

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document 2022

Huntingdonshire District Council | Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Supplementary
Planning Document 2022

Chapter 2 - Understanding Character

2 Understanding Character

- 2.1** The impact of development on its landscape and townscape setting will vary depending on the location, scale and type of the proposal. Some developments will only have a limited impact, others may be more significant depending on their prominence and the sensitivity of their proposed context. NPPF section 12 focuses entirely on achieving well-designed places that are sympathetic to local character while not preventing appropriate change and recognises good design as a key aspect of sustainable development. NPPF paragraph 130 sets out clear design expectations for new developments. Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 complements these through strategic policy LP 11: Design Context along with others identified previously.
- 2.2** Landscape considerations are a key component of good design. All planning applications should address landscape issues in a proportionate manner according to the location, scale and type of development proposed. It is beyond the scope of this SPD to provide a detailed analysis of landscape and townscape issues throughout the district. Therefore, for proposals where the location of the site and/ or scale of the development are such that landscape issues will be a key consideration detailed assessment of the proposal's context will be required.
- 2.3** Developers should demonstrate how the proposal responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings, including natural, historic and built environment, to help create distinctive, high quality and well designed places. This should include consideration of the sensitivity of the affected landscape and townscape to the proposed form of development and assessment of the magnitude of change that will occur through construction and operation of the proposed development. Developers should show how this consideration has been reflected in the siting, design and layout of the proposal. Where required a Design and Access Statement should demonstrate how the proposal has been designed with sensitivity to the surrounding landscape and townscape. The requirements and information in this SPD can be used to help inform this.
- 2.4** The following issues may be relevant to guide preparation of assessment of the landscape and/ or townscape impact of a proposed development.

Factors of key importance for landscape are consideration of:

- the existing landscape character within and around the site reflecting landform, soils and geology, land cover, water features and the pattern of built and natural features
- the visual character of the landscape and views to, from and across the site
- how the landscape has shaped local communities and is used by them
- opportunities to strengthen visual and physical linkages between the site and its surroundings, including opportunities for improved linkages of natural habitat.

Factors of key importance for townscape are consideration of:

- the character of key features such as land use, layout, density, plot size, massing and permeability
- the presence of local landmarks, memorable places, cultural assets and vistas
- historic street patterns
- vernacular architectural styles, materials, design and detailing that provide local distinctiveness
- the character of boundary treatments such as walls, hedges and hedgerows
- the character of open spaces and their relationship to built development.

- 2.5** It is helpful to think of townscape as an evolution of the natural landscape; both bring with them cultural influences and perceptions that have shaped how people interact and perceive the natural and built environment. Some of these factors are summarised in Figure 2.1. These are continually changing, some areas at a faster rate than others. Each townscape and its unique interaction with its surrounding landscape brings varying opportunities for development, enhancement and preservation.

2 Understanding Character

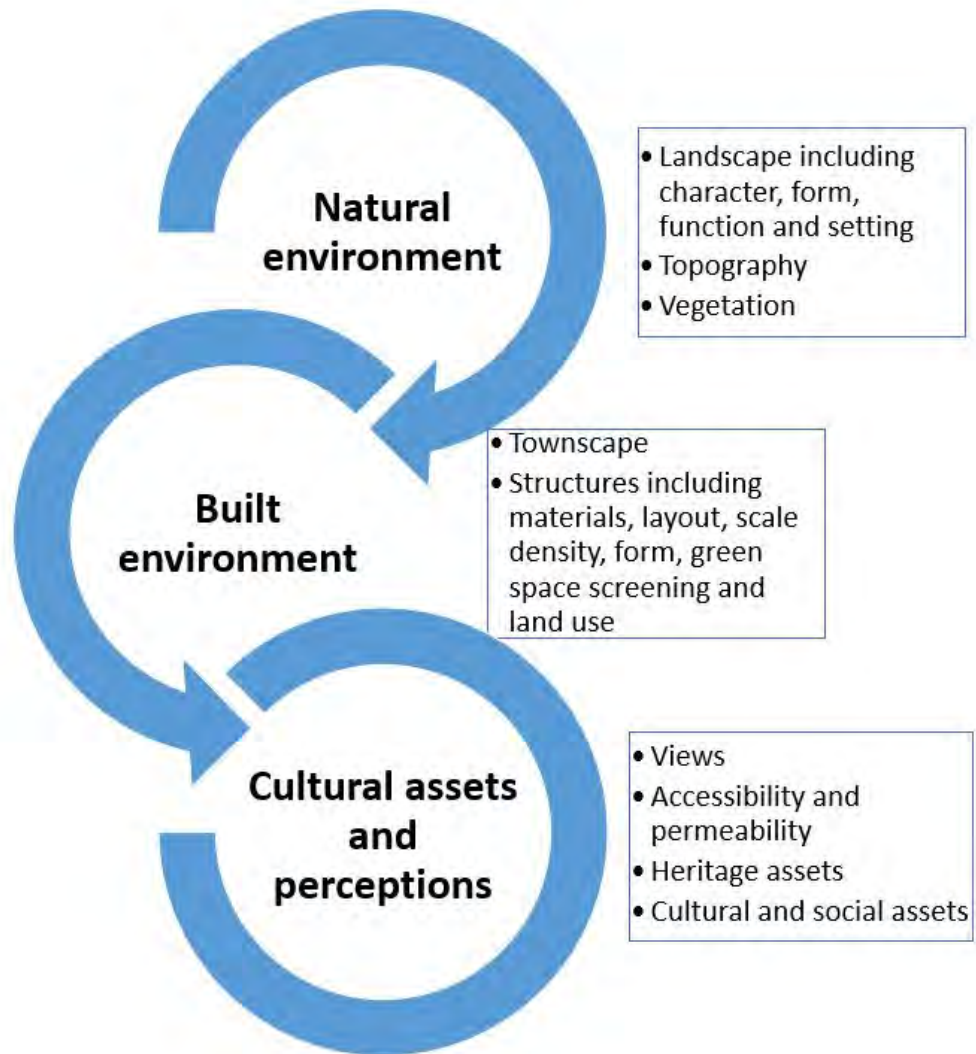


Figure 2.1 The evolution of townscape character from the natural landscape

National Design Guide and Design Code

2.6 In 2019 the then named Ministry for Homes, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) published a [Model Design Guide](#) and [National Model Design Code and Guidance Notes for Design Codes](#) illustrating how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. Updated in 2021, they form part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance to achieve high quality places and buildings which is a fundamental aspect of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.7 The National Design Guide addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics (see Figure 2.2 also):

1. **Context** – enhances the surroundings
2. **Identity** – attractive and distinctive
3. **Built form** – a coherent pattern of development
4. **Movement** – accessible and easy to move around
5. **Nature** – enhanced and optimised
6. **Public spaces** – safe, social and inclusive
7. **Uses** – mixed and integrated
8. **Homes and buildings** – functional, healthy and sustainable
9. **Resources** – efficient and resilient
10. **Lifespan** – made to last

2.8 This SPD is not a design guide or design code. It should be read in conjunction with the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017) or successor documents which provides detailed design advice along with any relevant Conservation Area character statements. However, it will provide the context and baseline understanding to inform further detailed design guides and codes to analyse local character and identity, these may be produced by Town and Parish Councils as part of their neighbourhood plan preparation. They may also be prepared to help shape planning proposals for new development.

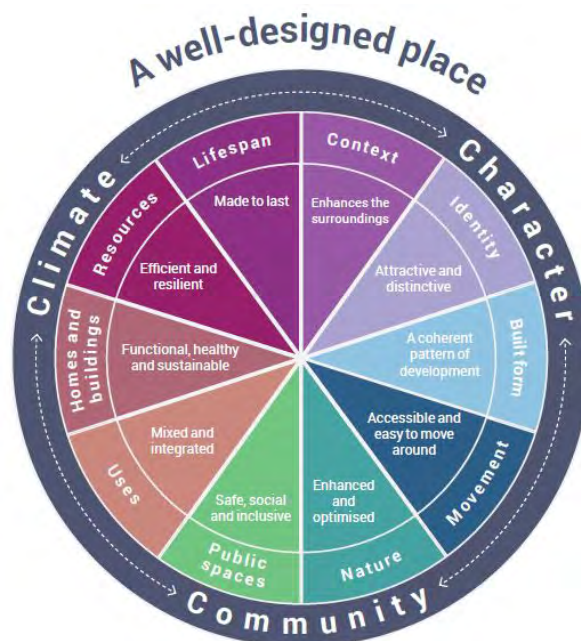


Figure 2.2 Model Design Guide's 10 characteristics of a well-designed place

2 Understanding Character

Settlement Scale Character Assessment

Methodology for the revised SPD

- 2.9** A review of the existing Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD from 2007 was undertaken in light of the adoption of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 in May 2019. The review assessed what purpose and scope an update would have so that it better relates to the current policy position and developments since its publication. In updating the SPD, it was recognised that making it a more practical document that provides greater guidance in the decision making process and for neighbourhood planning would be beneficial.
- 2.10** A desk study which involved the collection and review of the existing Landscape and Townscape SPD, existing reports, conservation area statements, maps, aerial photography and other published data was undertaken. These covered the four spatial planning areas and seven key service centres as identified in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. The Landscape Character Areas already identified in the 2007 SPD were found to still be appropriate so amendments were made to the supporting texts where necessary to take into account any new roads, developments and landscape changes.
- 2.11** Updates to existing character areas and the drafting of new character areas were done for the settlements within the spatial planning areas: Huntingdon, Brampton, Godmanchester, St Neots, Little Paxton, St Ives and Ramsey. A full assessment was carried out for the key service centres of Buckden, Fenstanton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley as these were not included in the 2007 SPD. The data collected at this stage provided an initial understanding of the form and character of the settlements, their landscape edges and wider landscaping setting. Initial text, mapping of key features and character area boundaries was done to be tested in the field survey.
- 2.12** A period of field survey within each settlement during which detailed information on building types, street pattern, key buildings, memorable places, vegetation, building materials and the relationships between townscape and landscape was undertaken. This allowed the initial conclusions on settlement and landscape structure and character from the desk study to be tested and refined. Photographs of key features and characteristics within each identified character area were taken to add visual elements to the SPD and demonstrate clearly what the key features are within each character area.
- 2.13** Following the field surveys, the assessments were refined with the observations made from the field surveys and the visual aids gathered were added. The boundaries of each character area were then refined and mapped. Once a full picture of the character of each area was understood, identifying design principles that can be applied to planning applications and decision making were formulated. These responded to the specific characteristics and features of each character area.

Methodology for local communities

- 2.14** Preparation of a landscape and/ or townscape appraisal at a settlement scale provides an opportunity to undertake finer grain consideration than can be conducted at a district-wide level. This provides opportunities to identify the importance of features distinctive at a local level which may be atypical of the surrounding landscape or townscape character. This is most likely to be carried out by a neighbourhood planning group to help develop appropriate policies for their plan. A methodology to do this is set out in Appendix 1 with its key steps summarised in Figure 2.3.

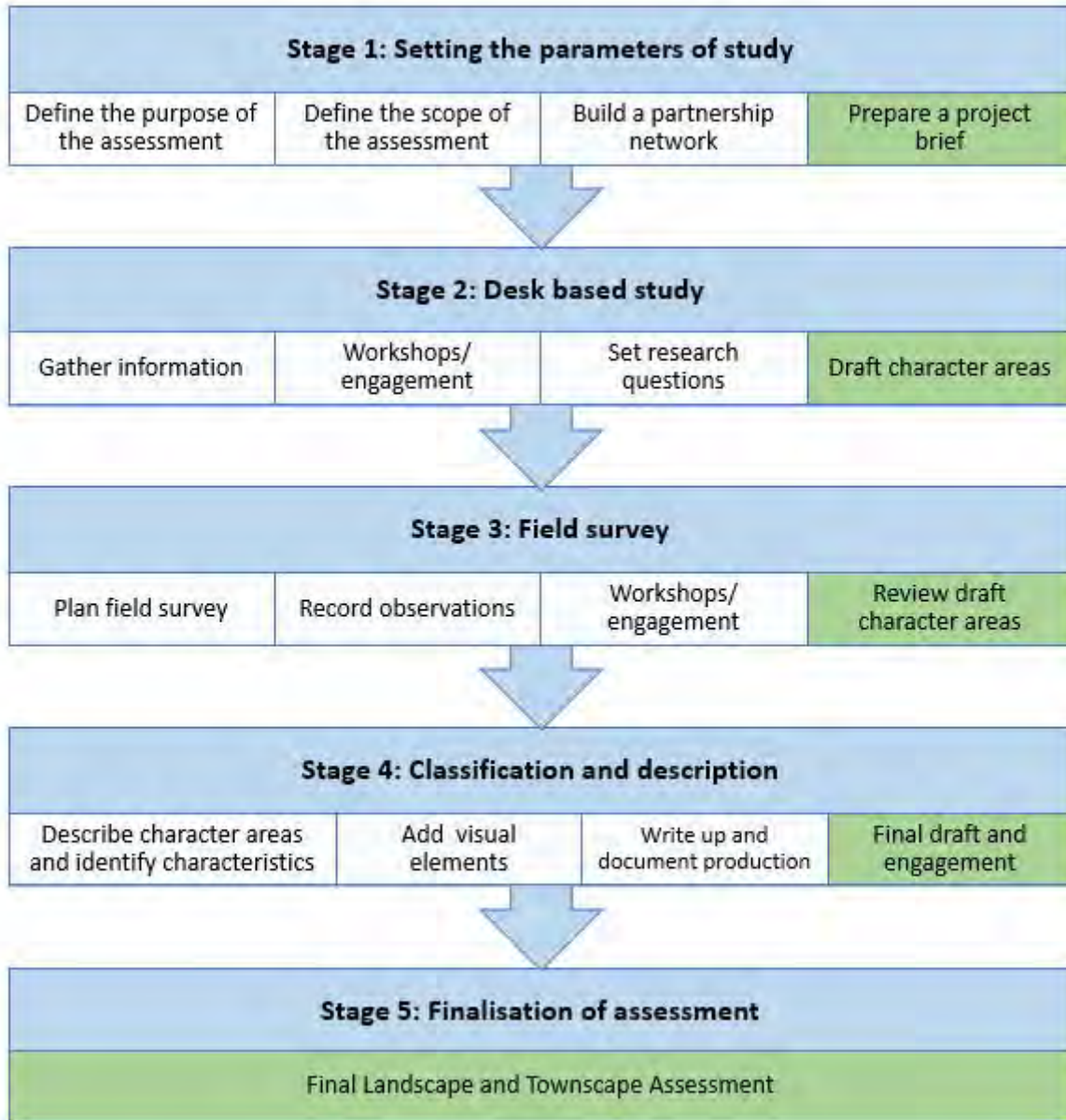


Figure 2.3 Summary of the key stages, steps and outputs of undertaking a landscape and townscape character assessment

2 Understanding Character

- 2.15** The following questions are designed to provide a starting point to help local residents undertake their own assessments informed by local knowledge of their town or village. These can be used in combination with the methodology in Appendix 1.

Landscape

- How does the area relate to the wider countryside? Has it features in common with the surrounding landscape?
- Is the area part of a larger landscape feature such as a ridge or field pattern that is characteristic of the wider area?
- Are there distinctive features that contribute to the character of the local area?
- What is the current use of the area?
- What function does the area serve in the wider landscape? For example, is it part of the countryside setting of a built-up area, or does it bring views of the countryside landscape into a settlement?

Topography

- Is the area situated within a distinct topographical feature such as a river valley or hill?
- Is the area flat, sloping or undulating?
- Are there any permanent or seasonal watercourses or ponds within or on the boundaries of the area?
- How does the topography affect the area's sense of enclosure or openness?
- Can the whole area be seen as one entity or are there parts of it hidden behind higher land or built structures?

Vegetation

- Are there individual trees within the area which make a significant contribution to the appearance of the locality?
- Are there indications of historic planting such as historic hedgerows, specimen trees or formal planting?
- Does existing vegetation include locally characteristic, native species?
- What natural habitats are provided by existing vegetation?

Townscape function

- Is it contained within well-defined boundaries?
- What is the current use of the area?
- Are there important buildings, structures or boundary treatments?
- What function does the area serve in the wider townscape? For example, is it part of an area of similar developments or does it provide a contrast?

Structures

- If the screening includes walls or fencing, is it typical of the landscape and/ or townscape character area? is it important to the area's historic character?
- What examples of green space or public space are there? How do they sit within the townscape?
- Are there any individual structures which stand out as significantly contributing or detracting from the character of the area?
- What contribution do these make to the landscape or townscape? Do they enhance or detract from its quality and character?
- How do the height, materials, style and uses of nearby buildings relate to the area?
- Do nearby buildings and structures display features that are typical of the townscape character area?
- Is there a clear pattern or structure to the surrounding buildings and streets?

Views and vistas

- Does the area provide an interesting or significant skyline?
- Do the views to/ from the area include heritage assets whose setting needs to be safeguarded?
- Do any views provide a valuable setting to existing buildings or landscape features?
- Does the area terminate a view or vista within the townscape?

Accessibility and permeability

- What physical access links the area to existing facilities and communities? Are there any obstacles which hinder access?
- What level of physical connectivity does the landscape and/or townscape character area benefit from?
- What physical access connections does the site or area currently have?

Historical, cultural and social assets

- Do vehicles, moving or parked, have an impact on the ambience of the area?
- What are the activity levels like in the area? Is the area busy? Are there clusters of particular activities? Does the area attract visitors as well as local residents?
- Is the area associated with particular cultural uses? For example, does it contain a museum or cemetery?
- Are there features which may provoke memories? For example, does the area include an old school or hospital?
- Are there any known associations with famous people or events?
- Is the area of high archaeological potential?
- Are there known designated or non-designated heritage assets within the area? How do these contribute to the character of the area?

Light and noise

- What are the existing levels of artificial illumination in the area?

2 Understanding Character

Site Specific Character Assessment

- 2.16** Understanding the character of a proposed development site and its relationship to its setting are essential for successful integration of a development scheme into the surrounding landscape and/ or townscape. The first step is to establish which landscape and/ or townscape character areas are relevant. Developers should consider the key characteristics of the landscape and/ or townscape character area to assess the relationship between the site and its locally distinctive features.
- 2.17** The following questions are provided to help in the consideration of landscape and townscape character when assessing the potential impacts of proposed change. Key factors to be considered when proposing development within a particular landscape or townscape character area are identified in the following chapters in boxes headed 'Development proposals should'.

Landscape

- How does the site relate to the wider countryside? Has it features in common with the surrounding landscape?
- Is the site part of a larger landscape feature such as a ridge or field pattern that is characteristic of the wider area?
- What is the current use of the site?
- What will the impact on the wider landscape be of the site's development?
- What function does the site serve in the wider landscape? For example, is it part of the countryside setting of a built-up area, or does it bring views of the countryside landscape into a settlement?

Topography

- How does the topography affect the site's sense of enclosure or openness?
- How does the topography affect views into, out of and across the site?
- Are there any permanent or seasonal watercourses or ponds within or on the boundaries of the site?
- Is the site flat, sloping or undulating?

Vegetation

- Do the boundaries of the site comprise vegetation rather than walls and fences?
- Are there indications of historic planting such as historic hedgerows, specimen trees or formal planting?
- What natural habitats are provided by existing vegetation and how should they be protected?
- Does existing vegetation include locally characteristic, native species?
- Are there individual or groups of trees within or adjoining the site which make a significant contribution to its appearance?

Townscape function

- Is the site contained within well-defined boundaries?
- What is the current use of the site?
- What function does the site serve in the wider townscape? For example, is it part of an area of similar developments or does it provide a contrast?

Structures

- If the screening includes walls or fencing, is it typical of the landscape and/ or townscape character? Does it enhance or detract from the site's character?
- What examples of green space or public space are there? How can green space and public space in the site contribute to the townscape?

- Are there any individual structures which stand out as significantly contributing or detracting from the character of the site?
- What contribution do these make to the landscape or townscape? Do they enhance or detract from its quality and character?
- How do the height, materials, style and uses of nearby buildings relate to the site?
- Is there a clear pattern or structure to the surrounding buildings and streets?

Views and vistas

- Does the site provide an interesting or significant skyline?
- Do the views to/ from the site include heritage assets whose setting needs to be safeguarded?
- Does the site terminate a view or vista within the townscape?

Accessibility and permeability

- What physical access links the area to existing facilities and communities? Are there any obstacles which hinder access?
- What level of physical connectivity does the site have to the surrounding landscape and/or townscape character area?
- What physical access connections does the site currently have?

Historic, cultural and social assets

- Are there high activity levels in the site? How can the site contribute to improving or increasing activity in the surrounding area?
- Is the site associated with particular cultural uses? For example, does it contain a museum or cemetery?
- Are there features which may provoke memories? For example, does the site include an old school or hospital?
- Are there any known associations with famous people or events?
- Is the site of high archaeological potential?
- Are there known designated or non-designated heritage assets within the site or adjacent to it? How do these contribute to its character?

Light and noise

- What are the existing levels of artificial illumination in the site and its immediate surroundings? Will development increase this?

2 Understanding Character

Heritage Assets

- 2.18** Heritage assets are relevant to both landscape and townscape and are integral to creating the distinctive character and individual sense of place of Huntingdonshire's towns, villages and countryside. Consideration of designated and non-designated heritage assets is a crucial element of landscape and townscape assessment. The distribution of Huntingdonshire's conservation areas, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and scheduled monuments are shown in Figure 2.4 at the end of this section and can also be viewed on the [interactive map](#).
- 2.19** The term heritage assets embraces a wide range of historic features including buildings, parks and gardens, monuments, sites and landscapes. The features can be of historic, archaeological, architectural or cultural interest that have a degree of 'significance', whether designated or not. The significance of a heritage asset is the value of the asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest; that interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. Designated heritage assets within Huntingdonshire include listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens and scheduled monuments. Non-designated assets also form a material consideration in determining planning applications as identified in the NPPF.
- 2.20** The Historic Environment Record (HER) is an important starting point for anyone interested in the archaeology, built heritage, and history of an area. Huntingdonshire is included within the [Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record \(CHER\)](#). HER can provide information on a wide variety of buildings and sites. The importance and extent of below ground archaeology is often unknown, although information in the HER will indicate areas of known interest, or high potential where further assessment is required before decisions or allocations are made. HERs contain details on local archaeological sites and finds, historic buildings and historic landscapes and are regularly updated.

Conservation Areas

- 2.21** Huntingdonshire has 61 designated Conservation Areas. These are defined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation) Act 1990 as areas of 'special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. The areas vary significantly in character and size from a relatively small group of buildings to a substantial part of an individual town. Character assessment statements have been prepared for many of these and can be found on the Council's website as [Conservation Area Documents](#).
- 2.22** The character of a conservation area results from the nature of the buildings within it, coupled with the pattern of streets, open spaces, trees and other vegetation. Conservation areas contribute positively to quality of life and provide a sense of continuity. The local distinctiveness they demonstrate should inform well designed new development that enhances the character of the area in which it is situated.

The Historic England Advice Note Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (February 2019)

The Historic England Advice Note [Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management](#) identifies the following list of factors to help judge whether a building contributes positively to the character of a conservation area which development proposals within a conservation area should consider:

- Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?
- Does it have landmark quality?
- Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?
- Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?
- Does it contribute positively to the setting or adjacent designated heritage assets?
- Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces within a complex of public buildings?
- Is it associated with a designed landscape, eg a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?
- Does it have significant historic associations with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
- Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?
- Does it contribute to the character or appearance of the area?

The Advice Note provides further guidance on aspects of setting and views which may be significant contributors to character and likewise should be taken into consideration;

- Views of rivers and surrounding hills and glimpses of landscape from urban streets
- Open spaces, church towers/ spires and prominent public buildings that provide landmarks in views
- Views that illustrate a particular element of the area's historic development
- Groups of buildings benefiting from a conscious design or of fortuitous beauty and the consequent visual harmony they present
- Townscape attributes such as enclosure, definition of streets and spaces, lighting, trees, verges, boundary treatments or street surfaces
- Uniform building height that contributes to the character of views
- Distant views of the settlement and those in the approach to it
- Adjacent or nearby heritage assets that gain or contribute significance through views to or from the area

2 Understanding Character

Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens and Scheduled Monuments

- 2.23** Listing marks and celebrates a building's special architectural and historic interest, and also brings it under the consideration of the planning system, so that it can be protected for future generations. Listed Buildings are graded into one of three categories:
- Grade I buildings which are of exceptional interest with only 2.5% of listed buildings at this grade
 - Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest accounting for 5.8% of listed buildings
 - Grade II buildings are of special interest accounting for 91.7% of all listed buildings and it is the most likely grade of listing for a home owner.
- 2.24** Historic England recognises that the total number of listed buildings is not known, as one single entry on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) can sometimes cover a number of individual units, such as a row of terraced houses. However, it is estimated that there are around 500,000 listed buildings on the NHLE. As well as buildings, other forms of heritage assets can be listed. Scheduled Monuments is the oldest form of designation and relates to nationally important archaeological sites. Parks and Gardens include gardens, grounds and other planned open spaces, such as town squares. They are protected due to their significance as a 'designed' landscape.
- 2.25** Huntingdonshire has a rich history and this is reflected in the large number of historic buildings found within the district, many of which are protected as listed buildings, along with 5 registered Parks and Gardens and 84 designated Scheduled Monuments. At the time of writing, there are some 2,216 designations across Huntingdonshire listed on Historic England's website, their grading closely following the proportion identified by Historic England above:
- 62 grade I designations (2.8%)
 - 130 grade II* designations (5.9%)
 - 2,024 grade II designated (91.3%)

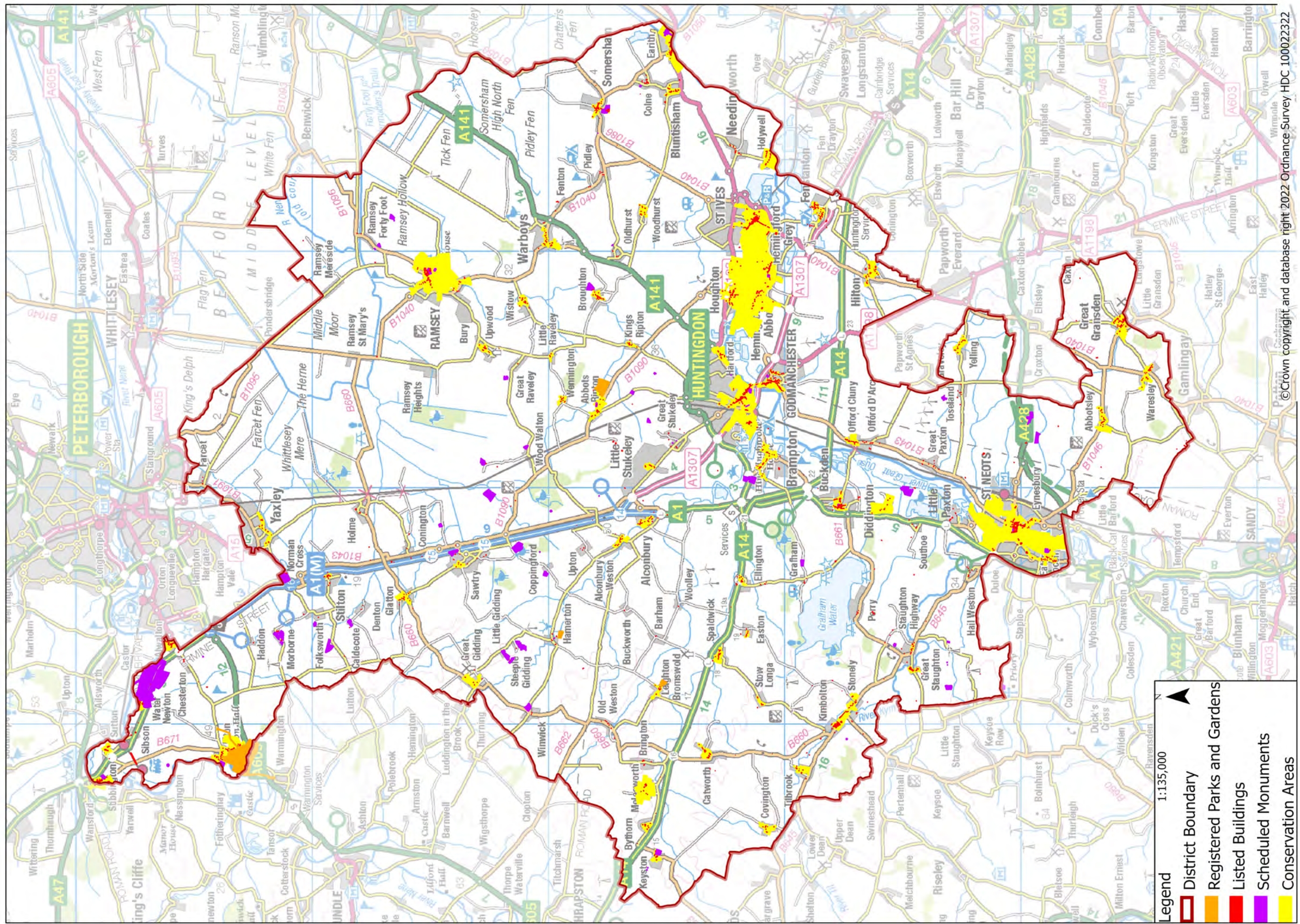


Figure 2.4 Heritage designations across Huntingdonshire

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Building Types

2.26 To understand the character of Huntingdonshire's settlements buildings have been grouped into typical categories labelled as building types which have helped to inform the assessments of townscape character areas. The building types illustrate the variations in style, architectural detail, materials and colours setting out the key characteristics that help to define them. Below is a table listing all building types, for comparison the previous building types in the 2007 SPD have been included for reference against those in this revised SPD.

| 2007 SPD Building Types | Revised SPD Building Types |
|---|--|
| Type T1A - High Status Medieval Timber Framed House | Type 1A - High Status Medieval Timber Framed Building |
| Type T1B - Vernacular Cottages | Type 1B - Vernacular Cottages |
| Type T2 - 18th-19th Century Town House | Type 2D - 18th - early 20th Century Town House |
| Type T3 - 18th-19th Century Terraced House | Type 2A - 18th - early 20th Century Terraced House |
| Type T4 - 18th-19th Century Villas and Semis | Type 2B - 18th - early 20th Century Villas and Semis |
| Type T5 - 19th Century Picturesque | Type 2C - 19th Century Picturesque |
| Type T6 - 18th-19th Century Grand House | Type 2E - 18th - early 20th Century Grand House |
| Type T7A - Arts and Craft Influenced Housing | Type 3A - Arts and Craft Influenced Housing |
| Type T7B - 1920s and Inter-war Suburbia | Type 3B - 1920s and Inter-war Suburbia |
| Type T7C - The 'Radburn' Estates | Type 3C - The 'Radburn' Estates |
| Type T7D - Modern Housing Estates | Type 3D - Mid 20th Century Housing |
| | Type 3E - Late 20th Century Housing |
| | Type 3F - 21st Century Housing |
| Type T8 - Agricultural Buildings | Type 4 - Agricultural Buildings |
| Type T9A - Pre-20th Century Industrial Buildings | Type 5A - Pre-20th Century Industrial Buildings |
| Type T9B - 20th Century Industrial Estates and Retail Parks | Type 5B - 20th and 21st Century Industrial Estates |
| | Type 5C - 20th and 21st Century Business Parks and Offices |
| | Type 5D - Shopping Facilities and Retail Parks |
| Type T10A - Parish Churches | Type 6A - Parish Churches |
| Type T10B - Non-Conformist Chapels | Type 6B - Non-Conformist Chapels |
| Type T11A - Victorian and Edwardian Civic Buildings | Type 7A - Victorian and Edwardian Civic Buildings |
| | Type 7B - Early and mid 20th Century Civic Buildings |
| Type T11B - Late 20th Century Civic Buildings | Type 7C - Late 20th and 21st Century Civic Buildings |
| Type T12 - Military Airfields | Type 8 - Military Airfields and Bases |

2 Understanding Character

Type 1: Vernacular Cottage/ House

Type 1A: High Status Medieval Timber Framed Building

2.27 Large medieval timber framed houses are found mainly in the centre and south of the district and generally date from the mid to late 16th century. The type is frequently rendered or faced in brickwork and re-fenestrated in later periods often disguising medieval origins. Some fine examples are found in Godmanchester as illustrated by Tudor Farm.



Tudor Farm, Godmanchester

Key Characteristics

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

Type 1B: Vernacular Cottages

- 2.28** The underlying geology, gault clays and limestone in the north west, together with reeds and straw from the nearby Fens and local farms, has generated the palette of traditional building materials for vernacular buildings. This, together with building techniques developed by the local population over many centuries, has created the vernacular cottages of the district. Vernacular cottages from late 16th century to the late 18th century occur throughout the area, but show distinct local variations.



Bridge Road, Broughton

Key Characteristics

- Long, low double-fronted single, 1.5 or 2 storey cottages
- Simple flat-fronted building form, generally eaves to the road
- Buff or rosy-buff brick or stone built, depending on location; rendered and painted timber framing is also common throughout the district
- Shallow plan depth with a simple steeply pitched roof and outbuildings
- Clay plain or pantiles, thatch or Collyweston-slate roof coverings, depending on location
- Eaves and gables are generally clipped close to the building, except for the deep overhangs found on thatched roofs
- Originally built with small, horizontally proportioned window openings with casement or horizontally sliding sash windows; flat or segmental brick lintels
- Dormer windows are a common feature, with pitched, cat slide or eyebrow roofs, depending on material and location
- Panelled or ledged and braced doors, with some later simple timber porches or canopies
- Large brick chimneystacks were positioned first centrally and later at the gable ends
- Within settlements, cottages are generally terraced and set at the back of the pavement, creating well-defined streets and space

2 Understanding Character

Local Variations

Area

Local Characteristics

The Fens and Fen Margins

The Fens contain few pre 19th century buildings, but cottages on the margins are predominately buff brick often painted, or rendered and painted white. Roofs are mainly covered with clay plain tiles and pantiles although there is also some thatch present. 1.5 storey cottages with catslide dormer windows and outshoots are a common feature



142 Main Street, Yaxley

Central Claylands and Great Ouse Valley

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



Honey Hill cottages in Fenstanton

South East Claylands

Rendered and painted timber-framed cottages are common, with projecting weather-boards a distinctive feature. Cottages are frequently 1.5 storeys, with many later examples built of a characteristic dark warm-red brick. Cambridgeshire peg tiles and thatched roofs are common.



19 High Street, Abbotsley

Nene Valley

Cottages are built from the locally occurring limestone, laid as coursed rubble with dressed stone cills, window and door surrounds on larger properties. Roofs are Collyweston slate.



Elton Road, Wansford

Type 2: 18 to early 20th Century Housing

Type 2A: 18 to early 20th Century Terraced House

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



East Street, St Ives



Cambridge Street, Godmanchester

Key Characteristics

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

2 Understanding Character

Type 2B: 18th to early 20th Century Villas and Semi-detached Houses

- 2.31** This building type is found in the larger villages and towns of the district, where it forms the wealthier fringes to the historic centres. The classic simple architecture of the Georgian period became increasingly eclectic and decorative during the Victorian and Edwardian eras. Although influenced by local building materials, improved transportation brought non-local materials, especially mass-produced bricks and Welsh slate.
- 2.32** The villa form complemented the narrow streets of small terraced homes built during the Victorian and Edwardian periods, providing larger properties for wealthier residents. The semi-detached form, creating the illusion of detached villas, is also found in some locations. Ramsey and Warboys have particularly good examples of this building type.



Victorian villa, High Street, Warboys



Victorian semi-detached villas, Needingworth Road, St Ives

Key Characteristics

- Medium to large brick-built, detached or semi-detached houses
- Decorative, contrasting brickwork stringcourses, eaves courses, lintels and window reveals
- Canted and square bay windows are a feature, often with stone mullions, now frequently painted white
- Decorative stone detailing, including mullions, copings, padstones and plaques
- Vertical window openings with stone cills, flat and segmental brick lintels, and vertical sliding sash windows
- Fairly low-pitched slate covered roofs, some with Italianate hipped roofs. Prominent brick stacks and chimneys
- Large houses are set in spacious grounds.
- Town based properties often have small front gardens that create a greener street character
- Parking can be on street or using driveways and garaging added since the original construction

Type 2C: 19th Century Picturesque

- 2.33** During the Victorian era it became fashionable for wealthy and philanthropic landowners to build housing and other facilities for their tenants, and the local community. The predominant style was based on a gothicised version of the idealised 'English' cottage, often creating picturesque groups or even whole villages. Generally, materials were of local origin, excepting more decorative elements such as cast iron windows and ornate rainwater goods.
- 2.34** The type is found in small numbers throughout the district; Abbey Green, Ramsey has several fine examples along its northern side.



Church Green, Ramsey

Key Characteristics

- Generally symmetrical but with intricate plan forms, layouts and elevations
- Architectural detailing used for decorative effect, such as buttresses, dentil courses, mouldings, bargeboards and string courses
- Picturesque rooflines, with tall decorated chimney stacks, numerous gables, finials and decorated ridge tiles
- Steep roof pitches, with slate or gault clay plain-tile roof coverings. Dormer windows are a feature on cottages
- Strongly mullioned windows often with decorative lattice-work glazing patterns
- Generally set back from the road with small front gardens and low walls to the front boundaries. Alms-houses often for courtyards defined by railings
- Originally built for a range of uses, including schools, estate offices, village halls, alms-houses and estate workers cottages. The majority are now in residential use
- Medium to low density depending on use and plot size
- Parking is generally on street

2 Understanding Character

Type 2D: 18th to early 20th Century Town House

- 2.35** The town house building type is found throughout the district; its adaptability to a wide range of scales, materials and uses creates the variety, and strong architectural cohesion of the historic centres of the towns and larger villages. This classically inspired style creates well-defined and elegant streets and public spaces.
- 2.36** During the 18th century it was fashionable to modernise earlier vernacular houses, and it is common to find medieval buildings re-elevated behind town house facades.



Late 18th Century gault brick town house at 79 Ermine Street, Huntingdon

Key Characteristics

- Predominately terraced form, 2 to 3.5 storeys, generally double stacked with central gutter
- Flat fronted and symmetrical, 2-4 bays wide, vertically proportioned facades
- Roofscape minimised by the use of parapets, shallow and double pitched roofs with the eaves to road. Cambridgeshire peg tiles and slate are the most common roof coverings.
- Stone detailing, often painted, including cills, string-courses, architraves etc.
- Drive-through archways, gaining access to the rear are a common feature, especially in former coaching towns
- 6 and 4 panelled doors, with door-surrounds and glazed fanlights or door canopies
- The terraced form, often built at back of pavement creates a well-defined street frontage of urban character
- High-medium density, depending on the numbers of storeys, bays, and plot width. Generally built with additive ranges of outbuildings
- Originally built as dwellings, some with shops on the ground floor; many are now in commercial and office use.

Local Variations

Area

Local Characteristics

Central Claylands and Great Ouse Valley

Built of warm soft red, dark buff and pale buff brick depending on age, and the settlement. Huntingdon, Buckden and the Offords have some fine examples of the warm-red brickwork. Roofs are typically gault-clay plain tiles, although slate is found on later properties.



Whitwell House, High Street, Huntingdon

South East Claylands

St Neots has some fine examples of townhouses. They are generally built of buff coloured brickwork with Cambridgeshire peg tile roof coverings.



Market Square, St Neots

2 Understanding Character

Type 2E: 18th to early 20th Century Grand House

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



Bluntisham House is a grade II* listed yellow brick early 18th century rectory

Key Characteristics

- Large, detached houses with symmetrical, wide-fronted facades, usually on expansive plots
- Georgian examples are wide-fronted, with tall floor to ceiling heights, creating an imposing scale
- Vertically proportioned window openings vertically aligned, frequently graduating in height up the façade, with flat-arch stone or 'red-rubber' brick lintels
- Timber vertical-sliding sash windows. Georgian examples generally follow 9, 12 and 16 pane patterns. Victorian sliding sash windows incorporate larger pane sizes
- Roofscape views are minimised through the use of parapets and shallow double pitched roofs, with the eaves to road. Mansard roofs are found on some examples.
- Decorative dentil eaves courses or painted timber cornice eaves detail
- Brick or stone detailing, often painted, including cills, string courses, keystones and quoins
- 6 and 4 panelled doors, with decorative-glazed fanlights or door canopies
- The grand detached forms, usually set back from the road behind railings or walls, create a restful, stately and less urban character
- Frequently set in gardens, with dark evergreen planting, with a backdrop of mature trees

Local Variations

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

| Area | Local Characteristics |
|---|---|
| The Fens and Fen Margins | Buff/Gault coloured brick with Cambridgeshire peg tiles are the most common regional materials. |
| Central Claylands and Great Ouse Valley | Built of warm soft red, dark buff and pale buff brickwork depending on the settlement. Roofs are typically gault-clay plain tiles, although slate is found on later properties. |
| The Nene Valley, Northern Wolds and western Fen Margins | Grand houses form the focus to the larger villages. Built of ashlar stone with stone details, roofs are typically Colleyweston stone slates. |



York House, Colne



Cambridge Road, Godmanchester



North Street, Stilton

2 Understanding Character

Type 3: 20th and 21st Century Housing

Type 3A: Arts and Crafts influenced Housing

- 2.38** The Arts and Craft Movement in the late 19th century, and the Garden Cities of the early 20th century exerted considerable influence on housing until the 1950s. This applied especially to social housing throughout the district, where estates of this housing type are found on the peripheries of the larger towns. The Garden City cottage aesthetic, and the aspirations for healthy, green environments were affected through increased densities and mass production, but the architectural style and geometrical layouts still retain vestiges of the original influences.
- 2.39** The type is found throughout the country, and does not generally show regional variations.



Westfield Road, Ramsey



Ferrars Avenue, Eynesbury, St Neots

Key Characteristics

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

Type 3B: 1920s and Inter-War Suburbia

- 2.40** Growing wealth and mobility resulted in the massive growth of suburbia in the 1920 and 30s with Huntingdonshire's towns and larger villages being affected to a limited extent. A few properties in the district retain influences of the Art Deco styling of the 1920s. The Arts and Crafts movement also heavily influenced the architectural style of the period, using motifs such as timber framing, tile hanging, leaded lights and stained glass to invoke the idyll of the 'English Cottage'.
- 2.41** This building type is found in small numbers throughout the district. They are especially noticeable in the Fens and the periphery of Ramsey.



Large semi-detached houses built in 1924, Blenheim Road, Ramsey

Key Characteristics

- Simple rectangular semi-detached plan form
- Fairly rectilinear street pattern
- Shallow pitched, double-hipped roofs, with slate or plain tiled roof coverings. Chimneys generally on the ridgeline
- Originally painted metal, and later timber casement windows, some with latticed-lights or stained glass panels
- Mass-produced red brickwork and painted roughcast render
- Decorative gables with timber-framing effect, frequently painted black and white
- Double height bay windows, with rendered or tile-hung panel, are a defining characteristic of the type
- Recessed porches with tiled floors, and glazed front doors, often with stained glass panels
- Medium-low density, hedges and grass verges to some streets, create the archetypal 'suburban' character
- Parking off street, generally between properties

2 Understanding Character

Type 3C: The Radburn Estates

- 2.42** The original Radburn estate, a satellite town of New York, was conceived in 1928 as an American garden city. The word is now generally used to describe housing layouts in which vehicles and pedestrians are segregated by keeping one side of the house (usually the front) free from vehicles, and the rear access as a cul de sac for servicing. The Radburn estates in the district follow the principles of vehicular/pedestrian segregation, densities are relatively low and the estates have many small areas of landscaping scattered between homes. However, the service cul de sacs tend to be cluttered by parking and bin storage.
- 2.43** The largest Radburn estate is the Oxmoor Estate in Huntingdon.



Kent Road, Huntingdon

Key Characteristics

- Rectilinear layout, with long straight vehicular routes, numerous culs de sac, wedges of open space interspersed with large school complexes, and local centre
- Pedestrian/vehicular segregation with rear vehicular access via paved culs de sac, with tall-timber gated entrances
- 'Front' elevations facing deserted, grass communal spaces, with occasional small trees
- Generally built of pale red brick, with white painted timber boarding fascias and facades
- Generally 2 storeys, with occasional 3 storey town houses, and local facilities
- Low-pitched roofs, with brown concrete interlocking tile covering
- Medium to high density of a highly distinctive urban character
- Parking is to the rear in-curtilage or in groups

Type 3D: Mid 20th Century Housing

2.44 The post-war building boom saw large numbers of new homes built in Huntingdonshire in the 1950s and 1960s with similar house types continuing to be built through much of the 1970s. Semi detached and short terraced forms were common with more detached homes provided through the late 1960s and 1970s. A high proportion of the district's bungalows fall into this category. Extensive housing estates were often developed with local schools, shops and services provided as an integral part of the development to help boost standards of living. Most layouts tend to involve relatively regular street patterns with later developments having increasing numbers of culs-de-sac with varying levels of pedestrian connectivity. Grass verges and areas of amenity greenspace with mature trees are commonly found in concentrations of these homes.



Acacia Grove, St Neots



Chalet style home, Chestnut Close, St Ives

Key Characteristics

- Relatively simple forms, often rectangular or L-shaped
- Fairly rectilinear street pattern
- Semi-detached or short terraces of homes dominant in housing estates, increasing proportion of detached homes later in the period
- Some experimental properties with bold shapes and an emphasis on light interiors
- Wide windows with large open panes
- Wide variety of brick colours, with hanging tiles and weatherboarding frequently used as decorative cladding
- Low pitched roofs, with brown concrete interlocking tile covering
- Garages became more common, often grouped in separate blocks, or to the side of semi-detached homes
- Medium density layouts predominate with reasonable plot sizes including both front and rear gardens as standard

2 Understanding Character

Type 3E: Late 20th Century Housing

2.45 This building type is found in profusion throughout the district in every major settlement. It forms the major expansion of house building from the early 1980s to the end of the 20th century, and is an evolution of the mid 20th century housing. Layouts often include an estate spine road leading to smaller roads and large numbers of culs-de-sac giving significantly different layouts than the mid-20th century areas. A high proportion of detached houses are typical of this category although it also included a growing emphasis on incorporating a mix of homes within large schemes to promote diversity and social inclusion with terraces of 2 and 3 bedroom properties and some bungalows included. Generally, the architectural style and materials are uninfluenced by local materials and building traditions, and the use of standard house types has led to the type being widespread across England.



Mock Tudor styling with leaded light windows, Richmond Close, St Neots



Neo-Georgian house, Suffolk Close, St Ives

Key Characteristics

- Curvilinear, tree-like road hierarchy, terminating in numerous culs de sac often generating disorientating layouts
- Units laid-out in an arbitrary winding street pattern create visually fragmented building and rooflines, and poor street enclosure
- Prominent elements include close-boarded fencing around boundaries and harshly engineered road geometry
- Homes generally set back from the street with significant variation in front garden depths creating poorly defined street patterns
- Strong emphasis on traditional styling with two widespread variants:
 - Mock Tudor beams with pastel coloured cladding panels or decorative brickwork, and a wide range of architectural features, including porches, gablets, and complicated set-backs, often with brown framed leaded light windows
 - Neo-Georgian styling with plainer brickwork accompanied by white panelled windows and frequent use of box-bay windows
- Mass produced red and buff brickwork with brown and red interlocking roof-tiles create a relatively strong colour palette
- Parking is often to the side or forms an integral part of detached and semi-detached homes or in separate parking courts to the rear of properties

Type 3F: 21st Century Housing

- 2.46** Higher density housing is more prevalent in this type in response to the recognition of the need to protect undeveloped land and to maximise reuse of previously developed land within existing towns and villages. There has been an increasing emphasis on creating liveable places rather than just building homes with recognition of the importance of incorporating community facilities and green landscaping within large schemes along with promoting cycle and pedestrian access to local services and facilities.
- 2.47** The growing influence of modern minimalism can be seen through frequent use of simple styling. Greater efforts to incorporate diversity and distinctiveness in design and housing mix can be found, although standard house types are still widespread. Two and a half and three storey homes, along with terraced and apartments forms have become more common with bungalows being rare.



Large detached home with decorative cladding in Shackleton Way, Yaxley



Flatted development on previously developed land, Drovers Place, Huntingdon



Mixed forms, Knights Way, St Ives



Linton Close, St Neots

2 Understanding Character

Key Characteristics

- More rectilinear layouts return with an increasing use of terraced housing forms giving stronger building lines and street enclosure
- The number of storeys vary with up to 3 being common, some being 2.5
- Higher density layouts are increasingly frequent with shallow front gardens to maximise private garden space to the rear
- Greater variation of types and sizes of homes within individual developments giving increased variety and a higher proportion of apartment and townhouse designs as well as coach house designs
- Simple decoration and plainer fronts more frequently found with cladding and wood panelling as key design features
- Large windows and/or glass walls introduced into some properties reflecting the increased emphasis on light open plan interiors
- Flats over garages or flats over access routes to rear parking courts are usually found sporadically throughout
- Street designs sometimes incorporate shared surfaces and mews

Type 4: Agricultural Buildings

2.48 This building type is found dispersed throughout the rural areas of the district, but also within some of the older villages, and coalesced into the fringes of the larger settlements. The majority date from the time of the 17-19th Century Enclosure Acts, with some remaining examples from the medieval period. Many of the older agricultural buildings have been converted into residential use as post-war intensification of farming practices have necessitated large-scaled, industrial type barns, stores and silos. These large scale steel-framed buildings have come to dominate many traditional farmsteads and often their landscape setting.



Gault and red brick barns adjoining a timber framed farmhouse, The Gables, Godmanchester

Key Characteristics

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

2 Understanding Character

Local Variations

Area

Local Characteristics

South East Claylands

Timber weather boarded barns are a feature in this area, many of which now have corrugated iron roofs, which suggests that they were once thatched. Materials in later examples include red brick with slate roof coverings.



Fitz Farm barn, Offord Cluny

The Fens and Fen Margin

A few Fen farmsteads date from the late 19th century, but the majority of the agricultural buildings in the Fens are of recent construction. The agricultural heritage of the Fen Margins is far older. A few medieval timber-framed and weather boarded barns remain; later examples are generally gault-clay brickwork with Cambridgeshire peg tile and pantile roof coverings.



Old Tithe Barn and Low Barn, Somersham

Central Claylands

Groups of gault-brickwork barns and outhouses, often laid out in additive ranges. Plain and pantile roof coverings.



Outbuildings along Main Street, Hartford

Northern Wolds and Nene Valley

Traditional farmsteads are frequently built of coursed rubble stonework with thatched or Collyweston slate roof coverings.



Converted agricultural buildings, manor Farm Court, Haddon

Type 5: Industrial Buildings, Business and Retail Parks

Type 5A: Pre-20th Century Industrial Buildings

- 2.49** The district has a rich heritage of pre-20th century industrial buildings, especially in the Nene and Great Ouse Valleys, where historically the rivers provided both good transport routes, and a means of power to mill corn and oil seed grown on the surrounding farms. Other mills in the Great Ouse Valley were associated with papermaking and textiles.
- 2.50** Windmills were formerly found throughout the district, especially on higher ground. In the Fens however, windmills pumped ground-water into the drains and lodes thereby creating the Fen landscape. Wind-powered mills were replaced by steam-pumps in the 1850's, and later by diesel and electric powered pumps; pump-houses remain a distinctive feature of the Fens today.

Key Characteristics

Great Ouse Valley Mills

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



Riverside Mill, St Ives

Nene Valley Mills

- Small to medium scale, long low ranges of mill and granary buildings, associated timber water-wheels and races; often in a secluded riverside setting
- 2-3 storeys tall. Generally built of coursed rubble masonry, with dressed stone quoins and openings. Collyweston slate, or gault- clay pantile roof coverings, and some small dormer windows.
- Early examples are simple vernacular buildings, often formalised in the Georgian era
- Originally built as water-mills, the majority are now converted for residential use



Water Newton Mill

2 Understanding Character

Windmills

- Brick tower mills are predominant, although a few timber Post and Smock mills remain. Draining engines, as mills in The Fens were known, were generally smock mills with brick bases
- Domed, lead covered, clay-tiled, or slate pitched roofs
- Small windows with a single door opening at the base
- Mills were originally fitted with four canvas sails, although later examples had up to twelve. In the 19th century mills were fitted with self-regulating sails.
- Originally built as pumping, flour and seed mills, the majority are now derelict or converted for housing or recreational use



Great Gidding Tower Mill, now converted to a house

Type 5B: 20th and 21st Century Industrial Estates

- 2.51** Industrial estates occur both within and on the peripheries of all the main towns, and some larger villages. Many were started in the mid-20th century and often expanded or partially redeveloped from the late-20th century onward. Styles are common throughout the district with no distinct regional variations. Whilst many units are wholly focused on manufacturing or warehousing some include trade counters which have been an increasing trend particularly amongst older estates in closer proximity to large numbers of potential customers.
- 2.52** Both Huntingdon and St Neots saw large industrial estate developments accompanying the Greater London overspill housing programmes, particularly at St Peter's Road and Cromwell Road respectively. Mid-20th century industrial estates typically comprise a mixture of smaller, often brick built units and larger factory premises. These are frequently located in close proximity to housing built concurrently providing opportunities for homes and jobs in close proximity. Later 20th century and 21st century examples are usually metal framed with cladding in a wide variety of colours. Some still include clusters of smaller units although large free standing units are common. Large scale warehouses are included within this category which are typically located on the outskirts of settlements with good connections to the strategic road network.



Burrell Road, St Ives



Cardinal Park, Godmanchester

Key Characteristics

- Large scale, wide span shed-type buildings. Generally steel framed construction, clad with buff or red brickwork, or plastic coated profiled sheet. Recent supermarket buildings tend to be of a more pleasing and distinctive visual appearance
- Roofs are low pitched and expansive, although parapets on in-town supermarkets generally mask their appearance
- Colours tend to be grey or brown, with garish or bright coloured fascias, trims and signage
- Large expanses of tarmac road surface and car/lorry parking. Supermarket car parks may incorporate some tree and shrub planting, which softens the effect
- Industrial estates frequently have heavily engineered road layouts with mown grass verges, and large expanses of steel security boundary fencing, creating a harsh exposed effect
- Tall lighting columns and large signage often creates an impersonal scale
- Industrial estates are heavily trafficked by cars and heavy goods vehicles, but generally few pedestrians
- Supermarkets and retail parks are fairly well trafficked, with bustling pedestrian movement at busy periods

2 Understanding Character

Type 5C: 20th and 21st Century Business Parks

2.53 Purpose built business parks are usually located on the edges of towns and larger villages providing distinct concentrations of employment uses. They can also be found within existing business locations where they have been introduced to rejuvenate an area or meet changing business needs. Predominantly focused on provision of offices, units are often arranged within business courtyards with large central car parking areas. Business parks usually have greater architectural detailing than industrial estates and particularly 21st century ones provide greater amounts of cycle storage and renewable energy generation.



Ramsay Court, Hinchingsbrooke Business Park, Huntingdon



Eaton Court, St Neots

Key Characteristics

- Open parking courts with soft landscaping features, delineation measures such as varying colours of bricks are sometimes used to mark out the parking bays
- Principle elevations within business courtyards usually face inwards
- More industrial units are large scale steel frame construction clad with buff or red brickwork, or plastic coated profiled sheeting
- Buildings used for offices are usually constructed from brickwork with some buildings utilising contrasting colour panels and detailing to elevations to add diversity and points of interest
- Roof pitches are usually flat or very shallow
- Large expanses of tarmac road surface and car/lorry parking
- Tall lighting columns and large signage with a list of business currently operating from the site are common, usually at the entrance of the site or where secondary roads diverge
- Covered areas for bicycle parking and storage are common encouraging active modes of transport
- Some renewable energy features such as solar panels are integrated into the design

Type 5D: Shopping Facilities and Retail Parks

- 2.54** The styling of traditional High Street style shops is normally that of 18th - 19th century town houses or terraced houses addressed in types 2A and 2D with the ground floor originally used for retail and upper floors for residential accommodation and more recently for retail storage or office use.
- 2.55** Purpose built retail units, often in the form of short parades of shops are widely found amongst larger estates of mid-20th century housing development to provide local services and facilities in walking distance. These again commonly incorporate first floor residential uses and are very similar in styling to type 3D. Establishment of large scale free standing retails units were a strong trend from the early 1980s onwards reflecting increased personal mobility amongst shoppers, demand for wider choice and ease of access to bulky goods.
- 2.56** Food stores are often freestanding and closely linked to residential areas. Retail parks with clusters of large retail units are generally found on the outskirts of settlements or as redeveloped or reused industrial areas. Building styles are often large warehouse style units sometimes with brick finishing but commonly coloured panel cladding. Larger 21st century residential led developments often incorporate smaller retail units, replicating the short parades of the mid-20th century and reflecting an increased focus on provision of local services within walking distances to support new communities.

Key Characteristics

Mid-20th century shopping parades

- Small retail units often in clusters of 3 to 6
- Two storey units replicating the architectural styling of residential type 3D
- Brick built in colours to match surrounding housing
- Very limited customer parking provision



Queen's Gardens, St Neots

Large scale freestanding retail units

- Foodstores are often stand-alone units
- Other goods often clustered into retail parks
- Extensive surface level car parking with integrated landscaping
- Segregated rear servicing yards
- Large scale units, mostly in coloured cladding
- Directional road frontage and internal signage, often internally lit
- Some dedicated bicycle parking



Morrisons, St Ives

2 Understanding Character

21st century integrated retail units

- Smaller units with designs tailored to blend with the surrounding homes
- Local car parking provision
- Dedicated bicycle parking, usually covered
- Often clustered near a primary school to provide a single local centre



Integrated shop units, Brampton Park

Type 6: Ecclesiastical Buildings

Type 6A: Parish Churches

2.57 This type is found throughout the district, the earliest surviving example, dating from around 1000 AD, is the Anglo-Saxon church at Great Paxton. However, ecclesiastical buildings survive from every century and architectural style - unique monuments to the districts' history and culture. Buildings range from Norman and Medieval parish churches to the inter neo-gothic of the Victorian era.



St John the Baptist Church, Somersham



All Saints Church, Buckworth

Key Characteristics

- Large scale buildings for Christian worship and former monastic complexes, including surviving gate-houses and hospitium, typically built and altered over a long periods of time
- Set in a churchyard, often with mature trees, especially yews. Generally, parish churches are located centrally in the town or village, while monastic houses were usually situated on the periphery
- Although many are older, the majority appear externally to be Gothic in style, with large, pointed arched and traceried windows, and stained glass. Moulded stringcourses and hood mouldings, buttresses, castellated parapets and other structural and decorative architectural devices evolved and incorporated over time
- Simple, pitched roofs, generally with plain gault-clay roof coverings
- Building materials range from corstone and cobbles to coursed limestone-rubble, and fine ashlar limestone in the north
- Fine, tall spires are a landmark feature of the district although many churches have a simple square tower
- Lancet windows (small pointed window openings) are characteristic of spires in the Northern Wolds. Towers became increasingly common in the 15-16th centuries and were often added to earlier buildings in the 15-16th centuries.
- Lych gates are characteristic of church in the area and are defining features of many churchyards. Construction varies from oak with clay tiles to stone structures.

2 Understanding Character

Type 6B: Non-Conformist Chapels

2.58 The district's Non-Conformist chapels predominantly date from the 18-19th centuries and are mostly affiliated to Baptist or Methodist groups. St Ives Free church is a particularly elaborate example and forms a major landmark in the town centre. Typically buildings are more modest. Some have been converted to residential use such as that at Great Gidding below.



Salem Chapel, Ramsey



The Old Chapel, Great Gidding

Key Characteristics

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

Type 7: Civic Buildings

Type 7A: Victorian and Edwardian Civic Buildings

- 2.59** This diverse type is found throughout the towns and larger villages of the district. It forms the focal point for community, civic and working life, and includes places of assembly, police and fire stations, schools, banks, hospitals and libraries.
- 2.60** The Commemoration Hall in Huntingdon with its grand painted stuccoed and pilastered neo-classical façade was first opened in 1842 and forms a rare example of an early purpose-designed non-religious civic building. Most of those found in the district are from the mid to late Victorian and Edwardian period and built to support aspirations to social improvement and increased literacy. Civic buildings were frequently designed to impress with significant detailing and high quality materials and construction being used to ensure the longevity of buildings.



Brampton Institute, Brampton



Old School Hall, Sawtry

Key Characteristics

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

2 Understanding Character

Type 7B: Mid-20th Century Civic Buildings

- 2.61** Alongside large scale residential developments in the district during the mid-20th century came provision of associated civic buildings providing education, recreation, fire and rescue and other community services. These are commonly found amongst the developments they were intended to serve or towards the outskirts of towns where extensive areas of land were required, for example for school playing fields.
- 2.62** This type is found throughout the towns and villages of the district with purpose built village and church halls often being the only building of this type in smaller villages.



One Leisure, St Ives



Little Paxton Village Hall

Key Characteristics

- Large to medium scale buildings, generally with large areas of associated car parking or hardstanding
- Varying number of storeys depending on function, varying from single storey schools and village halls to multi-storey medical and office buildings
- Amenity shrub planting, small ornamental trees and mown grass typify landscaped areas
- Generally avoid the use of decorative architectural devices with emphasis on function rather than form
- Mass produced buff and red brick are the most common facing materials, with large areas of glazing also a feature
- Other materials include metal trims and copings, cedar boarding, coloured powder-coated metal window frames and large areas of toughened glass
- Flat roofs were a feature of 1960-70s civic buildings, and low-pitched roofs on later examples; brown or grey concrete roof tiles are typical roof coverings
- Relatively flat facades are common with minimum set backs for doors and windows

Type 7C: Late 20th and 21st Century Civic Buildings

- 2.63** The late 20th and 21st centuries have experienced substantial growth in population, changes in building technology and working practices. Additional services such as schools have been needed. This is particularly noticed from the increased need arising from urban extensions and major redevelopment opportunities within or adjoining settlements provide the opportunity to design civic buildings that respond to the context of the development and the wider area. In such examples, these usually reflect the context of the wider design code/ guide for the site to create a harmonious built environment.
- 2.64** Large school complexes in residential estates with additional community facilities such as community centres and villages halls have used contemporary styles and materials, while others reflect aspects of the regional vernacular. They are frequently supported by walking and cycling routes and surrounding landscaping. Some examples of 20th and 21st century civic buildings can be landmark buildings adding to the interest of the area.



Ramsey High Lode Community Centre



Coneygear Centre, Huntingdon

Key Characteristics

- Large to medium scale buildings, generally with large areas of associated car parking or hardstanding, increasingly common in more recent examples having electric vehicle charging points or solar panels incorporated
- Varying number of storeys depending on function
- Generally modern design with some incorporating different shapes, lines and coloured panels within rooflines and elevations adding to the distinctiveness of the building
- Amenity shrub planting, small ornamental trees and mown grass typify landscaped areas
- Varying materials present from mass produced buff and red brick, large areas of glazing also a feature and metal trims and copings, cedar boarding, coloured powder-coated metal window frames and large areas of toughened glass

2 Understanding Character

Type 8: Military Airfields and Bases

- 2.65** Military airfields and bases were prevalent across Huntingdonshire following significant expansion during World War II. Several remain within military use, many have long since been decommissioned and redeveloped for a variety of uses including residential, employment or a mix of uses. Due to the large areas of land that they occupy, and the scale of some of the buildings, airbases can have a considerable impact on the landscape. They typically form the largest reserve of previously developed land within the district. Airbases often act as valuable habitats for flora and fauna, due to the low use of herbicides, and general lack of human disturbance.
- 2.66** The buildings and structures found within most military airfields are varied but generally do not reflect local character. They can be a source of rich and unique heritage tied to key moments in time. Such heritage may have existed before the military use of the site or is solely influenced by its military use. For example, Brampton Park House was a pre-existing grand house which was utilised by the military when they were given use of the land. Whereas on Alconbury Airfield (now being redeveloped as Alconbury Weald), the heritage is solely military related and is of exceptional significance due to its combination of World War II and Cold War listed structures including a watch office, Avionics building and Hardened Aircraft Shelters.



Wyton Airfield



Manchester Road, former RAF Brampton. An example of lower density housing common to military sites.



Little Staughton airfield nissan hut



Former watch office/tower from Alconbury Airfield, recently refurbished as part of the redevelopment of the airfield

Key Characteristics

- Assemblies of diverse building types including hangars, office buildings, recreational buildings, timber-boarded huts, barracks and married-quarters
- Very diverse scale of buildings from single storey huts, 2 storey domestic houses (see Types 3A, 3C and 3D), 2-4 storey civic and office buildings (see Type 7B) to very large aircraft hangars (similar to Type 5B)
- Housing is usually lower density with lots of amenity and play space.
- High chain link fences often backed by vegetation to some bases create strongly defined boundaries, but usually with a degree of visual penetration. Other bases e.g. RAF Wyton, are highly visible from local roads and the surrounding landscape
- Wide variety of building materials, with little reference to the surrounding character of nearby settlements.
- Materials include painted corrugated iron, red brick, buff brick, and colour-coated metal cladding
- Large areas of tarmac hard standing and runways
- Areas of close mown grass, clipped hedges and tree planting