continues to rise to the north along Quebec Road.

## History

Archaeological reports suggest that the first settlement on this site dates from the 8<sup>th</sup> century, but it is possible that the settlement is even older and pre-dates the Saxon era. The town grew around St Nicholas Church, which dates to the Norman era, and “Bishop Bonner’s Cottage” in front of the Church (which now houses the Museum), are the oldest surviving domestic buildings in the town - believed to date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Dereham held an important strategic position at the crossroads between east-west and north-south routes across Norfolk. Whilst Dereham didn’t have a navigable river, the town was still an important trading point in the local area.

The layout of the parish changed little up until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, although a number of buildings were lost in fires in 1581 and 1679. Buildings were predominantly arranged around the Market Place, lining the High Street, and brief extensions along Swaffham Road and Swanton Morley Road (see historic maps opposite).

The 19<sup>th</sup> century brought significant population growth to Dereham, whilst other parts of Norfolk saw out-migration. The arrival of the railway in 1847 brought increased activity to the town, including brewing and malting, and connections to King’s Lynn and later Fakenham. The markets became more organised and significant, and the Corn Exchange was built in the Market Place in 1857.

The post-war years saw significant physical expansion of the town, particularly in the north east and south of the town towards Toftwood. These estates tend to be of informal character, though development south of the A47 shows much more variation.

A significant intervention was the construction of the A47 Dereham bypass, which was completed in 1978, and now carries most vehicular traffic east-west into Norwich.

## Dereham Today

Dereham today is a vibrant market town, with a mix of commercial, residential, industrial, and recreational offerings. The town serves a number of nearby villages, and the central Market Place hosts a twice-weekly market. Large areas of the central town are taken up by (often free) car parks. Compared to other similar sized towns, Dereham has a large and well-preserved collection of historic buildings and heritage assets, and the town centre is covered by a Conservation Area.

In addition to the area-types identified in this study, townscape features, topographical and landscape features, open spaces and views also contribute to the distinctive character of Dereham. These include:

- A number of historic listed buildings in the town centre, mostly focussed around the High Street, Market Place, and Red Lion Street. The historic character of the town centre is identified as one of the town’s key positive characteristics. St Nicholas Church, St Withburga Well, and Dereham Town Museum are popular visitor attractions.
- A small, walkable town centre, with good retail provision. It has a linear high street to the south of the market place and secondary shopping streets to the east. The Dereham Shopping Centre was opened in 2005 and introduced pedestrian lanes, although some land remains undeveloped.
- St Nicholas Church and Churchyard provide a central landmark and green space within the town centre.
- Market Place is a key central open space in the town centre that forms a focal point for the town. The space is framed by a range of important historical buildings such as Hill House, the Assembly Rooms, the former Corn Exchange, and the Cowper Memorial Evangelical Church. Traffic and surface car parking dominance around the market square impact negatively on its character.
- A more urban scale of development can be found with 3 storeys around the market place and 2-3 storeys along the narrow high street. Most buildings are of masonry construction using red brick with some render and examples of parapets and strong cornice lines. There is also some timber framing with steep roofs and gables towards the edges of the town centre.
- Important industrial heritage in the form of the buildings around the railway, e.g. the maltings and station and continued existence and operation of the railway line (as a heritage railway).
- Nearby open space, including Scarning Meadows and the Ted Elis Walk.
- Local skyline landmarks include the Dereham Windmill, and the former Water Tower, which is visible from the surrounding area.
- Adjoining the built settlement, the landscape setting of Dereham comprises plateau farmland, tributary farmland and wooded valley of moderate/ high sensitivity, the main exception being to the south and east of the town where tributary farmland is of moderate sensitivity.



Dereham, 1882, illustrating clustered development around the market place and significant Victorian industry (source: Reproduced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC-BY-NC-SA) licence with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.)



Dereham, 1970, source: Digimap © database right Landmark Information Group Ltd. (All rights reserved 2022)



19th century terraced housing is a feature of areas around the town centre fringe, reflecting the town's growth in the industrial period



Bishop's Bonner Cottage Museum is a rare thatched building in the heart of the town centre.



The Maltings are Grade II listed buildings that have been converted into residential accommodation.



St Nicholas' Church is situated to the west of the town centre and is a key landmark.



Modern development in the town centre follows the same building line and scale as historic development across the street.



Dereham market place is currently used for car parking (when not in use as a market) and is surrounded by many listed buildings, such as the Orion cinema.

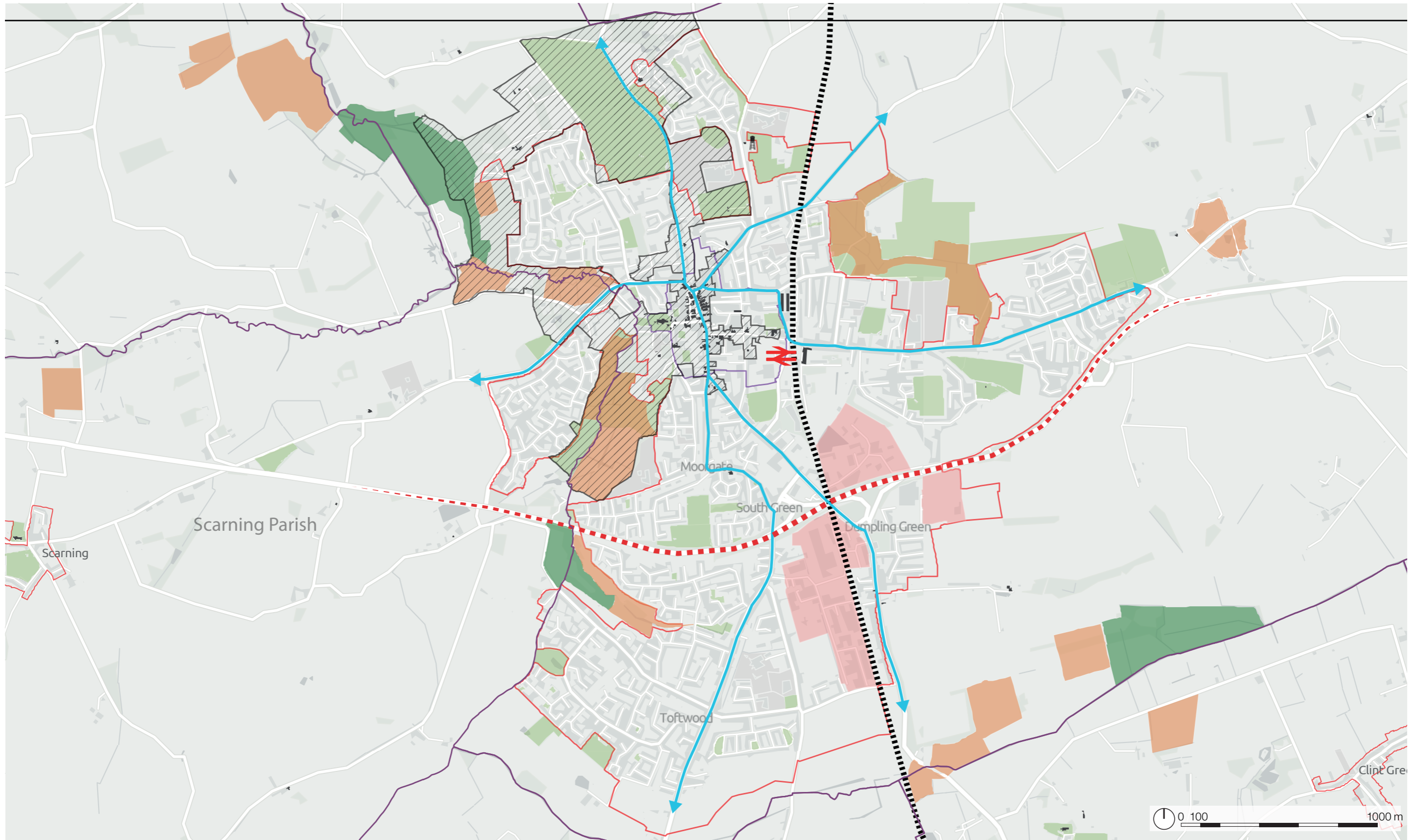


Dereham water tower is a landmark feature that is widely visible as it is situated in north Dereham which is on higher ground to the town centre.

## Stakeholder feedback

### Positive characteristics:

- Plentiful provision of green space in the town
- Heritage, of the town centre and the distinctive industrial and railway heritage
- Sense of community with neighbouring villages



Map of Dereham showing designations and key characteristics. Part of the Dereham settlement boundary is also in the parish of Scarning to the west.

- |                          |                      |                   |                           |                                |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| SSSI                     | Town Centre Boundary | Listed Building   | Barrier to movement (A47) | Main Vehicular Routes (Radial) |
| General Employment Areas | Settlement Boundary  | Conservation Area |                           |                                |
| County Wildlife Sites    | Open Space           | Railway Station   |                           |                                |
| Parish Boundary          | Water Tower          | Railway Line      |                           |                                |



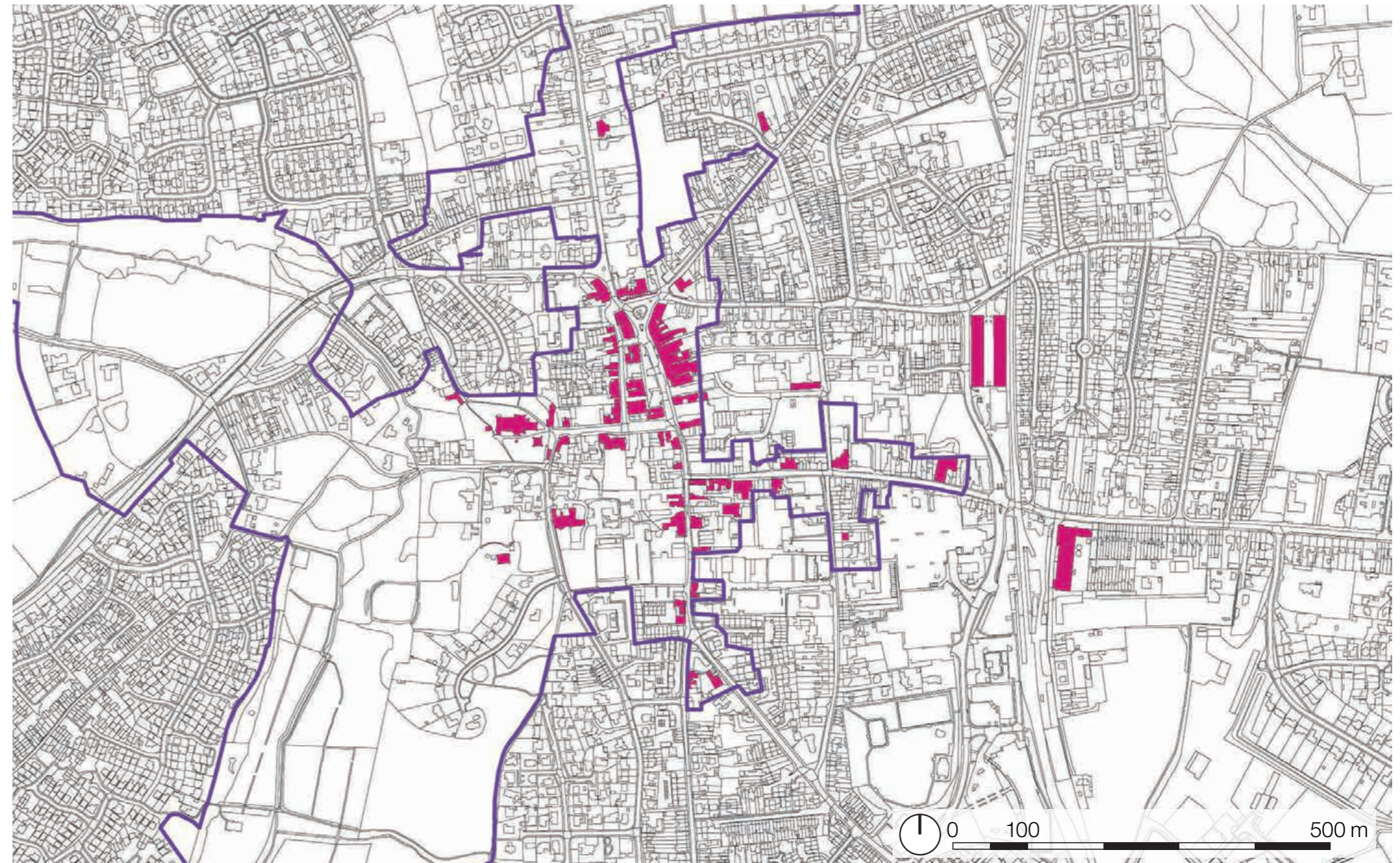
**Areas or issues with potential for change include:**

- Large areas of surface car parking in and near the town centre have a negative impact on the activity levels in these areas.
- Low density especially to the east of the town also impacts on the town centre's vibrancy.
- Increased town centre living would have a positive impact on bringing footfall and activity to these areas.
- Plans for a 160-acre country park, Dereham Neatherd Park, to the north east of the town, would provide a large area of dedicated and continuous open space to residents.
- Improved and more frequent public transport would improve accessibility within the town and to the surrounding areas.
- The focal point of the town, the market place, is often very congested with poor air quality and this is a common issue raised. Suggestions from stakeholders have included pedestrianising areas and increased greenery, and spill-out activities, such as markets, food and drinks.
- Pedestrian infrastructure in the town could be improved with areas that have narrow pavements benefiting from traffic calming.
- Enhancing existing footpaths and byways by linking them together would create a better network and improved access to the surrounding countryside for pedestrians and cyclists in Dereham.

**Character area-types**

The following character areas have been identified in Dereham:

- Town centre;
- Town centre fringe;
- Radial route
- Suburban bungalow;
- Formal suburban;
- Informal suburban;
- Inconsistent suburban;
- Leafy detached; and
- Industrial / retail (out of town)



Dereham town centre today, with the Conservation Area outlined in purple and listed buildings highlighted in pink.

# Swaffham

Swaffham is a small market town within Breckland district, located 19km east of King's Lynn. The population of Swaffham, as of the 2011 census, is 7,258, and the 2020 estimate is 8,333.

The town is surrounded by predominantly arable farmland to the east and north. The "Breckland Heathland with Plantation" landscape type surrounds the west and south of the town, and is defined primarily by the land use of farmland, historic parklands and plantation woodland, and distinctive Scots pine belts. The surrounding area is sparsely populated with a number of small nucleated villages.

## History

Swaffham prospered in the Middle Ages as part of the Honour of Richmond which afforded it considerable trade advantages. Its prominence on the main route north to south meant it became an important trading route, and the large market place became a focal point for this. The weekly Saturday market was established before 1215. The iconic Buttercross, the town's second market cross, was built by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Orford and presented to the town in 1783, and represents a focal point for the town.

The main focus for development during the 18<sup>th</sup> century was around the Market Place and London Street, and this forms the historic core of the town. Rebuilding after the great fire of 1775 and the refronting of houses to follow architectural tastes and fire regulations of the 18<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the Georgian character of the town centre. There are a number of well-preserved Georgian buildings facing onto the market square, particularly on the western side. These were built at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Swaffham was renowned for its horse racing, hare coursing, and theatre. The Conservation Area (established in 1974) now covers most of the immediate town centre, and expands east to include areas of open space including Campingland and the Manor House.

The Brecklands Landscape Character Assessment Settlement Fringe Study shows that significant development has occurred in the town since 1938. The character of the settlement edge to the east of the town is defined by late 1970s/80s brick built dwellings. The western settlement edge displays a range of development typologies and styles, including traditional brick and flint barns, to 1970s development including bungalows. To the south of the town, there are many recent examples of modern suburban development.

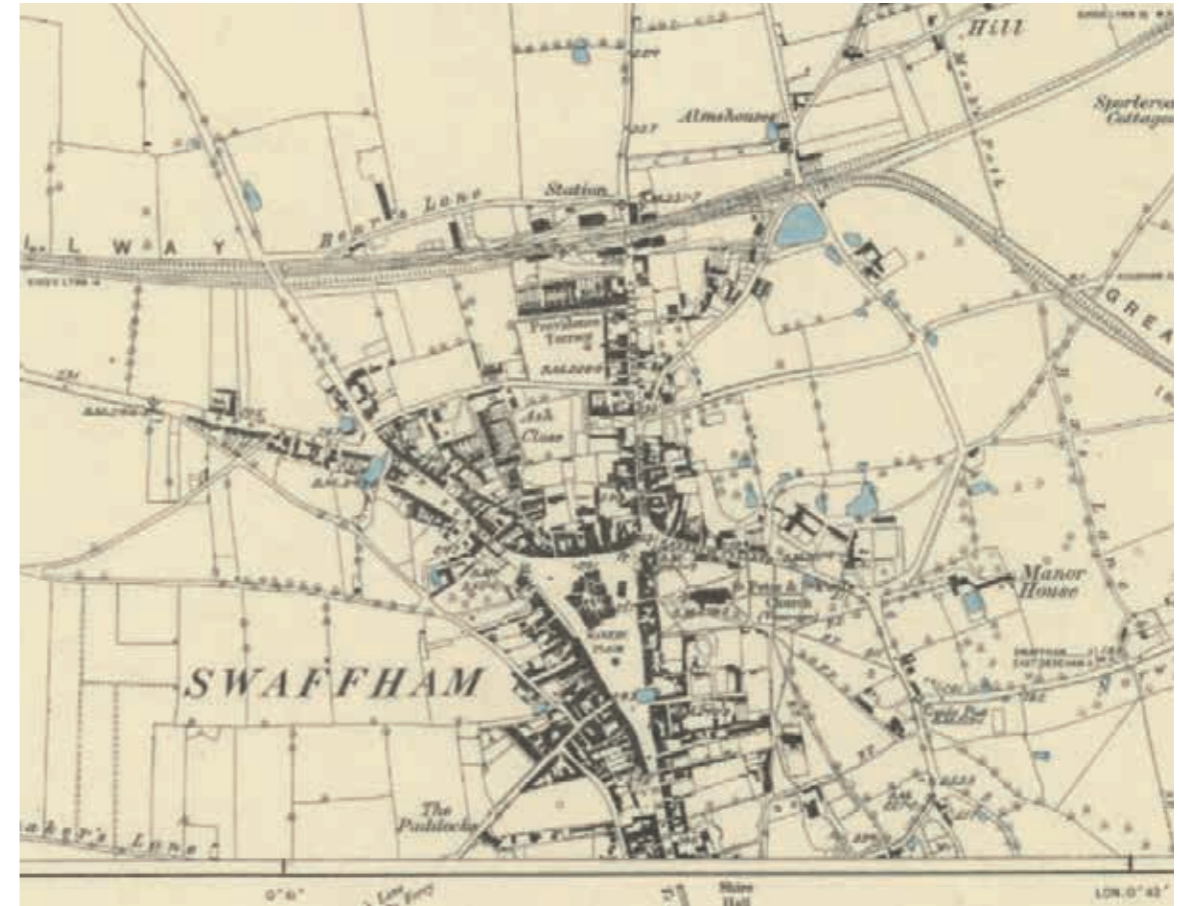
The town was served by the Great Eastern Railway line from 1847 up until 1968, when it was axed in the Beeching Cuts. After World War II, development saw many old buildings in the town centre being demolished and replaced with post war retail buildings, for example Angel Inn was demolished to make way for a Woolworths, and a number of town centre buildings were demolished for a bank and shopping centre. The A47 bypass was built to the north of the town in 1981, which means east-west traffic no longer flows through the town centre. However, the A1065 still passes through the town centre carrying north-south traffic.

## Swaffham today

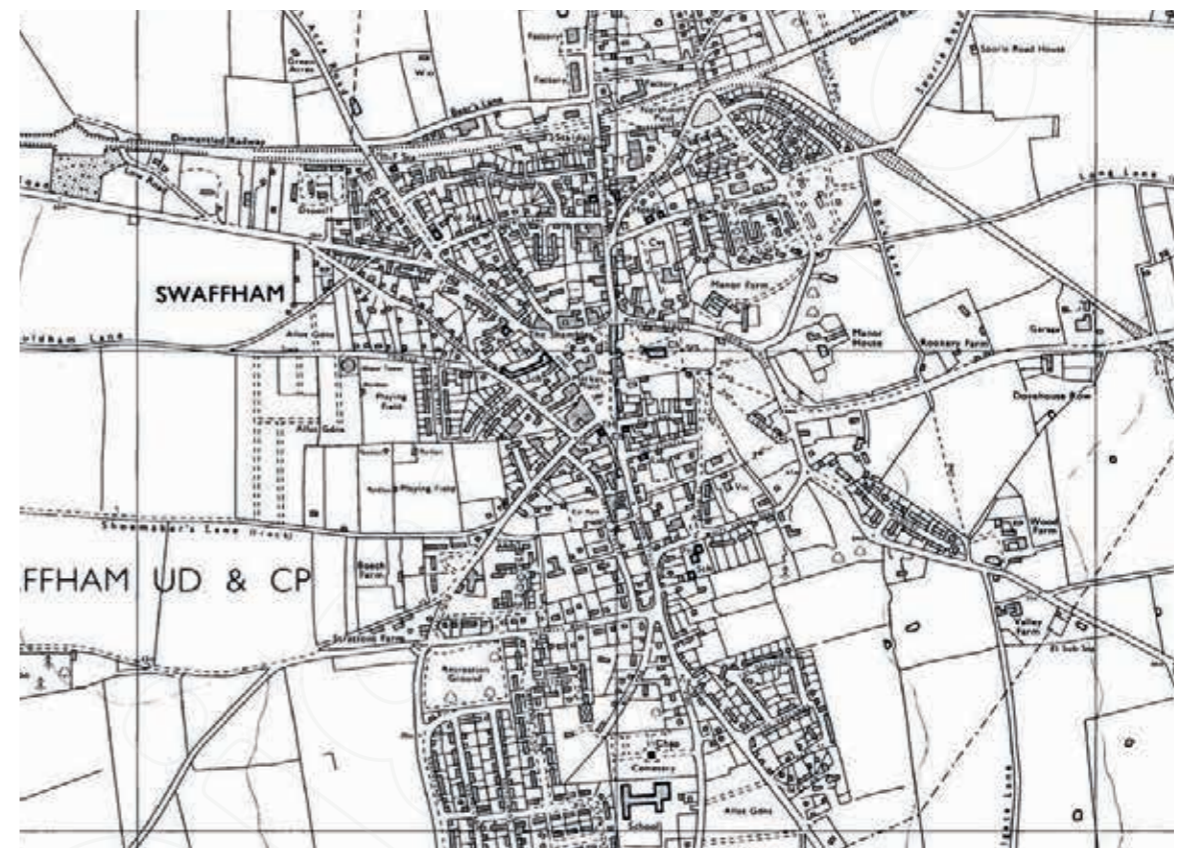
The historic Market Place continues to define the main centre of the town today, and consistent building frontages frame the area well, providing a sense of enclosure. The town hosts a weekly market, and has a variety of amenities including cafes, restaurants, and independent and chain retail outlets. Other attractions include the museum Swaffham Heritage, the Swaffham Assembly Rooms, and many nearby visitor locations such as Castleacre Priory, Oxburgh Hall and Houghton-on-the-hill church.

In addition to the area-types identified in this study, townscape features, topographical and landscape features, open spaces and views also contribute to the distinctive character of Swaffham. These include:

- Local views of community importance are identified in the Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan. These are shown on the map on page 28, and include the view of the Market Place from the south along London Street; the vista down Mangate Street towards Manor House; and various views looking towards the town from the A47.
- A series of historic listed buildings predominantly around the perimeter of the triangular Market Place. The Church of St Peter and St Paul, and the Buttercross are the only Grade I Listed buildings and are key landmarks for the town. The rest of the buildings around the Market Place are predominantly red-brick Georgian buildings (some rendered), with some evidence of 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century fabric behind the façades. Many of these have now been converted into offices.
- Other important historic buildings in the town centre include Corn Hall (19<sup>th</sup> century), Oakleigh House (refronted in 1750s), the Assembly rooms (19<sup>th</sup> century) and Oakleigh House (refronted in the 1750s) and the Assembly Rooms (18<sup>th</sup> century, refurbished in 1817).
- The scale of development in the town centre is modest with a maximum of 3/4 storey buildings which gradually reduce to 2 storeys moving south along London Street.
- The Market Place provides a pleasant pedestrian environment, though it is bisected by two main roads which are not pedestrian friendly especially on the eastern side. The central triangular "island" is well-used, but dominated by parking on non-market days. Most of the retail/commercial offerings are within the immediate Market Place, making the compact town centre easily walkable.
- Compared to some of the other market towns, Swaffham has more accessible green space within close proximity to the centre. For example, the churchyard, Campingland and the Antinghams.
- The town centre includes a mix of generous, wide-fronted historic town houses combined with smaller cottages and is almost entirely concentrated around the large market place.
- The wind turbine is a prominent feature to the entrance of Swaffham.
- The town's historic settlement pattern, with the main streets radiating out of the town centre, and smaller street, lanes and closes in between them, has remained largely unchanged.
- Adjoining the built settlement, the landscape setting of Swaffham comprises plateau farmland and heathland with plantation of moderate/ high sensitivity, the main exception being immediately to the east and south east where tributary farmland is of moderate sensitivity.



Swaffham, 1883 (source: Reproduced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC-BY-NC-SA) licence with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.)



Swaffham, 1970, source: Digimap © database right Landmark Information Group Ltd. (All rights reserved 2022)



Swaffham Buttercross. The market place is the focal point of the town, comprising the setting for a number of historic buildings.



St Peter and St Paul church is a landmark feature of the town, here viewed from the eastern side of the market place.



The Swaffham wind turbine is a landmark feature outside the town centre that is distinctive to the town and widely visible.



Historic streets on the edge of the town centre with continuous street frontages contribute to its character and the gentle density of the town centre



There are many listed buildings in the town centre that contribute to its character, some of which are not currently in very good condition.

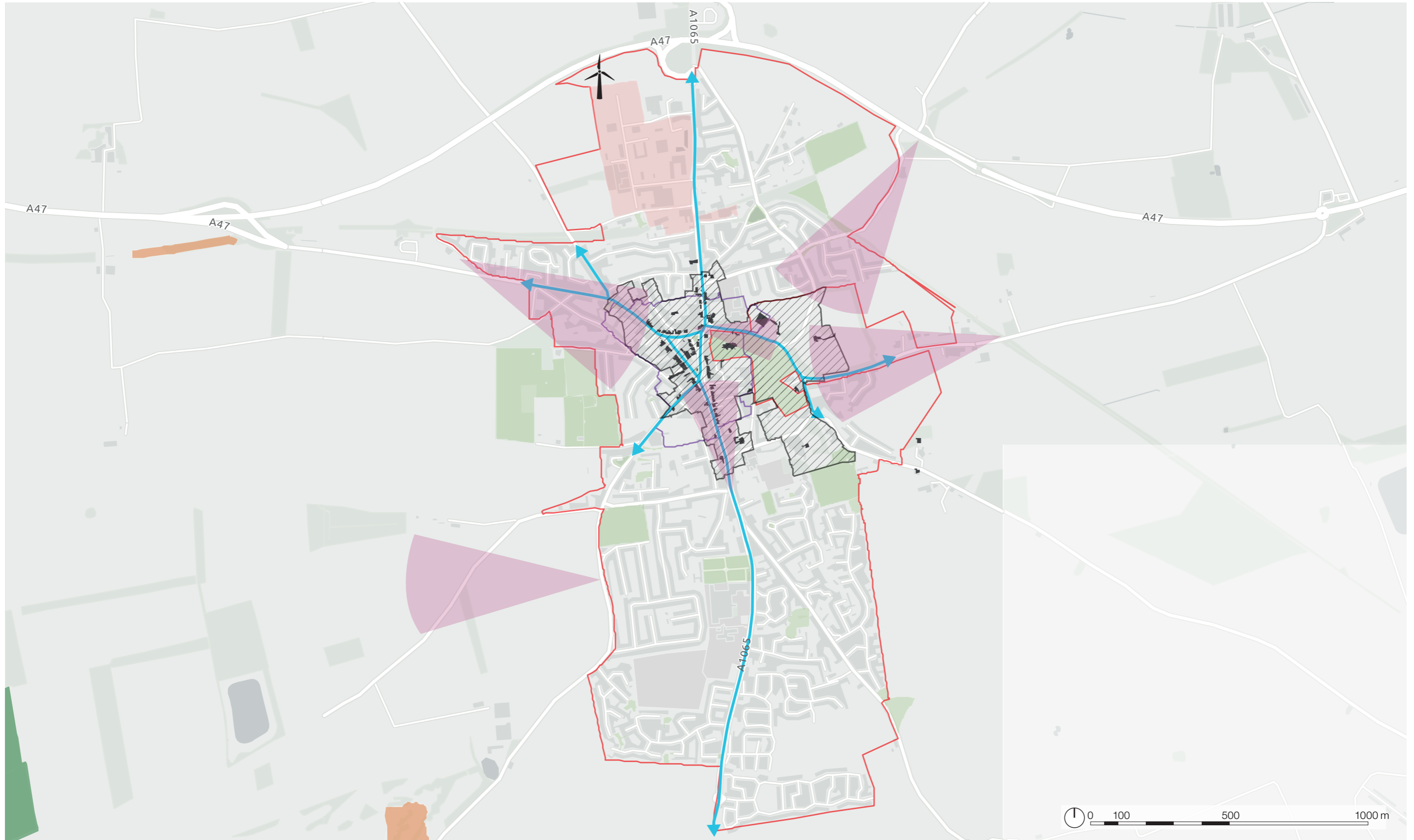


New town centre landscaping has integrated areas of parking within the town centre well into the public realm, creating a more pleasant environment for pedestrians

## Stakeholder feedback

### Positive characteristics:

- The distinct and well preserved Georgian heritage of the town, especially around the market place
- Its continued thriving status as a market town, built on its history as a coaching centre on an important Norfolk crossroads
- Proximity to the Brecks and the Peddars Way



Map of Swaffham showing designations and key characteristics

- |                          |                      |                   |   |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|
| SSSI                     | Town Centre Boundary | Listed Building   | Views of particular community importance (as identified in the Swaffham Neighbourhood Plan) |
| General Employment Areas | Settlement Boundary  | Conservation Area | Main Vehicular Routes (Radial)  |
| County Wildlife Sites    | Open Space           | Wind Turbine      |   |

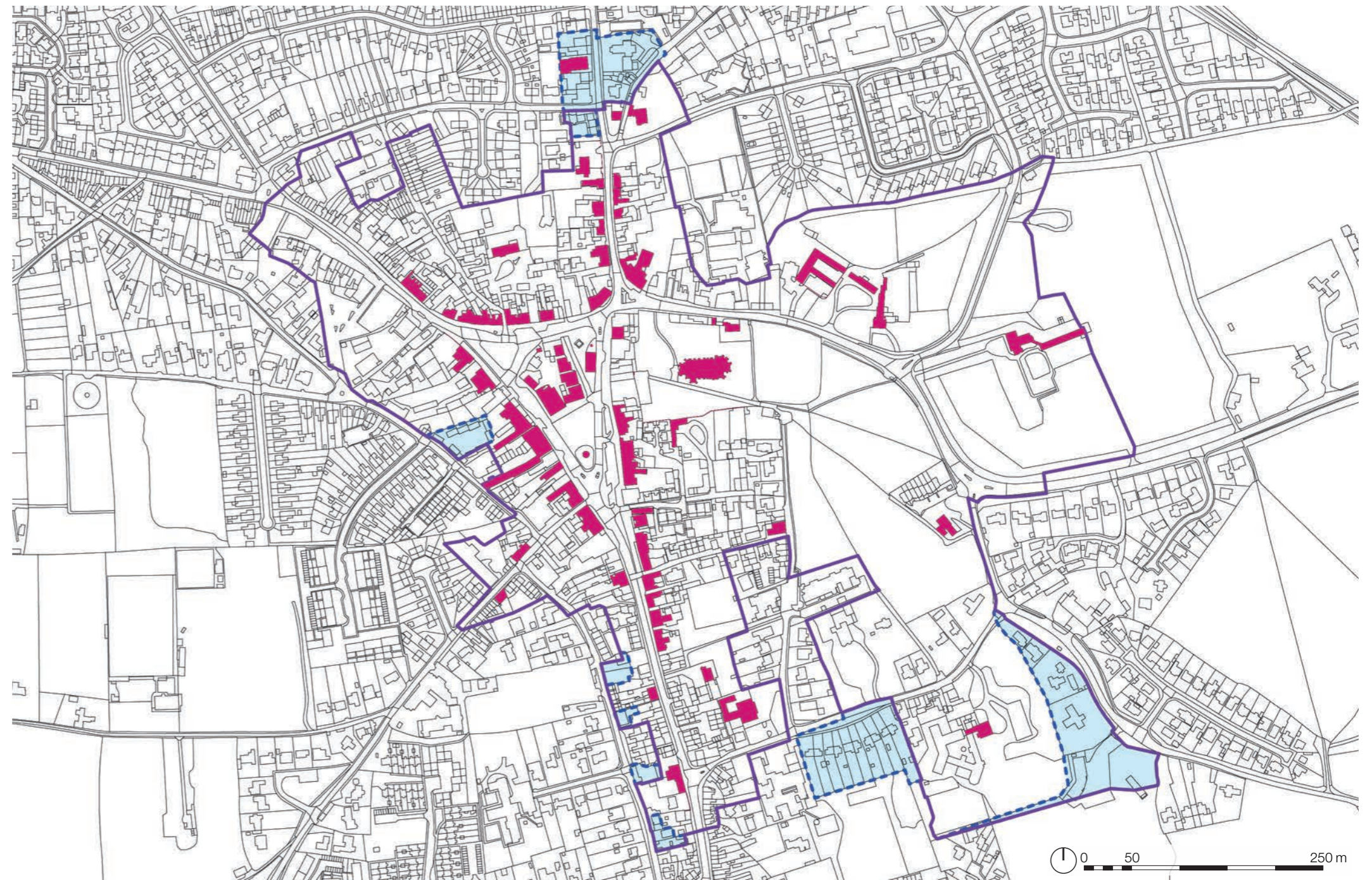
**Areas or issues with potential for change include:**

- Historic buildings in the town centre are key to the character of it, but there are a number in poor condition that detracts from their character and that of the surrounding area. Potential boundary changes to the Conservation Area (currently out for consultation in early 2022).
- The town centre has a retail vacancy rate of 7.4% (2021 Market Town Report), which is slightly above the Norfolk average.
- Large volumes of traffic running through the town centre, a lack of pedestrian crossings and poor pedestrian routes contribute negatively to the character and walkability of the town.
- The Allocation sites identified in the Breckland Local Plan outline a series of sites to the north and eastern peripheries of the town. There are significant development pressures in Swaffham, and 700 new dwellings are identified in the Local Plan allocations, to be delivered within the Plan period (by 2036).
- It is important to enable new residents to support the regeneration of the centre with easy access to it, particularly through walking and cycling.

**Character area-types**

The following character areas have been identified in Swaffham:

- Town centre;
- Town centre fringe;
- Radial route;
- Suburban bungalow;
- Formal suburban;
- Informal suburban;
- Inconsistent suburban;
- Leafy detached; and
- Industrial / retail (out of town)



Swaffham town centre today, with the Conservation Area outlined in purple, the proposed alterations to the Conservation Area in the dashed blue line, and listed buildings highlighted in pink.

# Thetford

Thetford is a historic market town in the south of Breckland district. The town's historic built heritage and distinct landscape setting make it a destination for tourism and recreation. It has a population of approximately 26,000 people (2016).

The river valley running through the town centre (where the River Thet and Little Ouse River meet) is unique in Breckland and a key asset to the town.

The surrounding landscape is sensitive, with Thetford Forest to the west of the town and the River Thet and Lower Thet - Little Ouse valleys to the east and south. Agricultural land surrounds the town on the northern edge, defined by arable farmland interspersed with scots pine shelterbelt hedgerows and mixed plantation woodland blocks.

Thetford Forest (to the west of the town) is an important landscape feature, recognised internationally for its significance as a habitat that supports unique flora and fauna. It is also a popular local and tourist destination.

## History

Thetford has a long and rich history as a settlement. The town evolved from a river crossing of the ancient Icknield Way which is one of the oldest roads in Britain. Its importance was such that the Iceni built fortifications to guard it around 300BC.

The town went on to be the Saxon capital of East Anglia during the Viking age, and the town continued to be an important settlement into the Norman period, during which time the Priory was constructed. The Domesday Survey records the population of the town in 1086 at around 4,500, making it the country's sixth largest town.

By the sixteenth century Thetford was a successful market town, with the Ancient House on White Hart Street the best surviving example of a merchant's house from the period. A few additional examples of medieval architecture survive, such as the Bell Hotel and 1, 3 and 5 Castle Street.

During the medieval period the market place was located on the eastern edge of the town, moving in the late 18th century to its current location.

Significant growth and change came to Thetford during the industrial age when the town became a manufacturing hub, notably of steam engines, fertilisers and malt. The railway arrived in the mid-19th century, connecting Thetford on the Ely-Norwich line. The population of the town doubled in the 19th century and the town expanded as a result.

Thetford then went through a period of huge growth after World War II. The town was part of the London overspill, which transformed the settlement. Between the 1950s and 70s around 3,000 homes were built in Thetford, more than tripling its population. Notable examples of this growth include the Barnham Cross Common estate, began in the late 1950s, Redcastle Furze estate in the Radburn style (with

housing fronting onto open space rather than the street) and Abbey Farm estate, began in 1967. The population of Thetford was 21,000 by 1981 and the town was transformed in size and character.

Traffic was routed out of the town centre in the 1960s and the current A11 bypass was built around 1990.

## Thetford today

Thetford town centre is focused around the historic core of the town, around the Market Place and King Street, around which there is a retail core, and multiple museums and community uses. There are notable areas of open space within the town, including Castle Park, Melford Common, Barnham Cross Common and the river valley. Around the historic core are large areas of suburban housing, often with strong and distinct character, built up until today.

In addition to the area-types identified in this study, townscape features, topographical and landscape features, open spaces and views also contribute to the distinctive character of Thetford. These include:

- Thetford town centre has a large number of listed buildings focused around the historic core of the town which is covered by a Conservation Area. The retail core is centred around the Market Place and King Street areas.
- The town centre has a tight network of intimate streets, generally with a small scale, well-defined and enclosed by continuous built form and with a predominance of flint and gault brickwork, although also with insensitive larger-scale retail developments.
- Proximity to Thetford Forest and its leisure and tourism activities.
- Notable heritage assets that attract visitors including Thetford Priory, Castle Mound and Thetford Guildhall which houses the Dad's Army Museum. The Charles Burrell Museum and The Museum of Thetford Life in the Grade I listed Ancient House are also popular.
- The town's three statues of Thomas Paine, Captain Mainwaring and Maharajah Duleep Singh also attract visitors from far and wide.
- Thetford riverside - rare public open space along a river valley in east of England market towns.
- A number of other green open spaces such as Castle Park and Melford Common.
- The location of the town on the railway line, providing sustainable transport to Cambridge and Norwich, as well as its proximity to Stansted airport and the A11 route to Norwich, all contribute to its connectivity.
- Markets continue to be held in the town centre on Tuesdays and Saturdays.
- Proximity to Breckland SSSI, SAC and SPA wildlife designated sites due to significant populations of rare bird species of Stone Curlew, Nightjar and Woodlark.
- Nunnery Lakes nature reserve to the south of Thetford and the Breckland Meres to the north of the town are also significant local wildlife and landscape features.
- Adjoining the built settlement, the landscape setting of Thetford comprises plateau farmland and heathland with plantation of moderate/high sensitivity, the main exception being immediately to the east and south east where tributary farmland is of moderate sensitivity.



Thetford pre-1930, showing clustered development around the market square and St. Peter's Church (source: Reproduced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC-BY-NC-SA) licence with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.)



Thetford 1970, showing major growth in the post-war years, source: Digimap © database right Landmark Information Group Ltd. (All rights reserved 2022)



Thetford Priory was one of the largest monasteries in East Anglia, and contributed to the town's powerful status during the medieval period. Extensive remains of the lower walls of the church and cloister survive, as well as elements of the 14th century gate house.



Thetford's river valley open space is a distinct area within the town and a valuable area providing attractive green space



Thetford market place is surrounded by largely two storey buildings, and contains public seating and a number of trees. Two weekly markets continue to be held in the space.



Thetford's current market place (relocated in the late 18th century) is framed by the landmark of the Guildhall



King Street, one of the key retail streets in the town centre, is pedestrianised



Ancient House (Grade I listed, built c.1490) is an example of late-medieval Tudor architecture

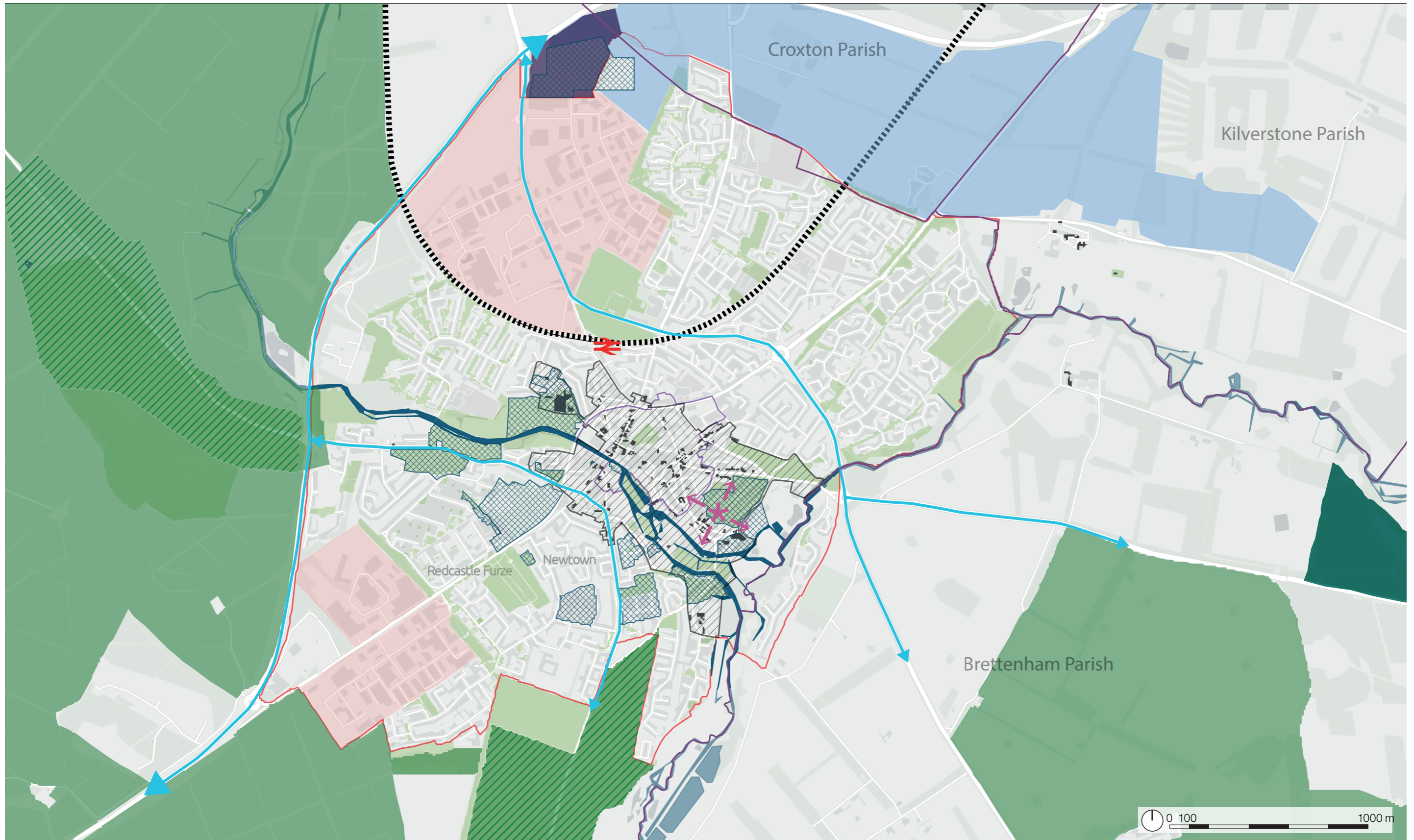


Castle Mound provides a unique viewing opportunity over the town

## Stakeholder feedback

### Positive characteristics:

- The heritage of the town and its central importance in the history of Norfolk and the whole of East Anglia
- The town's position as a gateway to Breckland and Norfolk
- Many distinctive assets, such as landscaping in the improved river frontage and the thriving market



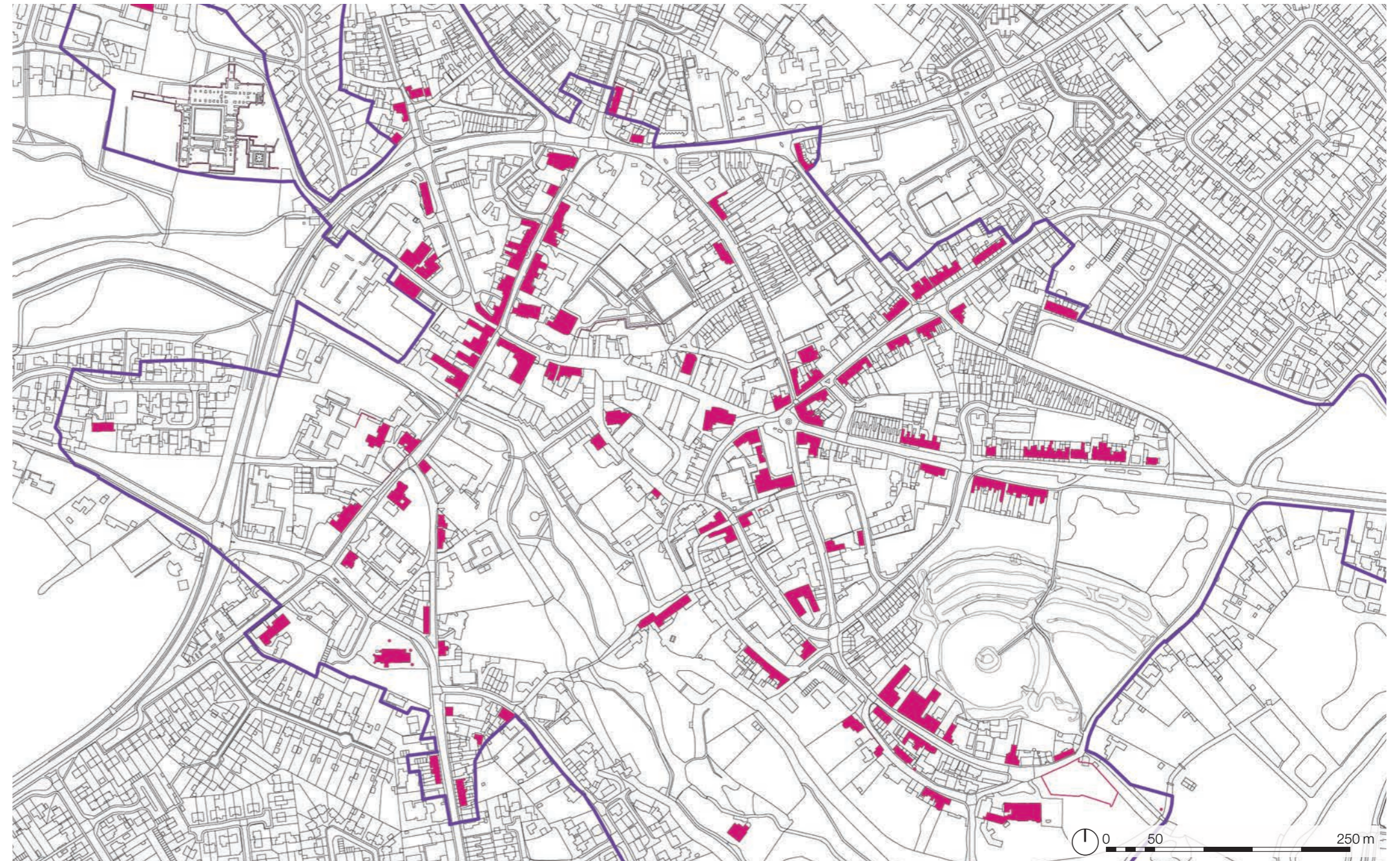
Map of Thetford showing designations and key characteristics. Parts of the Thetford settlement boundary and SUE are also in the parishes of Croxton (north) and Brettenham (east).

- |                                 |                            |                       |                          |                          |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| SSSI                            | Railway Line               | Open Space            | General Employment Areas | Important Views          |
| Site of Archaeological Interest | Thetford Urban Extension   | Listed Building       | Main Vehicular Routes    | Railway Station          |
| Special Area of Conservation    | Town Centre Boundary       | Conservation Area     | Settlement Boundary      | River Thet / Little Ouse |
| Historic Parks and Gardens      | Scheduled Ancient Monument | Thetford Castle Mound | Parish Boundary          |                          |



### Areas or issues with potential for change include:

- Major regeneration of Abbey Estate, currently being explored.
- An Urban Extension to the north / north-east of the town delivering up to 4,000 new homes has the potential to provide a much-needed mix of housing types and affordable homes.
- Thetford Area Action Plan outlines a vision for the town, including commitments on climate change, biodiversity, housing and community health improvements.
- The number of vacant retail units in the town is higher than the Norfolk average (9.5% according to the 2021 Market Town Report), and there is a concentration of vacant units in the centre of the town.
- Significant retail expansion on the outskirts of the town has impacted footfall within the town centre.
- The river valley is a unique and important characteristic that could be better connected and integrated into the town centre. Currently there is little frontage or activity on the riverside, and a number of car parks in proximity within the town centre. There are also a limited number of crossings.
- The Stone Curlew Primary Buffer zone borders the town on the south, east and west sides, impacting the potential for future development.
- Improvements to cycle/footpaths to the surrounding countryside would increase access to the forest and long distance footpaths.
- The A11 bypass is a barrier to accessing the surrounding countryside on foot or by cycle, providing few opportunities to safely cross.
- The railway line is another barrier to pedestrian and cycle movement within the town, with a limited number of crossings.



Thetford town centre today, with the Conservation Area outlined in purple and listed buildings highlighted in pink.

### Character area-types

The following character area-types have been identified in Thetford:

- Town centre;
- Town centre fringe;
- Suburban bungalow;
- Formal suburban;
- Informal suburban;
- Experimental suburban;
- Inconsistent suburban;
- Leafy detached;
- Industrial / retail (out of town); and
- River valley

# Watton

Watton is a historic market town located in central Breckland district, with a population of nearly 8,000 people (2016).

Watton is located on the north-eastern edge of the Brecks, a highly distinctive landscape composed of native forests, lines of Scots pines (or 'Deal rows') and historic heathland.

Land to the north of Watton is tributary farmland, to the south is plateau farmland and to the west is categorised as heathland with plantation.

Watton is the only market town in Breckland that does not have a market place (although historically one existed) and unlike the other market towns in this study is not in close proximity to a trunk road.

## History

Evidence of human activity in the parish dates to the Mesolithic period. The presence of a barrow on land at the RAF base suggests that the area has been settled since the Bronze Age.

The parish of Watton was established during the Norman period and it was mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Book. At the time Watton consisted of a church, mill, woodland and pigs. The town was granted a market charter during King John's reign (1190-1216) and still holds a weekly market on Wednesdays.

A fire in 1674 destroyed much of the medieval town, although a number of timber-framed buildings survive in the town centre today.

World War II was significant in the history of Watton, when RAF Watton was used as a base for both the RAF and the USAAF. The airbase played a significant economic and social role in the town, contributing directly and indirectly to its 20<sup>th</sup> century growth and leaving a military legacy today. The base continued to be used during the cold war and was closed in the 1990s. It has now been partly developed as a housing estate, Blenheim Grange. The runway remains to the south-east of the town.

Watton expanded significantly in the post war period. Early post war development included the George Trollope estate to the south of the High Street built in the 1950s and Nelson court (north of the High Street) built in the 1960s.

More modern developments tend to be more informal in layout and are often not well connected to each other, being accessed off the main routes running through the town.

## Watton today

Watton town centre is linear in form, focused around the historic core of the High Street, which runs west of the crossroads intersecting with the significant Dereham to Thetford route, the A1075.

Suburban residential neighbourhoods are predominately located around the historic core, and have largely been developed off the east-west route of the town. Industrial and larger retail units are located at the eastern and western ends of the town.

In addition to the area-types identified in this study, townscape features, topographical and landscape features, open spaces and views also contribute to the distinctive character of Watton. These include:

- The Clock House (Grade II), built after the 1674 fire.
- A number of other listed buildings from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, largely sitting within the Conservation Area and including Wayland Hall which houses Watton's museum and Harvey House. There are also a number of non-listed but locally significant historic buildings identified, such as the Old Brewery and the Old Gas House.
- St Mary's Church, which is Grade II\* listed dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century but there have been alterations in following centuries since.
- Church Walk, a tree lined pedestrian walk which has existed as an avenue since the late-18<sup>th</sup> century.
- A small scale of town centre development along a broad street, with 2-3 storey buildings and simple forms, mostly masonry construction with a number of buildings with timber frames (notable by steeper roof pitches and gables onto the street). Materials are generally red brick and white render.
- Loch Neaton pleasure garden, which was originally a railway ballast pit formed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and then converted into an ornamental pond. It is now a much-valued open space (of which there are not many within the town) used for fishing and recreation.
- Notable open space nearby includes the Wayland Wood, an ancient woodland with SSSI status.
- Pingos, a prehistoric landscape feature of pools formed during the last ice age, are also found in the Brecks, with the most notable example found south of Watton at Thompson Common.
- RAF Watton airfield, now disused the runway remains to the south east of the town.
- Some residential areas have pockets of open space that contribute positively to the landscape character of the town, which does not generally have much open space, although they are generally low quality grass lacking biodiversity.
- The west and south west of the town is located within the 15000m primary buffer zone of Breckland SPA.
- Adjoining the built settlement, the landscape setting of Watton comprises of tributary farmland of moderate/high sensitivity to the north, the Brecks heathland with plantation of moderate sensitivity to the west, and plateau farmland of low sensitivity to the south and west of the town.



Watton, 1882, showing linear development along the High Street (source: Reproduced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC-BY-NC-SA) licence with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.)



Watton, 1980, source: Digimap © database right Landmark Information Group Ltd. (All rights reserved 2022)



Watton High Street is the centre for commercial activity in the town.



Watton museum is located in Wayland Hall, on Middle Street. On-street parking in the town centre can be visually dominating, as in this example.



Church walk provides attractive green space amenity to pedestrians.



St Mary's Church is the only Grade II\* listed building in town, sitting to the east of the town centre.



Building heights in the centre of town are mostly two storey, with some three storey heights.



Alleyways and yards off main streets are a common feature, here the entrance to Durrant's Yard is distinctly marked.

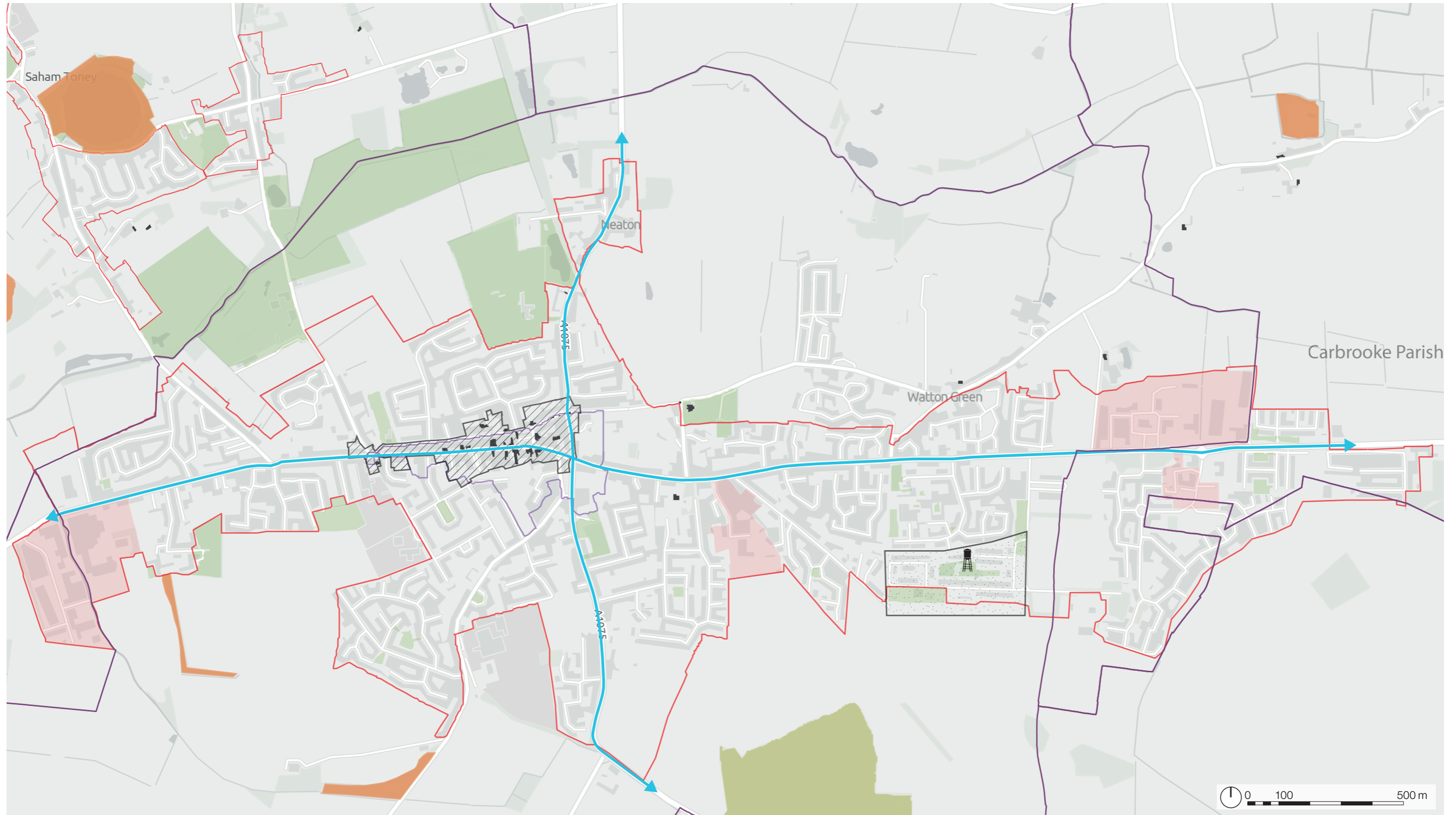


Watton Clock Tower is Grade II listed and is a notable landmark in the town centre.













## Stakeholder feedback

### Positive characteristics:

- The broad and attractive high street, which is unfortunately spoilt by volume of traffic
- The surrounding landscape character and resulting more rural feel of the town and its proximity to Wayland Wood.
- The small businesses and independent retail of the town



Map of Watton showing designations and key characteristics. This map includes the western part of Carbrooke parish. This part of Carbrooke Parish has a greater character relationship with Watton than Carbrooke village, partly due to the role of the RAF base.

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  SSSI                           |  Town Centre Boundary |  Listed Building   |
|  General Employment Areas       |  Settlement Boundary  |  Conservation Area |
|  County Wildlife Sites          |  Open Space           |  RAF Accommodation |
|  Main Vehicular Routes (Linear) |  Parish Boundary      |  Water Tower       |

**Areas or issues with potential for change include:**

- Watton has the highest unit vacancy rates in market towns in Norfolk at 13% (according to the 2021 Norfolk Market Towns Report).
- Significant areas of car parking around the main crossroads, while useful to people accessing the town by car, are not a positive feature of the townscape. However in some places they are softened by landscaping elements.
- Encouraging walking and cycling into the town centre would increase footfall and bring activity.
- Creating new pedestrian links into the High Street from the north would make it easier for people travelling on foot to access the town centre.
- Reducing vehicular dominance over the High Street would encourage more activity, for example by making it easier to cross the road (pedestrian crossings tend to be a considerable distance apart), encouraging cycle and creating a more 'green' environment.

**Character area-types**

The following character areas have been identified in Watton:

- Town centre;
- Town centre fringe;
- Radial route;
- Suburban bungalow;
- Formal suburban;
- Informal suburban;
- Inconsistent suburban;
- Leafy detached; and
- Industrial / retail (out of town)



Watton town centre today, with the Conservation Area outlined in purple and listed buildings highlighted in pink.



The Old  
VAPE  
SHOPPE

The Old  
VAPE  
SHOPPE  
e-cigarettes  
e-liquids  
coils  
accessories  
←  
[www.goddardshoppes.com](http://www.goddardshoppes.com)

## ■ Introduction to the Market Town Area-Types

Through the analysis of the market towns, the following area-types have been identified:

- Town Centre;
- Town Centre Fringe;
- River Valley;
- Radial Route;
- Formal Suburban;
- Informal Suburban;
- Suburban Bungalow;
- Experimental Suburban;
- Inconsistent Suburban;
- Leafy Detached; and
- Out-of-town Industrial / Retail.

These area-types have been developed using an elaboration of the National Model Design Code area types.

The purpose of this process has been to identify common characteristics in the market towns across the district, rather than to identify the unique and distinctive characteristics of each individual character area. This is to allow design guidance in the form of design codes to be prepared for an area-type rather than by specific area. Neighbourhood plans and other more local appraisals will appropriately focus on the detailed differences in character between different local areas.

The following area-types are therefore intended to draw out these commonalities. As a result, certain areas within the market towns that are identified as one of the area-types may not display all the characteristics outlined but, as a whole, have been judged to share enough in common with other areas within the same area-type.

All the character areas in the market towns have some degree of variation, and so it is rare that any specific character area will display only the characteristics of the area-type it has been identified with and it may also share similarities with another area-type. They also in places include open spaces and other uses (such as schools within suburban residential area-types) and this is not intended as a suggestion that those open spaces and uses should be redeveloped.

The plans and sections used to illustrate these area-types are intended to identify typical features of that area-type and do not therefore aim to depict a specific market town example.

# Town Centre

The town centre area-type is the focal point of the town and is the hub of commercial and retail activity. Town centres are historic and have the critical mass of listed and architecturally significant buildings within these market towns.

This area-type has two sub categories, the linear and clustered town centre. While these sub categories share many features there is some variation which is outlined on the following pages.

We have identified the following characteristics of this typology:

## Townscape

- Centres are situated on main historic routes around which these towns have developed. Most continue to be main roads through town which are busy traffic routes (with the notable exception of Thetford).
- Streets are defined by their built form rather than landscaping elements. Built form is predominantly continuous, with some detached buildings (largely for buildings of landmark or civic importance).
- Buildings are largely aligned parallel to the road and are set at the edge of the pavement, although there are some exceptions such as in Swaffham where there are forecourts to buildings in some places
- Plots are generally deep and narrow in relation to their depth but width varies. Plot frontages are generally densely developed whereas the rear of the plot behind the street frontage may be less dense and more informally developed. There is a vertical rhythm to the street.
- A continuous frontage and generally consistent building line along principal streets gives a sense of enclosure.
- All of these towns developed historically around a market place, although not all of them are retained today - see page 42 for more detail.
- Historic civic buildings are situated on market places or the main street, while churches are generally sited on the edges of the town centre. Their distinct forms and skyline features create key landmarks. War memorials and market crosses are more local landmark elements.
- Today some town centres are linear, whereas others are clustered in form, see maps to the right.

## Built form

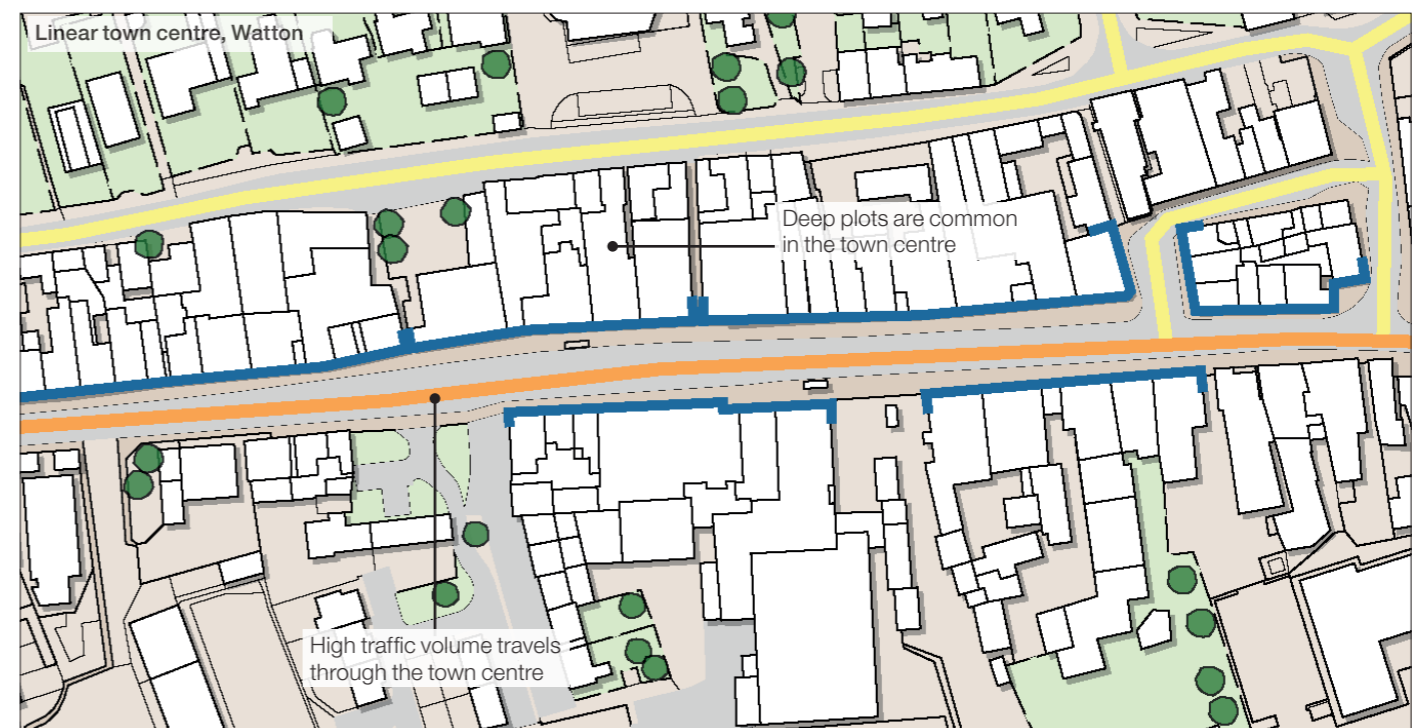
- Building heights are typically 2-3 storeys.
- The built character is generally historic, with some modern infill that maintains the street frontage.
- Higher status buildings - generally taller, with higher quality materials and more elaborate detailing and decoration - are found around market places or grouped at the heart of the main street.
- Ground level frontages are generally active with a mix of non-residential uses including retail, food and drink, commercial, civic, leisure and community uses.
- There is considerable variation in form and architectural detailing due to the varying ages of town centre buildings, reflecting their development over time.
- While brick is the predominant building material, many others are found, such as flint, render, and timber in some town centres and older fabric may be hidden behind 18<sup>th</sup> century or 19<sup>th</sup> century façades.

## Landscape character and vegetation

- There are generally few soft landscaping elements in town centre areas, aside from some decorative planting and trees in focal points such as market places. Notable exceptions are Attleborough's Queen's Square and Thetford's town centre river frontage.
- Churchyards also provide rare green space within these areas.

## Hard landscape

- Main routes through town centres tend to be wide streets with significant traffic volume.
- Secondary streets in these areas are often narrow with narrow pavements, and occasionally are pedestrianised.
- Parking is provided on street or in dedicated car parks. More successful car parking examples can be found where it is better integrated into the public realm and includes landscaping features. Some car parks are tucked behind town centre streets while others interrupt the built up street frontage.
- Some public realm enhancement schemes - narrowing of carriageways and widening of pavements with pinch points to encourage crossings, seats etc. using higher quality materials and street furniture.
- Narrow pedestrian alleyways run between or through buildings to link the main streets and market places to secondary 'back streets' that run behind them.
- Narrow pavements can be a feature in some areas, which when combined with high volumes of traffic can create a poor pedestrian environment.





### Boundary treatment

- There are usually no boundary treatments and buildings tend to sit at the edge of the pavement.
- Where there are forecourts these tend to be hardstanding with low railings or fences.



Churchyards provide rare green open space and mature trees in town centre. Attleborough.



Passageways through buildings are a feature. Attleborough.



Historic buildings in poor condition impact negativity on character. Attleborough.



Modern infill set back between existing buildings is more successful where it provides space for activity in front of it. Attleborough.



Distinctive architectural detailing is found across the town centres. Watton.



High streets are typically a mix of two and three storey buildings. Pedestrian crossings are positive features but sometimes far apart. Watton



Historic buildings of importance surround the market place, which is on a key route through the town. Vehicles dominate this central area of town, both on the road and in the large areas of parking in the market square.



Public realm improvements have made a positive impact on focal points in some of the market towns . Attleborough.



Landmark buildings are often located by the market place. Thetford.



Taller buildings and a continuous building line create a strong sense of enclosure. Dereham.



Retail and cafe / restaurant activity spills out onto pavement in some places, where there is space. Swaffham.



Areas of modern retail development are found in places. Dereham.



Narrow streets and pavements, and a continuous building line with no set-back also create a strong sense of enclosure. Dereham.

### Linear/ clustered town centre

Historically, all of the town centres developed around a medieval market place. Some survive as traditional market places today, as at Swaffham and Dereham. Others have been transformed e.g. Queen's Square in Attleborough which is also a green open space, or relocated elsewhere in the town as in Thetford, or developed as in Watton.

Town centres may either be:

- linear, where town centre uses and activity is concentrated on a single main street that runs through the town; or
- clustered, where town centre uses and activity are found around a market place, and/ or in a network of streets, as opposed to a single street.

### Linear town centre

Watton is an example of a linear town centre. The following characteristics are common to this town centre:

- Town centre activity is centred on the historic High Street and does not tend to extend beyond that street.
- A high volume traffic route also runs through the retail and commercial centre.
- Strong building lines and strong sense of definition of the high street space. Where the building line is interrupted and there are set backs to the buildings, it is often by more recent infill development, some of which is more successful than others.
- Pavements are relatively narrow in comparison with the width of the carriageway and the number of crossing points is limited.
- There are some on-street parking bays in parts of the street.
- Ground floors generally have shopfronts and upper floors appear to be occupied in many cases.
- Many of the plots can also be accessed from the rear.

### Clustered town centre

Attleborough, Dereham, Thetford and Swaffham are all examples of clustered town centres with market places. Dereham and Thetford also have a network of streets with town centre activity. The following characteristics are common to these town centres:

- Town centre activity is clustered around a market square.
- The market place creates a setting for local civic and cultural buildings, such as historic town hall buildings, libraries or cinema.
- Retail activity in these towns can be relatively spread out over a network of streets.
- Less concentrated retail activity can result in some areas attracting less footfall and therefore being less successful.
- High volume traffic can run through central routes, but there are often quieter streets, some of which are pedestrianised (Thetford and Dereham).
- Thetford and Dereham have retail areas that have considerably more modern buildings e.g. Guildhall St in Thetford and Wrights Walk along with some of the High St in Dereham.
- Clustered town centres where the market place is not dominated by concentrated parking are more successful.
- Where parking does not dominate, market places provide space that increases the variety of the town centre, with activity spilling out from the buildings around the edge, regular and one-off events, space for memorials and art, and for social interaction or recreation.
- High quality public realm can give the market place a sense of focus and identity, as in Swaffham.
- Today's market places include buildings that encroach into the original market place, often informal and generally on small and tightly knit plots, in contrast to the plots around the edges of the original market place.



Pedestrianised areas create a safe and pleasant pedestrian environment, with space for spill-out activity. Thetford.



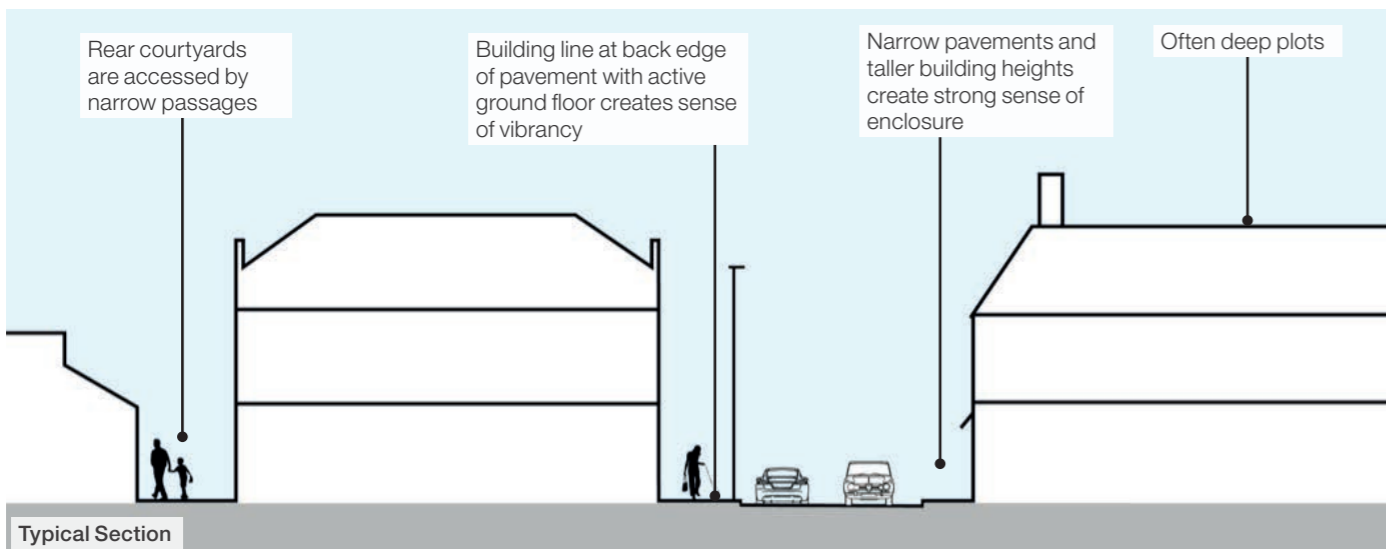
Long building set-back and lack of street frontage interrupts the rhythm of the street and reduces activity on the street. Attleborough.



Where retail windows are not active they do not contribute as positively to the streetscape. Thetford.



Vacant units and a lack of soft landscaping elements detract from public seating features. Thetford.



## What works well

There are examples of where this character area is particularly successful as a result of the following characteristics:

- Where areas of parking around focal points such as market squares are integrated into the public realm
- Traffic calming measures / public realm improvements
- Trees and areas of planting bring soft landscaping to generally dense built environment
- Activity at the ground floors of buildings
- Good pedestrian routes that are not dominated by traffic (e.g. in Thetford)
- Where there is a higher residential population on the edge of the town centre or living within the town centre there is more activity within these areas throughout the day, making the town centre feel more vibrant and safe
- Spill out (such as food and drink) activity on the streets and in market places increases the vibrancy of these central areas
- Public benches / seating in central areas to encourage people to spend time in the centre of town and allow space to meet



Parking can be well integrated into the public realm. Swaffham.



Regular markets continue to bring activity to the market place. Thetford.

## What works less well

Less successful examples of this character area include where:

- Large areas of car parks occupy central areas of town and / or car parking dominates the public realm
- Historic buildings are in poor condition impacting the character of the wider area
- There is lack of quality open space and planting within the town centre
- High traffic volume causes air pollution / noise / a dangerous environment for pedestrians in the central focal areas



Dominance of on-street parking and traffic on core routes creates a poor pedestrian environment. Attleborough.

## Town Centre Fringe

This character area includes mixed typologies and uses found on the edge of the town centres. Commercial uses are found alongside residential and community uses. As with the Radial Routes, the Town Centre Fringe areas also follow the main arterial routes leading into and out of the town, but the area also often extends behind the high streets. These areas often have a historic character, which sits alongside modern infill.

We have identified the following characteristics of this typology:

### Townscape

- Architectural style and form is varied.
- Building spacing is varied.
- Buildings are generally arranged parallel to the road, but set-back and building line varies. The exception to this are areas of historic development that are sometimes more consistent, such as areas of terraced housing.
- Building set back from the street varies across different areas. In more historic areas there is often no setback from the pavement edge, whereas in areas with community centres, schools and more modern development there is often a large building set back from the edge of the street.
- The buildings comprise of a mixture of residential dwellings and non-residential premises (including churches, schools, shops, community centres etc).
- Road layout tends to follow historic routes, and pedestrian provision is mixed. Where roads are particularly narrow and traffic volume is high, this can provide a challenging pedestrian environment.
- Car parking is provided as a mixture of on-street and on-plot. This area-type also includes a number of surface car parks that can cover large areas on the town centre fringe.
- Some areas are characterised by historic buildings, others are predominantly modern development.
- Block size varies, some areas have a fine grain of streets with small blocks of development, so easy to move through, whereas others have a large grain and are more impermeable.
- In these areas there is generally little consistency or coherence, with the exception of areas of terraced housing, see page 45 for more detail.
- There is little consistency of building line to clearly define and enclose the street spaces.
- There is much more hardstanding (parking and servicing areas) relative to built form, and relatively little soft landscape (other than parks), in the fringe areas than in the town centre or radial routes area types.

### Built form

- Building heights are inconsistent and vary between one and three storeys.
- Material palette is varied, but predominantly includes brick and stone. There is no consistency in materials or finishes.
- There are often pockets of traditional, more historic, terraced housing in short rows which create a more coherent built form, see page 45 for more detail.
- Many buildings are detached or standalone in comparison with the adjoining town centre.

### Landscape character and vegetation

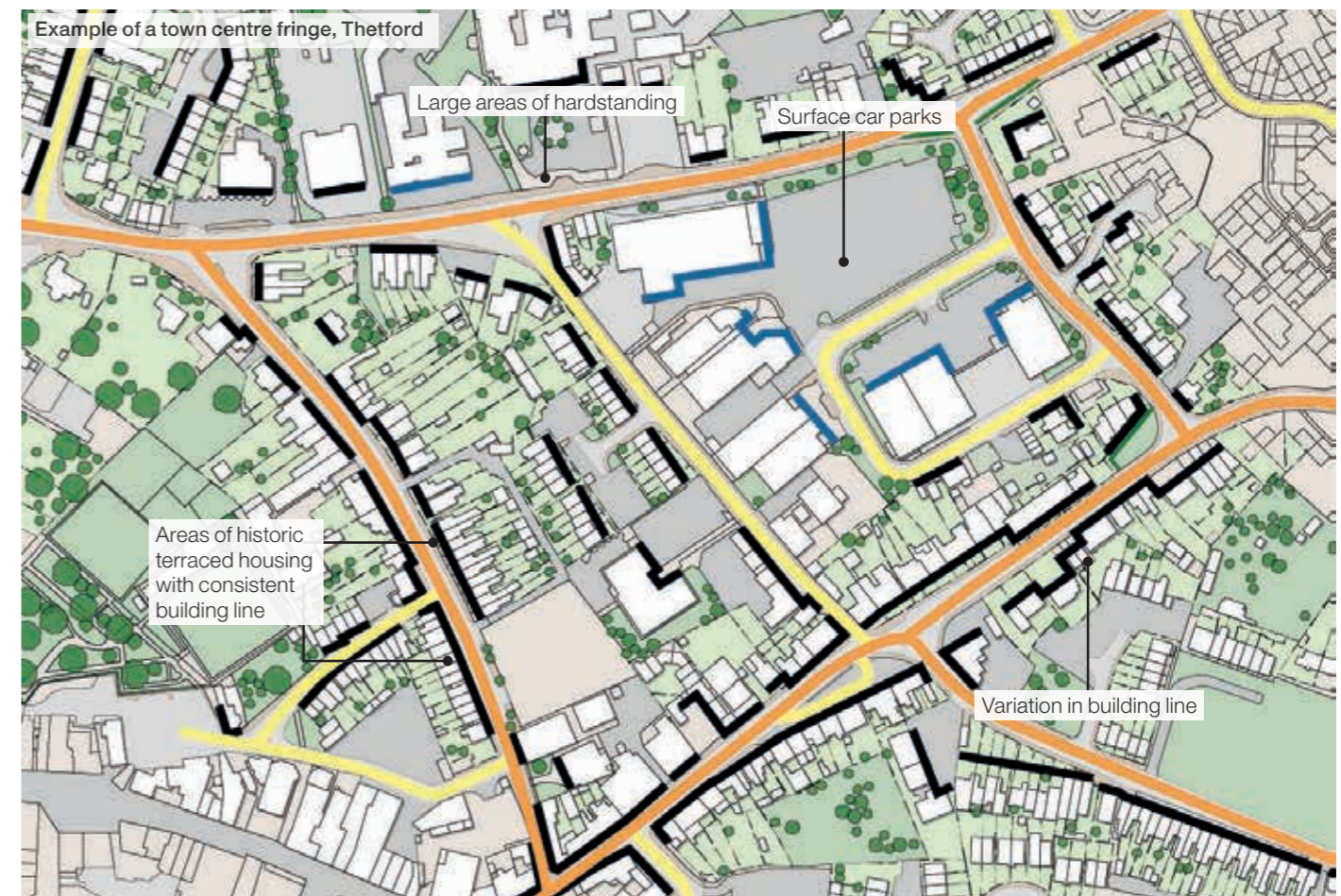
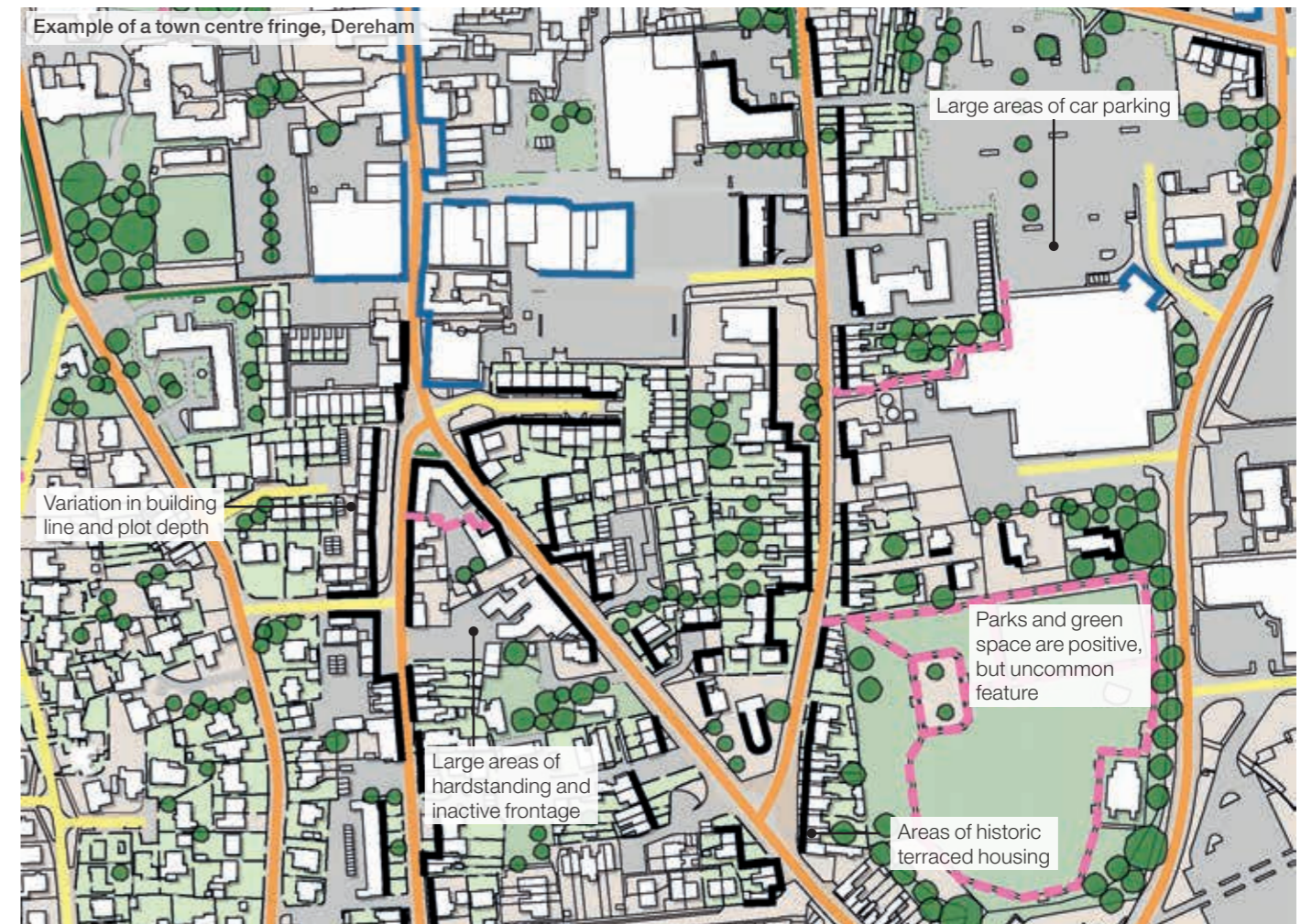
- Street planting and soft landscaping is generally minimal. However, there is a range of on-plot planting in some areas, which is more significant in larger plots where there is more space. In places this consists of mature trees and hedging.
- There are a small number of dedicated open spaces, such as parks and common land.

### Hard landscape

- Roads vary in width, due to the historic nature of a number of routes. Those that are wider and straighter are often transit routes and as a result they often feel dominated by traffic.
- Pavement provision and width varies, in most places there are pavements on both sides of the carriageway but there are areas where they are present on one side only. It is rare to have no pavements at all but this does occur on particularly narrow streets.
- In some areas parking is sited on street frontages with the building set back behind it.

### Boundary treatment

- Boundary treatments vary considerably. Where buildings front onto the road and there is minimal space, there are either no boundary treatments, or low walls are often used.
- Larger plots utilise the building set back to increase planting, which depending on use of the plot is often characterised by hedging, low railings or low walls.



### Town centre fringe - terraced frontages

Pockets of traditional terraced housing, usually dating from the 19th century, create a coherent built form and populate the town centre fringe, helping to support town centre activity. Common characteristics of terraced frontages are:

- Relatively small homes grouped together into terraces – composed as larger building forms.
- Narrow plots, often also relatively shallow
- Continuous building lines with frontages that define and enclose the street.
- Building heights generally two storey.
- Generally simple forms and simple roofs, with selected decoration, such as eaves cornice or moulded arches to openings.
- Street widths are relatively narrow and rear gardens may also be short.
- Generally with small front gardens or paved spaces that allow for boundary treatment, planting, bin and cycle storage and create semi-public space
- Parking may be on-street or to rear of terrace or a combination of both.



Sensitive conversion of historic buildings into residential accommodation increases the population of the central town areas and increases the vibrancy and activity of the area. Dereham.



Streets have varying levels of enclosure, where strongly enclosed streets are sometimes interrupted and inactive elements such as high fences and hardstanding are introduced this impacts character of the whole street. Dereham.



Historic terraced streets are higher density than many typologies found in the market towns, and increase activity. Dereham.



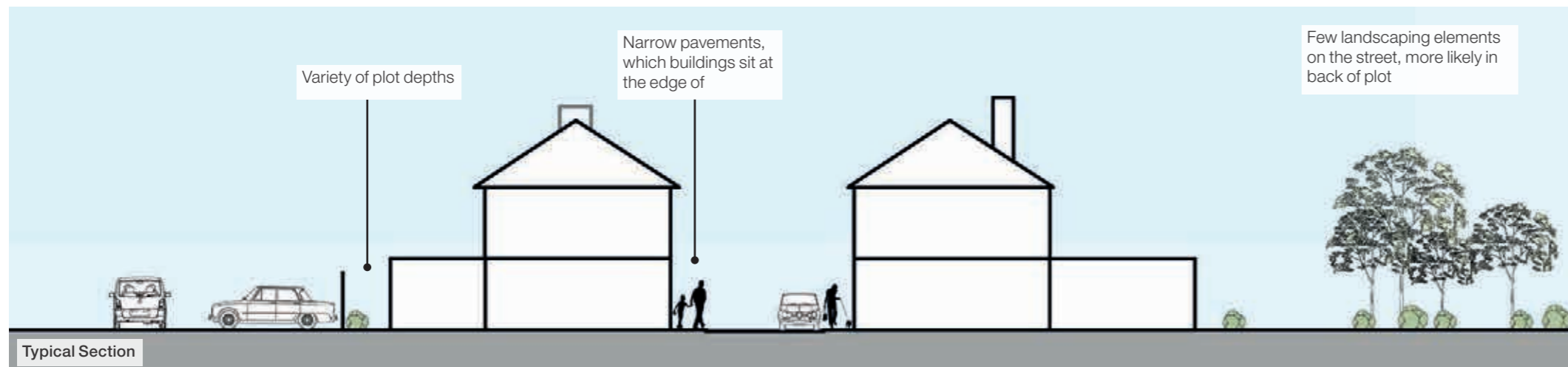
Some terraced housing streets have more generous front gardens with planting. Thetford.



Narrow streets and pavements create a sense of enclosure. Thetford.



Some streets have more generous front gardens and landscaping elements. Dereham.



Variety of heights, building line, form and uses. Dereham.



Where parking has replaced landscaped front gardens the vehicular dominance impacts on the character of the street and makes navigating these areas difficult for some pedestrians. Attleborough.



Historic fabric defines edge of street space with building frontage, and entrances/ windows to activate and provide passive surveillance of street. Swaffham.



Parks are a rare but positive feature introducing green space into edge-of-centre areas. Dereham.



Poorly maintained building and grass area does not make a contribution to local character. Dereham.



Large areas of car parking lower the density and activity levels in these areas. Dereham.



Heritage assets create distinct and attractive areas. Thetford.

### What works well

There are examples of where this character area is particularly successful as a result of the following characteristics:

- Permeable and legible pedestrian environments encourage people to walk more and make it more convenient
- Where commercial uses and residential uses mix and are well integrated, avoiding inactive frontage or large gaps in the building line, the character of these areas is more positive
- Historic fabric and heritage assets are well preserved and celebrated at street level creating an attractive and consistent character with the town centre
- Urban forms of housing in these areas, for instance terraced streets, create an attractive and distinctive character. They also increase activity throughout the day, contribute to safety and support town centre vibrancy.



Commercial premises match character and scale of the area. Thetford.

### What works less well

Less successful examples of this character area include:

- Excessive on street or on frontage parking that dominates the public realm
- Large areas of surface car parking
- Poor or no building frontage, lack of active street presence and poor quality landscape/ boundary treatment
- Modern infill development not in keeping with character or scale of street
- A lack of coherence in the building line interrupting the character of the street, especially where modern development is not consistent with the historic character.



Parking on pavements creates a poor pedestrian environment. Thetford.



Modern infill that is not sympathetic to the historic character of the area, together with large areas of car parking that detract from the streetscape. Dereham.

# River Valley

This character area-type is defined by its landscape characteristics, of a river valley and its green edges. It is unique to Thetford, and runs through the town providing attractive open space and access to nature. It is largely soft landscaping, but does meet the edge of the town centre in places such as Riverside Walk and School Lane.

We have identified the following characteristics of this typology:

## Townscape

- A network of pedestrian and cycle routes runs along the riverside, on one or both sides in places.
- Housing that meets this character area largely backs onto it, so there is a lack of overlooking and passive surveillance along pedestrian and cycle routes, except in some areas of the town centre.
- Connections into residential areas are not regular in places, decreasing connectivity and accessibility.

## Built form

- There are few examples of buildings overlooking the riverside, except around Riverside Walk in the town centre. Here they are of considerable scale, but still set back some distance from the water's edge.
- Some bridges over the river are historic and contribute to character of the area, being usually narrow and stone or brick.



## Landscape character and vegetation

- Often dense mature trees characterise the areas along the river valley, alongside vegetation.
- Some areas are more open and offer generous areas of green open space.
- The rivers Thet and the Little Ouse are defining features.

## What works well

There are examples of where this character area is particularly successful as a result of the following characteristics:

- In the town centre where there is public open space on the riverside, giving space for people to gather and enjoy the waterside.
- Well maintained routes with good signage encourage use of the pathways running through this area.
- Mature trees and planting contribute to this valuable open space, providing access to nature in the heart of the town.



Seating and open space by the riverside provide access to the riverfront and encourage people to gather. Thetford.

## What works less well

- A lack of frontage onto the river in parts of the town centre, where activity would contribute to vibrancy and overlooking, making the riverside feel safer for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Surface car parking by the river does not enhance the character of this landscape.
- A lack of crossings over the river in places and where crossings and urban areas adjacent to the river are not well lit the pedestrian environment can feel unsafe.



Car parks on the riverfront. Thetford.



Well maintained pathways and mature planting provide an accessible and attractive setting for the river. Thetford.

## Radial Route

Radial routes have been identified in most of the market towns, and this area-type predominantly covers (sections of) the main arterial roads in and out of the town centres. These routes are where historic development occurred, and the important character of these buildings contributes positively to the town but they sit beyond the immediate town centre where most historic development tends to be found. These linear routes had historical importance as trade passages, and host numerous listed buildings.

We have identified the following characteristics of this typology:

### Townscape

- Development lines key arterial routes into and out of the market town centres (usually A or B roads).
- Architectural style and form is varied, and reflects the incremental growth of development outwards as the towns expanded.
- Buildings have a variety of set back from the edge of plot, with examples closer to the town centre often close to the pavement edge, while some examples (often found further from the town centre) have larger plots and are set back further from the road.
- The buildings are predominantly residential dwellings, but there are also some non-residential premises, including care homes and schools. Closest to the town centre, there are also examples of split use, where the ground floor is occupied by a commercial use, and residential above.
- Buildings are usually oriented parallel to the street, but plot size can differ along a short stretch of road
- Car parking is provided as a mixture of on-street and on-plot, and sometimes in the back or side of plot in dedicated parking areas.
- Modern development often occurs alongside the historic, which can lead to an inconsistency of character where the modern development is not sensitive to its surrounding context, for example in the set back of building.
- As these routes often continue to be important roads in and out of the market towns, traffic, noise and air pollution can be an issue that compromises the character of this area-type.

### Built form

- Range of building forms and architectural styles, including large detached buildings, and short rows of terraced housing.
- Building heights vary between one and three storeys.
- Material palette is varied, but predominantly includes brick and render. There is no consistency in materials or finishes across all the examples of this area-type.

### Landscape character and vegetation

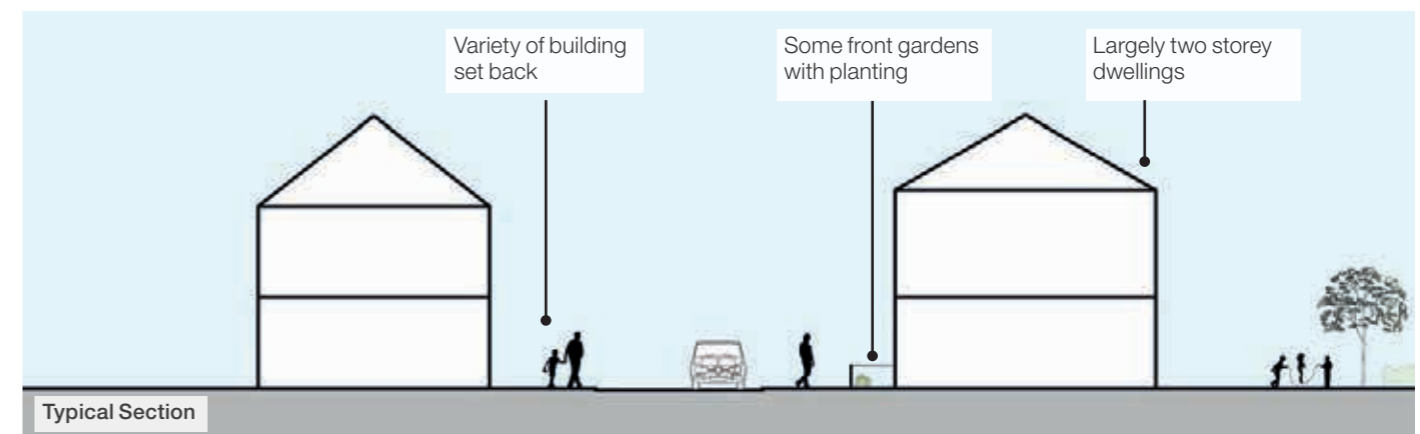
- Street planting and soft landscaping is varied. In denser areas, where buildings often have small or no front gardens, planting is minimal. However, on larger plots and further from town centres there is a range of planting including mature trees and hedging.
- Street trees are uncommon and soft landscaping elements tend to be on-plot.

### Hard landscape

- The roads are often straighter and wider than residential streets, to serve their purpose as transit routes.
- Pavements are usually consistent on both sides of the carriageway, although they are sometimes missing, especially further from town centres.
- On-plot parking is utilised where the building set back facilitates this.

### Boundary treatment

- Boundary treatments vary considerably. Where buildings front onto the road and there is minimal defensible space, low walls are often used.
- Larger plots utilise the building set back to increase planting, which is often characterised by hedging.







Plots become denser and more likely terraced housing as you approach the town centre. Watton.



These routes are often busy routes in and out of town, which can be congested and therefore noisy with poor air quality. Attleborough.



Car parking dominates where front gardens and front / side boundary treatments have been removed. Attleborough.



Plots further from the town centre often have larger front gardens and more planting on plot. Dereham.



Plots are often detached and large. Attleborough.



More modern infill development sometimes has less relationship to the street, with high fences creating inactive frontage. Swaffham.

## What works well

There are examples of where this character area is particularly successful as a result of the following characteristics:

- Where the buildings on the street have a strong presence and a degree of consistency, either through a regular pattern of built form or through landscaping
- Mature trees and planting enhance the character of many of these streets and pavements and this makes the pedestrian experience more enjoyable.
- Heritage assets are well-preserved and celebrated at street level. Listed buildings can act as a “gateway” to the town centre
- Examples of built form where the transition to the town centre is marked in a positive way through higher density and attractive historic terraces.
- The high quality architecture highlights the importance of these routes into the town and makes them more legible.
- Direct roads tend to mark important routes into town and improve legibility
- Where there is good provision for pedestrians, on what are often busy vehicular routes



Higher density residential properties closer to the town centre increase the population and activity in the centre, and active street frontages increase passive surveillance. Swaffham..



Some areas have mature soft landscaping features such as trees and hedging. Dereham.

## What works less well

Less successful examples of this character area include:

- Where the rhythm of the street is interrupted by extensive driveways and hardstanding
- Poor pedestrian environment, for example lack of pavements, illegible routes and cluttered streetscape
- Modern infill development that does not have a positive relationship with the street, e.g. with high fences or character that is not sympathetic to surrounding buildings.
- Parking and vehicles dominate the areas in front of buildings
- Vehicle speeds and road noise create poor pedestrian/residential amenity



Extensive hardstanding and driveways interrupt the rhythm of the street. Swaffham.

## Formal Suburban

The formal suburban area-type is commonly found across the market towns. It is characterised by consistent building lines and typologies fronting onto often straight roads. The resulting character is formal, planned and generally consistent across areas, although elements such as architectural details or building set back differ across examples from each of the market towns.

We have identified the following characteristics of this typology:

### Townscape

- Roads are often straight, with some gentle curves.
- Buildings are usually arranged parallel to the road, and are set back at equal distances with a consistent building line.
- Street widths are often wide.
- Usually equal (and generous) spacing between buildings. Single-storey garages often fill the spaces between buildings.
- Plots are regular in size and shape, and most boundaries are perpendicular to the road.
- Car parking is largely on-plot, in front, or to the side of buildings.
- Examples in this typology are largely planned, inter and post war development, although there are some more recent examples. In some examples of this development buildings are set around formal open space.
- Corners are sometimes elaborated with incidental semi-circular or triangular open spaces that serve little purpose, sometimes also with frontages on an angled building line.

### Built form

- Building heights are predominantly two storeys, sometimes with single storey garages attached to the side. Some examples have areas of single storey dwellings.
- Architecture is largely consistent throughout each development, although built form and style differs across different developments within the market towns.
- Simple material palette, predominantly brick.
- Buildings are often semi-detached, and short rows of terraces are also common, as well as some detached houses.
- Consistent simple building forms with pitched roofs are typical. There are few dormers or gable ends, except in later examples of this area-type.

### Landscape character and vegetation

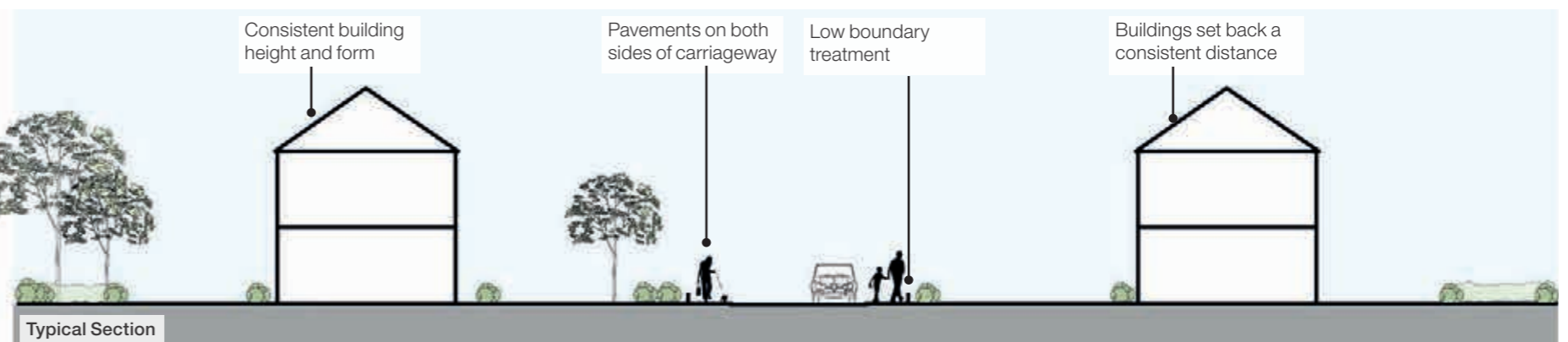
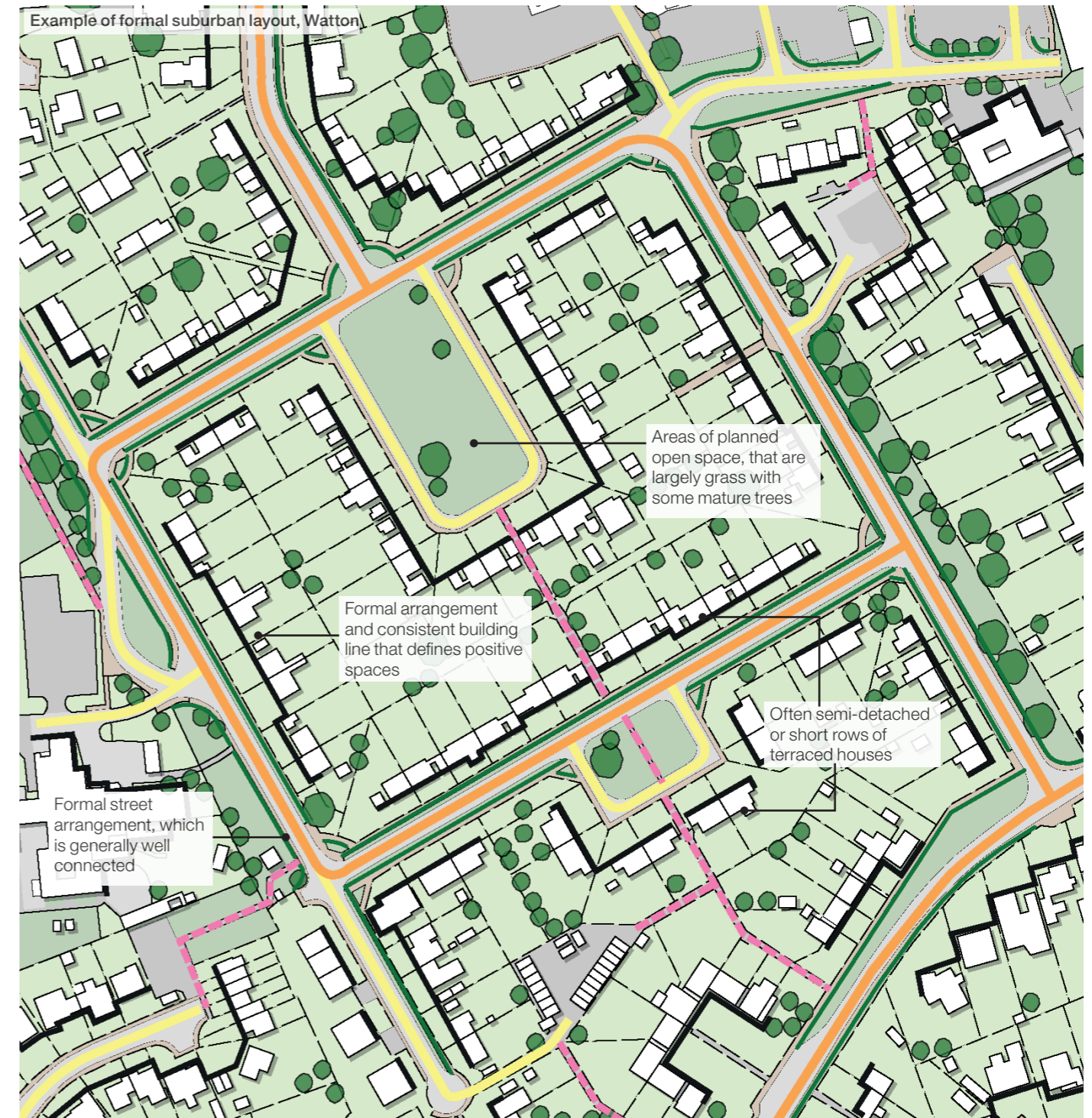
- The orthogonal arrangement of most buildings results in more structured landscaping arrangements.
- The streetscape often contains grass verges which range in width.
- Front gardens range in depth.
- Most planting is on-plot, and there is little formal street planting or street trees in most examples, except in some areas of formal open spaces, which are normally grass with some mature trees.
- On-plot planting ranges from grass to more substantial hedging and trees.

### Hard landscape

- Roads tend to be wide enough to incorporate some on-street parking. Also a number of turning heads and passing places which increase the covering of hardstanding.
- Roads mostly have pavements on both sides of the carriageway.
- Most residences have dropped curbs to allow on-plot parking.
- Plots often wide enough to have some soft-landscaped front garden, as well as driveways for parking and access to garages.

### Boundary treatment

- Boundary treatments vary, but are predominantly simple, and low in height.
- In most cases, boundary treatments tend to consist of low walls, fences and hedging.





Low density development results in relatively low activity levels on the streets. Attleborough.



Architectural detailing used to add interest to the building façades. Attleborough.



Extensive hardstanding and severe boundary treatment impact negatively on the streetscape. Attleborough.



Large areas of parking dominate the building frontage. Watton.



Clear legible routes follow densely-planted streets with active frontages and mature trees. Watton.

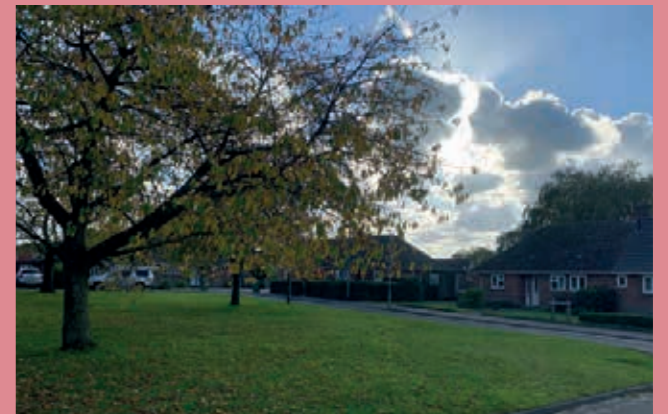
### What works well

There are examples of where this character area is particularly successful as a result of the following characteristics:

- Where there is good provision for pedestrians with continuous pavements that create a safe, pleasant pedestrian experience
- Consistent building line and formal arrangement of houses creates a strong consistent character
- Where there are generous pockets of green space with houses fronting on to them. These are particularly attractive when they have mature trees and planting, rather than just grass
- Street layout and design leads to improved legibility and a well connected pedestrian environment
- Mature trees and generous planting soften these areas and enhance their character
- Where there are short groups of terraces the increased density provides more street activity



Consistent building line and active street presence. Dereham.



Buildings front attractive green open space. Attleborough.

### What works less well

Less successful examples of this character area include where:

- Street widths and large turning circles lead to dominant areas of hardstanding
- Low levels of activity in relatively generous streets and open spaces (due to low density) can make streets and spaces less likely to feel lively and interesting.
- Less structured building arrangement gives weaker connection to the street
- Buildings do not front on to the street, reducing passive surveillance and overlooking
- Grass verges are a common feature. These areas of planting could help address biodiversity net gain and urban drainage



Excessive hardstanding and passing lay bys. Attleborough.

- Absence of mature trees or planting
- Parking dominates front gardens. Hardstanding can be overbearing and the opportunity for planting limited

## Informal Suburban

The Informal Suburban character is one of the most common characters identified, and therefore covers a large land area across the five market towns. This character is defined by the layout of the buildings and their relationship to the street. The buildings have a more informal arrangement, with an inconsistent building line, orientation and a range of boundary treatments. This character is identified in numerous developments which range in age, style, and size.

We have identified the following characteristics of this typology:

### Townscape

- Does not have a formal layout in plan, but consistency of building form and materials creates overall cohesion of area.
- Roads are predominantly sinuous and curvilinear, and often allow no through-traffic (cul-de-sac). These areas are often not well connected, although there are some examples of pedestrian connections between streets.
- Buildings are predominantly arranged parallel to the road, but orientation often varies throughout the street.
- Inconsistent building line and spacing between buildings.
- Set-back from the road varies significantly.
- Plots are irregularly shaped and inconsistent in size, and often wrap around multiple sides of the building to account for the organic arrangement.
- Often “leftover” underutilised open green space at key corners and junctions
- Some properties have integral garages to the side.
- Car parking is largely on plot, in front, and to the side of buildings. Some parking on-street.
- Examples in this typology are largely planned, post war development from the 1960s onwards, including most modern suburban development.

### Built form

- Building heights are predominantly two/three storeys.
- Buildings predominantly detached, with many semi-detached examples too. There are also examples of short terraces of 3-4 buildings
- Simple building forms with pitched roofs, some gable ends and door canopies are common.
- There is a general consistency in form and materials within these areas. Brick is the predominant material, with some timber features and weatherboard occasionally utilised.

### Landscape character and vegetation

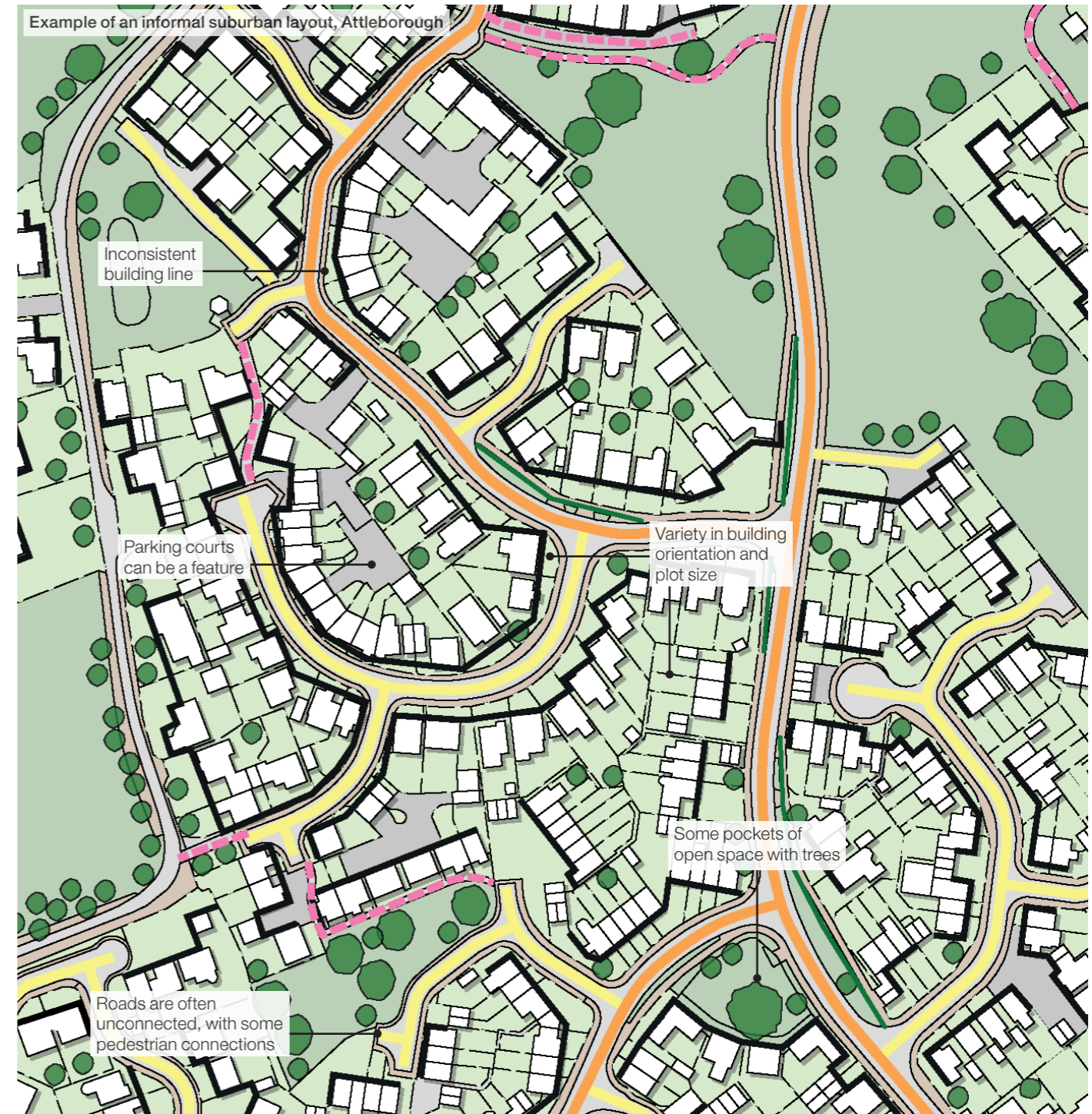
- The informal nature of building placement and orientation results in a wide variety of front garden and boundary treatment arrangements.
- Front gardens range in size, and where larger, are often planted with grass or low planting, with some trees.
- Most planting is on-plot and there is little street planting. Exceptions to this include open green spaces, which often include mature trees.
- More modern informal suburban development tends to have smaller front gardens.

### Hard landscape

- Some front gardens have hard landscaping or shingle for driveways.
- Roads mostly have pavements on both sides of the carriageway.
- Several roads end with private access roads/driveways.
- Some communal parking courts.
- Width of roads tend to be narrower, with examples of close front-to-front separation distances.

### Boundary treatment

- Boundary treatments vary, but are predominantly simple, and low in height. Occasionally there is larger planting/hedging to screen houses.
- In most cases, boundary treatments tend to consist of low walls, fences and hedging.





Consistency in architectural detailing but no consistent layout or plot size. Attleborough.



Variety of building orientation. Attleborough.



Incidental areas of open space and mature trees are a positive feature. Thetford.



High boundary treatments do not contribute positively to street presence. Dereham.



Narrow street with cars parked on the pavement. Thetford.



On plot parking is common. Thetford.

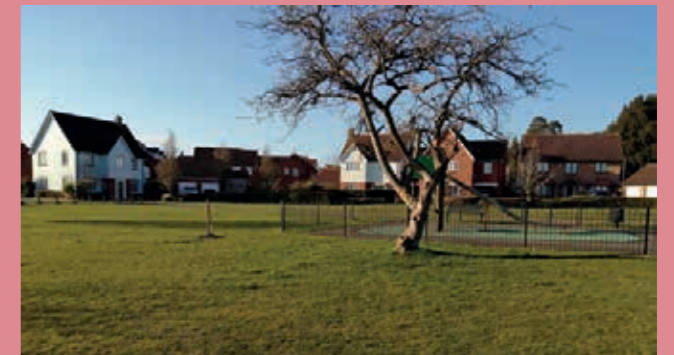
### What works well

There are examples of where this character area is particularly successful as a result of the following characteristics:

- Where houses have planted front gardens or front onto attractive informal open green spaces
- Where modern suburban development successfully uses a range of materials in a coherent manner, including timber detailing
- Where buildings successfully turn the corner, reducing blank façades
- Where the street widths are more generous allowing for front gardens and planting
- Streets that are better connected, at least for pedestrians, with direct routes to neighbouring areas or spaces
- Where there are areas of green open space and play areas integrated into the development, giving children space to play and an opportunity for landscaping



Successful use of materials, and active street frontage which is not dominated by parking. Swaffham.



Houses front onto open space with play area. Swaffham.

### What works less well

Less successful examples of this character area include:

- Large areas of hardstanding and parking courts
- Irregular plot shapes can lead to awkward leftover spaces due to lack of consistent building line
- Lack of street planting, trees, and lower level vegetation, particularly on grass verges, leaving these empty and overlooked.
- Overbearing boundary treatments that include high walls, and inactive frontages that contribute to a lack of passive surveillance
- Unconnected street networks make pedestrian movement convoluted and inconvenient
- Developments with a lack of sizeable open space and play areas do not provide good access to nature and play, or encourage biodiversity
- Where estates are not well connected to other parts of the town
- Narrow roads that have inadequate pedestrian infrastructure discourage pedestrian activity and cyclists, and can make these areas feel cramped especially when cars block pavements.



Extensive walled boundary treatments and lack of accessible building frontages make for a street dominated by hardstanding and poor pedestrian experience. Watton.



Large areas of hardstanding and bollards create a cluttered streetscape and lack soft landscaping elements. Dereham.

# Suburban Bungalow

This character area is residential and defined by the typology of the buildings and their layout. Buildings are single storey and formally arranged and consistent in their layout and set back along largely wide streets. Landscaping elements are largely on plot and street trees are not a common feature. The resulting character is generally very open and horizontal with few vertical elements.

We have identified the following characteristics of this typology:

## Townscape

- Largely detached, single storey dwellings.
- These roads are often straight and predominantly formally laid out.
- Buildings are set parallel to the roads and have front gardens, ranging in size but often generous.
- Largely consistent building line and spacing between buildings.
- Plots are regular and tend to be consistently sized, with most boundaries keeping perpendicular to the road.
- Many properties have integral garages.
- Car parking is largely on plot.
- Examples in this typology are largely planned development, built in the later half of the 20th century.
- The layout, form and scale of buildings generally does not vary according to their position in the townscape, for instance on corners, at the end of streets, or where there are pedestrian links.
- Streets are often fairly well connected, with pedestrian links between them found in some areas.
- There are no usable open spaces within the layout, although in some examples pedestrian routes have incidental open space along their length.

## Built form

- Building heights are predominantly one storey.
- Simple building forms with pitched roofs, which are often shallow-pitched.
- There are instances within these character areas of a second storey within the roof, where the roof pitch is notably steeper.
- Gable ends are often a feature of the frontage.
- There is a general consistency in form and materials within these areas. Buff brick is the predominant material, with rendered panels or elements a feature in many streets.

- Architecture varies but is generally undistinguished.
- There is usually relatively little to make these areas distinctive from each other, with some exceptions of architectural features common to specific areas such as emphasised chimneys or steeper roof pitches.

## Landscape character and vegetation

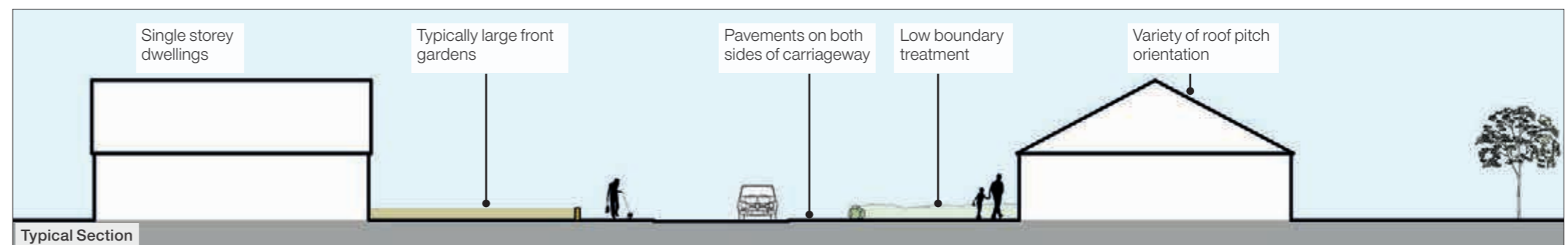
- Front gardens, where planted, are largely grass or low planting, with some trees.
- There are few street trees or planting, some streets have grass verges.
- There are generally few mature trees and houses do not usually have a woodland backdrop.
- Verges and other areas of open space are grass with little evidence of biodiversity.

## Hard landscape

- Some front gardens have hard landscaping or shingle.
- Wide streets mostly have pavements on both sides of the carriageway.

## Boundary treatment

- Boundary treatments tend to be low in height, allowing buildings to be clearly visible from the road.
- They tend to consist of low walls, fences and hedging, but there is little consistency along any street.





Grass verges along the pavement are found in some areas. Attleborough.



In some areas elements such as chimneys are emphasised as vertical features. Swaffham.



In some areas there is denser vegetation in front gardens and smaller pavements, contributing to a more enclosed and softer character. Swaffham.



Gable ends and integral garages are common. Swaffham.



Some areas have long front gardens, where boundary treatment is usually low to the ground. Swaffham.

### What works well

There are examples of where this character area is more successful as a result of the following characteristics:

- Where there are green pockets on the street with mature trees and grass verges, and mature trees in back gardens;
- Pedestrian links creating connections though small elements of open space make these areas more legible and pedestrian friendly;
- When there are architectural features that are not standard (such as vertical features), which would enhance the areas further especially at street corners.



Pedestrian connections make these neighbourhoods more legible. Watton.



Mature trees and green open space rather than large areas of hardstanding are attractive. Swaffham.

### What works less well

Less successful examples of this character area include:

- Where close boarded fences form the boundary with public spaces as they prevent passive surveillance and don't bring positive qualities to the townscape;
- Front gardens are paved over, as soft landscaping in these spaces contributes significantly to the character of these streets.



High boundary treatment creates blank frontage and doesn't contribute to passive surveillance. Watton.

## Experimental Suburban

This character area has been identified in specific locations in Thetford. The character type relates to post war planned neighbourhood estates that were experimental when they were planned and built, and continue to be distinct areas today. These estates differ clearly enough from the other area-types to warrant a discrete category, but there are relatively few examples due to their experimental character. Whilst the built form, landscaping treatments and plot arrangement may be consistent within an identified area, this varies between the different examples.

We have identified the following characteristics of this typology:

### Townscape

- These areas have a strong, consistent character, but are distinct from each other.
- The street layout has a distinctive pattern, for example radial or Radburn, where the buildings do not front onto the street.
- Architectural style and form is very consistent, and usually demonstrates a replication of units/plots along a street. In both cases this is usually the replication of linear slab blocks.
- The relationship to the road and streetscape varies across the area-types. Some buildings front onto the street, but many back onto the street and front onto an area of open space.
- The relationship to the road therefore results in a variety of set back distances and boundary treatments.
- Plots vary in orientation, but are usually similar size and shape. The plots which do not front the street are often arranged in courtyard blocks.
- Car parking is a dominant factor of the townscape, and there are large parking courts, some on-plot parking, as well as extensive informal on-street parking.
- The layout of the estates can be confusing, with dead ends, high boundary walls, and no clear signage.
- Examples of this character are planned post-war estates in Thetford.

### Built form

- Building heights are mostly consistent, between two and three storeys
- Material palette is simple and consistent, predominantly buff brick.
- Building forms include slab blocks and maisonettes with shallow pitched roofs.

### Landscape character and vegetation

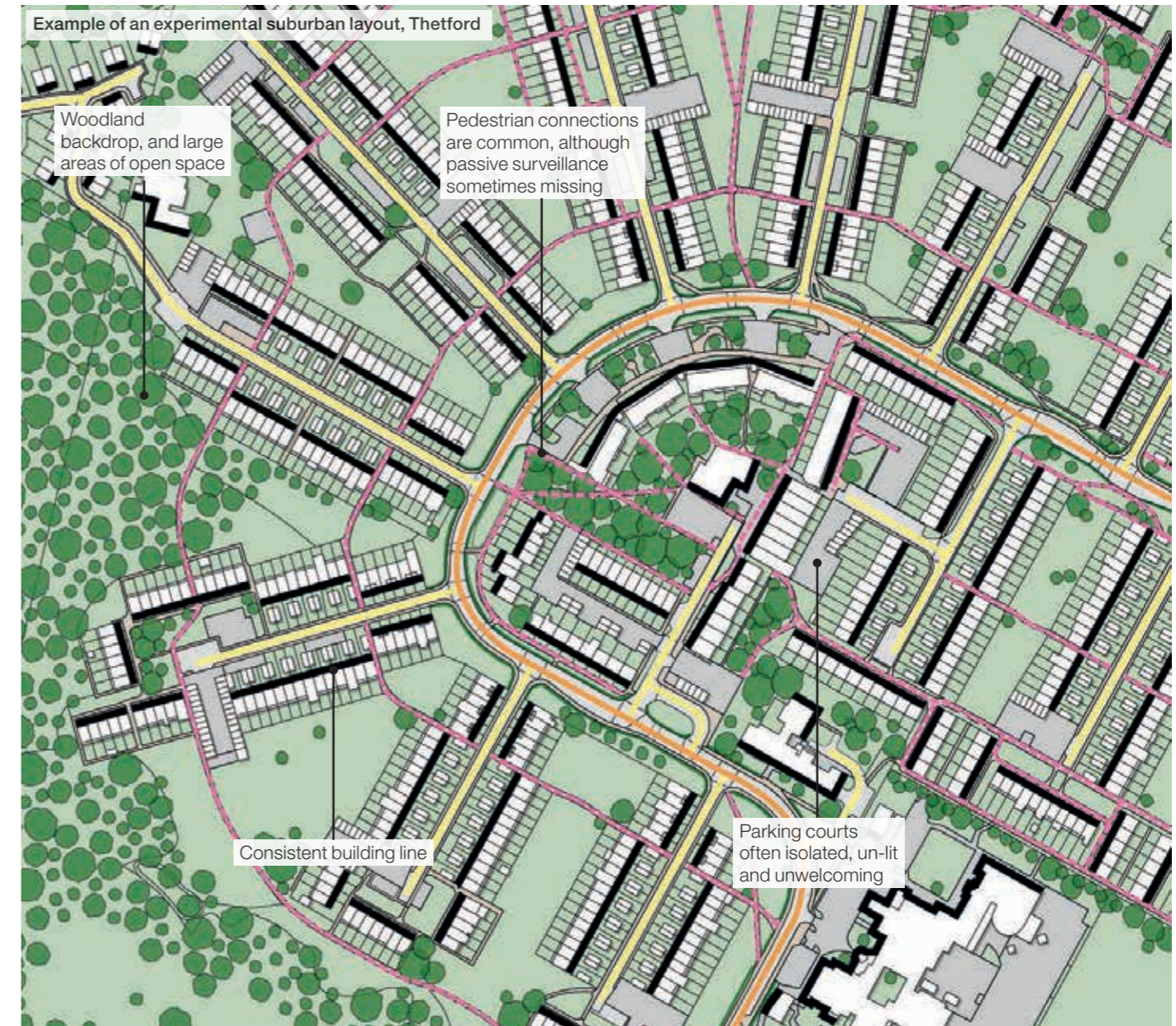
- Street planting on local streets is not a dominant feature, and is absent in most locations. Exceptions to this include the larger arterial routes which are planted with mature trees.
- Development sometimes backs onto woodland.
- Minimal on-plot planting at street edge - some planting in rear gardens.
- Green open space is focussed in large central communal/private areas, which buildings in some examples front on to and have some mature trees.

### Hard landscape

- Within the internal roads, large areas of extensive hardstanding and parking courts dominate the experience.
- Pavements frequently cover both sides of the carriageway, but regularly cross roads and driveways
- Parking and hardstanding also dominates front gardens in some areas.

### Boundary treatment

- Boundary treatments are consistent within each estate - ranging from no boundary treatment (buildings front onto green open space), to high brick boundary walls
- There is little planting or vegetation used as boundary treatments.







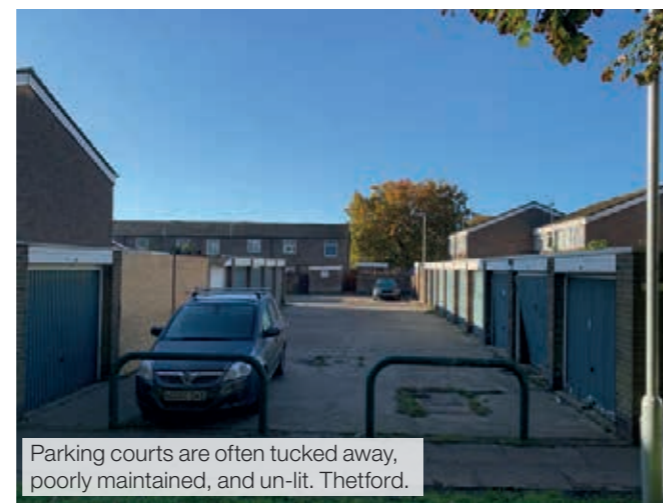
Parking dominates front gardens. Thetford.



Gated access reduces permeability across the estate. Thetford.



Lack of passive surveillance onto pedestrian routes. Thetford.



Parking courts are often tucked away, poorly maintained, and un-lit. Thetford.



Mature planting and greenery frames the development. Thetford.

### What works well

There are examples of where this character area is particularly successful as a result of the following characteristics:

- Arrangement and layout of the built form around communal open space makes for an attractive car free outlook
- Communal open space for play and recreation
- Easy resident access to landscape areas and woodland backdrop
- Mature trees and generous landscaping
- A mix of uses within the neighbourhood provides useful amenities for residents and creates a sense of community



Buildings front attractive communal green space. Thetford.



Woodland backdrop. Thetford.

### What works less well

Less successful examples of this character area include where:

- There is minimal overlooking and passive surveillance of pedestrian routes due to a lack of frontage onto streets. Routes are often poorly maintained
- Arrival by vehicle to the rear of properties gives a cluttered visual appearance with parking dominating the public realm, not leaving space for pedestrians and cyclists
- Dominance of car parking on arrival and car parking blocking pedestrian routes on pavements
- The pedestrian environment is illegible, impermeable and convoluted. This includes physical barriers to prevent access to areas
- Where large areas of grass verges are used for parking and do not contribute to biodiversity gain or urban drainage potential



Poorly maintained public realm. Thetford.



On pavement parking dominates the street. Thetford.

## Inconsistent Suburban

The Inconsistent Suburban category has been included to cover areas that lack a uniform character, with regard to built form, townscape, and landscaping features. This character therefore includes a range of building typologies and arrangements, and a varied relationship with the roads and streetscape. The mixed nature of this area-type also includes areas that contain some non-residential development that sits outside of the main town centre, for example schools. The Inconsistent category has been used where an area's character contains enough of a variety that does not fall into one of the other suburban/town centre categories identified, but there is often some degree of consistency within the area of a number of houses or small number of streets.

We have identified the following characteristics of this typology:

### Townscape

- No dominant architectural style or dwelling size.
- Roads have no distinctive pattern, and vary in alignment and width.
- Buildings are usually arranged parallel to the road, but set back distances and building lines vary considerably.
- There is some consistency in townscape along individual roads (or within small pockets of development), but this varies from one road to another (or between groups of buildings).
- Building typologies include detached bungalows, semi-detached houses, terraced housing, and detached housing.
- Plots vary in size and shape, although most boundaries are perpendicular to the road.
- Car parking is predominantly on-plot, but on-street parking and parking courts are also visible.
- Generally occurs on, or behind busy roads, and often includes commercial development.
- Character type usually covers areas of ad-hoc development that have been progressed at different times, with little design continuity between the areas.

### Built form

- Building heights vary between one and two storeys and is not consistent one building to the next.
- Inconsistent building styles which vary from road to road (or pocket of development).
- Building material and architectural features vary, but brick tends to be the dominant material.

- There are examples of historic buildings found in this area-type, due to the nature of growth of the market towns. Surrounding development can be insensitive to historic buildings, and as such does not enhance the setting of them.

### Landscape character and vegetation

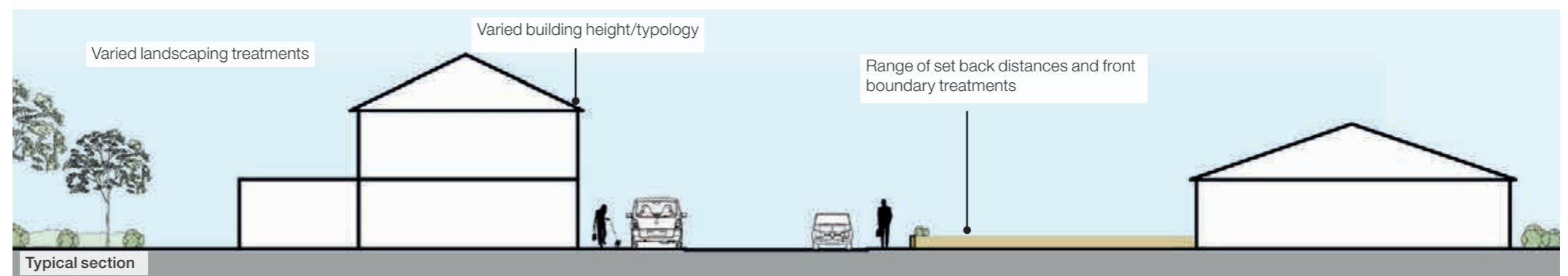
- Streets vary in width, but mostly have pavements on both sides.
- Due to varying plot sizes, street widths and building set back, car parking is accommodated differently across areas, with some on-plot or on-street, and sometimes in parking courts.
- The treatment of front gardens varies plot to plot, but there is some consistency in front garden depths.

### Hard landscape

- Roads are often busier than other suburban roads found in the other character areas.
- Roads mostly have pavements on both sides, with some exceptions.

### Boundary treatment

- Boundary treatments vary considerably. One side of the road will often have a different treatment to the other.
- If there are boundary treatments, they tend to consist of low walls, fences and hedging.





Variation in building height, style, set back and boundary treatment. Attleborough.



Variation in architectural style, here combined with relatively consistent plot size. Thetford.



Buildings on either side of the street do not relate to one another. Swaffham.



Lack of street frontage and extensive hardstanding. Dereham.



Range of building typologies. Watton.



Large areas of hardstanding have a negative impact on biodiversity. Watton.

## What works well

There are examples of where this character area is particularly successful as a result of the following characteristics:

- Where plot sizes are consistent, variation in the style and composition of the built form adds character and dynamism
- Inconsistent character can give a sense of transition to other areas of the town, for example into the town centre
- Successful examples often have at least one consistent element, e.g. building line, boundary treatment, building material, coherent public realm which helps create a sense of identity, even if there are varied characteristics
- Where non residential uses are included and they are accessible, well connected and distinctive
- Historic elements are sensitively incorporated into surrounding development



Mature, well maintained street planting. Attleborough.



Variation in plot size and boundary treatment can give sense of transition to different areas of the town, here the higher density terraced houses signal a transition to the town centre. Swaffham.

## What works less well

Less successful examples of this character area include:

- Where streets are illegible and create an unattractive pedestrian environment
- Where infill development is introduced, the arrangement can result in an inward facing development which lacks street presence
- Often extensive hardstanding and parking due to lack of consistent street frontage
- Where parking dominates the public realm, especially if in combination with buildings set far back from the street this lack of street frontage has a negative impact on character
- Where non residential uses occupy large plots on the street and are either well set back or lack a street presence throughout the day this can contribute to pedestrians feeling unsafe using these routes



Incoherent public realm and dominant parking. Swaffham.

- Where infill development is inconsistent in character with historic or existing properties this further dilutes the character of the street, rather than improving it with complimentary development

# Leafy Detached

This character area is defined by its landscape character and usually found in edge-of-town peripheral locations, as the urban built form transitions into rural landscape. The buildings are predominantly detached, and set in generous planted surroundings, often with mature trees and woodland nearby. There is an increased sense of privacy, and boundary treatments tend to reflect this.

We have identified the following characteristics of this typology:

## Townscape

- Roads are often sinuous, and have a semi-rural character. Some examples have a village-like character.
- Architectural style and form is varied, and often reflects individual plot-by-plot design choices.
- The relationship to the road and streetscape is mostly consistent, with buildings well set-back behind generous vegetation.
- Buildings are mostly oriented parallel to the road, but there is variation in plot size, plot shape, and building line. Plots often surround the entire building, providing significant private amenity space.
- Car parking is almost exclusively on-plot

## Built form

- Predominantly large detached dwellings.
- Building heights are mostly consistent, between two and three storeys, but there are examples of single storey bungalows.
- Building form and materials vary.

## Landscape character and vegetation

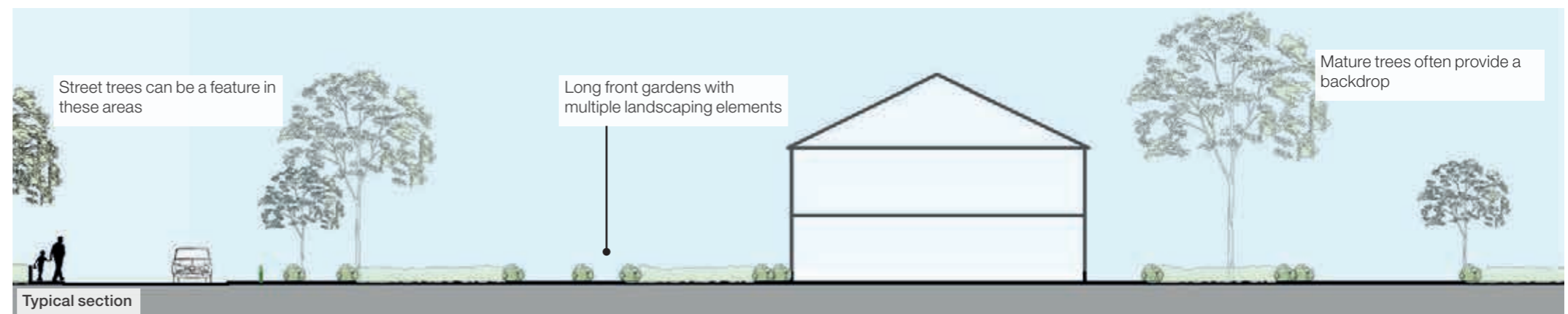
- Planting dominates the streetscape, but this dense provision of vegetation is mostly on-plot. Narrow grass verges and sporadic street planting are found in some locations.
- Development often backs onto woodland or countryside beyond.
- On-plot planting usually provides continuous coverage along the length of a street.

## Hard landscape

- Parking is predominantly on-plot, and often well screened behind vegetation.
- Pavements are infrequent, and tend not to be found on more peripheral streets.
- The width of streets varies considerably, some of these streets have a more enclosed character due to dense vegetation whereas others are wider and the vegetation is set back from the street edge.

## Boundary treatment

- Boundary treatments do vary, but tend to be higher than average to provide increased privacy and screening to residents.
- There is significant planting and vegetation used as boundary treatments. This includes hedges, bushes, and mature trees.





Pavements are often missing, which can create a more rural character but also can result in vehicle dominance and an unsafe pedestrian environment where traffic is not calmed. Attleborough.



Mature on-plot planting creates a strong boundary. Watton.



Buildings are less visible from the street and do not define its character. Swaffham.



Wide grass verges and mature planting. Swaffham.



Mature trees and consistent planting, with a range of boundary treatments. Thetford.

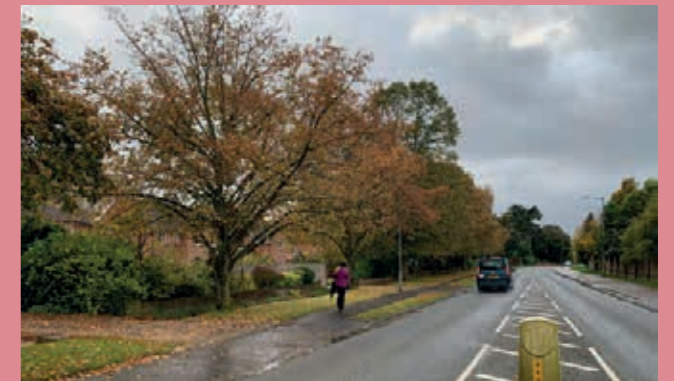
### What works well

There are examples of where this character area is particularly successful as a result of the following characteristics:

- Dense on plot planting that is attractive and well maintained, and a countryside / wooded backdrop
- Mature trees, planting, and pavements make for a pleasant pedestrian environment. Planting is visible to the front and rear of buildings
- Where roads are busier, pavements allow safer pedestrian movement
- Spaces between buildings leaves view of landscape beyond
- Where the landscaping brings consistency to the street rhythm



Well maintained street planting. Thetford.



Mature, regular trees and planting on this street marks it as an important route into town. Dereham.

### What works less well

Less successful examples of this character area include where:

- Lack of pavements prioritises vehicular movement
- High boundary treatments (fences) prevent passive street surveillance
- Where there is a lack of boundary treatment and planting which interrupts street rhythm
- Intermittent or no street lighting creates a poor pedestrian environment and does not promote active travel.



Lack of continuous planted boundary treatment. Watton.

## Out-of-town Industrial / Retail

This area-type is characterised by its built form and uses. This includes large scale industrial and commercial development that is usually located on the outskirts of the town. These are areas that are predominantly accessed by vehicle and are not characterised by landscape features.

We have identified the following characteristics of this typology:

### Townscape

- Distinctive, recognisable architectural style that includes large-floorplate simple warehouse/commercial buildings
- Roads have no distinctive pattern, but are usually wide and prioritise vehicular movement
- Large volume buildings with little architectural form/detailing, or frontage to the road.
- Access to the public is sometimes prohibited/discouraged
- Plots vary in size and shape, though most buildings are parallel to the road
- Car parking is predominantly on-plot, but some on-street parking is visible
- Generally occurs on, or in close proximity to busy roads
- Character type usually covers areas that have been specifically designated, and are physically separated from nearby residential development.

### Built form

- Building height varies between one and three (+) storeys and is not consistent one building to the next
- Material palette varies, but is usually simple and often include corrugated metal, breeze blocks, and pre-fabricated panelling.

### Landscape character and vegetation

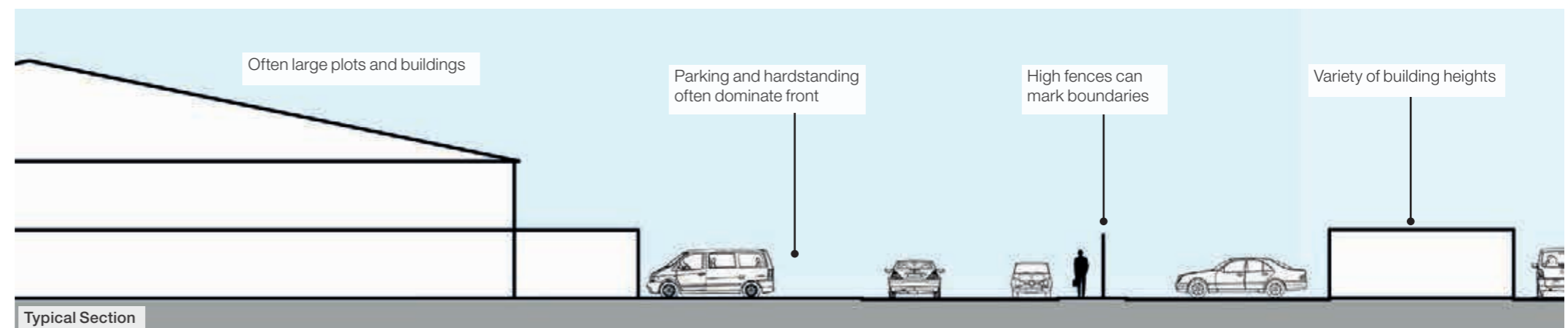
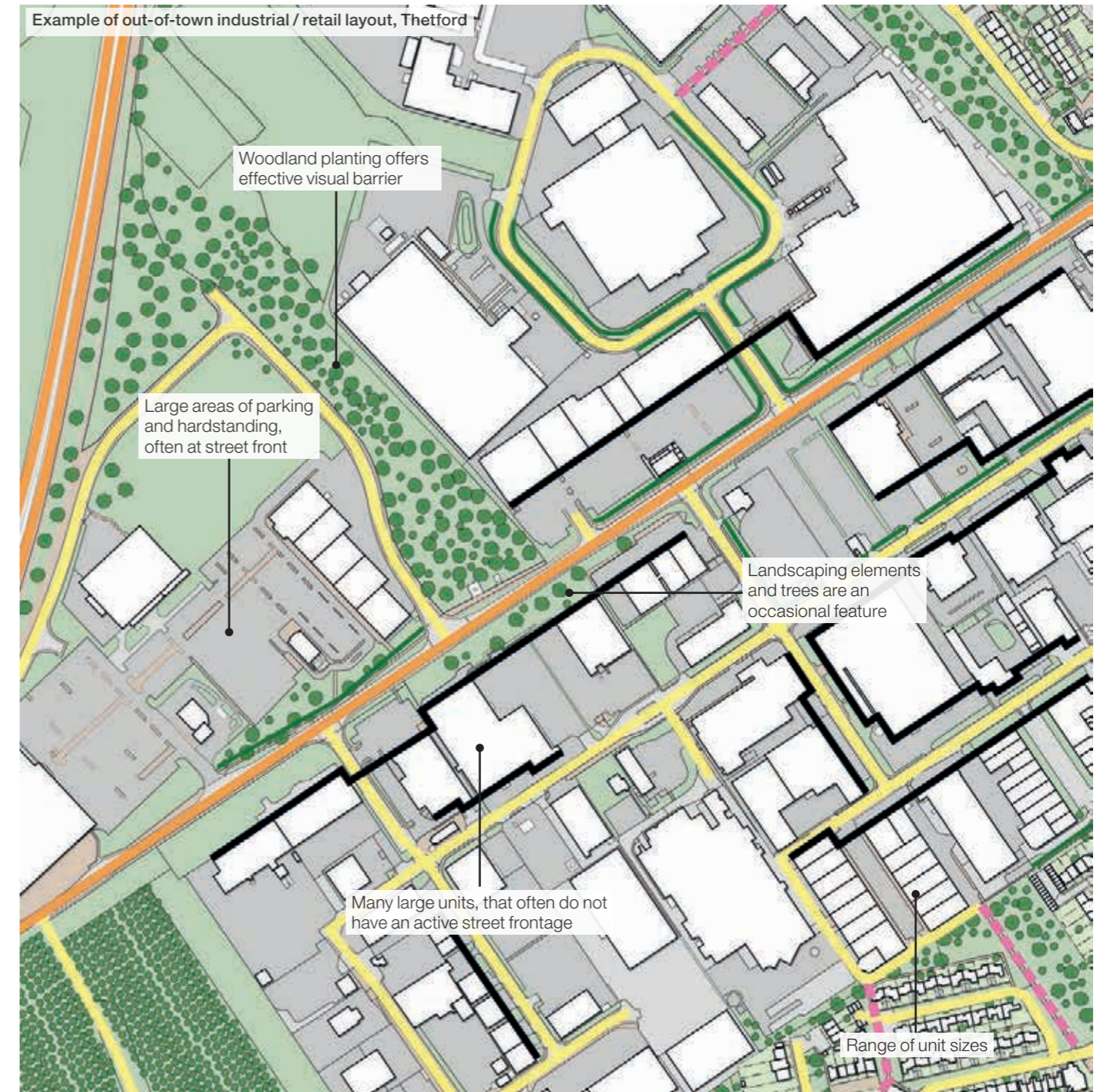
- Street planting is not a dominant feature, and is absent in most locations.
- Some planting can be found on-plot, which usually serves the function of screening the buildings' volumes from the surroundings. This includes dense hedging and trees.

### Hard landscape

- Usually large areas of hardstanding for car parking, HGVs, deliveries, and storage.
- Pavements are infrequent, and if they do exist, often poorly connected and poorly maintained.

### Boundary treatment

- Boundary treatments vary considerably. One side of the road will often have a different treatment to the other.
- Barriers/fences are often used instead of trees/hedging to screen development.





Buildings set back behind extensive parking, but architectural detail used to signal building entrances. Thetford.



Planting used as effective boundary treatment. Swaffham.



A range of materials and plot sizes, some very large. Thetford.



Low quality boundary treatment. Swaffham.



Hardstanding and parking are dominant features. Thetford.

### What works well

There are examples of where this area type is particularly successful as a result of the following characteristics:

- Lower level planting used effectively to soften the hardstanding, and provide effective boundary treatments.
- Pedestrian needs catered for - consistent pavements and connected public realm
- Where areas are more legible to pedestrians through signage and a connected street network.
- Simple, consistent building forms. Architectural detailing used to indicate building entrance.
- Building frontages relate to the street, and are not set back behind large areas of parking
- Use of timber cladding and softer materials supported.



Soft boundary treatment and generous planting. Swaffham.



This example, while found on the edge of the town centre, is a similar building typology and more successful as it fronts the street, bringing activity to the street. Attleborough.

### What works less well

Less successful examples of this character area include where:

- External perimeter boundary treatments (including fences and panelling) are poor quality, and visually dominant
- Large areas of hardstanding
- Poor pedestrian environments
- Lack of consistency in street scene
- Routes are not well connected and therefore difficult to navigate



Extensive hardstanding and poor pavement provision. Thetford.

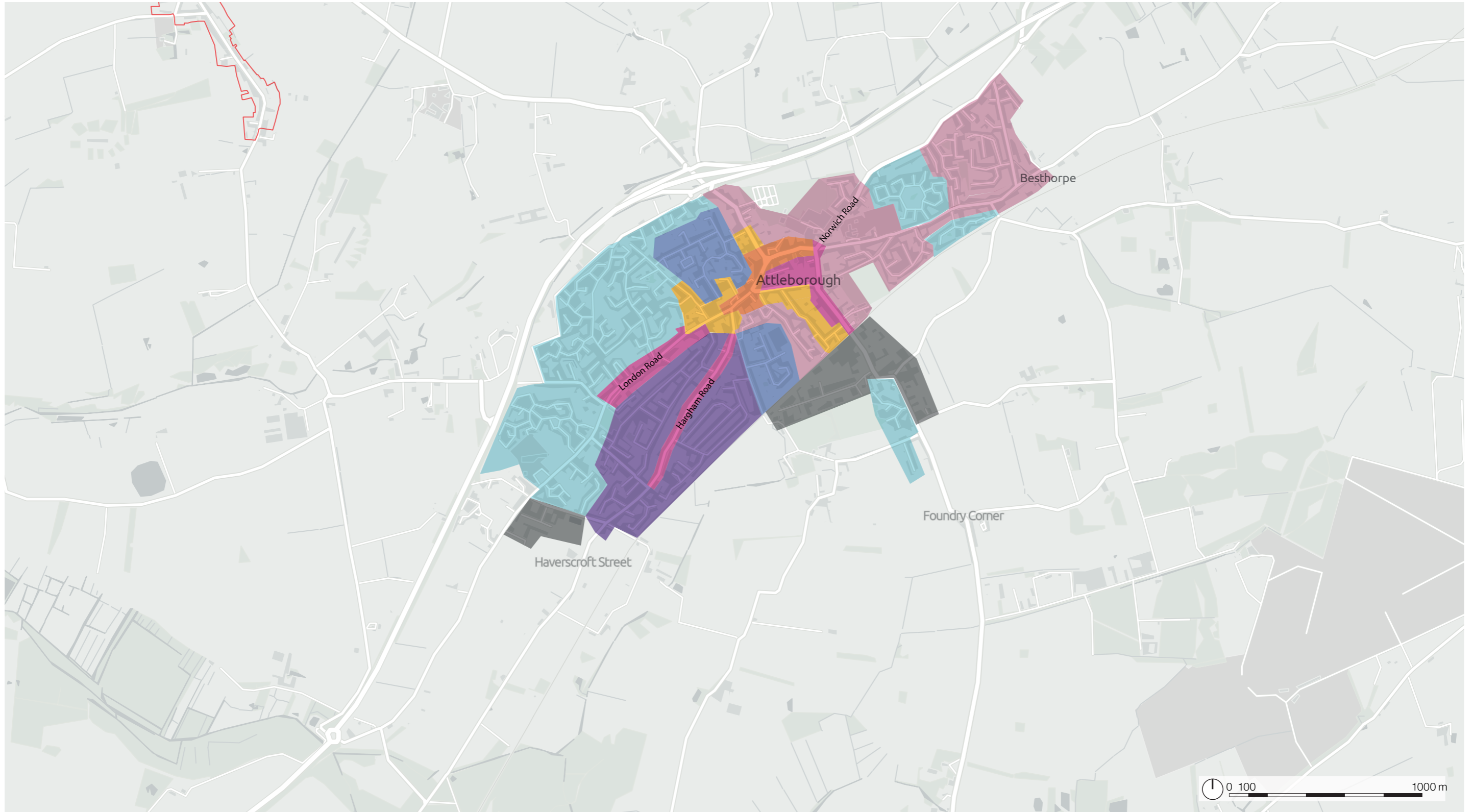









55



# Character Area-Type Maps

## Attleborough

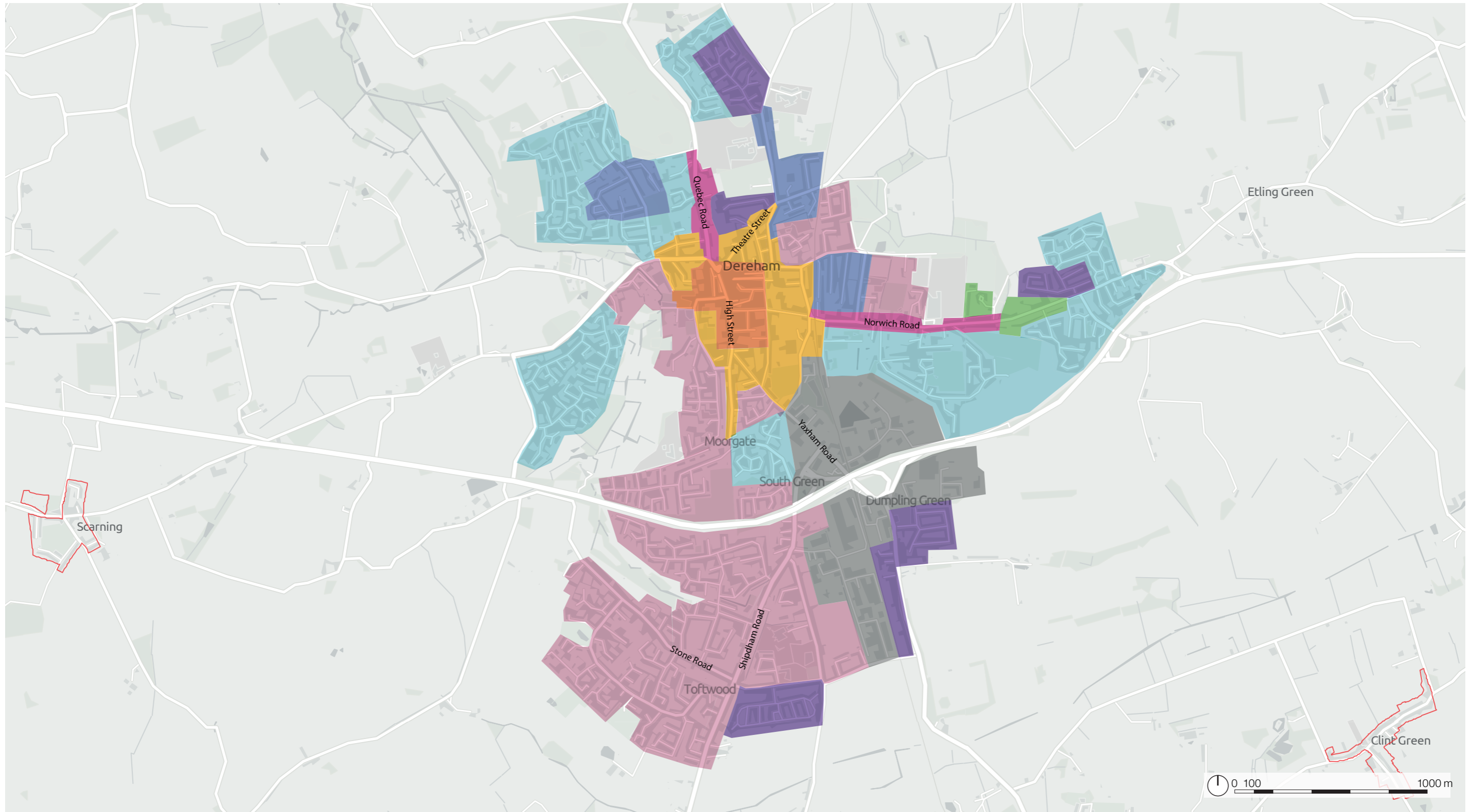


- |   |                    |   |                   |   |  |
|---|--------------------|---|-------------------|---|--|
|  | Town centre        |  | Formal suburban   |  | Inconsistent suburban                    |
|  | Town centre fringe |  | Informal suburban |  | Radial route                             |
|   |                    |  | Bungalow suburban |  | Industrial / retail (out of town centre) |

Open space, including parks and play areas have been included within area-types as they have been considered as part of the surrounding area, however it should be noted that this is not a suggestion that these spaces should be developed in future.

# Character Area-Type Maps

## Dereham

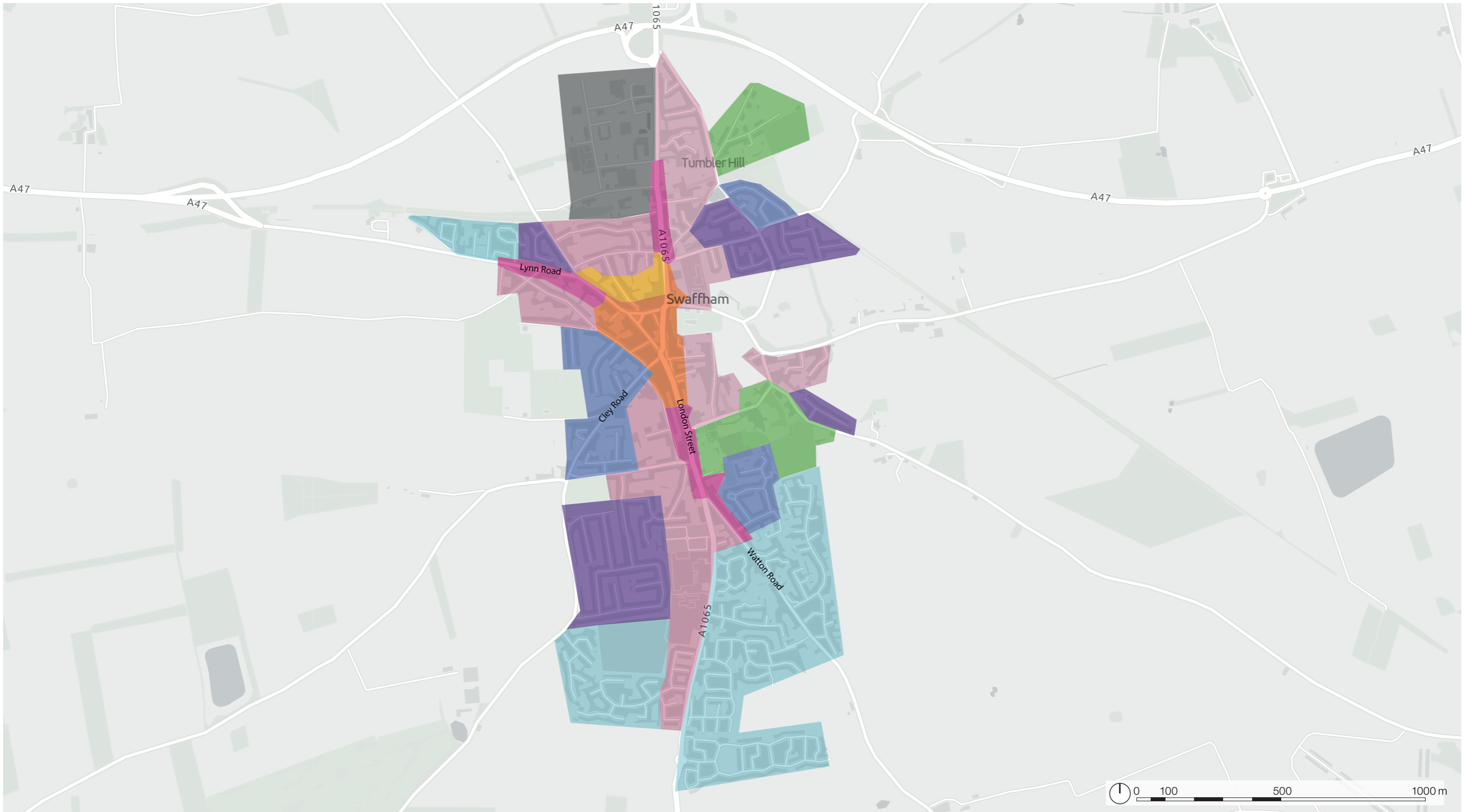


- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
|  Town centre        |  Formal suburban   |  Inconsistent suburban |  Industrial / retail (out of town centre) |
|  Town centre fringe |  Informal suburban |  Radial route          |  |
|  |  Bungalow suburban |  Leafy detached        |  |

Open space, including parks and play areas have been included within area-types as they have been considered as part of the surrounding area, however it should be noted that this is not a suggestion that these spaces should be developed in future.

# Character Area-Type Maps

## Swaffham

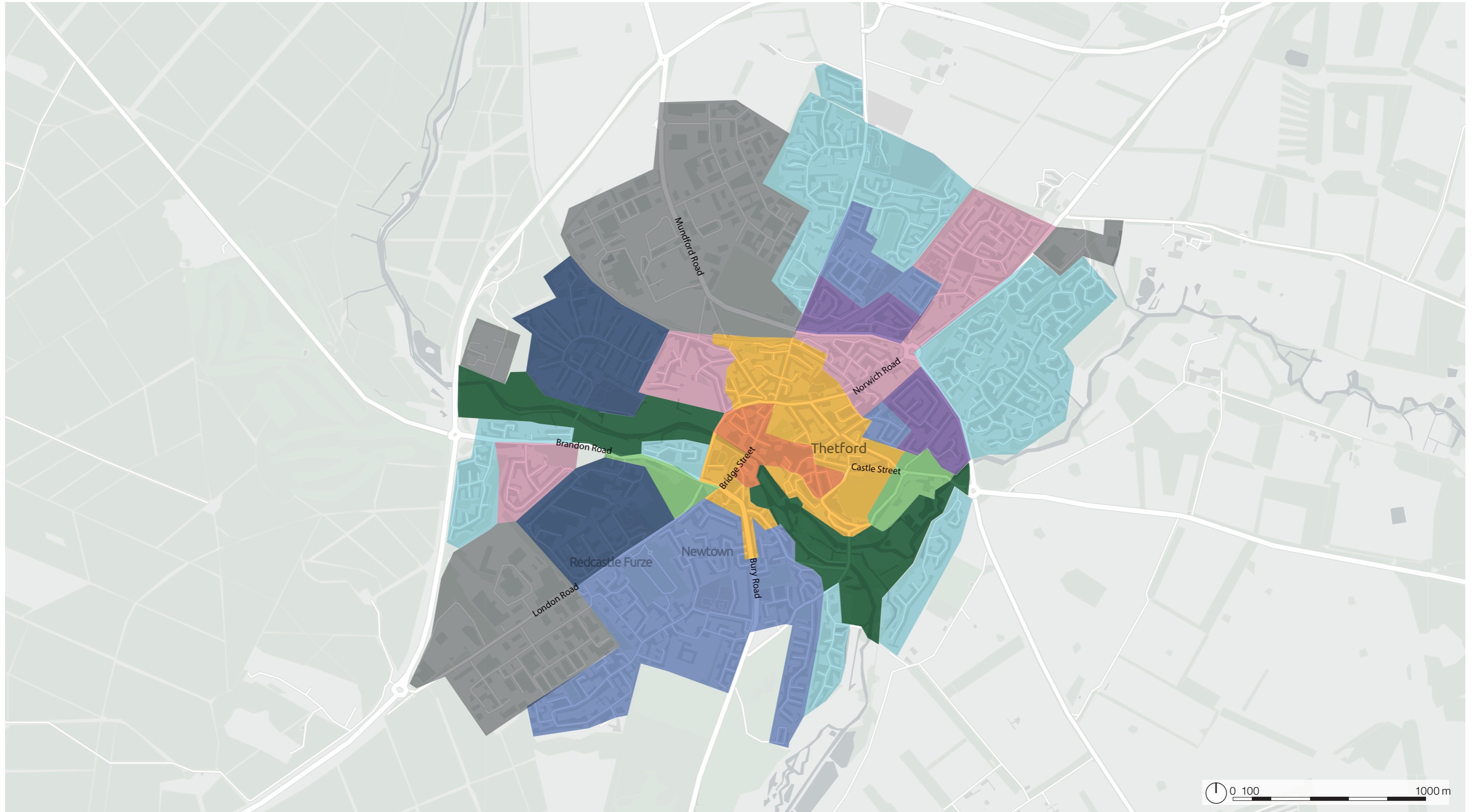











- |   |                    |   |                   |   |                       |   |  |
|---|--------------------|---|-------------------|---|-----------------------|---|--|
|  | Town centre        |  | Formal suburban   |  | Inconsistent suburban |  | Industrial / retail (out of town centre) |
|  | Town centre fringe |  | Informal suburban |  | Radial route          |  | Leafy detached                           |
|   |                    |  | Bungalow suburban |   |                       |   |  |

Open space, including parks and play areas have been included within area-types as they have been considered as part of the surrounding area, however it should be noted that this is not a suggestion that these spaces should be developed in future.

# Character Area-Type Maps

## Thetford

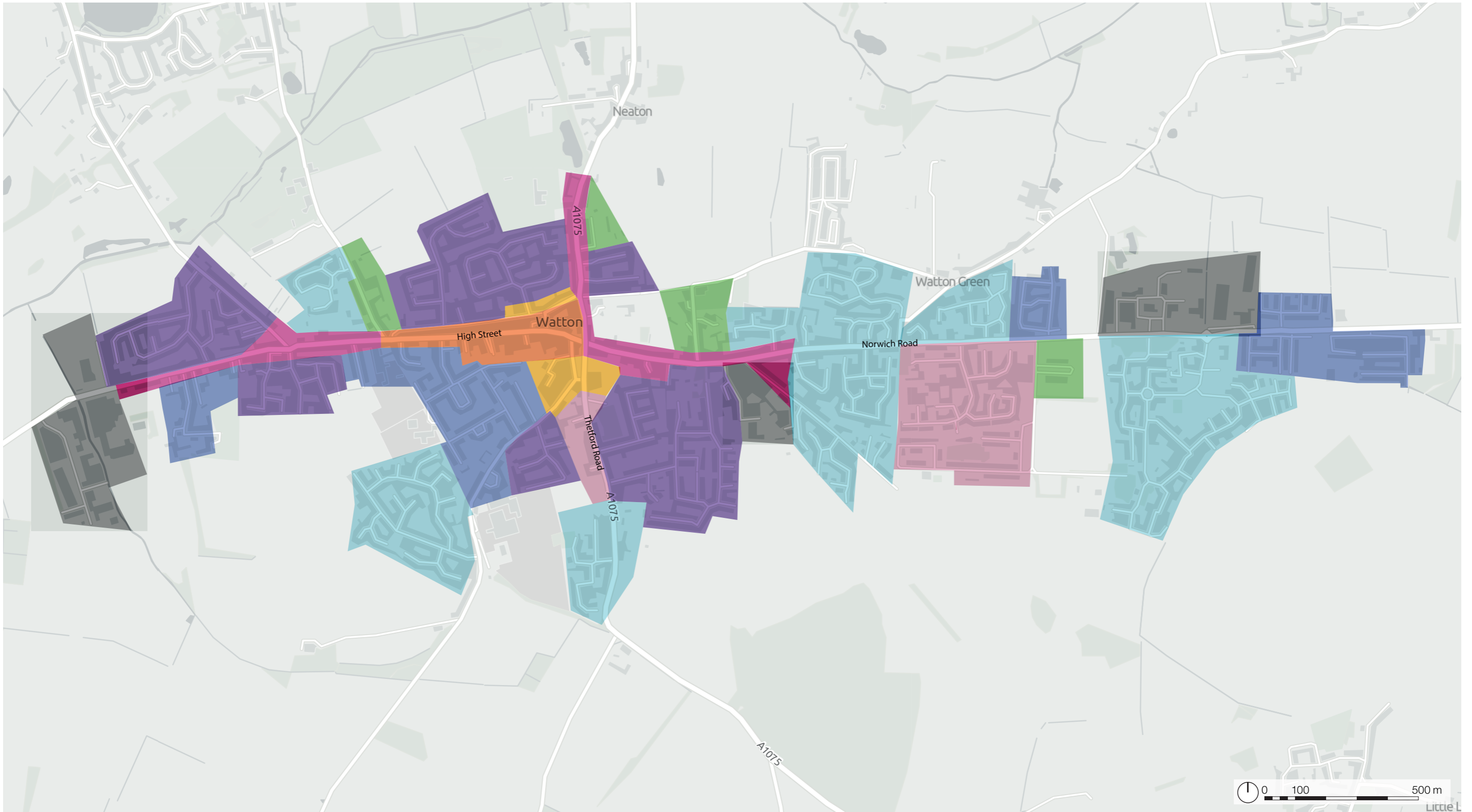


- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
|  Town centre        |  Formal suburban   |  Inconsistent suburban |  River valley                             |
|  Town centre fringe |  Informal suburban |  Experimental suburban |  Industrial / retail (out of town centre) |
|  |  Bungalow suburban |  Leafy detached        |  |

Open space, including parks and play areas have been included within area-types as they have been considered as part of the surrounding area, however it should be noted that this is not a suggestion that these spaces should be developed in future.

# Character Area-Type Maps

## Watton



- |   |                    |   |                   |   |                       |   |  |
|---|--------------------|---|-------------------|---|-----------------------|---|--|
|  | Town centre        |  | Formal suburban   |  | Inconsistent suburban |  | Industrial / retail (out of town centre) |
|  | Town centre fringe |  | Informal suburban |  | Radial route          |   |  |
|   |                    |  | Bungalow suburban |  | Leafy detached        |   |  |

Open space, including parks and play areas have been included within area-types as they have been considered as part of the surrounding area, however it should be noted that this is not a suggestion that these spaces should be developed in future.



WASHERIDGE

# Part 3: Rural Settlements



# Rural Settlement Character Assessment

The village categorisation process has identified a series of settlement character types, based on an analysis of function, morphology and landscape influence.

This section of the report should be read in conjunction with the two part Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of Breckland District (2007), incorporating a District wide LCA and a local level LCA of 17 identified settlements. Specific reference should be made to the identified landscape guidelines and the principles in relation to development to inform future proposals.

## Methodology

The approach to the categorisation (see **Figure 3.1**) has distinguished between the likely origins of each village (its historic function) and its morphological form. This approach has been adopted to illustrate the influence of the village's original function on current day character, whilst also recognising the historic and modern day settlement form. This results in three categories of types as outlined below:

- **Origin Character Types;**
- **Morphological Village Types; and**
- **Morphological Landscape Traits.**

Each village is allocated one or more origin character type based on the historic functions of the settlement. This has involved the analysis of historic mapping to categorise each settlement based on its origins of development. Although a settlement may have deviated from its original function and character, this information is useful to understand the role of historic function in its development.

All villages are also categorised into one or more morphological types to identify both the historic and present day morphological form. Further refinement has also been undertaken (morphological landscape traits) to distinguish where settlements are, or have been arranged around a village green or common. This 'hybrid' approach aims to ensure that all relevant characteristics can be considered as part of future design coding. The classification for villages is presented spatially in **Figures 3.2-3.3** and summarised in the **Hybrid Classification Matrix**.

It is important to note that village classifications are not always straightforward and so a best fit approach has been taken. To ensure robustness, settlements that have more complex morphologies have been assigned more than one morphological category to reflect their varied forms.

A full breakdown of the origin character types, morphological types and morphological landscape traits are listed below:

### Origin character types:

- Agricultural Village Origin Character Type;
- Market Village Origin Character type;
- Planned Estate Village Origin Character Type; and
- Planned Village Other Origin Character Type

### Morphological village types:

- Nucleated Single Focus Morphological Village Type;
- Nucleated Polyfocal Morphological Village Type;
- Rural Row Continuous Morphological Village Type;
- Rural Row Interrupted Morphological Village Type; and
- Dispersed Morphological Village Type.

### Morphological landscape traits:

- Common Edge; and
- Green Edge.

For each of the village types, an analysis of typical character and identity is outlined based on the headings listed below:

- Street hierarchy;
- Density, set back and building line;
- Building height and roofscape;
- Landmark features;
- Architectural features and materials; and
- Relationship to landscape / influence of vegetation and open space.

The key characteristics have been summarised using example settlements that fall within each village type.

## Glossary of Terms

### Morphological

Morphological form describes a settlement's street pattern, building density, plot layout and other building patterns, including height and relationship with the street. How the village relates to both internal and external landscape features is another important feature of rural settlement morphology.

### Agricultural village

Small settlements which initially originated as a series of dispersed buildings which have since developed into villages. The historic origins of the built form may range from a variety of functions including; farmsteads, grain milling or turnpike settlements on key routes.

### Market village Planned estate village

Villages with a historic market function, often with market squares or places.

Villages planned by a landlord to house estate workers; often created in a single phase and/ or featuring stylistically similar buildings (e.g. workers' cottages).

### Planned village other

Regularity of spacing, shape of plots and often of the form of the dwellings suggests a degree of external planning, usually by a landlord.

### Nucleated village

Rural settlement in which farmsteads are typically clustered together, normally as villages (i.e. with ecclesiastical and/ or lay function) but also as hamlets (i.e. without lay function). These are being sub classified as either a single nucleated settlement or a polyfocal one.

### Nucleated single focus

A nucleated settlement which develops around one single core, shown by the clustering of features such as the church, manor house, village green, school, shops and crossing points.

### Nucleated polyfocal

A settlement that does not develop with one single core, but may develop or spread out over a wider area, and may in fact have a number of separate concentrations of settlement (Taylor 1977). This could be represented by two or more development clusters, generally around features such as churches, schools and villages greens, within one settlement.

### Rural row village

Linear arrangement of farmsteads and dwellings, usually built along a road. These are being sub classified as either continuous or interrupted.

### Continuous rural row

A row settlement (linear arrangement of dwellings along a road) with no large gaps between buildings. These commonly begin as interrupted rural rows which have since been infilled by development.

### Interrupted rural row

A row settlement (linear arrangement of dwellings along a road) with numerous substantial gaps between buildings, such as agricultural fields or building plots.

### Dispersed village

A dispersed pattern is where isolated buildings are spread out across an area, usually separated by a few hundred metres with no central focus. It is typically an area containing buildings rather than a single settlement.

### Common edge village

Agricultural village with farmsteads and cottages wholly or mainly arranged along the edge of a common.

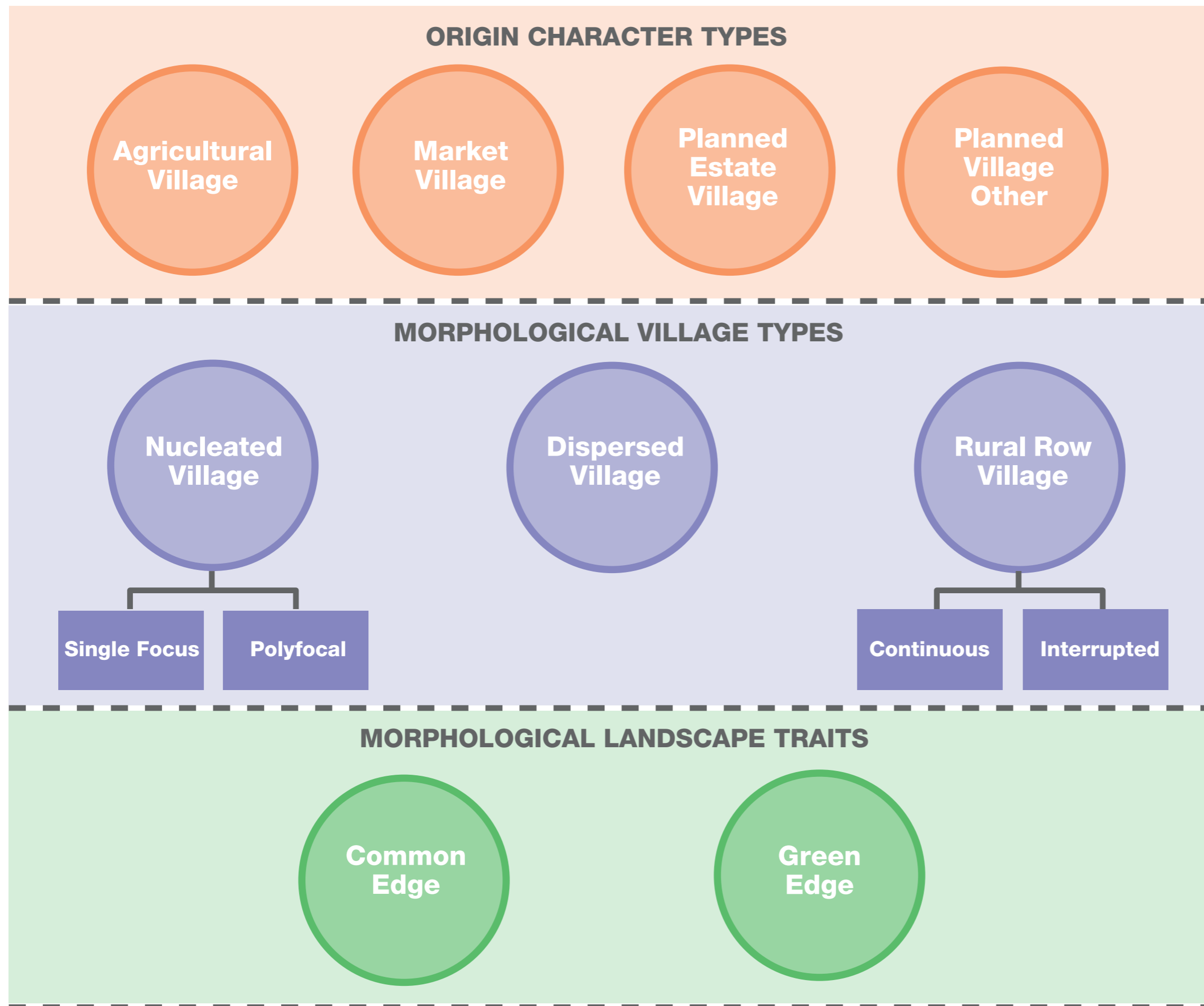
### Green edge village

Agricultural village with farmsteads and cottages wholly or mainly arranged around the edges of a green.

\*Definitions have mostly been taken from or adapted from the FISH Historic Characterisation Thesaurus (2015).



Figure 3.1 - Approach to the categorisation



### USER GUIDE

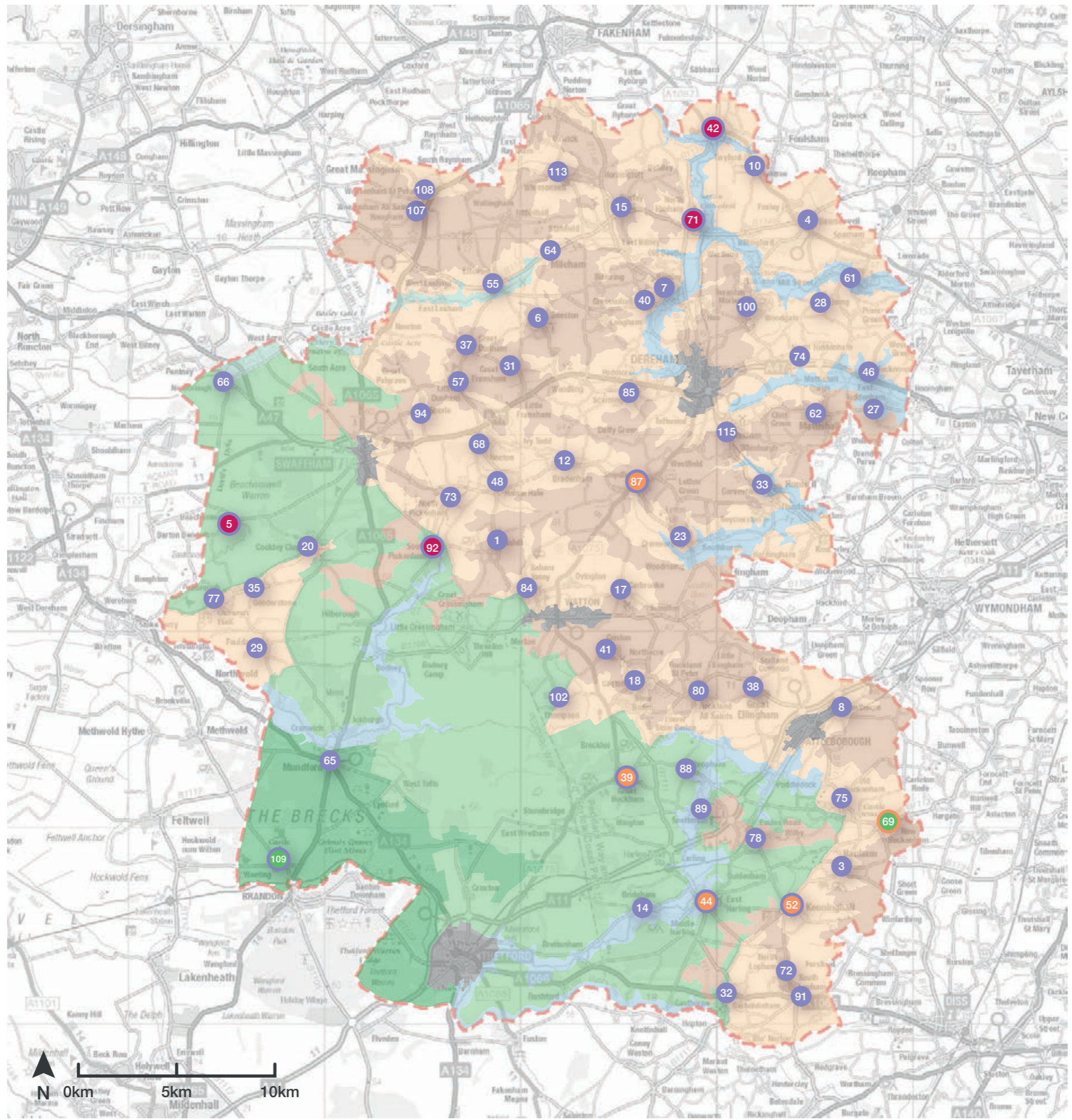
The origin character type is based on the original function of the village

The morphological village type is based on the spatial layout of the village, as shown on historic and modern day maps

Morphological landscape traits apply to those villages that were arranged around a common or green at some point in their development

**Figure 3.2 - Analysis of Origin Character and Landscape Character Types (LCTs) (as defined within the Breckland District Landscape Character Assessment)**

1. Ashill
3. Banham
4. Bawdeswell
5. Beachamwell
6. Beeston with Bittering
7. Beetley
8. Besthorpe
10. Bintree
12. Bradenham
14. Bridgham
15. Brisley
17. Carbrooke
18. Caston
20. Cockley Clew
23. Cranworth
27. East Tuddenham
28. Elsing
29. Foulden
31. Fransham (Great)
32. Garboldisham
33. Garvestone
35. Gooderstone
37. Great Dunham
38. Great Ellingham
39. Great Hockham
40. Gressenhall
41. Griston
42. Guist
44. (East) Harling
46. Hockering
48. Holme Hale
52. Kenninghall
55. Litcham
57. Little Dunham
61. Lyng
62. Mattishall
64. Mileham
65. Mundford
66. Narborough
68. Necton
69. New Buckenham
71. North Elmham
72. North Lopham
73. North Pickenham
74. North Tuddenham
75. Old Buckenham
77. Oxborough
78. Quidenham
80. Rocklands (St Peter & All Saints)
84. Saham Toney
85. Scarning
87. Shipdham
88. Shropham
89. Snetterton
91. South Lopham
92. South Pickenham
94. Sporle with Palgrave
100. Swanton Morley
102. Thompson
107. Weasenham All Saints
108. Weasenham St. Peter
109. Weeting with Broomhill
113. Whissonsett
115. Yaxham



**Breckland Landscape Character Assessment**

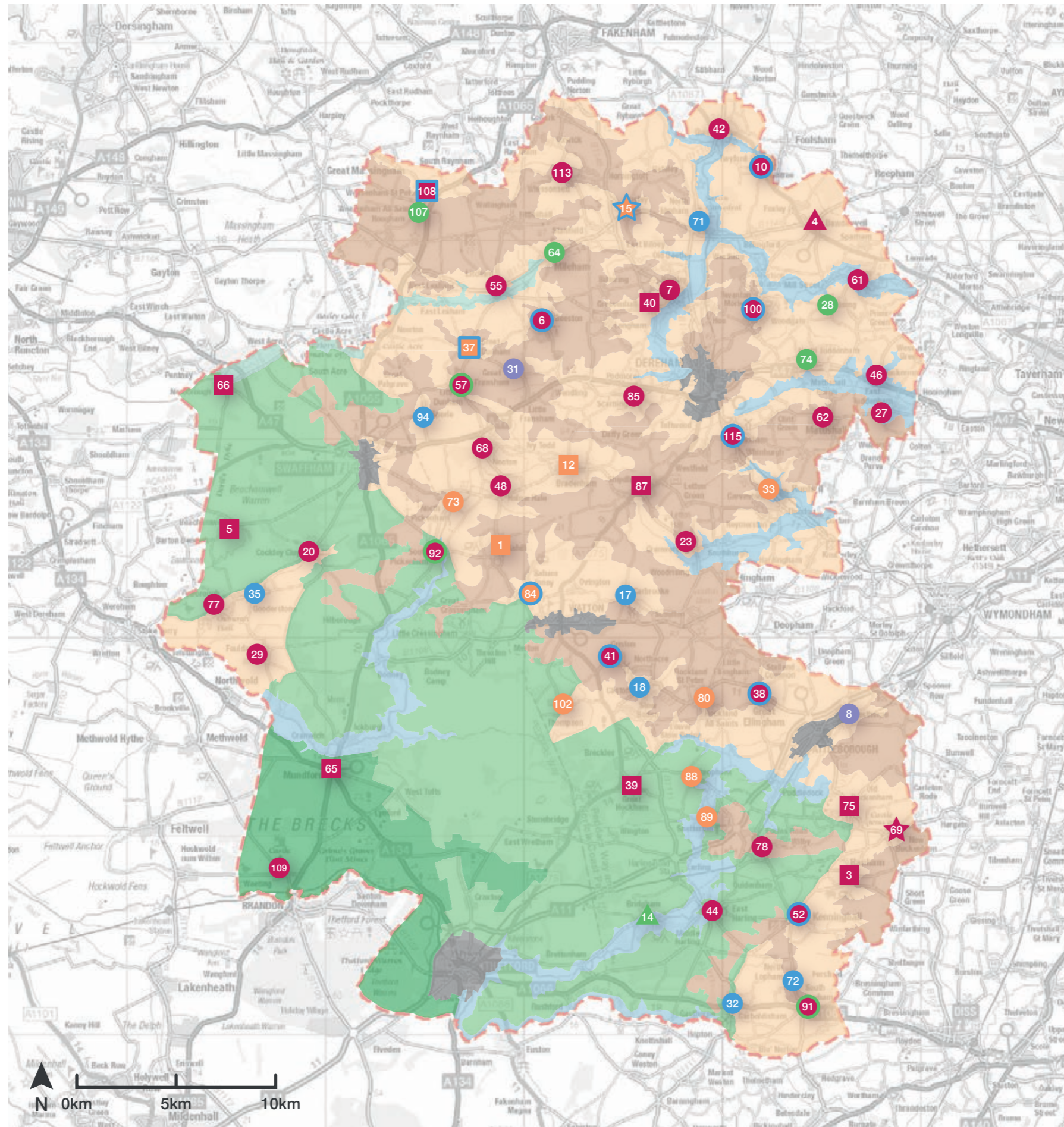
- River Valleys**  
Settlement is infrequent and small scale, comprising individual properties and hamlets.
- Settled Tributary Farmland**  
Settled character, with dispersed farmsteads and nucleated villages.
- The Brecks - Plantations**  
An unsettled landscape with the exception of small settlements and the occasional individual property. Weeting would be an exception to this, as the single large settlement in the character type.
- The Brecks - Heathland with Plantation**  
Settlement is dispersed and of low density but the urban edges of Swaffham and Thetford have an influence on the landscape.
- Plateau Farmland**  
Settlement occurs throughout the plateau – comprising individual farmsteads, hamlets and small scale villages – the latter often centred around a green or pond. There are some larger scale settlements on the edges of the plateau.
- Chalk Rivers**  
Settlement density is generally low, with settlement confined to compact nucleated villages to the valley sides and isolated halls and farmsteads.
- Urban**

**Origin Character**

- Agricultural Village
  - Market Village
  - Planned Estate Village
  - Planned Village Other
- Where a hybrid classification of origin character has been identified, an outline will be shown, for example:
- Guist is a planned estate village but also an agricultural village
  - New Buckenham is a planned village other but also a market village

**Figure 3.3 - Analysis of Morphological Village Types and Morphological Landscape Traits with Landscape Character Types**

1. Ashill
3. Banham
4. Bawdeswell
5. Beachamwell
6. Beeston with Bittering
7. Beetley
8. Besthorpe
10. Bintree
12. Bradenham
14. Bridgham
15. Brisley
17. Carbrooke
18. Caston
20. Cockley Cley
23. Cranworth
27. East Tuddenham
28. Elsing
29. Foulden
31. Fransham (Great)
32. Garboldisham
33. Garvestone
35. Gooderstone
37. Great Dunham
38. Great Ellingham
39. Great Hockham
40. Gressenhall
41. Griston
42. Guist
44. (East) Harling
46. Hockering
48. Holme Hale
52. Kenninghall
55. Litcam
57. Little Dunham
61. Lyng
62. Mattishall
64. Mileham
65. Mundford
66. Narborough
68. Necton
69. New Buckenham
71. North Elmham
72. North Lopham
73. North Pickenham
74. North Tuddenham
75. Old Buckenham
77. Oxborough
78. Quidenham
80. Rocklands (St Peter & All Saints)
84. Saham Toney
85. Scarning
87. Shipdham
88. Shropham
89. Snetterton
91. South Lopham
92. South Pickenham
94. Sporle with Palgrave
100. Swanton Morley
102. Thompson
107. Weasenham All Saints
108. Weasenham St. Peter
109. Weeting with Broomhill
113. Whissonsett
115. Yaxham



**Morphological Landscape Trait**

- Green Edge Village
- Common Edge Village
- Both Green and Common Edge
- Neither Green or Common Edge

**Morphological Village Types**

- Nucleated - Single Focus
- Nucleated - Polyfocal
- Continuous Rural Row
- Interrupted Rural Row
- Dispersed Village

Where a hybrid classification of morphological village types has been identified, an outline will be shown, for example:

- Griston has a modern morphological form of both nucleated and continuous rural row traits. The village is not a green edge or common edge village.
- New Buckenham has a modern morphological form of nucleated. The village is both a green edge and common edge village.
- Weasenham St Peter has a modern morphological form of both nucleated and continuous rural row traits. The village is also a green edge village.

## Hybrid Classification Matrix

Village	Origin Character				Morphological Form					Morphological Landscape Traits	
	Agricultural Village	Market Village	Planned Estate Village	Planned Village Other	Nucleated Village		Dispersed Village	Rural Row Village		Green Edge Village	Common Edge Village
					Single	Polyfocal		Continuous	Interrupted		
Ashill	✓					H + M				✓	
Banham*	✓				H + M					✓	
Bawdeswell*	✓				H + M			H			✓
Beachamwell*	✓		✓		H + M					✓	
Beeston with Bittering	✓				H + M			M	H		
Beetley	✓				M			H			
Besthorpe	✓						H + M				
Bintree	✓				M			M	H		
Bradenham	✓					H + M		H		✓	
Bridgham	✓								H + M		✓
Brisley*	✓					H + M		M		✓	✓
Carbrooke*	✓							H	M		
Caston*	✓							H	M		
Cockley Cley	✓				H + M						
Cranworth	✓				H + M						
East Harling	✓	✓			H + M						
East Tuddenham	✓				H + M						
Elsing	✓								H + M		
Foul登	✓				M	H					
Garboldisham*	✓							M	H		
Garvestone*	✓					H + M					
Great Dunham	✓					H + M		H + M		✓	
Great Ellingham	✓				M			M	H		
Great Fransham	✓						H + M				
Great Hockham	✓	✓			H + M					✓	
Gressenhall	✓				H + M					✓	
Griston	✓				M			M	H		
Gooderstone	✓							M	H		
Guist*	✓		✓		H + M						
Hockering	✓				M			H			
Holme Hale	✓				H + M						
Kenninghall*	✓	✓			H + M			M	H		
Litcham*	✓				H + M						
Little Dunham*	✓				M	H			M		
Lyng*	✓				H + M						
Mattishall*	✓				M	H					
Mileham*	✓								H + M		

Village	Origin Character				Morphological Form					Morphological Landscape Traits	
	Agricultural Village	Market Village	Planned Estate Village	Planned Village Other	Nucleated Village		Dispersed Village	Rural Row Village		Green Edge Village	Common Edge Village
					Single	Polyfocal		Continuous	Interrupted		
Mundford*	✓				M				H	✓	
Narborough*	✓				H + M						
Necton*	✓				M		H				
New Buckenham*		✓		✓	H + M					✓	✓
North Elmham*	✓		✓					M	H		
North Lopham*	✓							H + M			
North Pickenham	✓					M			H		
North Tuddenham	✓								H + M		
Old Buckenham*	✓				H + M					✓	
Oxborough*	✓				H + M						
Quidenham*	✓					H + M					
Rocklands	✓					H + M					
Saham Toney	✓					H + M		M	H		
Scarning	✓				H + M						
Shipdham*	✓				M			H + M		✓	
Shropham	✓					H + M			M		
Snetterton	✓					H + M					
South Lopham*	✓				H + M				H + M		
South Pickenham*	✓		✓						H + M		
Sporle with Palgrave	✓							M	H		
Swanton Morley	✓				M			M	H		
Thompson	✓					H + M					
Weasenham All Saints*	✓					H			M		
Weasenham St Peter*	✓				H + M			M		✓	
Weeting with Broomhill	✓			✓	M	H					
Whissonsett	✓				H + M						
Yaxham*	✓				M			M	H		

H = Historic Morphological Form M = Modern Morphological Form \* =

village currently designated as a conservation area (Weasenham All Saints and Weasenham St Peter both fall within the Weasenham Conservation Area)

Where the modern day morphological form is different from the historic morphological form, both should be considered in planning for future development



# Origin Character Types



Bridge over the River Thet, Bridgham

# Origin Character Type

## Agricultural Village

This morphological form is characterised by small settlements which initially originated as a series of dispersed buildings which have since developed into villages. Villages which developed as a series of dispersed buildings associated with agriculture or grain milling fall within this category. In addition, villages that developed from turnpikes on key routes also tend to have the same characteristics. The settlements generally exhibit evidence of later extensions to the urban form and infill development.

The following characteristics are typically associated with villages that have agricultural origins:

### Street hierarchy

- In general, the villages retain a strong historic centre. Buildings of rural origin are a frequent presence within this area, emphasising the agricultural character of the settlements.
- The building form and block structure of the village maintains some historic connections to agriculture, despite the conversion of many agricultural buildings to residential properties.
- Historic development is arranged in some villages around a small common or village green. Some of these green space features remain intact.
- The modern day villages typically exhibit mixed street hierarchy and block structure as a result of expansion around the agricultural core from a range of different periods.

### Density, set back & building line

- The villages are generally characterised by a varied orientation of buildings with some being 'end on' to the road and others forming a road frontage. A number of buildings are also set back from the road with green frontages.
- Commonly, farmsteads are set out so that outbuildings front, and in many cases adjoin, the road, concealing the principal buildings behind them.

### Building height & roofscape

- Within the older historic centre of the village, residential properties are low in height and generally do not exceed three storeys. Churches form features of the villages, often providing the tallest structure.

### Landmark features

- The older historic buildings of agricultural origin are generally located within the village core. The continued use of some farmsteads for agriculture purposes provides an important link to the land uses and practices which continue today.

### Architectural features & materials

- Farmhouses are generally constructed with timber, red brick and flint detailing and variations in building styles within the historic centre are limited. However, there is generally a greater degree of built form and architectural styles with increasing distance from the historic centre.
- Older buildings within the village are generally characterised by attractive vernacular detailing to the facades, gables and roofs.
- Large scale red brick mill buildings, including extant windmill towers and waterwheels, provide reference to the important traditional practice of grain milling across Breckland.
- Within some villages, the agricultural wealth of the settlement during the Victorian period is prominent in the ornate building details, e.g. Banham, where decorative details such as contrasting yellow brickwork, dentil cornicing, stepped gables and decorative barge boards are present.
- Many villages have now experienced mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century development which uses non place-specific architecture and materials, diluting the character and sense of place.

### Relationship to landscape

- The villages typically exhibit a strong relationship with surrounding farmland which contributes to the rural identity of the settlement.
- Selective views between properties and visual links are afforded across the surrounding agricultural context, with woodland often forming a component of the view. Patterns of mature vegetation typically align the street frontage and frame key views.
- Where settlements have developed along watercourses, historically significant buildings can be found along the river, e.g. Narborough Water mill.

### Example villages

- Ashill
- Banham
- Bawdeswell
- Beachamwell
- Beeston with Bittering
- Beetley
- Besthorpe
- Bintree
- Bradenham
- Bridgham
- Brisley
- Carbrooke
- Caston
- Cockley Cley
- Cranworth
- East Harling
- East Tuddenham
- Elsing
- Foulden
- Garboldisham
- Garvestone
- Gooderstone
- Great Dunham
- Great Ellingham
- Great Fransham
- Great Hockham
- Gressenhall
- Griston
- Guist
- Hockering
- Holme Hale
- Kenninghall
- Litcham
- Little Dunham
- Lyng
- Mattishall
- Mileham
- Mundford
- Narborough
- Necton
- North Elmham
- North Lopham
- North Pickenham
- North Tuddenham
- Old Buckenham
- Oxborough
- Quidenham
- Rocklands
- Saham Toney
- Scarning
- Shipdham
- Shropham
- Snetterton
- South Lopham
- Sporle with Palgrave
- Swanton Morley
- Thompson
- Weasenham All Saints
- Weasenham St. Peter
- Weeting with Broomhill
- Whissonsett
- Yaxham



Black weatherboard barns with clay pantile roofs and some red brick and flint detailing on boundaries and external walls in Bridgham. Now residential, the farmstead retains its layout and position on the edge of the village



18th century shuttered clay walled barn, now converted to residential. Great Hockham.



Attractive local vernacular detailing of a steep pitched roof with clay pantiles, flint walls and red brick quoins on this former weaver's cottage. Brisley.





Red brick farmstead with yard, now a residential dwelling in Bridgham



17th century barn, now converted into residential, with timber framing and a thatched roof

2.5 storey red brick farmhouse of 17th century origin with crowstepped gables, overlooking the yard

Backing onto open countryside, small historic farmsteads are commonly found on the periphery of agricultural villages

Manor Farm, Hockering



Mature vegetation frames the approach to Thompson



Modern residential development in Great Fransham mimicking black weatherboard and agricultural barn forms



Former agricultural buildings converted to residential dwellings. Lyng.



Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse Museum providing an insight into the historic land uses and practices. Beetley.



Ornate detailing and larger scales of residential buildings reflect the agricultural wealth of the area. Banham.

## Farmstead Agricultural Village

Farmstead agricultural villages are the most frequently found type of agricultural villages and represent the most common function linked to the historic development of settlements within Breckland District.

The development of these villages likely originated from the clustering of farmsteads and worker cottages within an area of high agricultural productivity, resulting in the formation of a hamlet. Over time, settlement would have incrementally grown into a village through the building of a church and subsequent dwellings.

Over time, the diversification of the agricultural landscape would become apparent through the use of the village's buildings, e.g. blacksmiths and weavers cottages.

Key characteristics of the farmstead agricultural village include:

- The proliferation of larger scale farmhouses generally orientated away from the road;
- The orientation of farmsteads are generally set out so that outbuildings front, and in many cases adjoin, the road frontage;
- Historic farmsteads with outbuildings and yards are still frequently found within the modern village core and represent the original extent of the settlement;
- Within villages which have not substantially grown, farmsteads are still common features on the settlement edge; and
- Larger farmsteads regularly see decorative detailing on both farmhouses and outhouses, reflecting the wealth within the agricultural landscape at the time.



Timber framed and brick dwellings with pantile roofs, formerly used as a post office and a blacksmith. Quidenham.



Manor Farm in Bridgham with its large farmhouse and flint walled out buildings has retained its character as a farmstead whilst expanding as a small-scale business park



Local vernacular detailing on former agricultural buildings using red brick, flint and clay pantiles within Beeston. This cohesion of materials is carried on to the adjoining boundary treatment

## Grain Mill Village

Closely linked with farmstead agricultural villages, grain mill villages have developed through the practice of corn milling, generally utilising wind power. All three major types of windmill were used across Breckland, including tower mills, smock mills and post mills.

These were largely situated in locations close to areas of high agricultural productivity, therefore being closely related to the position of other farmstead agricultural villages. The villages would also need to be located within open landscapes where high winds prevail, resulting in their frequent presence within the Plateau Farmland and the Settled Tributary Farmland LCTs.

Today, a number of extant windmills are visible in the landscape, including the tower mill at Great Ellingham, the tower mill at Old Buckenham and the smock mill at Garboldisham.

Key characteristics of the grain mill village include:

- Extant tower mills are common features within these villages. Although they would originally have been situated at the edge of the settlement, growth of the village over time means they are now commonly part of the village core. They will typically have had their blades removed and be converted into the residential dwellings of around five storeys; and
- Milling buildings which are larger in scale to the surrounding local vernacular commonly adjoin these mills.



Five storey tower of Great Ellingham Windmill which once milled corn and has now been converted to a dwelling



Five storey Old Buckenham windmill tower and adjacent three storey milling buildings used for turning corn into flour



Garboldisham Windmill, a post mill with two storey roundhouse used for milling corn ©Bob Jones

## Water Mill Village

The growth of water milling led to the development of a number of settlements adjacent to watercourses, including the River Thet, Upper Yare, River Wissey, River Wensum and Blackwater, Upper Tud and the River Nar.

Narborough, located on the River Nar, is a good example of where the presence of water milling has had a significant impact on the development of the settlement. Narborough Water mill, used for the milling of corn, is located directly on the river with the Maltings nearby. Further downstream, the Narborough Bone Mill, where the water wheel can still be seen today, milled bones to create fertiliser. This activity ceased once a sluice gate was built on the Nar and reflects the importance of the river for both navigation, trading and producing energy.

Other water milling opportunities were harnessed across Breckland, including a paper mill in Lyng which was located on the River Wensum.

Key characteristics of the water mill village include:

- Building scales are generally larger, as seen in Narborough, due to the more industrial character of some of the key historic buildings;
- Situated within river valleys, water milling villages are generally more enclosed by both topography and vegetation; and
- Although settlements were traditionally focussed around the river, modern growth has seen expansion away from this watercourse focus, likely due to the realised risks of flooding. This is prominent in Narborough, as well as Lyng.



Narborough Water mill on the River Nar reflects the importance of milling in the development of the settlement

## Turnpike Village

A number of turnpikes, or toll roads, existed across Breckland and in places contributed to the development of villages. These villages were common stopping points for travellers and were therefore scattered with coaching inns and public houses. This is true of Bawdeswell where there were four original public houses, the architecture and form of which are still recognisable today even as private residences. In this village, the original toll gate is still extant.

Another extant relic of Breckland's turnpikes exists at Toll Gate Farm which is situated between East Tuddenham and Mattishall. Although there is a clustering of farmsteads within this area, this has not developed into a village. There was also a toll gate at Quidenham, however this building has now been lost like many other toll houses across Norfolk. Toll gates were also present at the market towns of Swaffham and Dereham.

Key characteristics of a turnpike village include:

- Larger scale buildings typical of public houses and inns are common, reflecting the importance of these villages as stopping points.
- Turnpike villages are commonly found along historic primary routes e.g. Roman roads.



The Old Toll House in Bawdeswell, dating back to 1823, is reflective of the turnpike which led to the village being used as a stopping point for horses and coaches ©Milestone Society



Former building of the Bell Inn, a public house and coaching inn which dates back to 1790, now flats. Bawdeswell.



The Maltings at Narborough ©Evelyn Simak



Remnants of the waterwheel at Narborough Bone Mill which was used for the crushing of bones to create fertiliser ©Keith Evans



Former building of the Ram Inn, a public house dating back to 1660, which is now a private residence. Bawdeswell.

# Origin Character Type

## Market Village

Villages that fall into this category are defined by the historic presence of a market. A key example of this village type in Breckland is East Harling, which forms the primary settlement within the village cluster of Harling comprised of East Harling, West Harling, Middle Harling and Harling Road. Market villages can occasionally be accompanied by a market square or market place, e.g. within East Harling, or a market cross, e.g. New Buckenham. The existence of a market square is not a prerequisite for markets to have occurred in the past, e.g. Great Hockham's green was granted a market licence in 1272 by Henry III. Where market squares are present, their spatial structure provides a civic role and central focus to the settlement.

The following characteristics are typically associated with villages that had an historic market function.

### Street hierarchy

- The historic street patterns are largely intact with development clustered along key routes. In East Harling, the market place itself creates a village centre which acts as a central 'hub'.
- Typically located on a key transport route or at a historic road junction, the market square provides a wider setting to a number of historic buildings which surround it. The contrast between the close-knit building form and the open nature of the market square contributes to the sense of space and helps to retain the vitality of the settlement.

### Density, set back & building line

- The building frontages which bound the market place in East Harling are of largely consistent age and architectural style, creating a visually interesting pattern and rhythm to the building line.
- Due to the open nature and historic function of the market square, hard landscape treatments predominate with limited mature vegetation.
- The dominance of car parking detracts from the street pattern and the wider setting of heritage assets. Within Harling and Kenninghall, the location of the market square creates a space commanded by cars.

### Building height & roofscape

- Villages are characterised by general uniformity in building height. However, subtle variations exist in frontage heights and the gradient of roof pitches within the market squares, providing architectural interest.

### Landmark features

- The lack of vegetation within East Harling's market square and along historic routes results in unobstructed sight lines.
- The comparatively larger scale building frontages framing the market square add interest to the skyline.
- St Peter and St Paul's Church is a Grade I listed church on the outskirts of East Harling. Built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the building boasts a hammerbeam roof, intricate carvings and magnificent stained glass windows. The church attracted visitors from afar and reflects the wealth which was once in the area.

### Architectural features & materials

- East Harling's market place is characterised by a limited palette of materials (predominantly Norfolk red brick, clay pantiles and render) and only subtle variations in their use provides a distinctive architectural language.
- In contrast, a more varied scale, height and sometimes distinctive architectural features surrounding the market place in New Buckenham provides a diversity of built form. Distinctly larger and grander buildings reflect the historic wealth of villages as a hub for trade, a feature prominent within New Buckenham and East Harling's market places.

### Relationship to landscape

- East Harling lies in close proximity to the River Thet, which appears to constrain development due to the extent of the wider floodplain. This sunken river valley topography constrains views into the village when approaching from the west.
- Undeveloped land in the open countryside adjoins the settlement boundary and contributes positively to the setting of the village, frequently with linear drainage ditches bounding the field system.

### Example villages

- East Harling
- Great Hockham
- Kenninghall
- New Buckenham



1.5 and 2 storey buildings with little set back along Market Place. Kenninghall.



New 2.5 storey development in East Harling uses appropriate scale, materials and interesting architectural features, including a mimicked rubbing corner which is present on historic buildings on this street



St Peter and St Paul's, a Grade I listed church on the outskirts of East Harling



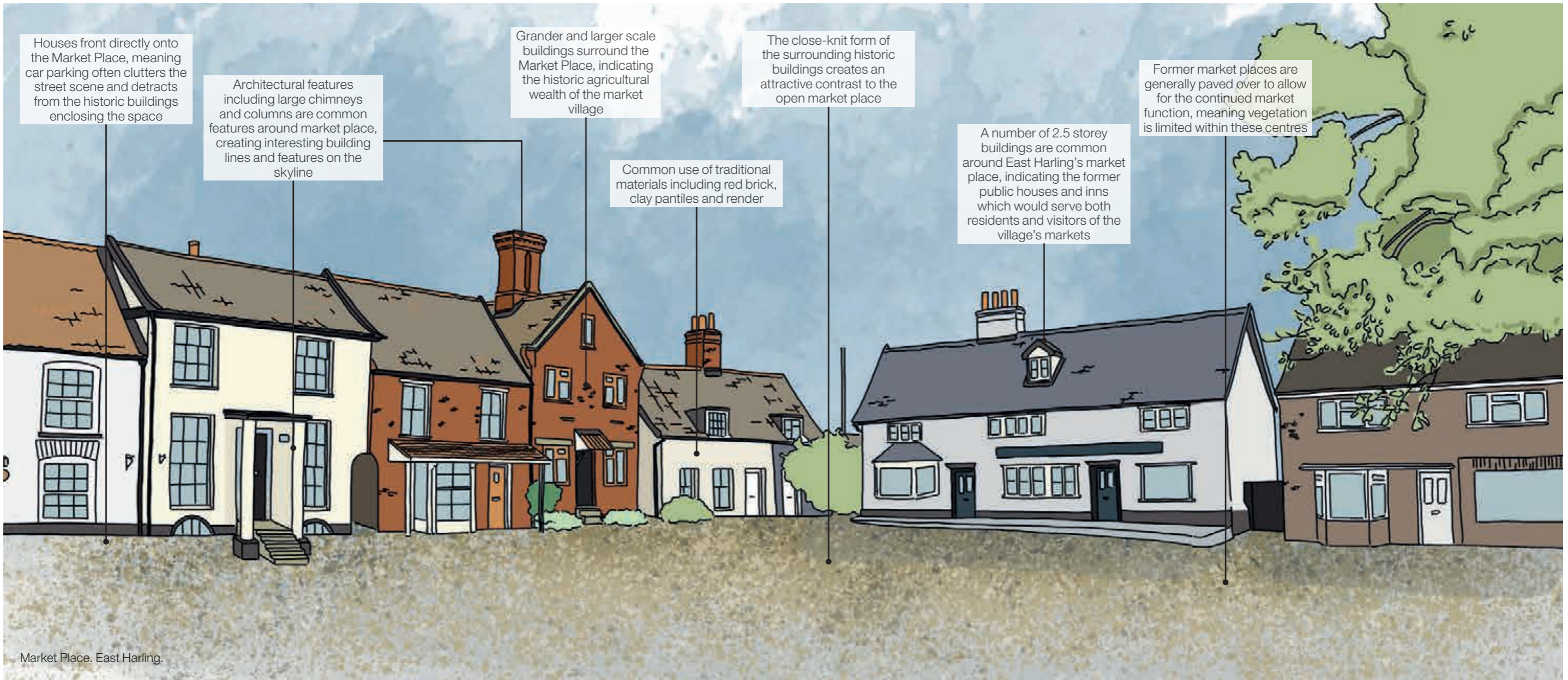
Canted and cantilevered brickwork to create a rubbing corner to prevent damage by cartwheels. East Harling.



Village sign showing a carving of a lamb to represent the village's historic lamb markets. East Harling.



Dwellings surrounding The Green on Market Street in Shipdham



## Origin Character Type Planned Estate Village

Villages that fall into this category are associated with the historic development of an estate by a landlord to accommodate local workers. As such, built form is defined by a consistency of architectural form which provides an important unifying element within each settlement.

Within Breckland, a number of landed estates were, and still remain, key features within the district's rural landscape. Both the Sennowe Park Estate and the South Pickenham Estate remain functional today and have previously supported the development of small planned estate villages at Guist and South Pickenham.

The following characteristics are typically associated with planned estate villages:

### Street hierarchy

- A largely intact and consistent historic street hierarchy creates a strong sense of place.
- Within Guist, Malthouse Lane, a residential track which branches from the Norwich Road, retains its agricultural character though its narrow profile and lack of modern surface upgrades. This is also true of Sennowe Road which connects the village with Sennowe Hall.
- Winding lanes and roads are common within the village, indicating little upgrade or widening from its historic form.
- Usually of cottage scale, the orientation and use of detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings varies throughout the village.

### Density, set back & building line

- Built form predominantly fronts directly on to the road, creating a consistent street pattern and regular building line.
- The density of built form within the villages is variable.
- Farmsteads which retain their agricultural function today are common within the village, reflecting the importance of the surrounding estate farmland in the development of the villages.

### Building height & roofscape

- Limited contrast in scale of the built form, characterised by dwellings typically of 1.5-2 storeys. This results in an overall architectural harmony at road frontages.

### Landmark features

- Some villages have retained historic features and connections to the former estate parklands, e.g. the clock tower in Guist which was designed to reflect the architect's ambition for a 'model village'.
- Important landmark buildings, such as the manor house and brick kiln in Guist, aid historic legibility.
- Both St Andrew's Church in Guist and All Saint's Church in South Pickenham are located towards the periphery of the village. Relatively small in scale, this reflects their rural location and small congregations.

### Architectural features & materials

- The unique and distinctive vernacular architectural features and materials that repeat through the village give a strong and unique character. The villages exhibit distinct architectural patterns. For instance, South Pickenham's original estate planned dwellings use a repetition of flint with red brick quoins and window frames alongside clay pantiles, demonstrating the wealth of the estate.
- In Guist, Thomas Cook re-built the estate dwellings in 1929 as a 'model village'. The presence of distinctive architectural forms, including rounded gable tops on the building facades, local vernacular brickwork and roof tiling, confers a strong sense of village history.

### Relationship to landscape

- Views between the village and former estateland and surrounding farmland are common. In Guist, large parts of the village and the surrounding farmland remain in the ownership of the Sennowe Park Estate.
- Avenues of mature trees provide a leafy character and mature landscape setting to buildings, e.g. the avenue of limes in Guist. Street trees and well-tended gardens within larger plots are key to the character of the villages, softening the settlement edge.
- The presence of mature vegetation and avenue tree planting frame historic routes and contribute to the perception of a village gateway.

### Example villages

- Beachamwell
- North Elmham
- Guist
- South Pickenham



Bus stop in Guist which mirrors the local vernacular through the use of rounded and stepped gables



Planned 'model village' clock tower which matches the local vernacular of flint and red brick creates a welcoming arrival space. Guist.



Row of cottages built as part of the Sennowe Park Estate using red brick and clay pantiles with some distinctive architectural features including rounded and crow stepped gables on building facades. Guist.



All Saints round tower church. South Pickenham.



Flint cottages with red brick quoins and window frames creating an attractive and repetitive style across the South Pickenham Estate



## Origin Character Type Planned Village Other

This character type relates to a niche development scenario where its form and layout suggests a degree of external historic planning, usually by a landlord. The spatial structure exhibits a regularity of spacing and size of plots, and the buildings typically have a distinctive architectural style.

A prominent example is that of New Buckenham which is laid out on a regular grid system as a planned Medieval village which sits adjacent to the ruins of a castle and former deer park. Buckenham Castle, built in 1145, supersedes the Old Buckenham Castle which was located just to the north east of Old Buckenham, where the original earth works and moat are still visible today. The village was founded around the same time in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by William d'Aubigny and utilises the castle's moat as a physical settlement boundary.

The following characteristics are typically associated with planned villages:

### Street hierarchy

- New Buckenham is characterised by a regular grid pattern of main streets and back lanes with a large market place / village green. Remnants of the original street hierarchy remain today, with narrow lanes such as Rosemary Lane, providing limited vehicle access.
- The typical block structure within New Buckenham is comprised of a mixture of cottages, terraces and townhouses.
- Isolated remnants of historic street hierarchy remain in Weeting with Broomhill, characterised by the narrow back lanes and town ditch.

### Density, set back & building line

- Occasional evidence of modern infill development is present in New Buckenham where detached and set back dwellings do not reflect the local distinctiveness of the historic built vernacular, contrasting with the density and scale of the historic built form.
- The density and scale of the built form is characterised by a regularity of terraces forming the road frontage, with a generally larger set-back typifying larger status buildings. The density of built form typically increases with distance from the historic centre.
- Weeting on the other hand has experienced substantial 20<sup>th</sup> century growth which has seen a disproportionately large amount of detached bungalows with large set backs infill the former Weeting Hall Estate.

### Building height & roofscape

- Larger and higher status buildings typify the built form within the 'hub' of the settlements, typically 2.5-3 storeys in height. This is evident within the Market Place at New Buckenham and the three legacy settlements now comprising Weeting with Broomhill.

### Landmark features

- The remains of the moated Buckenham Castle within New Buckenham forms a prominent landmark feature within the village.
- The area of public realm provided by the Market Place within New Buckenham, including the Market House, Market Cross and adjacent common land are of importance to the setting of the settlements.
- Inward views within New Buckenham tend to focus towards the tower of St. Martin's Church, which acts as an important local feature.

### Architectural features & materials

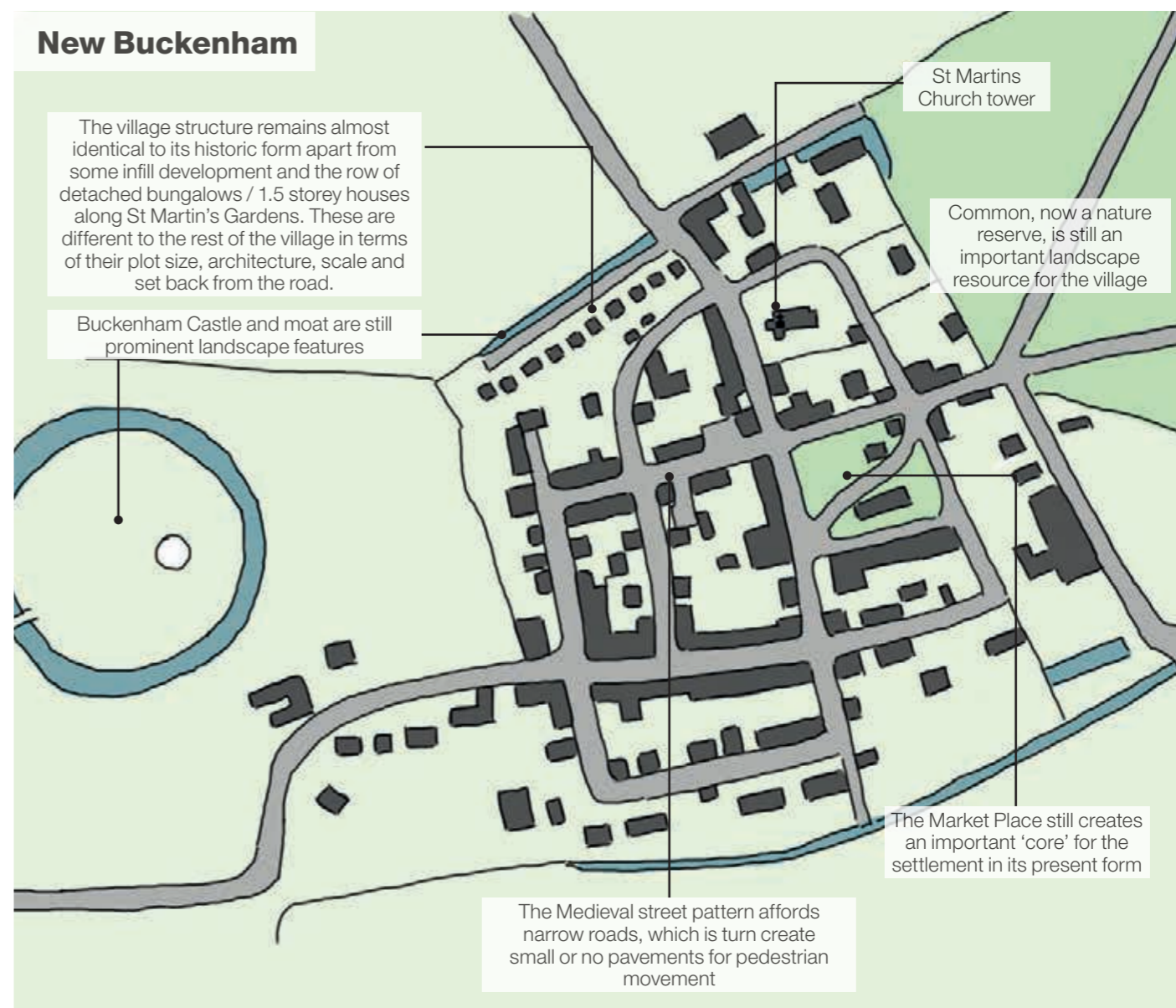
- The architectural form is constructed primarily from red brick or render with slate or clay pantile roofs. A high proportion of older buildings within the settlements are also timber framed, with brick facing. In addition, thatched roofs are common within the settlements. This consistency of architectural form provides an important unifying element which adds visual interest within the settlements.
- Intricate architectural detailing is more apparent in higher status buildings in the settlement core.

### Relationship to landscape

- For New Buckenham, the town ditch divides the settlement from the wider landscape. A deer park also once surrounded the castle. To the east, extant unenclosed common land adjoins the settlement, now largely covered by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust New Buckenham Nature Reserve.
- Views towards St. Mary's Church in Weeting with Broomhill are filtered by its location at the settlement's eastern fringes.

### Example villages

- New Buckenham
- Weeting with Broomhill







Almshouses along King Street. New Buckenham.



Rosemary Lane, a back lane which forms part of the original Medieval grid street layout which has been retained at New Buckenham



Weeting Primary School, with original primary school building (left) built with yellow Cambridge brick and thatch, sits within its historic position which was once the parkland of the Weeting Hall Estate



The Row, Weeting, is believed to date between the 18th & 19th century and provided workers cottages for the Weeting Hall Estate



A diversity in built form and materials creates a distinctive and interesting architectural language for the village

Grander and larger-scale buildings common within the Market Place. Columns mark the status of this 3 storey building and the historic agricultural wealth of the market village

Tower of St Martin's Church creates a distinctive vertical element on the skyline which can be seen in views from most parts of the settlement

Regular street pattern which retains the original Medieval grid system

The rectangular grid of streets through the village is not suitable for modern car movement, causing a cut through of the Market Place for the B1113

Market Cross within the Market Place demonstrates the history of the settlement as a trading hub

Market place situated in close proximity to New Buckenham Common

Traditional red brick, render and clay pantiles commonly used

Market Place. New Buckenham.



# Morphological Village Types



The Grange overlooking the green, Old Buckenham

# Morphological Village Type

## Single Focus Nucleated Village

This village type is defined by the development of a settlement around one single core, often relating to features such as a church, manor house, village green, common, school, shops or crossing point.

Single focus nucleated villages which have retained their historic morphology generally see higher density cores often with an abundance of traditional buildings. Development over time has seen the nucleated core continue to function, however densities and form will change as the settlement grows outwards.

The following characteristics are typically associated with nucleated villages (singular core):

### Street hierarchy

- A compact village form predominates with a small scale settlement pattern within the village core, characterised by narrow streets and consistent block structure.

### Density, set back & building line

- Characterised by a continuous street frontage, the historic core forms a higher density clustering of historic built development with some evidence of expansion along the rural road network and radial routes. Terraces are common in the core and where buildings are detached, gaps between plots are small.
- The settlement periphery is generally characterised by more regular building lines and an increased building setback from the carriageway due to 20<sup>th</sup> century settlement expansion.
- The lack of pavements is evident in some locations within the village core where buildings adjoin the street.

### Building height & roofscape

- Consistency of 1.5-2 storey building heights, with some diversity of form and scale for higher status buildings, including 2.5 and 3 storey heights for farmhouses and public houses.
- Evidence of backland and infill development beyond the historical building line and key historic roads at the periphery of settlements.
- Higher status buildings are often orientated away from the road with a larger building setback.

### Landmark features

- Clustering of built form around a central focus or village core, such as a village green, common, higher status building or church.
- Church towers form distinctive features, forming skyline features in views and providing a focus for the settlement. Windmills also form characteristic features.
- Comparatively larger-scale buildings are common within the historic core, often serving functions such as public houses, farmhouses or higher status residential properties, many of which remain legible and in their original use.
- Historically significant buildings can be found clustered around the landscape feature, e.g. Narborough Water mill.

### Architectural features & materials

- Buildings within the village core display a range of vernacular materials, including dressed stone, Norfolk red brick, clay pantiles and colour washed render. Higher status buildings such as churches are often constructed from flint.
- Historic timber framed domestic buildings with thatched roofs are common within the historic cores.
- Occasional architecturally varied buildings can generate an insight into the historic development of the settlement, e.g. the single-storey Old Toll House in Bawdeswell gives reference to its historic function as a turnpike village.
- 20<sup>th</sup> century characteristics are apparent in villages which experienced a proliferation of development during World War II due to the presence of a Royal Air Forces (RAF) air base, e.g. Swanton Morley and Griston. The latter has also been influenced by the presence of 20<sup>th</sup> century utilitarian buildings on a regular grid at Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Wayland.

### Relationship to landscape

- The presence of open and undeveloped farmland at the village periphery provides a rural setting as well as physical and visual separation from neighbouring villages.
- A network of intact hedgerows typically line the rural roads and delineate the settlement approach.
- Properties at the edge of the village take advantage of views across surrounding rural farmland and tend to be outward facing.
- Some villages have close association with rivers, e.g. Narborough on the River Nar.

### Influence of vegetation and open space

- Although garden and boundary vegetation generally exists within large plots at the periphery of the settlement, the permeable character of the settlement edge enables views to the wider landscape.
- Public open space and village greens within the core often contain mature vegetation and provide access to amenity greenspace.
- Where village cores do not contain a green, vegetation is generally quite limited due to the relatively tight urban grain.

## Extant examples of Single Focus Nucleated villages

- |                          |                 |                          |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| ■ Banham                 | ■ Griston       | ■ Oxborough              |
| ■ Bawdeswell             | ■ Guist         | ■ Scarning               |
| ■ Beachamwell            | ■ Hockering     | ■ Shipdham               |
| ■ Beeston with Bittering | ■ Holme Hale    | ■ South Lopham           |
| ■ Beetley                | ■ Kenninghall   | ■ Swanton Morley         |
| ■ Bintree                | ■ Litcham       | ■ Weasenham St. Peter    |
| ■ Cockley Cley           | ■ Little Dunham | ■ Whissonsett            |
| ■ Cranworth              | ■ Lyng          | ■ Yaxham                 |
| ■ East Harling           | ■ Mattishall    | ■ Kenninghall            |
| ■ East Tuddenham         | ■ Mundford      | ■ Weeting with Broomhill |
| ■ Foulden                | ■ Narborough    | ■ Whissonsett            |
| ■ Great Ellingham        | ■ Necton        | ■ Yaxham                 |
| ■ Great Hockham          | ■ New Buckenham |                          |
| ■ Gressenhall            | ■ Old Buckenham |                          |



Traditional vernacular, including red brick, thatch, clay pantiles and 1.5 storey housing are common in the core. Great Hockham.



Larger-scale buildings surrounding the green in the historic core, associated with uses such as public houses and hotels. Litcham.



Higher status buildings are often orientated away from the road and have a larger set back, e.g. The Grange, Old Buckenham.



Former almshouses overlooking the village green at Old Buckenham



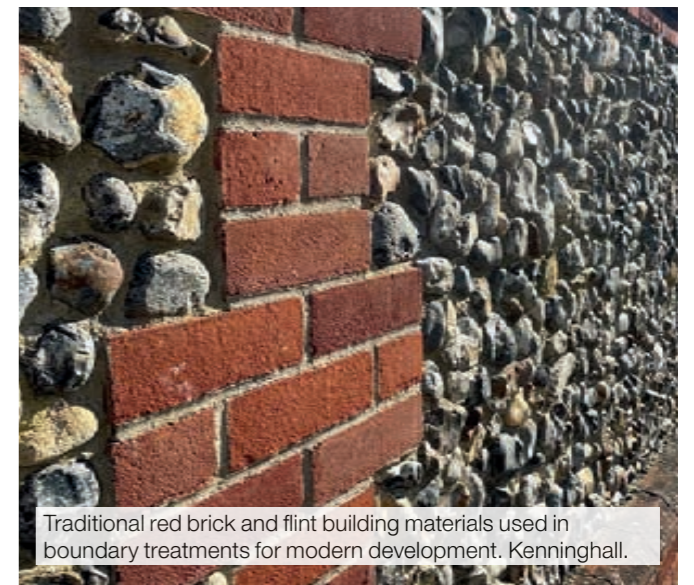
Mature vegetation which has developed around the village green. Banham.



Narrow village street with terraced properties fronting directly on the street, Front Street in Litcham



Traditional timber frame buildings overlooking the green. Banham.



Traditional red brick and flint building materials used in boundary treatments for modern development. Kenninghall.

## Great Hockham - why is this described as Single Focus Nucleated Village?

- The village has developed around a village green, which forms the single point of focus and central core.
- The village lacks other points of focus.
- Although backland or infill development has occurred to the rear of Shropham Road and Watton Road, this does not form a focal point within the village.
- Great Hockham's school was once located within the traditional village core (in the southern section of the 'egg timer' cross roads). Due to settlement and population growth, the original school exceeded capacity and was moved to the outskirts of the town, on Watton Road, in 1962. However, the new school has not been accompanied by a clustering of development around it, and therefore does not create another village centre.

## Other settlement examples - why are these categorised as Single Focus Nucleated Villages?

### Beetley

- The settlement is focussed at the crossroads of the B1146 and Gressenhall Road / Elmham Road, with residential properties extending along these routes.

### Weasenham St. Peter

- The village core is centred on a single small green centred on Lambert's Lane.

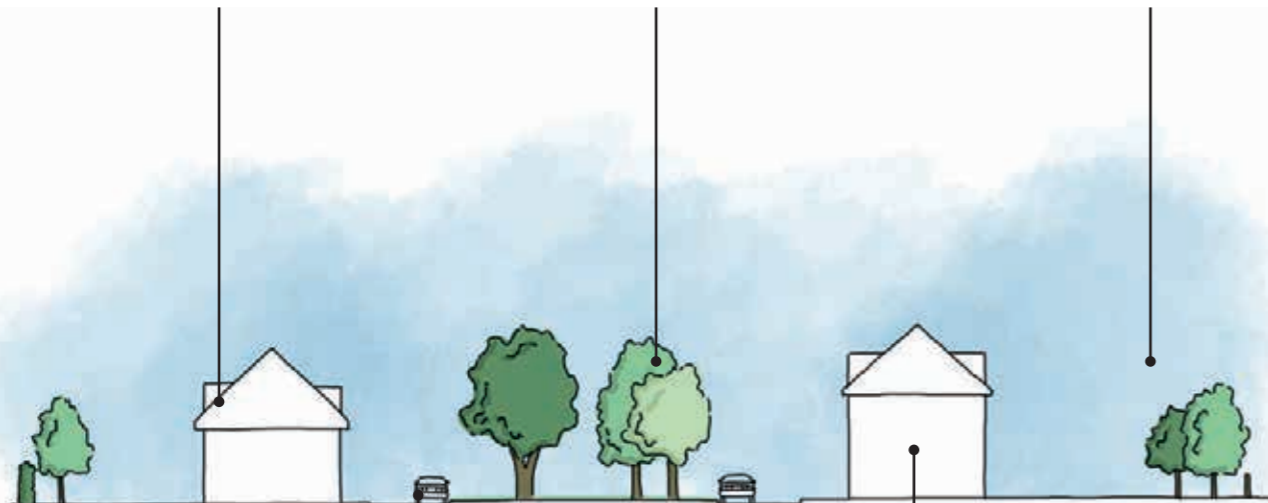
### Whissonsett

- The village is clustered around the Parish Church of St Mary and the common lying to the north.

1.5-2 storey buildings most common, with traditional building materials, including red brick, flint, thatch, render, clay pantiles and some timber frames found in the core

Mature vegetation present on village greens and within older private gardens, core is otherwise relatively vegetation free with limited street trees

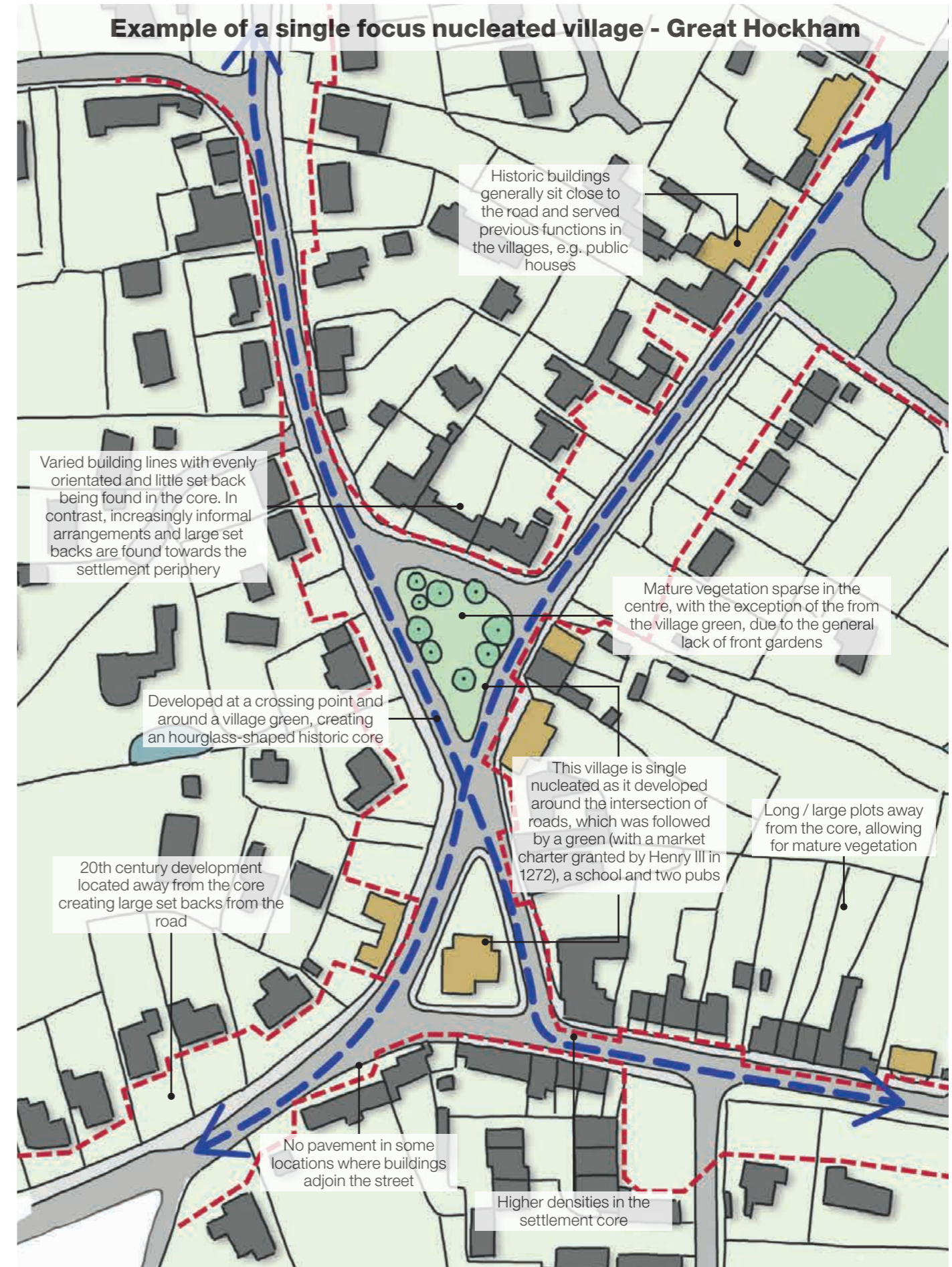
Larger gardens and set back as plots move away from the core



Relatively narrow roads and pavements associated with the traditional core

Larger-scale buildings, typically 2.5-3 storeys, are common within the core, representing former uses such as pubs, farmhouses or higher status homes

## Example of a single focus nucleated village - Great Hockham



## What works well

- In places, narrow back lanes have been retained which provide informal routes through the settlement core.
- Traditional development of settlements around a green with minimal set back creates a sense of natural surveillance and a central 'hub' for the community. The clustering of buildings around a green also play a central role in creating a settlement's identity.
- Historic buildings can help to frame public spaces in a positive manner. There are examples of their successful re-purposing, e.g. former mills.
- Dark skies form an important characteristic within many of Breckland's rural villages and can form one of the reasons residents choose to live there. In certain villages, e.g. Lyng and Yaxham, street lights are limited and therefore help to retain these dark skies.
- Vegetated boundaries and hedges frame streets and soften views of built form.
- Where present, trees contribute very positively to existing character and create an attractive streetscape within new development.



Natural surveillance on Great Hockham's green



Singular traditional street light in Yaxham



Successful retention and re-purposing of a windmill, giving a diversity of scale and form. Old Buckenham.



Natural surveillance on Weasenham St Peter's green



An informal route through the village core and framing views towards the church. Lyng.

## What works less well

- Care is needed when reusing historic building types to ensure their scale relates appropriately to the surrounding spatial form, e.g. using 2.5 or 3 storey buildings should be largely restricted to high status buildings or development within the village focal points.
- New development which does not respond to the local vernacular or street patterns therefore creating anywhere place areas rather than belonging to the character of the settlement.
- Single track roads get used as 'rat runs', particularly where new development is placed on the edge of villages.
- Dominance of cars along historic narrow streets and in historic cores e.g. Kenninghall.
- Over extension of villages results in development being some distance from the local services in the village cores. This makes village services less easily accessible to residents and encourages the use of cars (e.g. Swanton Morley and Mattishall).



New 2.5 storey development in School Close on the outskirts of Kenninghall



Car dominated village core. Kenninghall.

# Morphological Village Type

## Nucleated Polyfocal Village

This village type is defined by settlements that have not developed with a single core, but may have developed or spread out over a wider area, and may in fact have a number of separate concentrations of settlement. The villages are characterised by two or more development clusters, normally concentrated around features such as churches, commons, a cross roads, higher status buildings or village greens. Development of light industry and the arrival of railways have also contributed to additional points of focus in some villages, e.g. Quidenham, where the railway station and industry have led to the development of a secondary focus at Eccles.

The following characteristics are typically associated with polyfocal nucleated villages:

### Street hierarchy

- Villages have typically developed with several foci and are comprised of distinct clusters of compact development. The presence of gaps play an important role in maintaining the character of these settlements.

### Density, set back & building line

- Historic cores have a relatively small scale and closely spaced buildings. Narrow roads with limited set back characterise these historic cores, although an irregular building line with compact changes is common. In contrast, the periphery of the village is generally typified by regular building lines and an increased building setback from the carriageway due to 20<sup>th</sup> century settlement expansion.
- Historically, there would have typically been gaps between village cores, although modern infill development has closed these gaps in some settlements, resulting in a degree of coalescence. A gap or break on the line of the street helps to divide these distinct historic cores.

### Building height & roofscape

- Village dwellings are domestic in scale and are typically 1.5-2 storeys in height, although a diversity of form and scale is typical of higher status buildings in the historic cores.

### Landmark features

- Clustering of built form is generally around two or more foci, such as a village green, common, higher status building or church.
- Church towers form distinctive features, forming skyline features in views and providing a focus for the settlement. Windmills can also form characteristic features.
- Comparatively larger-scale buildings are common within a historic core, often serving functions such as public houses, farmhouses or higher status residential properties, many of which remain legible and in their original use.

### Architectural features & materials

- The village cores are typified by an inherent historic character due to the presence of the largely intact vernacular buildings.
- Buildings display a range of vernacular materials, including dressed stone, Norfolk red brick, clay pantiles and colour washed render. Higher status buildings such as churches are generally constructed from flint.
- Historic timber framed domestic buildings with thatched roofs are common within the original cores.

### Relationship to landscape

- Open land surrounding and penetrating between the historic cores of the villages forms a vital component of settlement character. These 'green gaps' that separate the settlement are integral to the setting of the village.
- A strong relationship typically exists between the village itself and the rural landscape beyond due to the permeable character of the settlement edge.

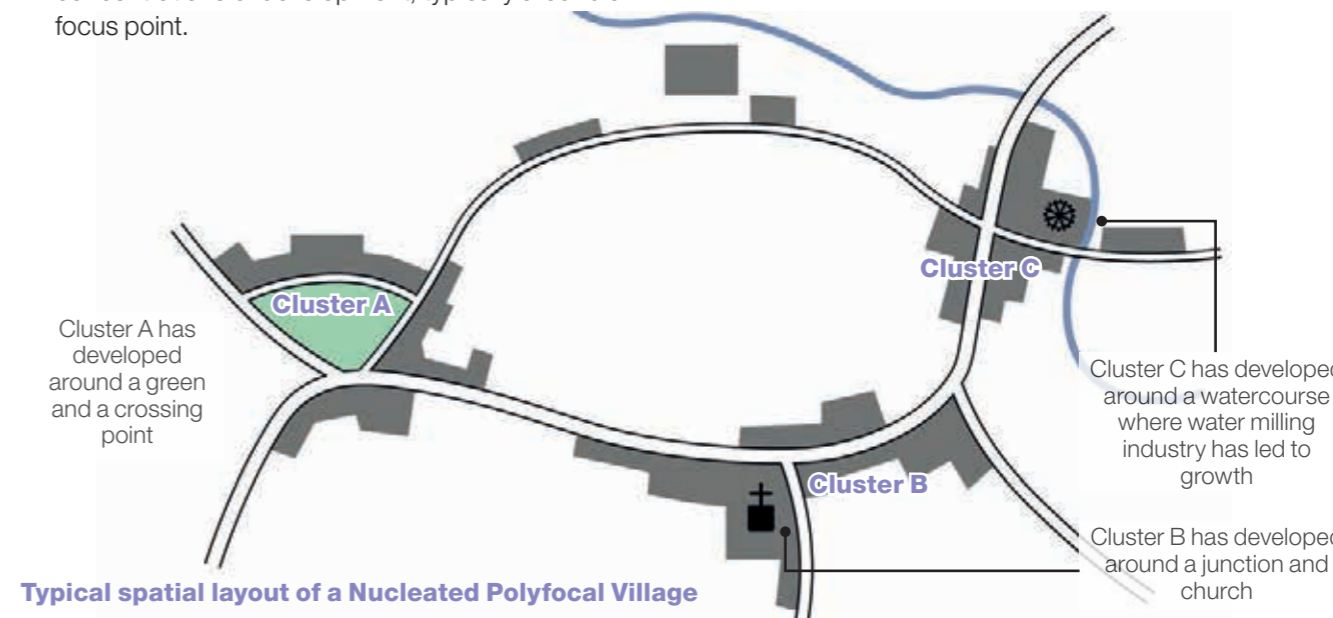
### Influence of vegetation and open space

- Open spaces within the settlements, such as greens, commons and gardens contribute significantly to the unique form and character of the villages.
- Within historic cores, and away from village greens, the abundance of vegetation is often minimal due to tighter urban grains.

## How do we distinguish between Single Focus Nucleated and Nucleated Polyfocal settlements?

- Single Focus Nucleated Villages develop around a single core and tend to be more compact in their spatial form. In contrast, Nucleated Polyfocal Villages have typically developed around more than one point of focus and can also develop where a series of smaller settlements, commonly hamlets, merge to form a single village.
- Both Single Focus Nucleated and Nucleated Polyfocal Villages can have highly variable spatial forms, however, 'clusters' are identified through concentrations of development, typically around a focus point.

### Typical spatial layout of a Single Focus Nucleated Village



### Typical spatial layout of a Nucleated Polyfocal Village

### Extant examples of Nucleated Polyfocal villages

- Ashill
- Bradtenham
- Brisley
- Garvestone
- Great Dunham
- North Pickenham
- Quidenham
- Rocklands
- Saham Toney
- Shropham
- Snetterton
- Thompson

### Historic examples of Nucleated Polyfocal villages

- Foulden
- Little Dunham
- Mattishall
- Weasenham All Saints
- Weeting with Broomhill



## Ashill



St George's Church, which forms the focal point of one of Ashill's village cores, adjoins a row of cottages with unusually decorative fascias



Avenue of mature lime trees framing The Green is within another of Ashill's cores

## Brisley



St. Bartholomew's Church, the former post office and Church House, a manor house set back from the road (out of shot), form one of Brisley's cores which has developed near to Brisley Green and a crossroads

## Saham Toney



Ornate chimneys and the use of flint and red brick feature on this dwelling which is situated at the entrance to Saham Lodge manor house in Saham Toney. This manor house formed one of the focal points by which the village developed and has since seen infill and significant linear development northward



St George's Church and the adjacent rectory and school (which remains on its original site) form another core in Saham Toney

## Rocklands



Buildings front directly onto the street opposite the village shop and pub in Rockland All Saints



The former Methodist Chapel, now a private dwelling, overlooking Chapel Green in Rockland St Peter

## Settlement examples - why are these categorised as Nucleated Polyfocal Villages?

### Rocklands

- The village comprises two concentrations of settlement.
- One focal point lies to the south at Rockland All Saints, concentrated around a former triangular village green. Rockland St Peter forms the second focal point. Both foci are linked by the corridor of Chapel Street / The Street.

### Brisley

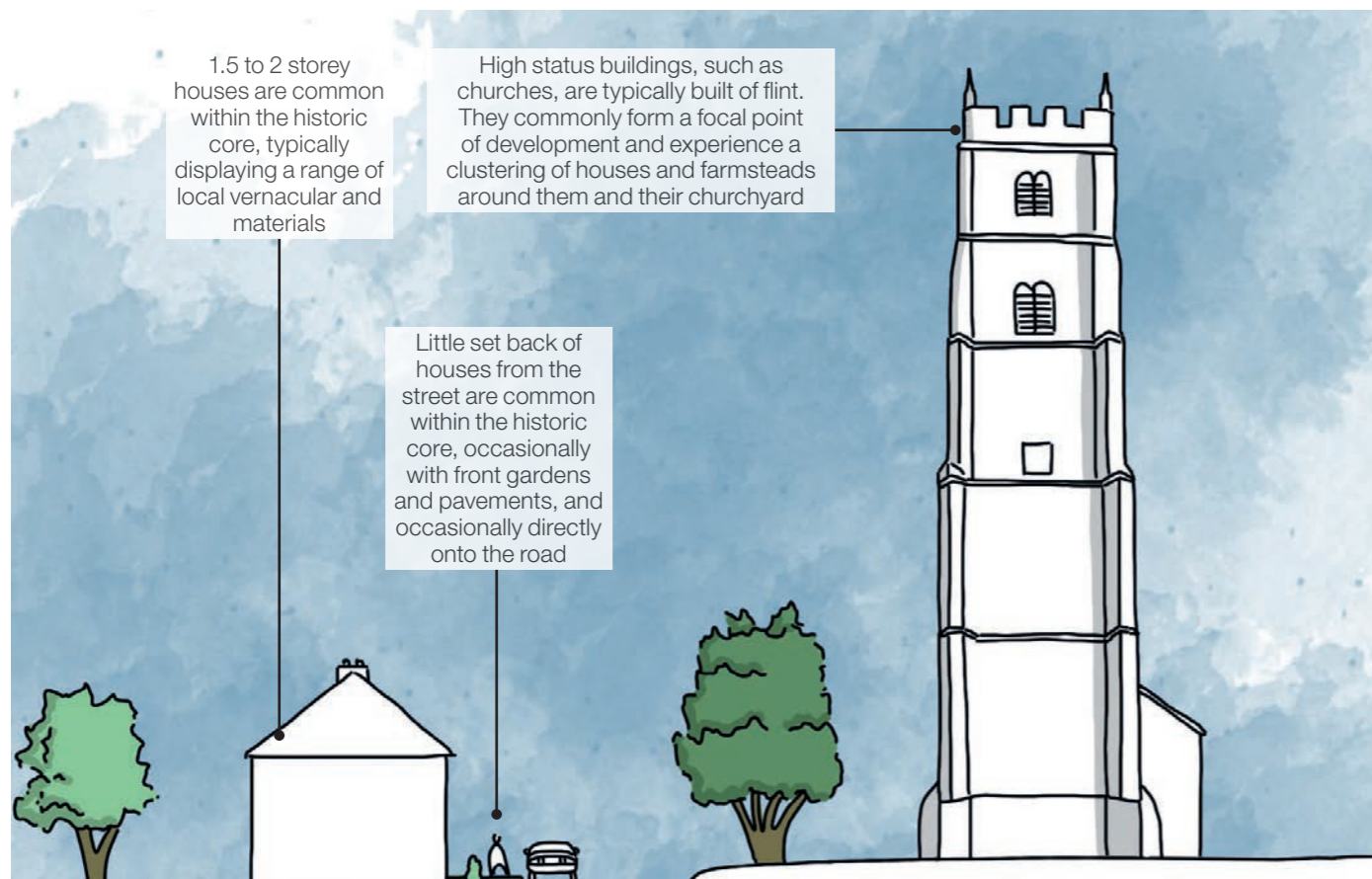
- Brisley developed around three commons, which formed three separate concentrations of settlement (Brisley Green, Harpers Green and Potthorpe Common). The village has largely retained its historic morphological form; and
- Two of the three commons (Brisley Green and Harpers Green) survive today, although the common at Potthorpe is now largely enclosed, apart from a very small remaining patch of green.

### Ashill

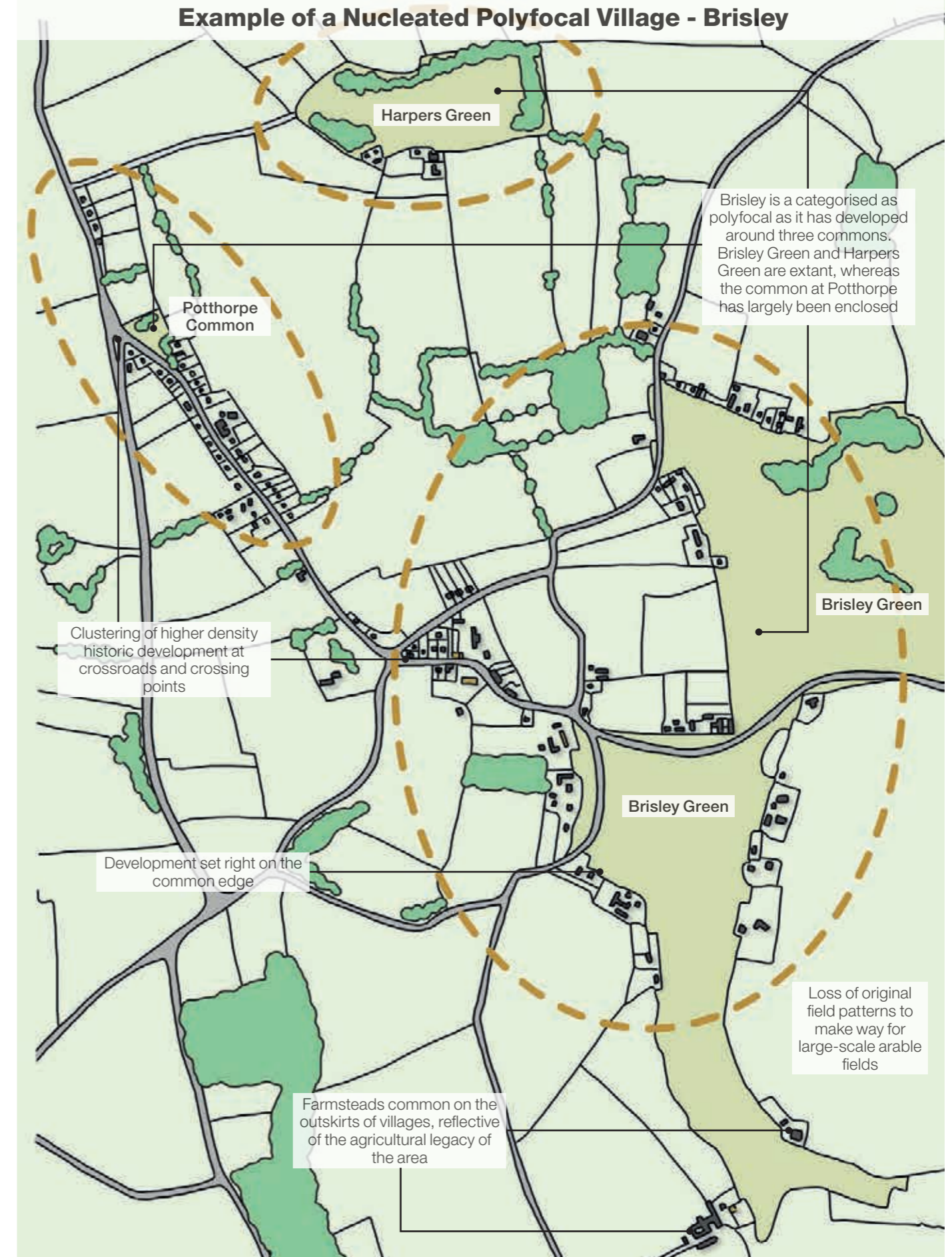
- The village developed around two focal points – the village green and the Parish Church of St. Nicholas; and
- The two historic centres remain intact, although some settlement infill has occurred along Hale Road / Watton Road; and
- A separate cluster of modern housing development along Cressingham Road reinforces the polyfocal character of the village.

### Thompson

- The village developed as small clusters of development around St. Martin's Church as well as Thompson Common and Thompson Heath, which were both largely enclosed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; and
- Development along the new road layout changed the settlement pattern, creating a more nucleated settlement form. However, the focus at St. Martin's Church remains separate and the village retains a nucleated polyfocal settlement pattern.



## Example of a Nucleated Polyfocal Village - Brisley



## What works well

- Having more than one core can enable a dispersal of amenities, therefore having the potential to serve a wider proportion of the settlement within walking distance and deliver sustainable communities.
- The retention of gaps between various focal points of a village, e.g. in Brisley. This helps to retain the historic character of the settlement.
- The presence of commons and greens when coupled with traditional materials used on vernacular buildings provides a strong sense of place.
- Large property frontages can help to reinforce a village's sense of place and character within the streetscape, particularly when they exhibit a strong local vernacular and some more ornate, yet appropriate, detailing.
- Hedging creates an attractive boundary feature along rural lanes which also provides some screening of development.
- The presence of more than one core which is separated by countryside affords attractive external and internal views from the village, e.g. Saham Toney and Brisley.



Historic flint dwellings in the north of Ashill which mirror the look of the primary school in the south, including the use of flint and dogtooth corbels. Red brick corbels and flint are common in vernacular across the village.



Attractive building detailing using red brick and flint, Rocklands (All Saints)



Greens can form attractive focal points. Ashill.



Attractive views of agricultural fields lined with distinctive poplars on the skyline. Saham Toney.



Large property frontage with ornate red brick detailing and large chimney stacks on a historic building. Saham Toney.



Attractive infill development which matches the scale, form and materials of existing buildings. Saham Toney.

## What works less well

- Historic cores of settlements are commonly characterised by the dominance of cars along narrow historic streets.
- Polyfocal settlements have commonly seen mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century infill or mini-estate development which uses non-place-specific architecture and materials, diluting the character and sense of place, alongside altering the morphological form of the village. This can also apply to the merging of settlements which can lead to a loss of identity, e.g. Saham Toney and Watton.
- Proliferation of street clutter or poorly placed street furniture which contribute to a less attractive walking environment. This can be exacerbated by high density modern development located within the boundaries of existing settlement.
- Inappropriate local materials used on vernacular buildings, which can dilute the character of the settlement.



Inappropriate use of bright render on 21st century development adjacent to the Grade I listed St George's Church. Saham Toney.



Cars form common features in the streetscape. Ashill.

# Morphological Village Type

## Continuous Rural Row

This village type is defined by a largely intact linear arrangement of dwellings along a road. A consistent settlement pattern predominates, with limited gaps in the continuity of the built form within the streetscape. These villages have commonly evolved from interrupted Rural Rows following the incremental expansion of modern infill and backland development.

The following characteristics are typically associated with Continuous Rural Row settlements:

### Street hierarchy

- The settlement form lacks a single clustering or central focus, with amenities and facilities distributed along the streetscape.
- The regularity of the rows of historic properties provides a distinctive feature of the villages. However, evidence of modern infill development stretching along local roads detracts from the linear form of the historic settlement morphology. The historic spatial structure of settlements is also disrupted by the presence of backland development within villages.

### Density, set back & building line

- The villages are characterised by a linear form and regularity of density within the historic core.
- Built form is typified by a largely consistent building line parallel to local roads. However, deviations from this set back exist in some villages due to the presence of 20<sup>th</sup> century infill development. Outlying farmsteads are also typically located to the rear of the continuous row of dwellings or characterised by a larger set back.
- Characterised by a continuous street frontage, the historic core forms a higher density clustering of historic built development with some evidence of expansion along the rural road network and radial routes.
- Built form within the historic settlement cores is characterised by limited set backs from the road, often devoid of pedestrian footways.
- The presence of grass verges or wet ditches disrupt the continuity of the building line, albeit softening the streetscape.

### Building height & roofscape

- Subtle variations in building scale exist, albeit 1.5-2 storey buildings predominate. Higher status buildings, typified by minimal set back from the road, often extend to 2.5 to 3 storeys in height.

### Landmark features

- The towers of local churches protrude against the skyline in local views e.g. St. Nicholas' Church in North Lopham.
- The pattern of infill development has reduced the network of local green spaces, detracting from the wider village setting.

### Architectural features & materials

- The villages are generally characterised by a limited palette of materials (predominantly Norfolk red brick, clay pantiles, render and timber frames). Subtle variations in their use provides a consistent architectural vernacular.
- Distinctive architectural features are evident within higher status buildings and churches e.g. All Saints Church, Shipdham.

### Relationship to landscape

- Gaps in the continuity of built form along local roads offers visual links with the wider landscape. The linear form of development also provides the framing of local vistas.

### Influence of vegetation and open space

- The continuous nature of the row means there is limited scope for public open space within the village.
- Historic village cores typically experience a lack of street-facing vegetation due to the limited set back of buildings from the road. However, mature trees are common in private gardens.
- Mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century infill development typically have a greater set back from the road through the use of driveways and front gardens. These plots are often vegetated and frame the street.

## Extant examples of Continuous Rural Row villages

- Beeston with Bittering
- Bintree
- Brisley
- Caston
- Garboldisham
- Great Dunham
- Great Ellingham
- Griston
- Gooderstone
- Kenninghall
- North Elmham
- North Lopham
- Saham Toney (including Saham Hills)
- Shipdham
- Sporle with Palgrave
- Swanton Morley
- Weasenham St Peter
- Yaxham

## Historic examples of Continuous Rural Row villages

- Bawdeswell
- Beetley
- Bradenham
- Carbrooke
- Great Dunham
- Hockering
- North Lopham
- Shipdham



The tower of St Nicholas' Church which creates a prominent feature on the skyline in local views. North Lopham.



Little set back and a lack of pavements on Eastgate Street creates a continuous building line. North Elmham.



Wet ditch which runs parallel to the western side of the primary road in Sporle with Palgrave, creating a green and blue corridor and frames the traditional vernacular of adjoining dwellings



Larger scale dwellings, Sporle with Palgrave



Attractive red brick and flint detailing on a 1.5 storey house on a stretch of continuous rural row in the north of Saham Toney



Red brick row of cottages adjoining the road in Carbrooke



Modern development extending the length of the linear settlement. Caston



Mid 20th century development has extended the village of Weasenham St Peter to the west

## Settlement examples - why are these categorised as Continuous Rural Row villages?

### Carbrooke

- Settlement follows a broadly north-south alignment following the routes of Shipdham Road, Church Street, Broadmoor Road and Mill Lane.

### North Elmham

- Development is centred on the route of Eastgate Street, with some infill development apparent to the south towards the corridor of the B1145. However, a linear settlement pattern predominates.

### North Lopham

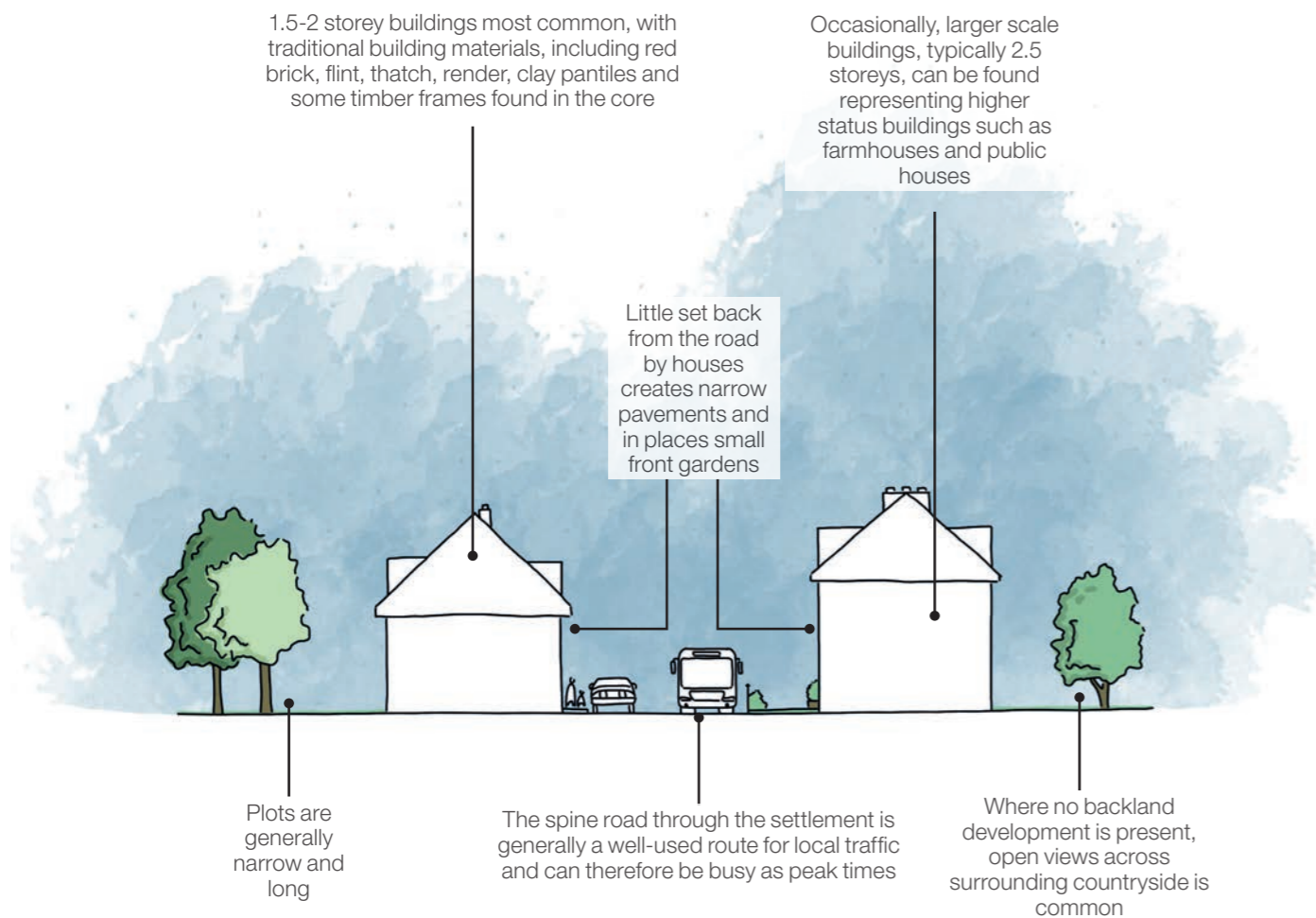
- The village is characterised by a consistent linear settlement pattern and spatial structure, albeit some incremental extension is evident along Kings Head Lane and Tanns Lane.

### Gooderstone

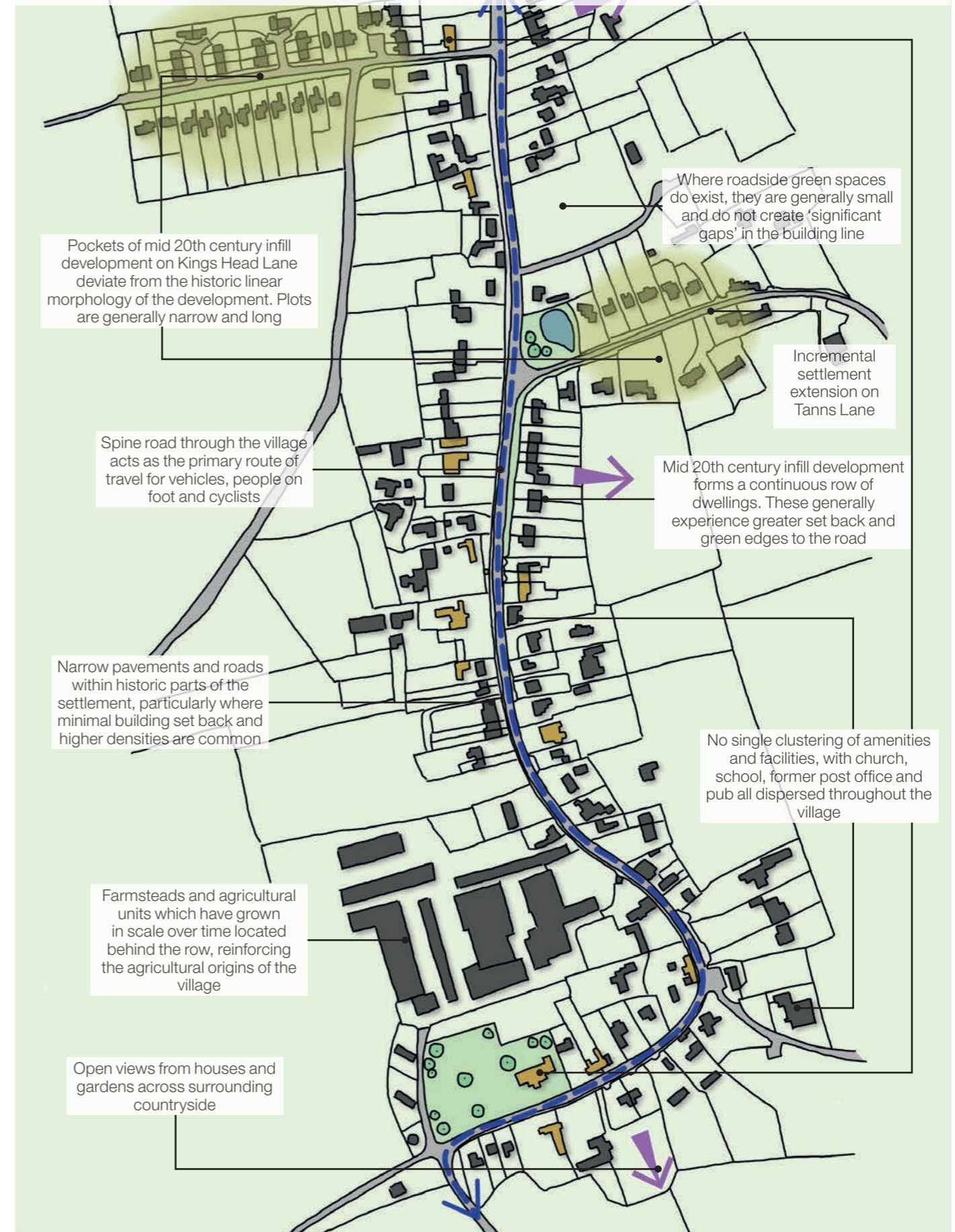
- The village largely retains its historic linear form. However, modern development has extended along Elm Place to the south of the otherwise east-west linear pattern.

### Yaxham

- The linear settlement pattern is focussed along Station Road and Norwich Road, creating a nucleated street plan focused on road junctions.



## Example of a continuous rural row village - North Lopham



## What works well

- The higher density of housing within the village core can create a greater sense of community, alongside continuous natural surveillance as houses overlook the street.
- The linear settlement pattern provides linkages with the countryside and open rural views with opportunities for green corridors, e.g. Sporle.



Natural surveillance of the street, Sporle with Palgrave



Network of wet ditches / watercourse along the primary road creates a green setting to the street, Sporle with Palgrave

## What works less well

- These villages are typically characterised by limited access to public open space in the village itself. Where development infills within the settlement boundary, the loss of fields and gardens alters the nature of the settlement and creates a more urbanised character.
- These settlements are generally centred along a single primary road which forms the dominant channel of movement through the settlement. These can become quite busy and therefore unwelcoming environments e.g. during school drop off and pick up times.
- Severance features, such as the busy A1066 which dissects Garboldisham, discourages people from walking and cycling to access the services of the village e.g. school, village hall and community owned pub.
- Infill or side street development can create pockets of architecture which do not relate well to the historic form and vernacular.
- Development inside settlement boundaries, particularly high density development within small villages, can cause street clutter and parking issues.



The carriageway of the A1066 in Garboldisham discourages pedestrian movement



Narrow pavements and minimal space for pedestrians. North Lopham.



A1075 as it passes through Shipdham provides minimal pavement space

# Morphological Village Type

## Interrupted Rural Row

This village type is defined by a linear arrangement of dwellings along a road, interspersed with substantial gaps (building plot or greater in scale) between buildings. These gaps are generally characterised by agricultural fields or green space and interrupt the continuity of the streetscape. The development of substantial gaps within settlements could be for a number of reasons, including the loss of small holdings and the retraction of settlement where properties have been lost. Conversely, these gaps could have been retained throughout the development of the settlement by their continued successful function as agricultural land, woodland, common land or other green space, e.g. Mileham Castle.

The following characteristics are typically associated with interrupted rural row settlements:

### Street hierarchy

- The historic core is characterised by a linear form with variations in density due to gaps in the continuity of built form.
- The settlement form lacks a clustering or central focus, with amenities and facilities distributed along the row.
- The village is relatively enclosed by its built form, although the presence of gaps disrupt the consistency of the frontage.
- The historic core forms a higher density clustering of historic built development with some evidence of expansion along the rural road and radial routes.

### Density, set back & building line

- The building line is typified by built form parallel to local roads. However, deviations from this set back exist in some villages due to the presence of 20<sup>th</sup> century infill development which is typically at odds with the historic settlement form.
- The presence of gaps between built form disrupts the continuity of the building line, albeit softening the streetscape.
- Built form within the historic settlement cores is characterised by limited setbacks from the road, often devoid of pedestrian footways.

### Building height & roofscape

- Subtle variations in building scale exist, albeit 1.5-2 storey buildings predominate. Higher status buildings, typified by minimal set back from the road, often extend to 2.5 to 3 storeys in height.

### Landmark features

- The towers of local churches protrude against the skyline in local views, forming localised townscape features.
- The presence of intervening green space between the built form contributes positively to the wider village setting.

### Architectural features & materials

- Characterised by a limited palette of materials (predominantly Norfolk red brick, clay pantiles, render and timber frames) and only subtle variations in their use provides a consistent architectural vernacular.
- Distinctive architectural features are evident within higher status buildings and churches.

### Relationship to landscape

- Gaps in the continuity of built form along local roads offer visual links with the wider landscape. The linear form of development also provides the framing of local vistas.

### Influence of vegetation and open space

- Access to public open space within these villages is generally limited, with green gaps within the building line being primarily composed of private agricultural land.
- Woodland blocks can also create green gaps within a settlement and generate a more enclosed street character, as well as visually separating parts of the village from one another.
- Mid 20<sup>th</sup> century and modern infill development typically have a greater set back from the road through the use of driveways and front gardens. These plots are often vegetated and offer a green frame for the street.

### Extant examples of Interrupted Rural Row villages

- Bridgham
- Carbrooke
- Elsing
- Little Dunham
- Mileham
- North Tuddenham
- Shropham
- South Lopham
- South Pickenham
- Weasenham All Saints

### Historic examples of Interrupted Rural Row villages

- Beeston with Bittering
- Bintree
- Bridgham
- Elsing
- Garboldisham
- Great Ellingham
- Griston
- Gooderstone
- Kenninghall
- Mileham
- Mundford
- North Elmham
- North Pickenham
- North Tuddenham
- Saham Toney
- South Lopham
- South Pickenham
- Sporle with Palgrave
- Swanton Morley
- Yaxham

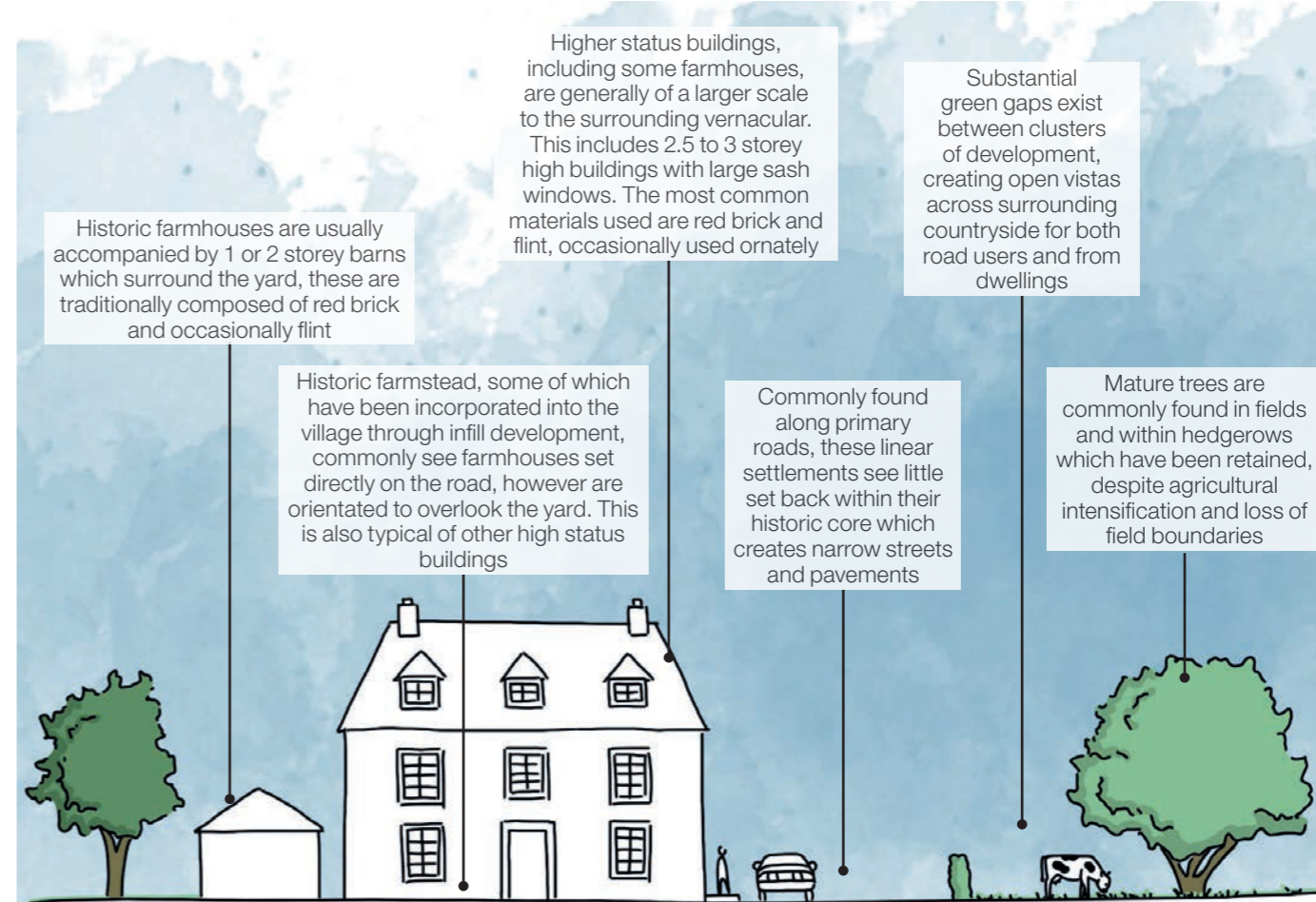
### Settlement examples - why are these categorised as Interrupted Rural Row villages?

#### Bridgham

- A linear settlement arrangement predominates, centred on The Street.
- Although some infill development is apparent, a number of substantial gaps are evident which disrupt the continuity of the street pattern. These gaps include land lying to the north of St. Mary's Church as well as landscape lying to the east and west of Hall Farm.

#### Elsing

- Infill development between St. Mary's Church and the enclosed common has resulted in a continuous linear settlement pattern, albeit interrupted by substantial gaps on Church Road and Rectory Road.







The historic core at Bridgham sees some stretches of narrow road and little building set back



Open views across agricultural fields are retained in North Tuddenham



Substantial gaps in between plots within Bridgham creates a highly agricultural character within the village



Larger set back typical of higher status buildings, such as The Rectory within Mileham



Open views across agricultural fields are enjoyed by residential dwellings



Substantial gaps between residential plots and farmsteads have been retained within North Tuddenham

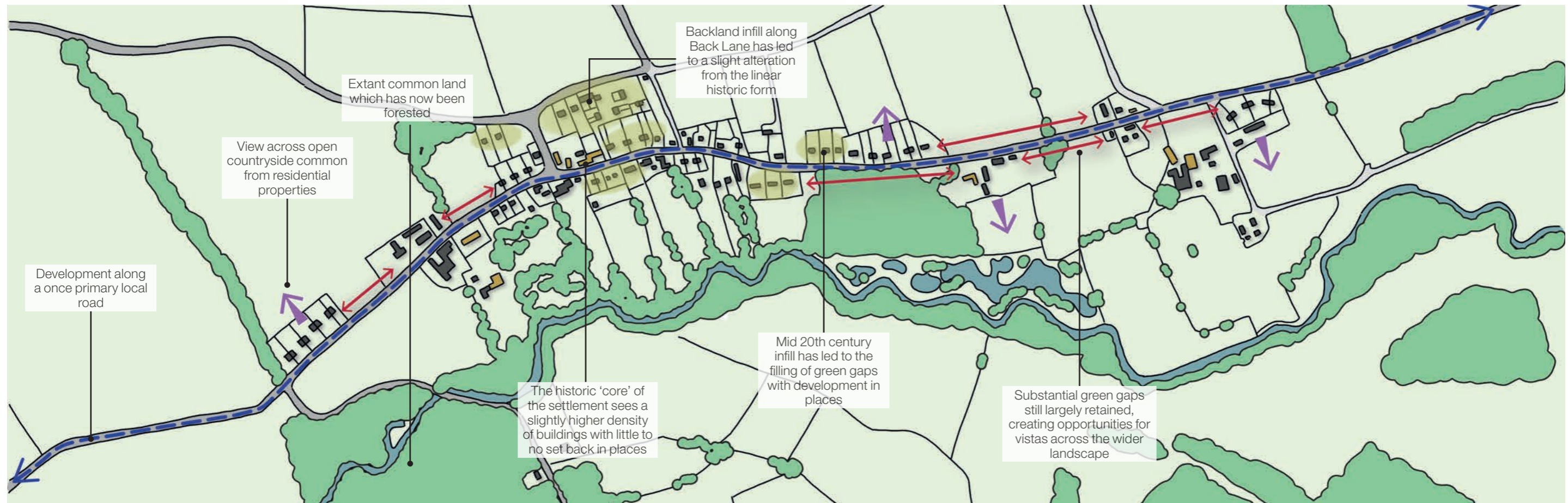


2.5 storey thatched dwelling in Mileham



The farmhouse at Hall Farm enjoys open views across agricultural land which has remained relatively free from infill development

## Example of an interrupted rural row village - Bridgham



### How do we distinguish between Continuous and Interrupted Rural Row settlements?

- Interrupted Rural Row villages are characterised by a number of substantial gaps which break the building line of the settlement. These gaps are at the scale of building plots or larger, including agricultural fields or other areas of green space, such as woodlands or private estates. These gaps provide a more open and green aspect for residents and travellers through the village.
- Continuous Rural Row settlements are characterised by a continuity of built form along a linear route and experiences a lack of substantial gaps between building plots. Several smaller scale gaps, e.g. empty building plots or small fields, could be present within Continuous Rural Row villages, however, these do not produce a loose grain and open character present within Interrupted Rural Rows.

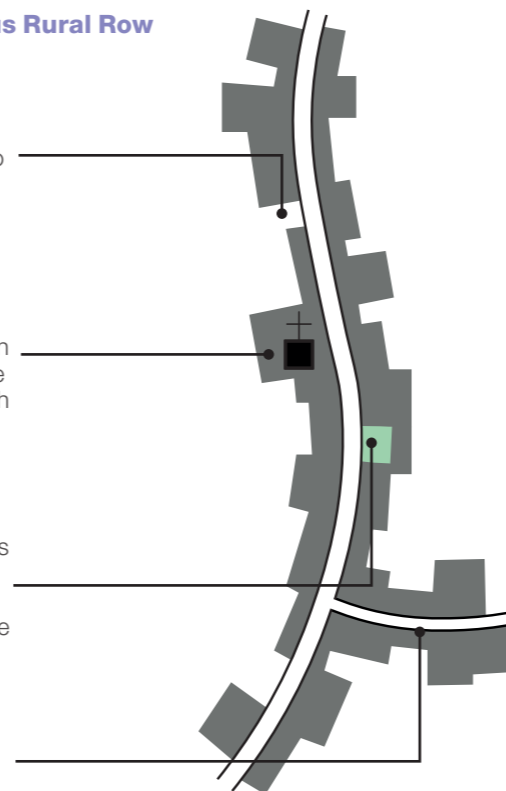
#### Typical spatial layout of a Continuous Rural Row

Some smaller gaps, equivalent to the size of building plots or small fields, could be present within continuous rural rows, but do not significantly impact on the continuity of the built form and building line

Where continuous rural rows are the product of modern-day infill within historic interrupted rural rows, a noticeable variety in architectural form and periods is noticeable across the village, also contributing to a high diversity in building set back

Small public green spaces, occasionally with ponds, can be found within continuous rural rows. These generally do not imitate the scale or function of villages greens, however they contribute to the setting of the surrounding streetscape

Backland or side street development is very common off the side of these settlements and deviate from the linear morphology



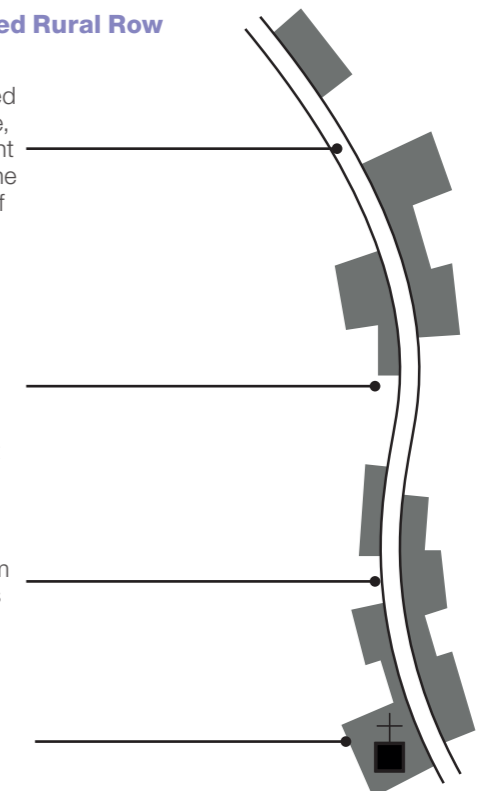
#### Typical spatial layout of a Interrupted Rural Row

These settlements tend to remain highly tied to their surrounding agricultural landscape, with functioning historic farmsteads present within central and peripheral stretches of the village, contributing to the lower density of built form

For an interrupted rural row to exist in the present day, it is likely that the settlement has not seen significant development over the past century. Therefore, a high proportion of historic buildings exhibiting traditional local vernacular will be present across the village

A lack of public open space or public realm is common within Interrupted Rural Rows

Features such as churches, which would typically provide a focal point within nucleated settlements, are often located towards village peripheries



## What works well

- Gaps in the continuity of built form and the presence of intervening green space contribute positively to the setting of the village, softening the street scene. The combination of mature vegetation and the availability of some longer distance filtered views also facilitate increased integration with the wider landscape.
- Subtle variations in the density of built form provides visual interest within the streetscape.



Vegetated road frontage adjacent Mileham Castle



Vegetation frames the streetscape within North Tuddenham



Open outlook from residential properties. Bridgham.



Availability of an open outlook from residential properties in North Tuddenham

## What works less well

- Incremental infill and backland development has partially eroded the pattern of green gaps which characterise these settlements and in some places have deviated from their linear form.
- The severance of North Tuddenham by the A47 has led to the physical separation of the northern and southern halves of the villages, creating a disjointed character and the feel of two separate settlements.



Modern development near The Lodge at North Tuddenham has led to a deviation from the rural row morphology of the village



Incremental development along Back Lane at Bridgham

# Morphological Village Type

## Dispersed Village

This village type is defined by isolated built form spread out across an area and generally devoid of a central focus. This pattern of development is often associated with a collection of buildings rather than a single settlement, albeit changing over time as a consequence of modern infill development.

The following characteristics are typically associated with dispersed villages:

### Street hierarchy

■ Settlement patterns are generally characterised by the lack of a single settlement ‘hub’ and a loose urban grain. This is typified by built form at Besthorpe where All Saints Church is isolated from areas of wider village exhibiting settlement coalescence with Attleborough. Great Fransham is also an outlying village with its dispersed historic layout largely intact. The urban form is laid out in a dispersed urban pattern, loosely centred on the corridors of local roads.

### Density, set back & building line

■ Built form generally follows consistent building lines, characterised by medium to large building set backs.

■ Residential development is typified by low density semi-detached or detached built form, benefitting from comparatively large plot sizes and vegetated buffers provided by front gardens.

### Building height & roofscape

■ Consistency of 1.5-2 storey building heights, with some diversity of form and scale for higher status buildings, including 2.5 and 3 storey heights for farmhouses.

### Landmark features

■ The route of the Breckland Rail Line defines the stark settlement edge to the south of Besthorpe. The alignment of the disused railway in Great Fransham, running broadly east to west also provides a distinctive wooded corridor which dissects the settlement.

### Architectural features & materials

■ Historic built form is characterised by a much wider range of architectural styles and ages, constructed from a limited palette of vernacular building materials. However, the integrity of the local character has been diluted in residential properties dating from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century within Besthorpe.

### Relationship to landscape

■ Characterised by isolated built form rather than a distinct single settlement, the surrounding landscape plays a key role in providing a rural setting to the villages.

■ Often dwellings or farmsteads are visually linked to the surrounding agricultural landscape by the lack of physical boundaries between private gardens and fields.

■ The loss of hedgerows to make way for large-scale fields due to agricultural intensification has resulted in a distinct impact on the surrounding landscape character.

### Influence of vegetation and open space

■ Public open space is generally limited to churchyards and occasionally amenity space linked to village halls.

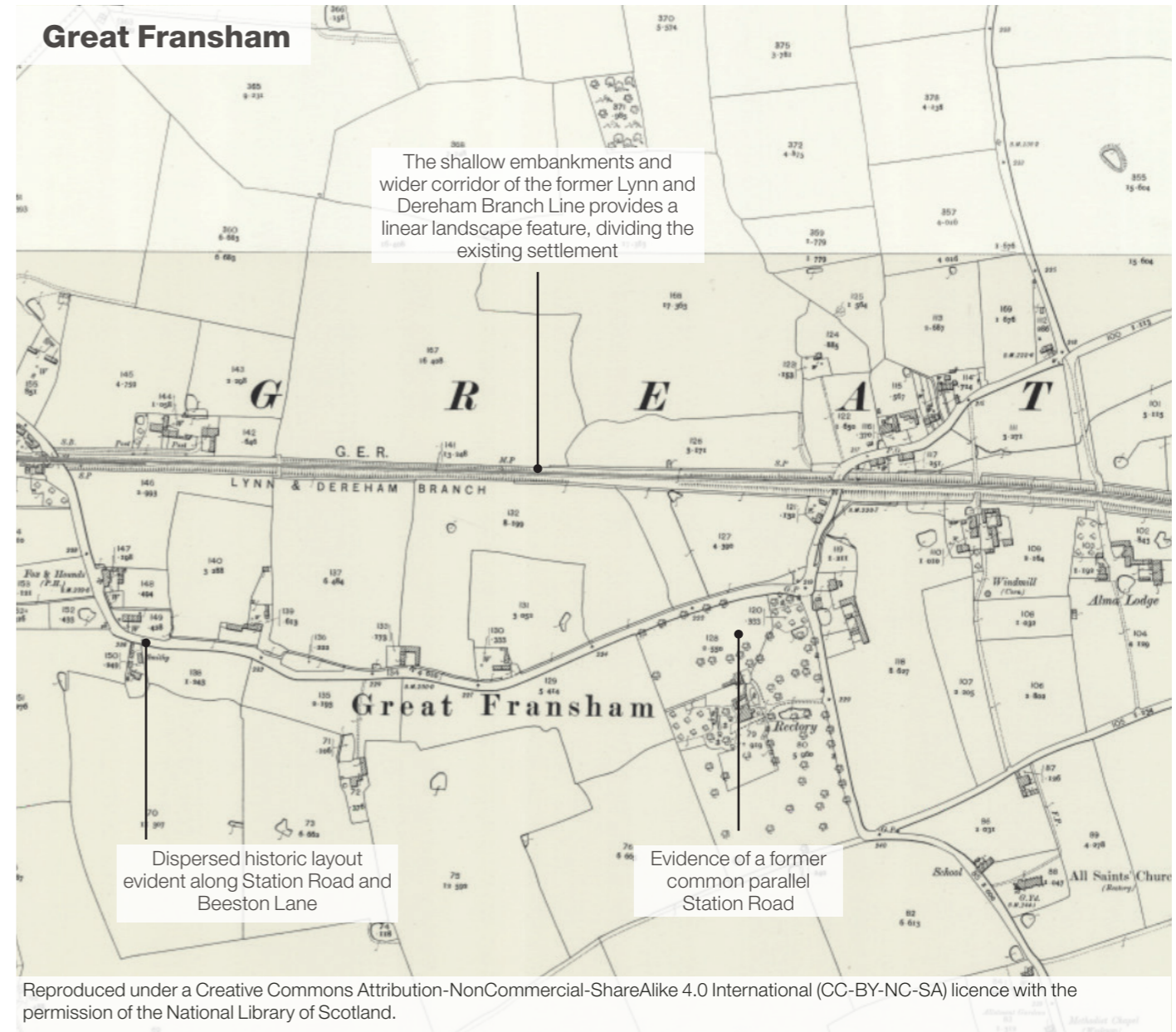
■ Dispersed settlements often have very green and leafy characters due to the presence of hedgerow-bounded fields, woodland blocks and mature trees within private gardens.

## Extant examples of Dispersed villages

- Besthorpe
- Great Fransham

## Historic examples of Dispersed villages

- Besthorpe
- Caston
- Great Fransham
- Necton





Agricultural fields, mainly large-scale arable however some smaller scale pastoral, adjoin residential plots, affording open views across the countryside from dwellings

1.5 and 2 storeys represents the most common building heights. A limited palette of vernacular building materials is generally used

Relatively narrow roads traverse the settlement. Hedgerows and hedgerow trees are the most common boundary features, obstructing views towards houses and into adjoining fields

2.5 and 3 storey buildings can be found for higher status uses, including farmhouses and rectories. These are often coupled with grander features, including large windows and tall chimneys

Houses generally sit on large plots with high levels of mature vegetation which can reduce intervisibility both in and out



Former bridge abutment at the disused railway within Great Fransham

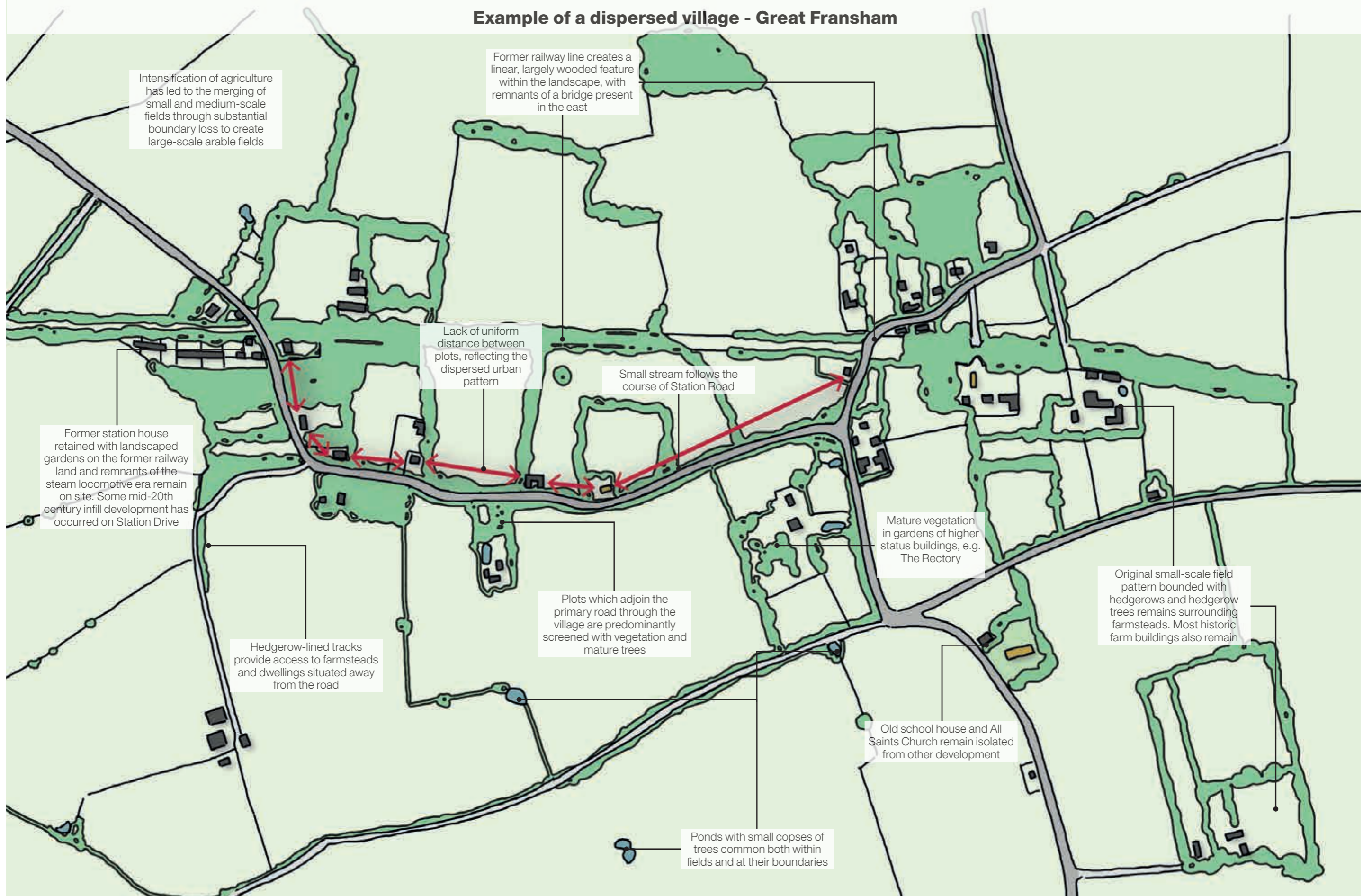


Evidence of dispersed settlement pattern in Great Fransham with the church and village hall being some distance from nearby properties



Some modern infill at the old station. Great Fransham.

### Example of a dispersed village - Great Fransham



## What works well

- The villages are typically characterised by a proliferation of vegetation, particularly at property boundaries, as well as the wider availability of views across agricultural fields.
- Large plot sizes generally permit access to good provision of private green space and the activities which go alongside this, e.g. gardening and growing vegetables.
- Consistent traditional vernacular due to limited modern and infill development e.g. Great Fransham.
- The disused railway line in Great Fransham creates a green corridor for the movement of wildlife.



Station house in Great Fransham provides an insight into the historic land use



Agricultural fields and green space provide an attractive setting to All Saints Church. Great Fransham.



The old school house remains part of a dispersed morphology and overlooks fields in Besthorpe



Agricultural fields without boundaries create open and attractive views. Besthorpe.

## What works less well

- Growth and infill development at Besthorpe has led to the lack of a distinct settlement gap between the village and Attleborough.
- Dispersed plots reduce the potential for community interactions and natural surveillance.



Meeting of historic development and mid 20th century development at Besthorpe which connects the village with Attleborough



Limited space for pedestrians and cyclists. Great Fransham.





# Morphological Landscape Traits



# Morphological Landscape Traits

## Green Edge Village

This morphological landscape trait is defined by the presence of farmsteads and cottages wholly or mainly arranged around the edges of a green.

Greens were important in the historic development of a number of settlements across Breckland District, frequently acting as spaces to host markets and fairs, e.g. Great Hockham. Although primarily a product of a historic function, greens may also have developed through the local enclosure of commons.

### Example villages

- Ashill
- Banham
- Beachamwell
- Bradenham
- Brisley
- Great Dunham
- Great Hockham
- Gressenhall
- Mundford
- New Buckenham
- Old Buckenham
- Shipdham
- Weasenham St. Peter

### What works well

- Extant village greens create a central 'hub within the settlement which can form an important meeting place and area of public amenity.
- The street design bordering village greens, which generally sees housing forming a built frontage, creates a welcoming environment with high levels of natural surveillance.



Natural surveillance on the village green. Ashill.



The Green being used as spill out space for the Ox & Plough pub. Old Buckenham.



Natural surveillance provided by residential properties. Weasenham St. Peter.



Mature trees form attractive landscape features. Banham.



The Green, which adjoins the main route through Shipdham, is encircled and overlooked by houses, offering natural surveillance

### What works less well

- Village greens tend to consist of short mown amenity grass and scattered mature trees. Although the land use serves the function as an informal meeting space, localised enhancements could be introduced to provide better access to quality public open space for residents.
- Historic street layouts surrounding the village green where houses sit directly on the street can lead to car dominated environments surrounding the space.



Large swathes of under-used grassland. Old Buckenham.



Evidence of car parking bordering the village green. Gressenhall.



Car dominated street scene adjacent the village green. Shipdham.

# Morphological Landscape Traits

## Common Edge Village

This village sub-category is defined by the presence of farmsteads and cottages wholly or mainly arranged around the edges of a common.

Commons were historically an important component of the agricultural landscape, contributing to the development of settlements within Breckland District. The relationship exists between the use of this land for grazing livestock and the presence of market villages e.g. New Buckenham. The presence of large swaths of common land at East and West Harling Commons is also linked to the development of the market at East Harling.

In the present day, extant commons locally enhance the setting of villages as well as deliver important public amenity and nature recovery benefits, e.g. New Buckenham Common is also a Norfolk Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve.

### Example villages

- Bawdeswell
- Bridgham
- Brisley
- New Buckenham

### What works well

- Extant commons generally constitute open access land which provides good quality access to natural and semi natural green space for residents.
- Commons can provide good spaces for biodiversity and nature recovery, e.g. the New Buckenham Norfolk Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve.
- Extant commons provide a reference to former land uses and landscape management practices.



Brisley Green is still being used for livestock grazing today, as well as alternative uses such as a cricket pitch



Access to nature. New Buckenham. Common



Set back and screening by vegetation is more common for higher status residential buildings, e.g. Brisley Hall



Interpretative signage at New Buckenham Common



WWII pillbox on Brisley Green provides a historic reference within the landscape

### What works less well

- Land use change, e.g. the conversion of part of the West Harling Common to forestry at Bridgham has dramatically changed the open nature of the landscape in this locality, whilst also steering away from traditional land practices.
- Some common land, e.g. at Brisley, is characterised by short mown grassland, which although helps to retain the open character of the settlement, does not reach its full potential in providing for both biodiversity and amenity.



Expanse of grassland at Brisley Green offers limited biodiversity value



Extant common land at West Harling Common which is now wooded and used for forestry in places



Evidence of land use change - the remnants of Potthorpe Common, including a small pond

