

# Bury St Edmunds Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan





Bury St Edmunds Town Centre  
Conservation Area Appraisal  
and Management Plan

Planning Guidance  
Adopted 20 November 2007

Planning & Engineering Services  
St Edmundsbury Borough Council  
Western Way  
Bury St Edmunds  
IP33 3YS

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# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

This conservation area appraisal and management plan has been approved as planning guidance by the Borough Council on 20 November 2007.

It has been the subject of consultation. Comments received as a result of the consultation have been considered and, where appropriate, the document has been amended to address these comments. This document will, along with the Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan 2016, provide a basis by which any planning application for development in or adjacent to the conservation area will be determined.

A conservation area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. The Borough Council has a duty to designate conservation areas and to have regard to their special character and appearance when considering planning applications for development. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 contains the legislation regarding the designation of conservation areas and the duties of the Borough Council. National guidance on conservation areas is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 15: Planning and the Historic Environment. Detailed local policies about how the Borough Council will consider planning applications in conservation areas are set out in the Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan 2016.

The then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued a Best Value Performance Indicator 'BVPI 219: Preserving the special character of conservation areas' on 28 February 2005. This requires local planning authorities to have up-to-date appraisals and management proposals for all of their conservation areas. To remain up-to-date, they should be reviewed every five years. This document is an appraisal of the special character and appearance of the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Conservation Area and includes a summary of key features and characteristics to guide future development in the conservation area. It has been produced in accordance with the advice contained in the English Heritage guidance 'Conservation Area Practice' (October 1995) and 'Conservation Area Appraisals' (March 1997) and updated following the publication of 'Guidance on conservation area appraisals' and 'Guidance on the management of conservation areas', both published February 2006 by English Heritage.

This document expands on the information within the policies in the Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan, particularly policies HC4: buildings of local architectural or historic significance; HC5: the demolition of unlisted buildings, structures or features within conservation areas; HC6: new development in conservation areas; DS3: development design and impact; TCR1: shopping centres; TCR2: protection of primary shopping centres; TCR3: shopfronts and advertisements; TCR4: amusement arcades and T6: off-street car parking.

This document supports the priority in the Corporate Plan to secure a sustainable and attractive environment and the long-term visions for a sustainable St Edmundsbury 2025 which:

- values, protects and enhances the distinct landscapes and biodiversity of the borough
- has successfully retained and enhanced its built and natural heritage and environment

Much detailed research has been carried out into the history of the town of Bury St Edmunds and it is not the purpose of this appraisal to repeat that. A brief history is included, however, as much of what we value today and seek to protect in the conservation area is a direct result of historical events and developments. A bibliography is included at the end for those wishing to learn more about the town's rich history.

## Summary of the special interest of the conservation area

The town centre of Bury St Edmunds includes a Norman grid of streets and spaces which has survived intact and is still very evident today. To the east is the Abbey Precinct, which contains the cathedral church of St James, St Mary's church and the remains of the great abbey, and provides a peaceful and green contrast to the densely built up streets. Historically, development continued out towards the five town gates and then to the north of the town centre, adding to the wealth of historic buildings. The overall quality of the buildings is exceptional, with hundreds of listed buildings reflecting this. The combination of residential, commercial and religious uses in the town centre makes it a vibrant and lively place with a special character derived from this.

Despite the strong Georgian influence, a rich mix of traditional building forms and materials are apparent throughout the conservation area giving interesting and varied streets. The mix of uses, building styles and materials combined with the visible history of the town give the conservation area its special interest which must be protected.

# Assessing special interest

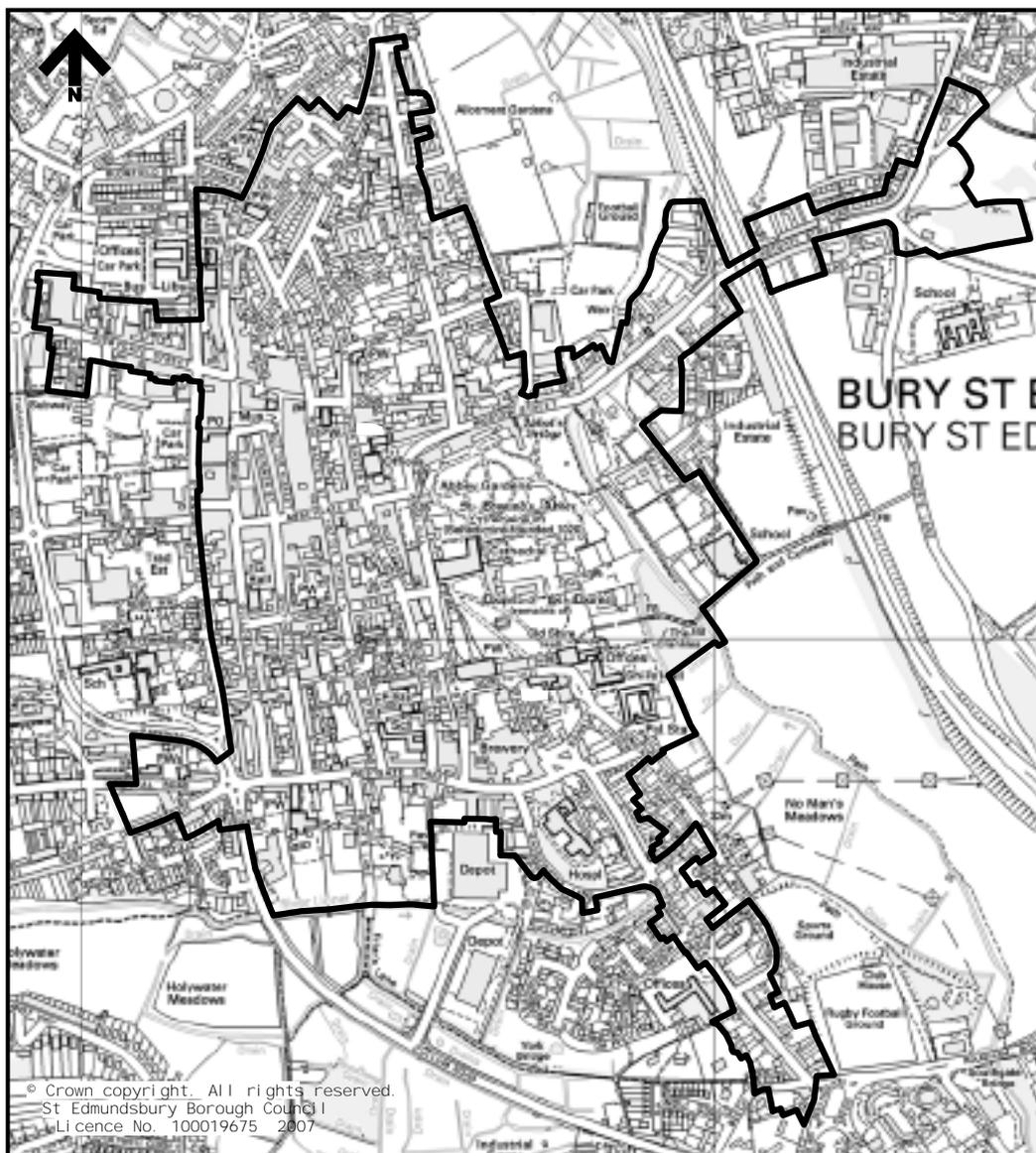
## 1 Location and setting

### Context

Bury St Edmunds is an historic market town in West Suffolk. It is positioned on the River Linnet and River Lark, approximately 30 miles west of Ipswich and 25 miles east of Cambridge. The town has a population of around 35,500 in a borough of just over 100,000.

Within the borough are more than 30 conservation areas and over 3000 listed buildings, a third of which are in the town of Bury St Edmunds. The Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Conservation Area focuses on the retail core of the town centre and the residential areas adjoining it. The centre is a thriving area with a mix of high street multiples and individual, unique shops. There are numerous bars, cafes and restaurants, several with outside seating areas adding to the vibrancy of the traffic-free streets. There is a large, colourful market in Cornhill and the Buttermarket on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

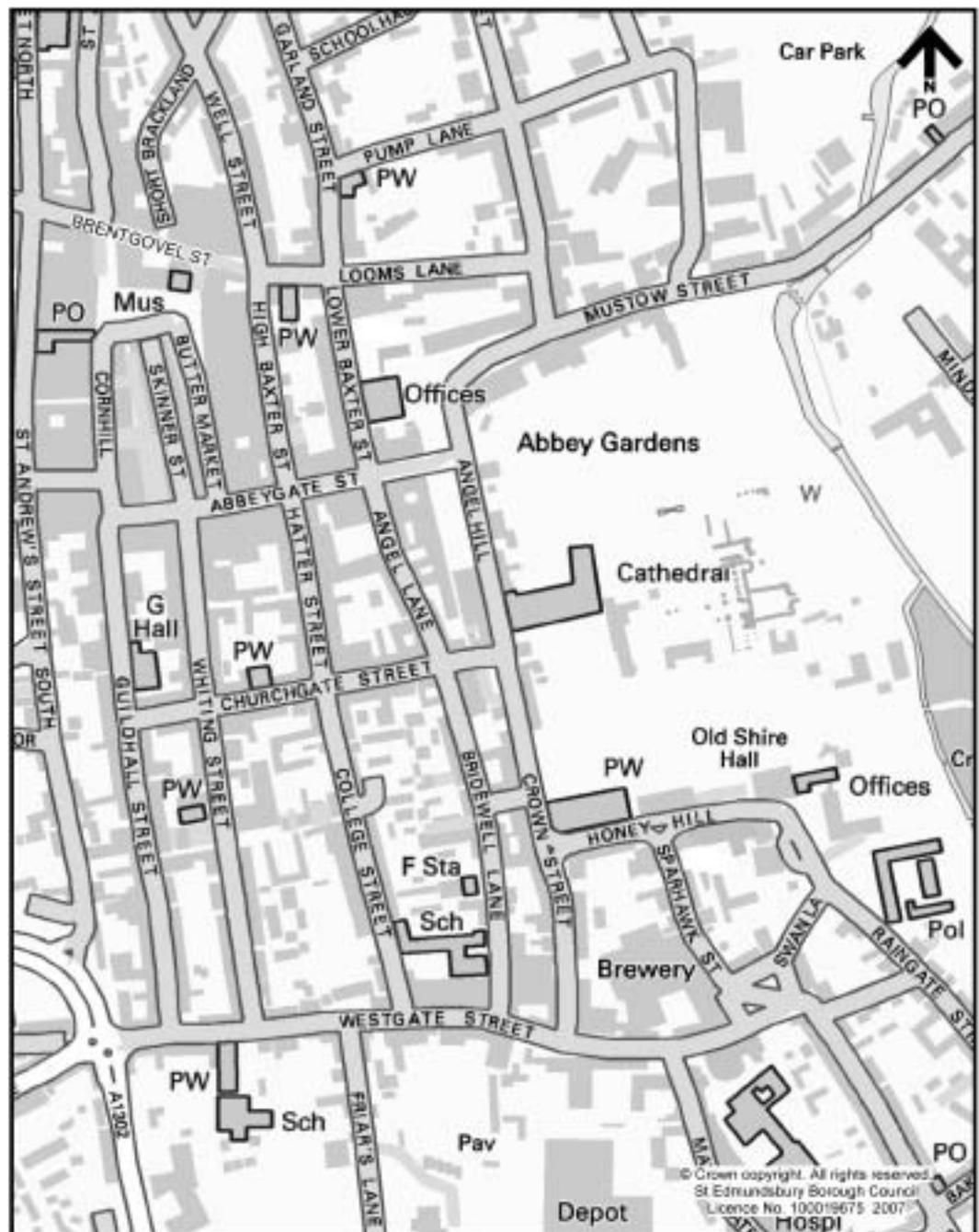
In recognition of its architectural and historic importance, the central area of Bury St Edmunds was designated a conservation area on 26 January 1973 and the boundary was extended along Risbygate Street on 23 May 1975. Further smaller additions, including the east end of Out Westgate and Hospital Road, were added to the conservation area on 5 December 1985. The whole of the east side of St Andrew's Street South was also added at this time following the production of the 'St Andrew's Street Town Wall Area' study in September 1985. Map 1 shows the boundary of the conservation area.



Map 1: the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Conservation Area

## Plan form and general character

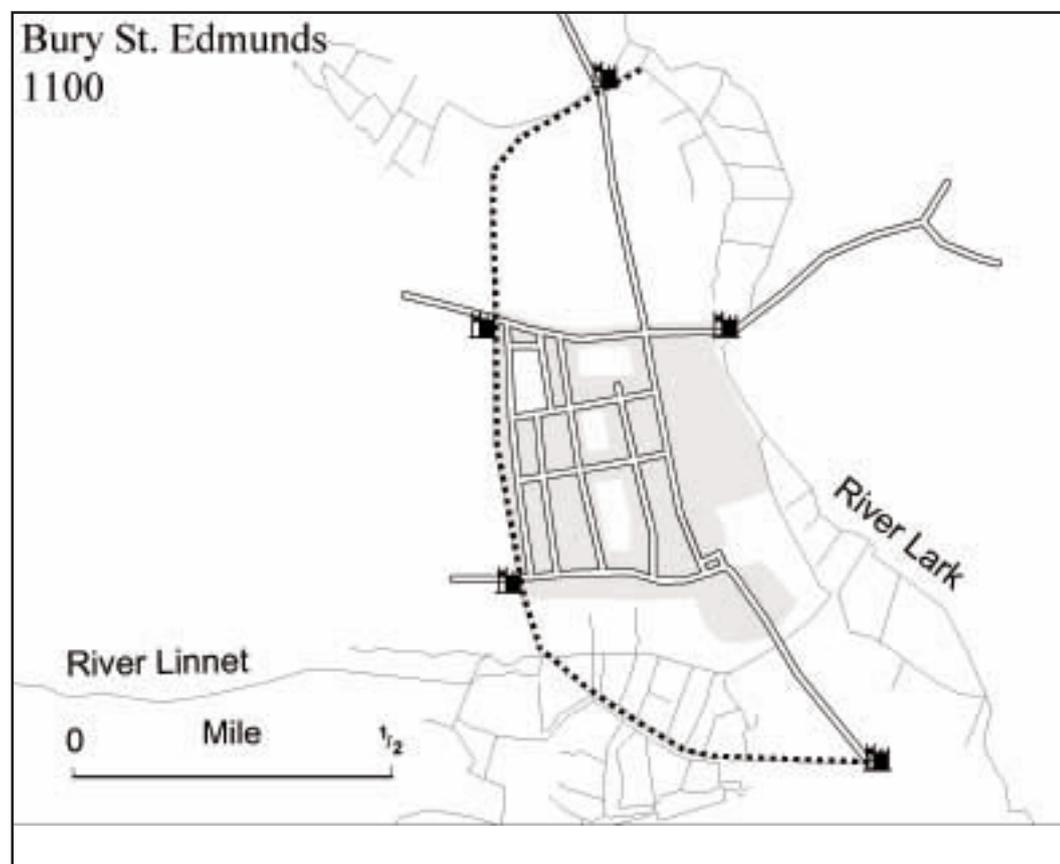
The centre of the town is dominated by Abbot Baldwin's and Abbot Anselm's irregular grid plan shown on map 2.



Map 2: the abbots' grid plan

The principal streets enclosing the grid are Westgate Street to the south, St Andrews Street South to the west, Looms Lane/Brentgovel Street to the north and Angel Hill/Crown Street (formerly Church Govel Street) to the east. Within the grid the two principal streets are Abbeygate Street (formerly partly Cook Row), running east/west between the market place and the Abbey Gate, and Churchgate Street also running east/west, between the Norman Tower and Guildhall Street. Churchgate Street is particularly important as it was laid out to line up directly with the centre of the west front of the Abbey. Many secondary streets link the principal streets with Angel Hill, Chequer Square and the market place.

The streets lie to the west of Angel Hill with the Abbey Precinct to the east. The original settlement of Bedricesworth was located to the west of the River Lark on sloping land facing east. Despite its orientation, the site was well chosen, as, with the River Lark to the east, Tayfen to the north and the River Linnet to the south, it only needed defending to the west. The town wall, built during the time of Abbot Anselm (1121-48), followed the line of the present St Andrews Street South and enclosed the built-up area of the town. The wall included four town gates at the ends of Southgate Street, Westgate Street, Risbygate Street, and Northgate Street. Part of the Abbey Precinct was also protected by a ditch (of unknown date) which probably ran from St Mary's Church, along Crown Street, to meet the River Lark in Eastgate Street, where there was a fifth town gate between The Fox Inn and the Abbots Bridge (see map 3).



Map 3: the location of the town gates

Abbot Anselm was also responsible for the building of the precinct wall, much of which still survives. The gates were demolished by the Corporation between 1761 and 1765. The ditch also protected the Abbey Precinct from flooding, and eventually became a sewer.

The layout of the northern part of the conservation area, a Victorian expansion of the town, is informal with terraces of houses fronting the roads.

Throughout the conservation area are several historic lanes forming 'through lanes' between the streets, some for pedestrian use only and others for both pedestrians and vehicles.



Map 4: Warren's map of Bury St Edmunds 1747

The majority of the streets are very hard in terms of their townscape; the building line follows the footpath edge with small, if any, front gardens. There are few gaps along the street frontages, giving almost continuous building lines. Plot widths vary, the narrower ones probably survivals of the medieval burgage plot divisions. Warren's map of 1747 shows a good deal of variety in plot widths possibly indicating the sub-divisions of the original burgages (see map 4).

Most buildings are two or three storeys in height, often with attics, and generally with cellars, some of which are much older than the building above. Street width is also fairly uniform giving some consistency as one looks down the different streets, despite the great variety of rooflines and materials.

The central area of the town is wholly commercial, as one would expect, with shops, restaurants, bars and offices predominating. As one moves out from the centre, there is a notable change in emphasis to residential use, although with a proportion of commercial activity mixed in along Churchgate Street, Hatter Street, Whiting Street and Guildhall Street. The prevalence of restaurants and bars within the centre gives a lively character to the town in the evenings. Many upper floors are underused because of difficulties of forming separate units with independent access. Successful schemes have been introduced, however, and the Borough Council will continue to encourage the use of vacant upper floors.

The main shopping street to the north of the centre is St John's Street which contains a large number of small, individual shops rather than 'High Street multiples'. The Victorian expansion of the town to the north is largely residential, with a few bars/restaurants and shops.

Being a town centre conservation area there is no marked transition between the land within the conservation area and the land outside. At the main approaches the boundary tends to start at a roundabout, close to the former gate positions in the cases of Northgate Street and Southgate Street. The exception is the approach into the conservation area from the south, across a large area of flood meadow known as Sexton's Meadow to the south of Westgate Street and to either side of Cullum Road, giving quite a rural setting. This historic meadow was the site of pest houses erected in 1665. To the east, No Man's Meadows forms an attractive green setting to the conservation area. Both meadows still define the town boundaries and are included within the Bury St Edmunds Area of Archaeological Importance. From each direction, the character of the conservation area is apparent, with buildings being hard against the footpath edge and the Georgian appearance becoming prevalent.

## 2 Historic development and archaeology

### Origins and historic development of the conservation area

Around 630, King Sigebeht established a small monastic foundation at the Anglo-Saxon royal vill of Bedricesworth. The settlement's fortune increased with the arrival of St Edmund's relics soon after his death. King Edward granted land around the shrine to the Abbey in 945. In 1020 King Cnut established a Benedictine monastery in Bedricesworth and is considered to be the founder of the abbey and town. He consecrated a chapel to house the Saint's remains in 1032.

The Anglo-Saxon town formed a line along the west bank of the River Lark, with a north/south road comprising Northgate Street (formerly High Street) and Sparhawk Street/Southgate Street. The road would have run directly in front of the west front of the Abbey and into the town's first market place in what is now St Mary's Square. To the east were the secondary lanes of Cotton Lane (formerly Scurfe Lane) and Raingate Street, which probably indicate the locations of the earlier Saxon settlement.

The abbey and town prospered in the 11th century, their combined fortunes increasing with the Norman Conquest. A new Abbey church was begun by Abbot Baldwin, a Frenchman, who became Abbot in 1065, and the body of Saint Edmund was moved to its new resting place in 1097. At the time of the Domesday survey in 1086, the town already had over 650 houses and the entry records that 342 of these had been built on plough land in the twenty years following the Conquest (1066-1086). This new development, on the scale of a new town, took the form of a grid layout aligned with the nave of the new church in the area to the west of the main north-south road. Abbot Baldwin's original plan was subsequently enlarged by Abbot Anselm, an Italian, between 1121-48, extending the area of the Precinct and enlarging the size of the Abbey church. It also included the relocation of St Mary's church and the building of St James' church (now the cathedral) to replace St Denis' church built by Abbot Baldwin. The original St Mary's and St Denis' churches were located on land required by Abbot Anselm for the building of the larger Abbey church and both were sited to the east of the line of the southern continuation of Northgate Street.

Throughout the Middle Ages, St Edmund's town was a major pilgrimage centre retaining its royal patronage right up to the Dissolution. It was also a wealthy market town with a thriving fair and was a regional centre for the European cloth trade, housing merchants, manufacturers, entrepreneurs and tradesmen who established their premises (combining commercial and residential activities) in the grid of streets. They usually adapted earlier buildings but sometimes built new ones over the older cellars; this was particularly the case after a disastrous fire in 1608 which affected the northern part of the town and the market place.

As a fashionable town in the Georgian and Victorian periods, Bury St Edmunds acquired elegant facades, and impressive public buildings.

With the arrival of the railway new suburbs were developed to the north of the centre in the direction of Northgate Station, which was built in 1846 as part of the Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds Railway. In this area, terraces of brick and slate houses front the streets. Following the building of Northgate Station, St John's Street gained importance as the main route into the town centre for rail passengers.

### Archaeology and scheduled ancient monuments

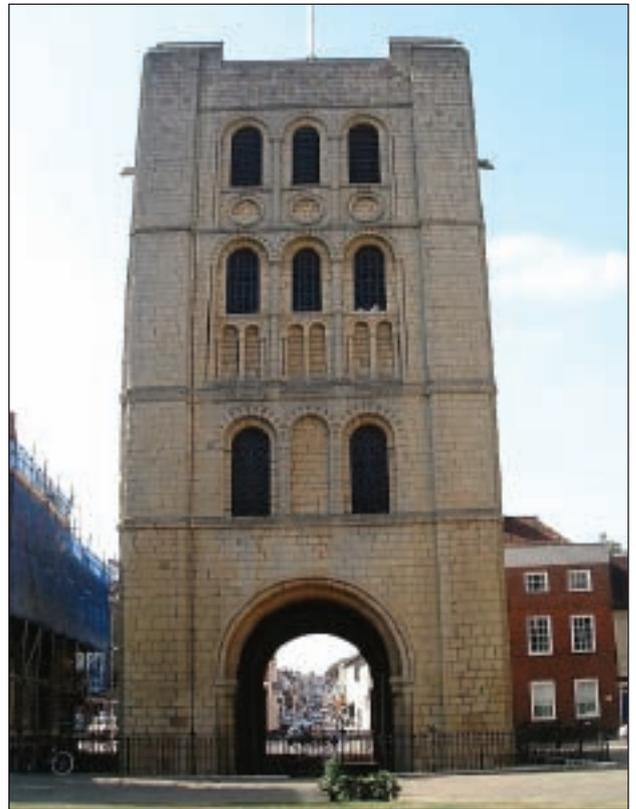
Archaeological evidence supports the premise of a settlement dating from the 7th century. Late Saxon pottery has been found in the ditches of the earlier road in the Abbey Precinct, suggesting settlement of the southern part of Northgate Street which ran through the precinct to join Sparhawk Street to the south, and there is evidence of late Saxon occupation to the rear of the Record Office in Raingate Street. Ipswich ware (7th-9th centuries) has also been found to the rear of properties along Southgate Street, near to St Mary's Square.

The development of the ecclesiastical site from its origins in a 7th century Saxon settlement to its final status as one of the great monastic houses in the county is complex. The earliest visible remains date from the 12th century, including the Norman Tower – one of the finest buildings of its period - and the core of the West Front (which, originally 246 feet in width, was wider than that of any other medieval church).

The planned grid pattern of streets resulting from the grand redevelopment and expansion of the town in the Norman period provides a potential source of archaeological evidence for the development and growth of the town and helps to identify social, economic and industrial zones which may have characterised the early settlement.

The town was partly walled and gated in the 12th century. No standing monuments survive to show this, although archaeological investigation periodically identifies and records fragments of the town wall and ditch. The street pattern and property boundaries perpetuate the layout of the walled town.

The abbey wall and ruins, a large section of the Precinct, the Chapel of the Charnel in the Great Churchyard, Abbot's Bridge, the Abbey Gate and the Norman Tower are Scheduled Ancient Monuments (photo 1).



*Photo 1: The Norman Tower*



*Chapel of the Charnel*



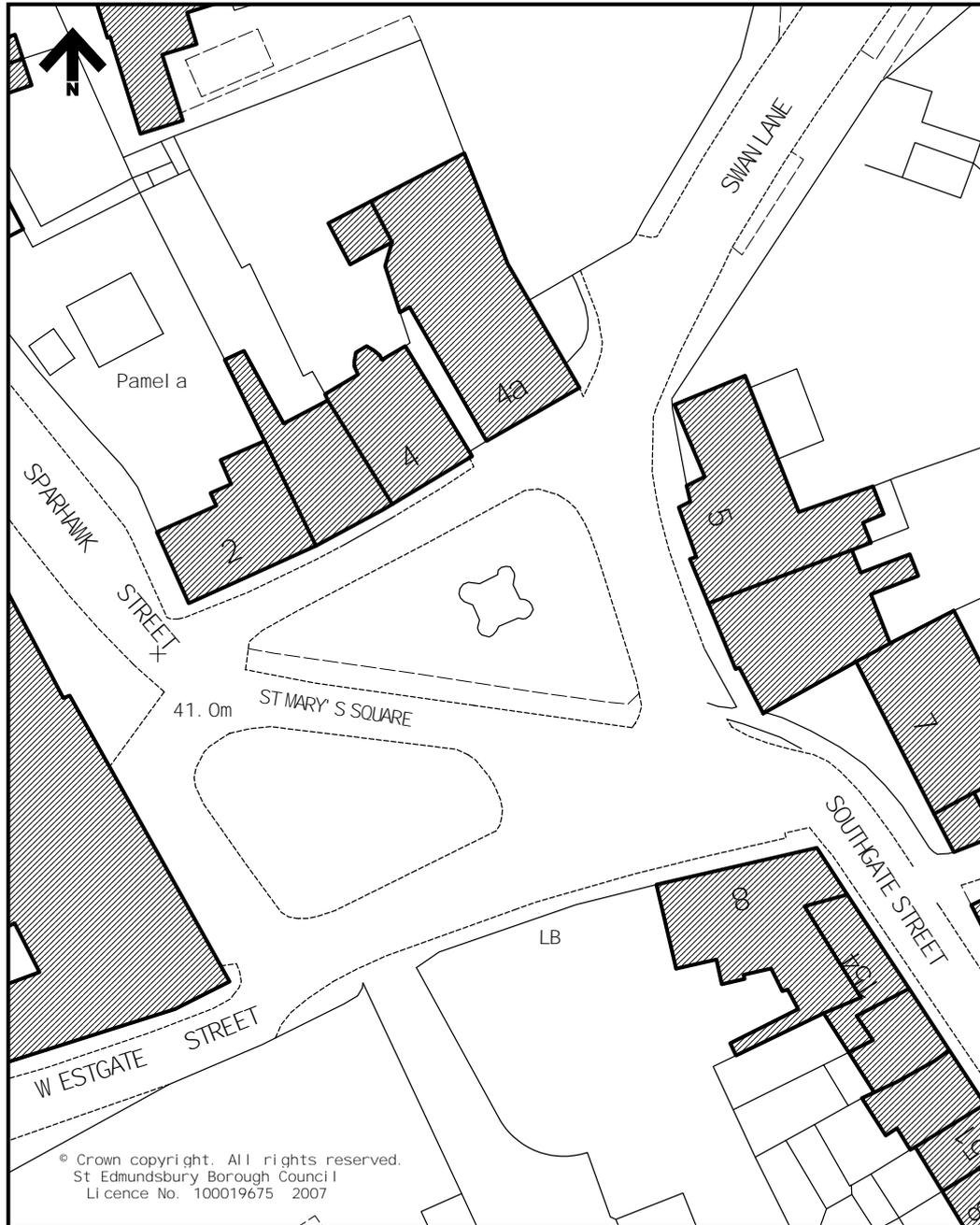
*Abbot's bridge*

### 3 Spatial analysis

#### Character and interrelationship of spaces

The streets of Bury St Edmunds are very densely developed with most properties being built up to the pavement edge and few front gardens. In contrast to this, however, are the public squares and spaces which are linked by the main routes through the central area and Norman core.

#### St Mary's Square



Map 5: St Mary's Square

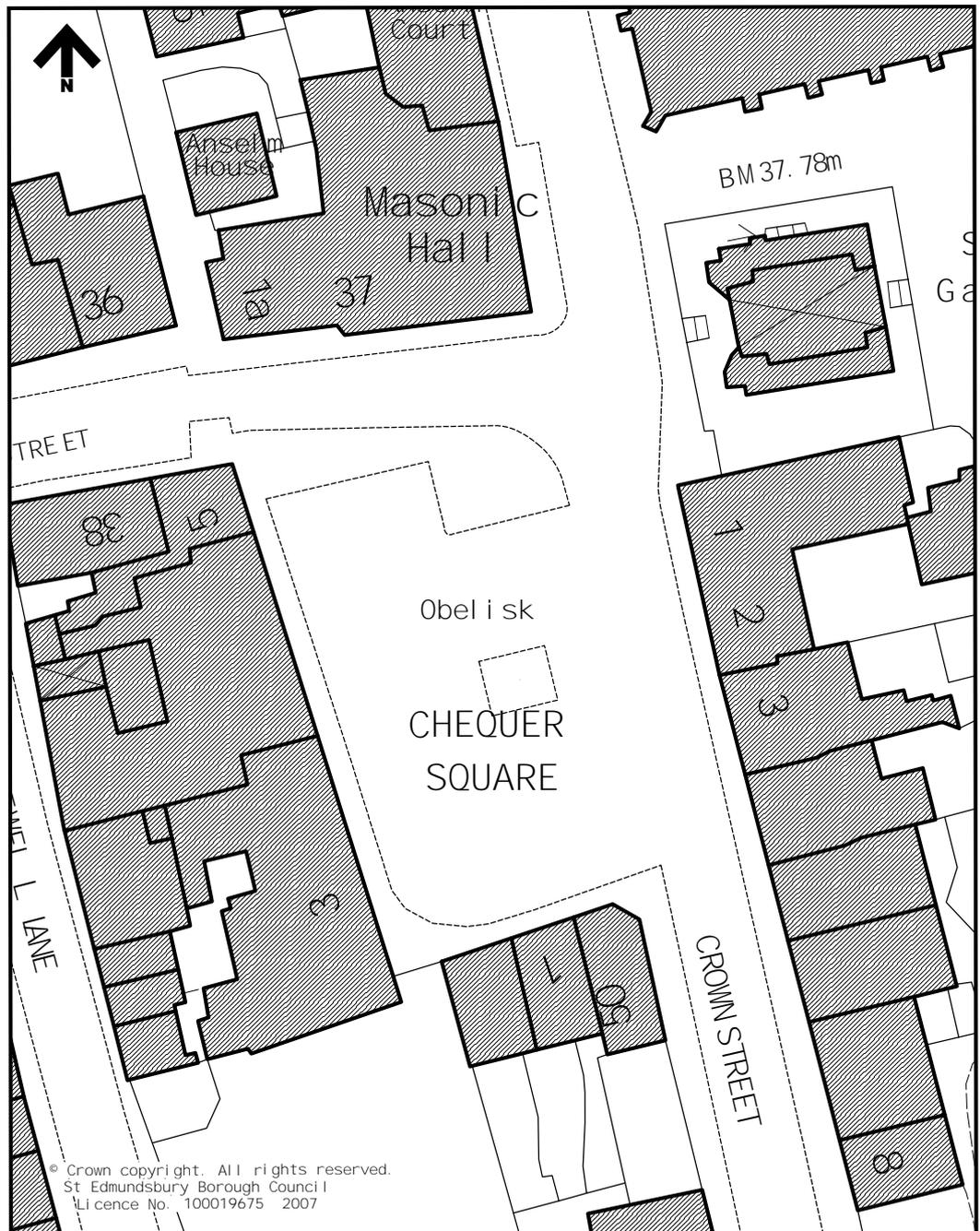
This is at the convergence of Northgate Street (formerly High Street) and Southgate Street (the main roads of the Anglo-Saxon settlement). It is generally said to be the town's first market place, appearing in documents from the 14th century as the Horse Market and becoming known as the 'Old Market' following the provision of the new market place within the Norman grid. It is surrounded by buildings on all four sides with two triangular green areas in the centre divided by the diagonal road linking Sparhawk Street and Southgate Street. The northern green area contains a listed Coade stone ornamental centrepiece of 1874 (photo 2). The southern green area includes several large trees, giving an open and leafy feel to the space despite the close proximity of the buildings around the edge.

The buildings around St Mary's Square vary in scale. The northern and eastern sides are bounded by terraces of imposing houses, Georgian in style (although with older cores) and of two and three storeys in height. To the west is the side of the Greene King brewery building. The red brick building in the south-west corner of the square, adjoining Westgate Street is modest in scale. Adjoining it to the north is the very tall, imposing elevation of the brewery which is softened somewhat by the trees. This elevation is broken up by fenestration and sits quite comfortably in the square despite its scale. The square is completed along its southern edge by a large Georgian house and a high red brick boundary wall.



Photo 2: St Mary's Square

### Chequer Square



Map 6: Chequer Square

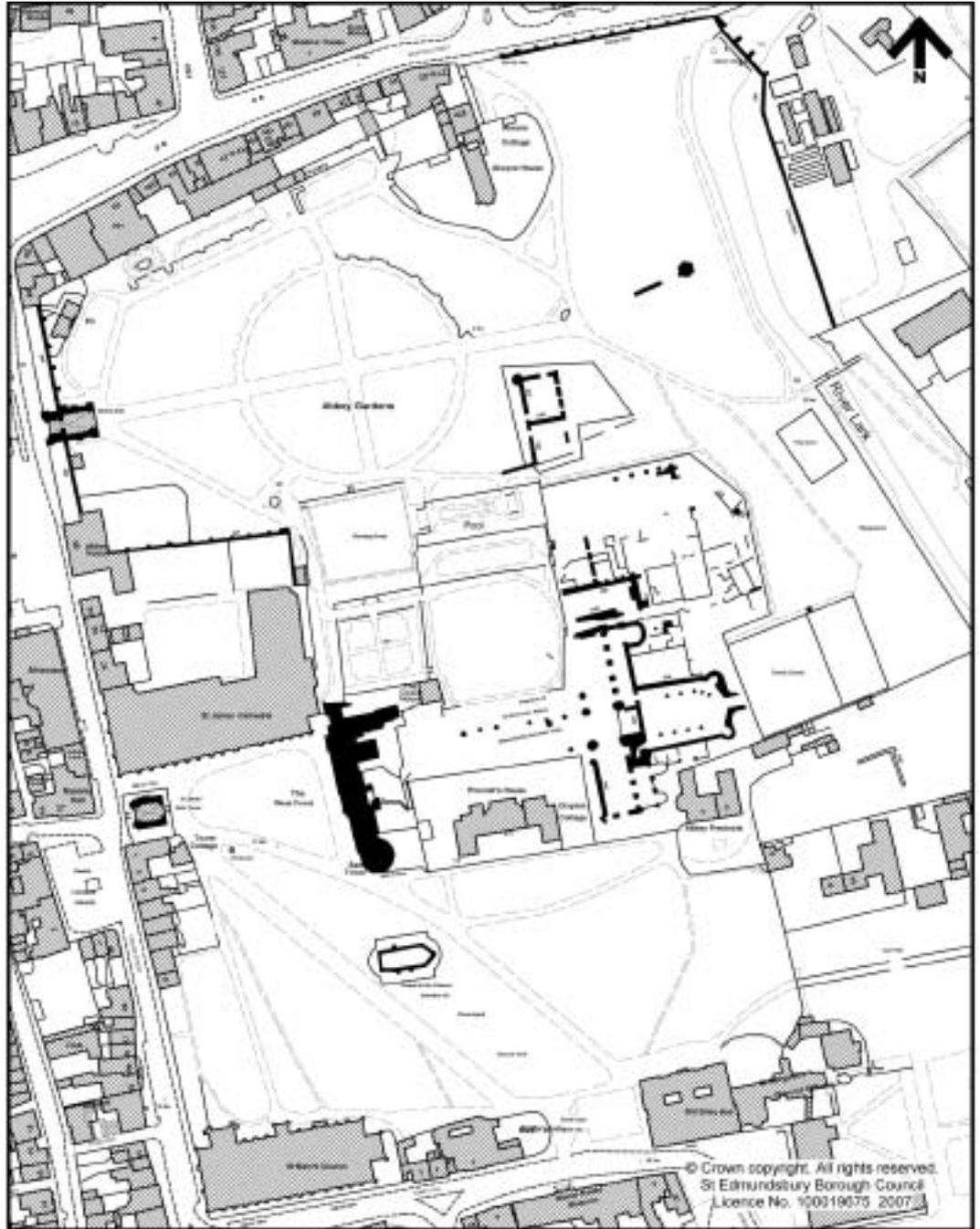
Chequer Square is the smallest square in the town at the corner of Crown Street and Churchgate Street. This area was originally called Paddock Pool but later renamed after the public house The Chequer which used to occupy premises in the square. Very simple in character, the square comprises a hard space with only a small landscaped area in the south-western corner. It is bounded on three sides by elegant houses (photo 3).



*Photo 3: Chequer Square*

Crown Street runs along the east side, lined by a terrace of historic buildings. This includes the former Penny Bank of 1846 in Tudor style - quite a rarity in the town. Adjoining this to the south is a more restrained group of two storey Georgian buildings. The properties along the southern and western sides are substantial Georgian houses of three stories, some with ornate balconies. The Masonic Hall and 37 Churchgate Street, which form the northern boundary of Chequer Square, are two- and three-storey buildings respectively of red brick. In the centre of the square is a listed 18th century obelisk which, until the early nineteenth century, was located in St Mary's Square, where it was the successor to the market cross which used to stand in the Horse Market.

## Abbey Precinct



Map 7: Abbey Precinct

The Abbey Precinct is the largest open space in the town centre. It has three distinct areas of different character: the Great Churchyard, the open grassed area containing the abbey ruins, and the formal gardens (photo 4).

Photo 4: Aerial view of the Abbey Precinct showing the three distinct areas



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The Great Churchyard occupies the area between St James' cathedral in the north and St Mary's Church/Honey Hill in the south, Crown Street to the west and the grounds of Shire Hall to the east. It is a large area crossed by several tree-lined paths (photo 5). In contrast to the other spaces within the town centre it has a tranquil, almost rural, character. It contains over 200 listed tombs and headstones dating from the 17th century onwards. In the centre is the Chapel of the Charnel, built c.1300 as a repository for old bones disturbed by the digging of new graves.

*Photo 5: A tree-lined path in the Great Churchyard*

The flint ruins of the former abbey are prominent features in the grassed area behind the cathedral. This space extends to the River Lark in the east and is very open with just a few scattered trees.

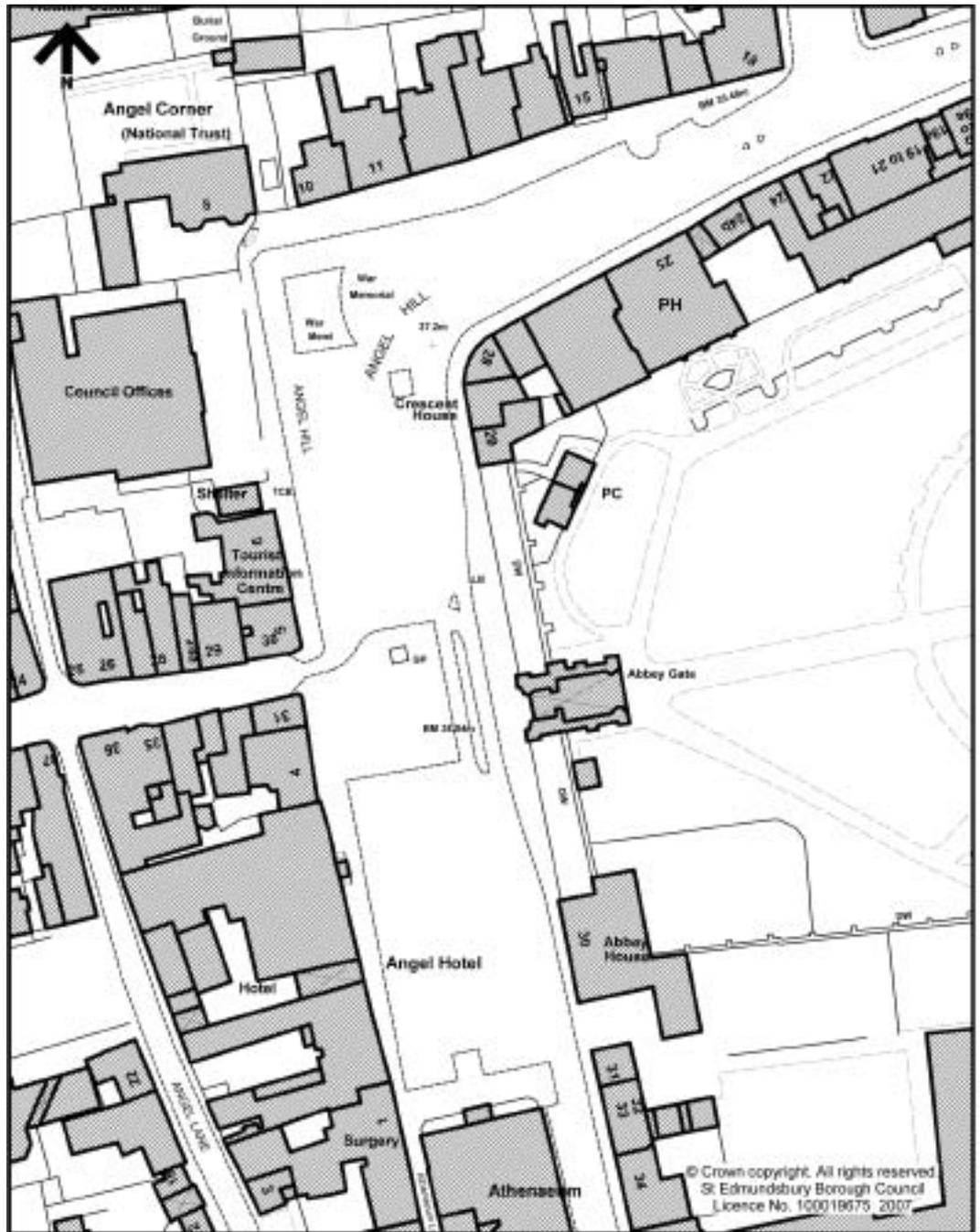
To the north are the formal gardens in what was once the Great Court of the Abbey (photo 56). This area is entered from Angel Hill through the Abbey Gate. Trees surround a circular space divided into four flower beds with paths between, similar to the original plan of Hodson's Botanic Garden laid out here in 1831 and as depicted on Payne's map of 1834. There is an aviary and sensory garden along the north Precinct wall. To the north of the cathedral is another sensory garden and to the east, behind the cathedral, are a walled rose garden and a bowling green.

## Angel Hill

This is now the largest hard space within the town centre. It was laid out as part of Abbot Anselm's Norman street pattern and was the site of the Bury Fair, probably from as early as the 12th century. Until the 17th century it was known as The Mustowe, meaning 'meeting place'. It lies at the bottom of Abbeygate Street – one of the principal streets within the town centre – and stretches from the terrace of houses on the north side to the Athenaeum in the south. Along the eastern side are the walls to the Abbey Gardens and the Abbey Gate, the principal entrance to the Great Court of the Abbey. The original gate was destroyed in the riots of 1327 and the present gate was built next to the first, no longer in line with Abbeygate Street (photo 6).



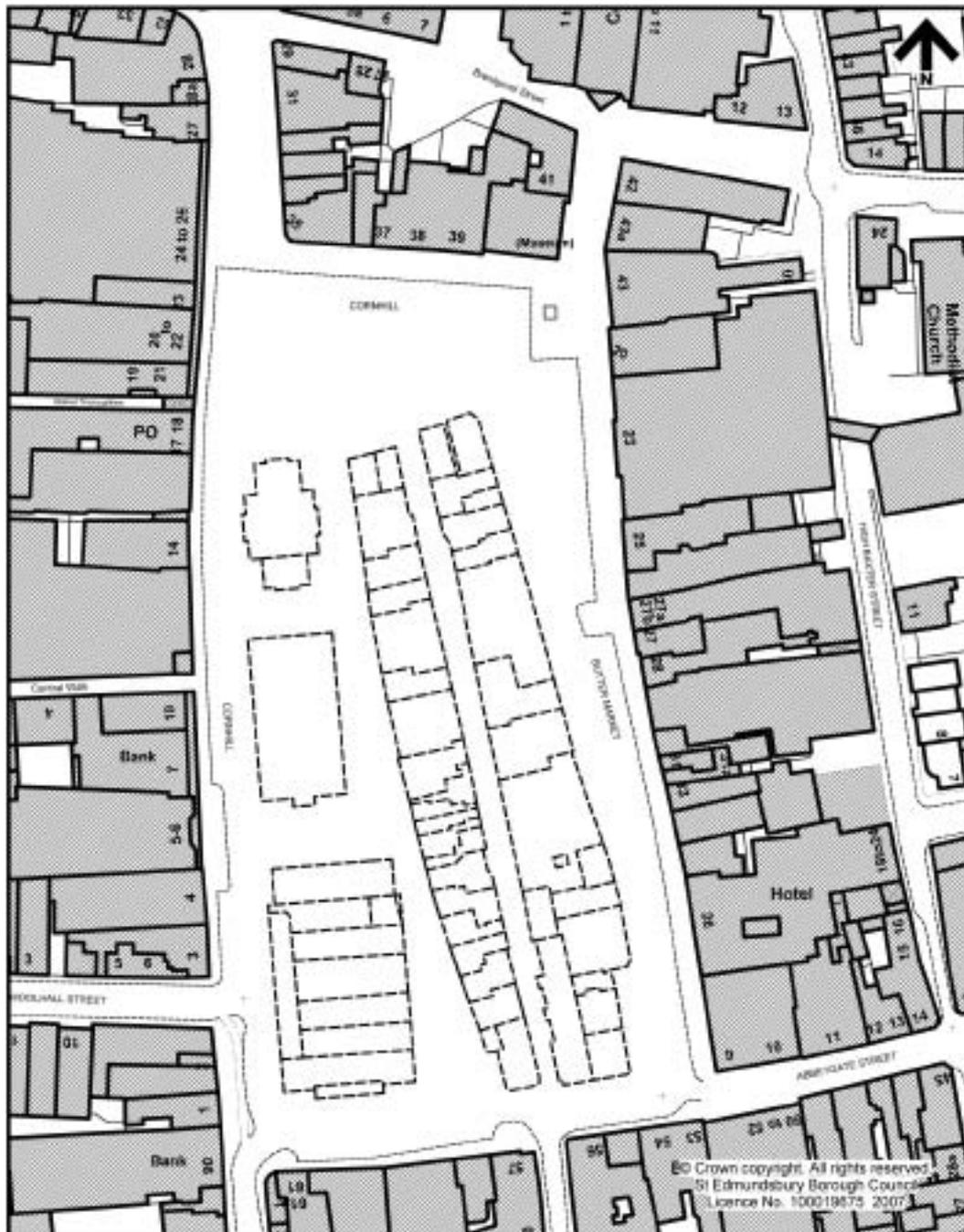
*Photo 6: Angel Hill*



Map 8: Angel Hill

The buildings surrounding Angel Hill are predominantly three storeys in height with wide frontages. Externally, they are almost all Georgian in style including the 20th century Borough Offices and contain a mixture of residential and commercial uses. Most have older cores. They are built directly up to the pavement edge, apart from the Borough Offices which is set back behind a small car parking area and the Athenaeum which is set back behind railings. Some of the North Terrace properties have a very small enclosed area in front of them with half-basements and York stone steps, but none of the spaces in front of the buildings are significantly planted. There are trees and flowers in the grassed areas running along the front of the abbey walls, planters and small trees on Angel Hill and some flowers around the memorial to the two world wars. Predominantly, however, this space is a hard environment, in marked contrast to the character of the Abbey Precinct. Angel Hill is now a car park with a listed road sign of 1935, known locally as the 'Pillar of Salt', in the middle.

## The Market Place



Map 9: Market Place showing the outlines of later encroachments

This market place is thought to date from Abbot Baldwin's 11th century plan and to originally have covered the huge rectangular space formed by Cornhill to the north and west, Buttermarket to the east and Abbeygate Street to the south. However, as a fire of 1295 destroyed one third of the town, it could date from a remodelling following this. Skinner Street, The Traverse and the three public buildings – Corn Exchange, the former Public Library and the Market Cross - are all later encroachments into the market place. According to Warren's map of 1747 different parts of the market place were assigned to different commodities from time to time, such as the beast market, butter and fish market and the corn market. The beast market (cattle market) was moved to its last site in the Prospect Row area in 1828.

The space is enclosed by buildings on all four sides, the oldest being Moyses Hall, a 12th century house at the corner of Cornhill and Buttermarket. It is on a naturally high spot in the town and routes lead into and out of it at each corner, in common with St Mary's Square, Chequer Square and Angel Hill. On the western side are three walks connecting the market place with St Andrews Street North. Because they are so narrow they do not visually weaken the enclosure of the space.

The buildings surrounding the market place vary considerably in both age and scale. The fire of 1608 started in Eastgate Street and spread into the market place from Looms Lane, damaging properties along the west side of Cornhill, The Traverse and Buttermarket and necessitating the rebuilding of many. Older wings survived to the rear of some of the Buttermarket properties. Some properties were also damaged when a zeppelin bombed the Buttermarket in 1916. The majority of buildings on the Buttermarket are three storeys high, of varying frontage widths, with eaves facing the streets (photo 7). The north and west sides of Cornhill include many more recent buildings, generally three storeys in height, with shallow roof pitches.

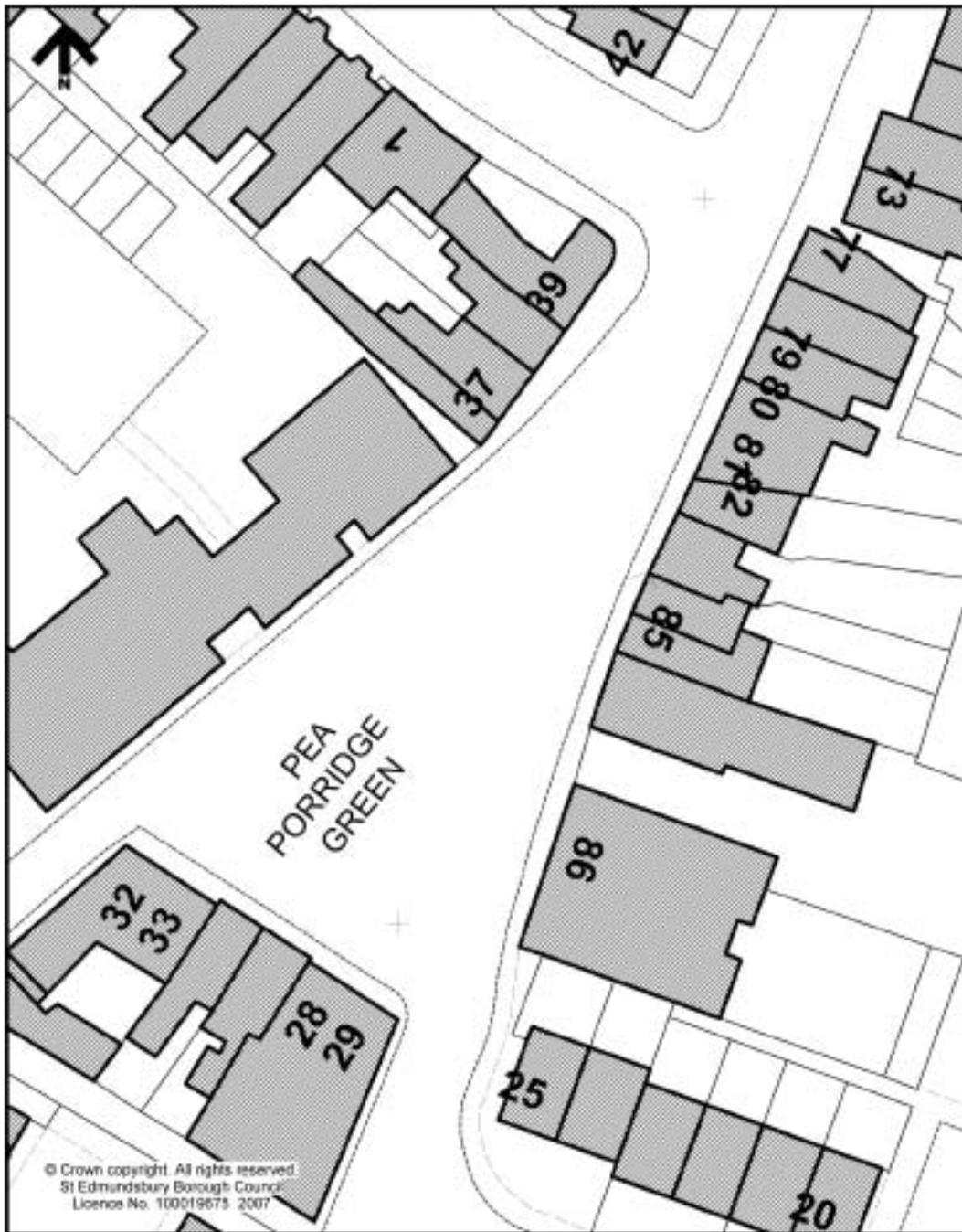


*Photo 7: Buttermarket*

The block of buildings between The Traverse and Skinner Street appears to be the oldest of the encroachments into the market place, pre-dating the 1608 fire; at least half of the present buildings contain pre-1608 fabric. It is thought that the site was probably used by market stalls which gradually became more substantial, eventually being replaced with permanent structures. It may have developed as two rows, back-to-back, although some properties, such as Cupola House, are continuous between The Traverse and Skinner Street, giving them access from both elevations. The parallel block of buildings which face Buttermarket and back onto Skinner Street are predominantly of 19th century date, the main exception being the late 18th century Lloyds Bank. Skinner Street is an important historic street which still retains its traditional setts and some good quality elevations to the buildings.

In the centre of the market place is a Grade II listed memorial to the Suffolk men lost in the Boer War, quite a rarity; memorials to this war are not common.

## Pea Porridge Green



Map 10: Pea Porridge Green

This is a small triangular space formed at the convergence of Cannon Street and Church Row. It is a hard space dominated by car parking and surrounded by two storey brick buildings (photo 8). The Old Cannon Brewery is one of numerous historic buildings which face into the space.



Photo 8: Pea Porridge Green

## Private Gardens

Contrasting with the hard, built-up character of the residential streets are private gardens, many hidden from view at the rear of the buildings. Some are of considerable size and reveal a completely different aspect of the town.

## Key Views and Vistas

There are several 'landmark' buildings which are visible from outside the boundary of the conservation area. The most notable of these are the spire of St John's church, the new tower to the Cathedral Church of St James and the cupola of Cupola House. Seen from several vantage points around the town, they are particularly visible when looking south from the A14



*Photo 9: Views out of the conservation area from Abbeygate Street (above) and St Andrew's Street (left)*

and east from Robert Bobby Way. A good view of the cathedral tower is also gained looking south from Northgate Street or from Mustow Street, near the Abbots Bridge.

There are few notable views out of the conservation area, perhaps the most important being the view east from Abbeygate Street. Here, from the centre of the town one can look out over trees to the open green fields beyond. Looking north from St Andrews Street North and St Johns Street are also views out of the conservation area into the open countryside and Hardwick Heath can be seen looking south from St Andrew's Street South (photo 9).



*Photo 10: The Norman Tower from Churchgate Street*

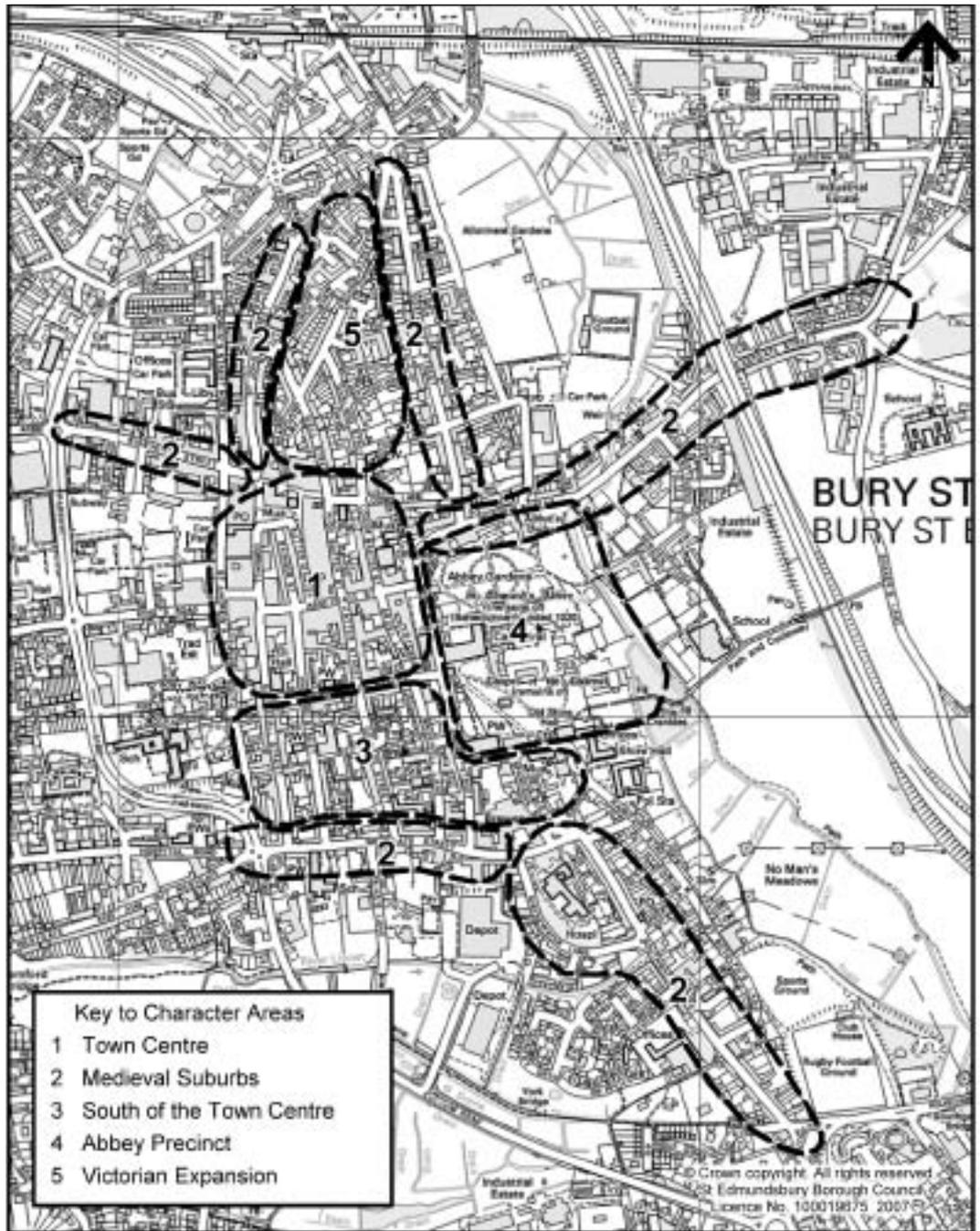
These views illustrate the relationship of the town to its surrounding countryside and should be maintained. Within the conservation area, there is a good view of the Norman Tower from the west end of Churchgate Street (photo 10). The spire of St John's church is seen from several vantage points around the town centre.

## 4 Character analysis

### Definition of character areas

Five areas of distinct character have been identified within the conservation area which are described below and shown on map 11. Although the areas are defined below, there are zones of transition between.

- The town centre is dominated by the Norman grid of streets - the area bounded by Brentgoval Street and Looms Lane to the north, Churchgate Street to the south, Angel Hill to the east and St Andrew's Street South to the west. It includes the market place and Angel Hill.
- The medieval suburbs developed along the main roads to and beyond the town wall and gates – Risbygate Street, Northgate Street, Southgate Street, Eastgate Street, Westgate Street and St John's Street (formerly Long Brackland).
- To the south of the town centre are secondary streets between Churchgate Street and Westgate Street – the southern parts of Guildhall Street and Whiting Street, College Street, Bridewell Lane and Crown Street, Sparhawk Street and Honey Hill. St Mary's Square and Chequer Square are included in this area.
- The Abbey Precinct is a large space to the east of the town centre which includes the formal gardens, abbey ruins, cathedral church of St James, St Mary's church and the Great Churchyard.
- To the north is the Victorian expansion of the town in the direction of Northgate Station, which was built in 1846 as part of the Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds Railway. This is known as the Brackland area and includes Garland Street, Well Street, Cannon Street, Short Brackland, Church Row and Pea Porridge Green.



Map 11: conservation area character zones

## Town centre

### Prevailing and former uses

A mix of residential, religious, retail and commercial uses has prevailed in the town centre area for many years, albeit with the use of individual buildings changing, particularly between residential and retail/commercial uses. The variety gives this part of the conservation area a lively character with activity from early morning until late in the evening. The retail and commercial uses attract visitors during the day, whilst the pubs, restaurants and residential uses ensure that there is activity long after the shops and offices have closed. The various uses in the historic core have respected the grid layout of the streets and this is still very clear today.

The town centre is completely given to retail and commercial uses on the ground floors of the properties in Buttermarket, Cornhill and Abbeygate Street. Off these streets, shops tend to be occupied by independent traders rather than the High Street multiples and residential use starts to appear in amongst the commercial properties. The northern part of Guildhall Street contains solicitors' and estate agents' premises.

### Buildings

The majority of buildings within the town centre are listed. It is a built-up area with buildings positioned hard along the edges of the pavements. Storey height varies between two and four floors; Cornhill, Buttermarket and Abbeygate Street have many three storey properties. Plot widths vary, altering the impression of height. Roof profiles vary with hipped roofs behind parapets, gables and eaves facing the street and in Abbeygate Street some shaped gables (photo 11).

St Andrew's Street South, which forms the western boundary of the conservation area, was historically the line of the old town wall and the edge of development for many years. This street has never had a built-up frontage along the east side and retains its 'edge of town' character, with the rears of the properties in Guildhall Street visible, and their surviving outbuildings and boundary walls.

At first glance, Bury St Edmunds is a fine Georgian town. Beneath the surface, however, is a wealth of historic timber framed buildings which in themselves make fascinating and rewarding investigation. There are a few jettied properties still visible in the town centre, with interesting examples being found on the side elevations of 14 and 24 Abbeygate Street and others in Churchgate Street (photo 12). In addition to the abbey ruins



and the West Front, for which Bury St Edmunds is perhaps particularly well known, there are a number of other notable buildings within the town centre.

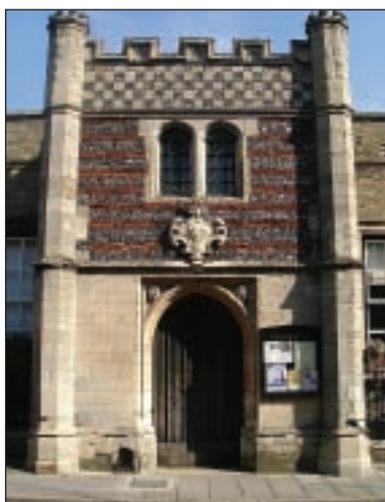
*Photo 11: Variety of rooflines in the town centre*



*Photo 12: Examples of jettied properties in the town centre*

On Angel Hill are the Angel Hotel, a late 18th century inn with a 13th century undercroft, and the Athenaeum. The Norman Tower was originally a monastic gate, built in 1120-48 under Abbot Anselm and later became the belfry for the adjacent Cathedral Church of St James. The elaborate Abbey Gate, which replaces an earlier gate destroyed in riots by the townspeople in 1327, was built c.1353 as the great gate to the Abbey of St Edmund.

The northern part of Guildhall Street contains some imposing properties with wide frontages which are predominantly in office use. The Guildhall itself has a 13th century entrance arch within a 15th century porch (photo 13). The Unitarian Meeting House in Churchgate Street is a fine example of an early 18th century chapel built of red brick in 1711 (photo 14).



*Photo 13: The Guildhall porch*



*Photo 14: The Unitarian Meeting House*

In the market place, the three former market buildings form a procession, each one larger than the next. The Market Cross as it appears today is cruciform on plan. It is a design of Robert Adam of 1774. Adam's work involved the addition of the first floor to provide a theatre – hence the masks and emblems representing the Muses (photo 15) – with the Corn Exchange occupying the ground floor until it became too small in the early 19th century and a new Corn Exchange was erected to the south in 1836.

This building also became too small and was eventually used as a Public Library before being converted into shops. A new Corn Exchange was erected, again to the south, in 1861. This building has a grand entrance on the south elevation, with steps leading to a giant Ionic portico. Moyses Hall, Cornhill, is one of the oldest stone houses in the country, dating from the late 12th century. It is now a museum open to the public (photo 16).

Within the town centre are many shops of varying ages and styles which have a great impact on its character and appearance (photo 17). The Borough Council seeks to ensure that shopfronts and advertisements make a positive contribution to their surroundings and seek to retain those of historic interest. Such shopfronts are very important features and in addition to their historic importance add considerably to the visual interest of the street. Abbeygate Street has some interesting shopfronts, particularly at numbers 35-6 with its fine early 19th century shop windows, and number 11 which has six large Gothick shop windows. In contrast to the restrained later Georgian grey/white brick facades in the town centre, 59 Abbeygate Street is late Victorian in vibrant red sandstone and red brick with elaborate terracotta detailing in a combination of architectural styles. 15 Cornhill is in a 'Jacobethan' style with four life-size historic figures along the front. It was built in 1910 for Sir Joseph Boot (of Boots the Chemist) as shop premises and is unique to Bury St Edmunds.



*Photo 15: Muses detail on the Market Cross*



*Photo 16: Moyses Hall*



Photo 17: Examples of shopfronts in the town centre

In The Traverse is Cupola House (photo 18), a late 17th century building with an earlier core which was enlarged and modernised for Thomas Macro, apothecary, in 1693, and more recently used as a pub/restaurant. It is well known for its cupola, which can be seen from many vantage points within and outside the town centre conservation area. Probably the most famous of all the pubs in the town, however, is The Nutshell in The Traverse. Reputed to be the smallest pub in England, it is an attractive 19th century curiosity (photo 19).



Photo 18: Cupola House

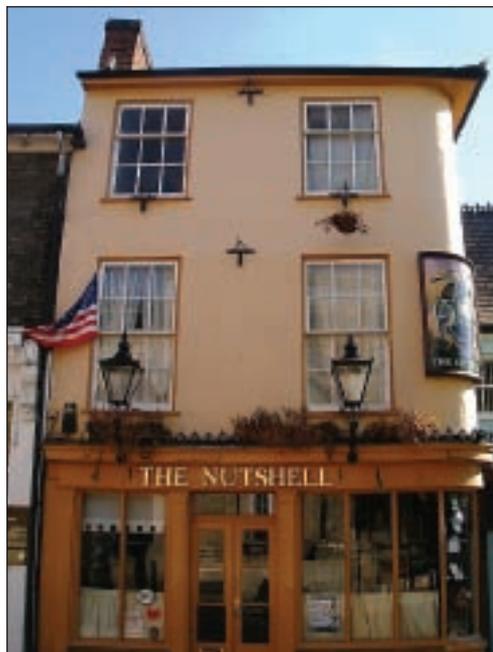


Photo 19: The Nutshell

Cornhill Walk terminates the view out of the market place from Buttermarket. It is a striking, modern building with a glazed frontage projecting into Brentgoval Street.

### Building materials

Many of the historic buildings within the Norman core of the town centre are timber framed although this is not always obvious. Being a fashionable town in the 18th and early 19th centuries, Bury St Edmunds underwent 'Georgianisation' with the frames being faced over and jetties underbuilt, often in brick. Red brick, popular in the earlier part of the 18th century, and gault brick, favoured in



Photo 20: Examples of the use of plaster, gault and red brick and stone in the town centre



the later Georgian and Regency periods, are both found there. Painted plaster is also a prevalent finish. The public buildings in the market place are built of gault brick with stone dressings and embellishments (photos 11 and 20). Stone is not local to Suffolk and is only found on the earlier,

prestigious buildings like Moyses Hall, or in small quantities for quoins and window and door surrounds. Tile hanging is found on a few buildings in the town centre.

Despite the variety of roof profiles in the conservation area, the predominant material is the clay plain tile, which suits the steep roof pitches. To a lesser degree, pantiles and slates are also found, particularly on shallower roof slopes. Following the fire in 1608 thatch ceased to be used in the town and there are no thatched buildings surviving.

### Details

Roof profiles vary considerably, not only from street to street but in some cases from building to building – there are few uniform rooflines. Gables and eaves are found lining the streets, some buildings with a combination of both, and there are hipped roofs behind parapets. Whiting Street and Hatter Street slope down from Abbeygate Street to Churchgate Street, revealing an attractive roofline with dormer windows and chimneys contributing further to the roofscape (photo 11). The gentle slope of Churchgate Street gives a similarly interesting view. The variation in profiles together with the sloping of the streets emphasises the many different building heights.

There are some very good historic shopfronts in the town centre, particularly in Abbeygate Street and Churchgate Street (photo 21). Sash windows prevail interspersed with other styles such as leaded lights, casements and modern glazing patterns, and there are many good traditional panelled doors and surrounds found on both commercial and residential buildings (photo 22).



*Photo 21: Shopfronts in Churchgate Street*



Photo 22: Examples of traditional windows and doors in the town centre

Balconies are found on some town centre buildings, including Starbucks in the Buttermarket and 83-84 Guildhall Street (photo 23).



Photo 23: Examples of balconies in the town centre

### Green spaces

The town centre conservation area is predominantly a hard townscape. Within this hard environment, however, are pockets of soft landscaping - the trees and planters



Photo 24: Angel Hill in bloom



Photo 25: Langton Place

of Angel Hill (photo 24), the garden of the Guildhall and the trees down Whiting Street, at the entrance to Langton Place (photo 25), and in Cornhill. A glimpse of private open space is also seen between 26 and 27 Churchgate Street.

The hard landscaping is complemented during the summer by the floral displays in the town centre. Bury St Edmunds has received many awards in the Britain in Bloom competition and the town is renowned for its floral displays throughout the summer. There are basket trees and planters in the streets and many property owners contribute with window boxes and hanging baskets.

## Medieval suburbs

### Prevailing and former uses

They vary in character, with Risbygate Street being generally commercial in nature, Eastgate Street and Northgate Street are mainly residential but with some shops and offices interspersed amongst the houses. Westgate Street has mainly residential properties to the west but with the strong presence of the Greene King Brewery at the east end (photo 26) and Southgate Street largely comprises residential properties. St John's Street is a busy commercial street with some residential use at the north end (photo 27). It has a good collection of historic shopfronts, many still with their traditional blind boxes and blinds

### Buildings

The medieval suburbs have an eclectic mix of modern and historic buildings and lack the restrained Georgian

uniformity of the streets south of the town centre. There are many listed buildings in these streets and Article 4 Directions are used to protect some of the later, unlisted

residential properties. The streets are wide and generally lack the intimacy found in the narrower streets. Several small roads and accesses lead off Southgate Street and Eastgate Street interrupting the built frontage. In all of the medieval suburbs the buildings are placed along the pavement edge with very few front gardens. Those properties with gardens tend to have a boundary



Photo 26: Part of the Greene King brewery



Photo 27: St John's Street



Photo 28: Northgate House

wall, railings or fence, maintaining a strong building line. Storey heights and roof profiles vary in all the streets. Typically, buildings are two or three storeys in height, with dormers being prevalent in all but Northgate Street. The scale of buildings is more varied in Westgate Street.



Photo 29: 4 Northgate Street

A mixture of eaves and gables is found lining the streets with the occasional mansard roof, parapet or shaped gable. The sloping nature of some of the streets and the chimneys and dormers add to the interest of the roofscape. Jettied timber framed properties are found in all these streets, but are particularly numerous in St John's Street. Northgate Street and Southgate Street both contain a line of almshouses called Long Row.



*Photo 30: View out of the conservation area along Cotton Lane*

The south part of Northgate Street has an exceptional collection of large, two and three storey, grand buildings with high quality Georgian frontages and fine Classical detailing to the doors and surrounds, fanlights and porches. Small and large sash windows are prevalent, some in one and two storey bays. Of particular note is Northgate House with its ornate entrance (photo 28).

Towards the north, the scale reduces and there are terraces of two storey houses interspersed with larger properties. In contrast to the elegant Georgian frontages 4 Northgate Street is a former chapel in a Victorian Gothic style with acanthus leaf capitals to the columns, a pierced parapet and a bellcote (photo 29). 122 Northgate Street is a



modern building with overhanging eaves to reflect those of the historic properties. Views out of Northgate Street are possible along narrow lanes leading off. Pump Lane provides a glimpse of Garland Street, whilst Cotton Lane allows a view of the countryside to the east of the town (photo 30).

A less attractive view is seen down Mark Jennings Lane, with trees screening the industrial buildings beyond. Reeds Buildings is lined with flint walls and cottages, which are unusually built with re-used stone blocks, with modern housing at the end.



Mustow Street, linking Northgate Street and Eastgate Street, has a long stretch of abbey wall along its south side and the Dutch House, with its shaped gable, on the north (photo 31).

*Photo 31: The Dutch House  
Photo 32: Barn Lane*



Photo 33: The Fox Inn

Eastgate Street has a mix of modern and historic buildings in terraces but is visually split by the A14 running above it. Barn Lane, off Eastgate Street, is a quiet area with terraces of traditional two storey cottages (photo 32).

Eastgate House is a fine Georgian building and the 15th century timber framed Fox Inn (photo 33) and 33 (The Old Grammar School) are interesting timber framed and jettied properties. At the end of Eastgate Street are the ruins of St Nicholas' Hospital with a



Photo 34: Ruins of St Petronella's Hospital

reset window from St Petronella's Hospital formerly in Southgate Green (photo 34). A high flint boundary wall runs around the site along Barton Road. Next door is St Nicholas, an interesting historic house dating from the late 15th century. The Glen, at the junction with Mount Road, also has a high flint boundary wall.



Photo 35: 104-108 Risbygate Street

Risbygate Street also has a mixture of historic and modern buildings. The built frontage along the south side is broken by the entrance to the cattle market and adjacent car park, which only has a low boundary wall. 104-108 have a pierced parapet, Ionic style door surrounds and scrolled brackets to the window moulds. Pilaster strips divide the properties (photo 35).



*Photo 36: First floor bay of 90 Risbygate Street*

Number 90 has elegant first floor segmental bays (photo 36). There is some interesting detailing, such as the Doric style entrances on 10 and 26 and the door surrounds on 81 and 82. The Rising Sun is another timber framed and jettied building worthy of note (photo 37).

Some of the modern shopfronts are brash and oversized, appearing divorced from their upper storeys. There are, however, some simple modern shopfronts which complement the buildings in which they are set. Nelson Road, off Risbygate Street, is a street of traditional two storey houses. Glimpsed views are seen through the narrow alleys on the north side of the street. The view down Tavern Lane is unattractive,

with bins and the gas holder opposite the end of St Andrew's Street North is visible when full. Elseys' Yard and Tidy's Court afford better views over the St Andrew's Street car park to new housing and trees beyond (photo 38).



*Photo 37: The Rising Sun*

The northern part of St John's Street has buildings of two storeys, with some dormers lighting a second floor in the roof. 52-54 is a good group of historic buildings. The historic shopfront of 36 has been retained when it was converted to a house. St John's church was built in Early English style in 1841 and is a local landmark. To the south of the church, towards the town centre, buildings tend to be taller and more ornate, with detail to upper floors and good historic shopfronts surviving complete with their blind boxes and canopies (photo 39). There is also a good collection of jettied timber framed properties in this end of the street (photo 40).

4 Brentgoval Street is a modern brick built property. Its long side elevation in St John's Street is jettied out, giving a modern twist on the traditional timber



*Photo 38: Views out of the conservation area from Tidy's Court and Elseys' Yard*



framed features found elsewhere in the street.

Southgate Street consists mainly of two storey terraces interspersed with some of three storeys. 80-81a is a row of jettied timber framed houses dating from the 15th century (photo 41) and 42 and 43 are grand three storey Georgian houses (photo 42). The Oast Court development is named after the oast house, with its distinctively shaped roof, in the east corner which is now converted into two houses. Linnet House is an attractive timber framed house dating from the 17th century (photo 43).

Maynewater Lane is a one-way street linking Southgate Street and Westgate Street. It has a long flint boundary wall along the east side and



Photo 39: Examples of traditional shopfronts in St John's Street



Photo 40: Jettied properties in St John's Street



opposite is Maynewater Square, an attractive group of cottages around a central garden. Maynewater Lane is dominated by Maynewater House, a large modern development which does not reflect the character or appearance of the conservation area.

On Westgate Street is the Theatre Royal (photo 44). Built in 1819 to designs by William Wilkins, it is one of very few Georgian theatres still in use. The theatre box office occupies number 6 next door. This may also be by Wilkins and has a large segmental bay with a Classical frieze.



Photo 41: 80 Southgate Street

Photo 42: 42 and 43 Southgate Street



Photo 43: Linnet House

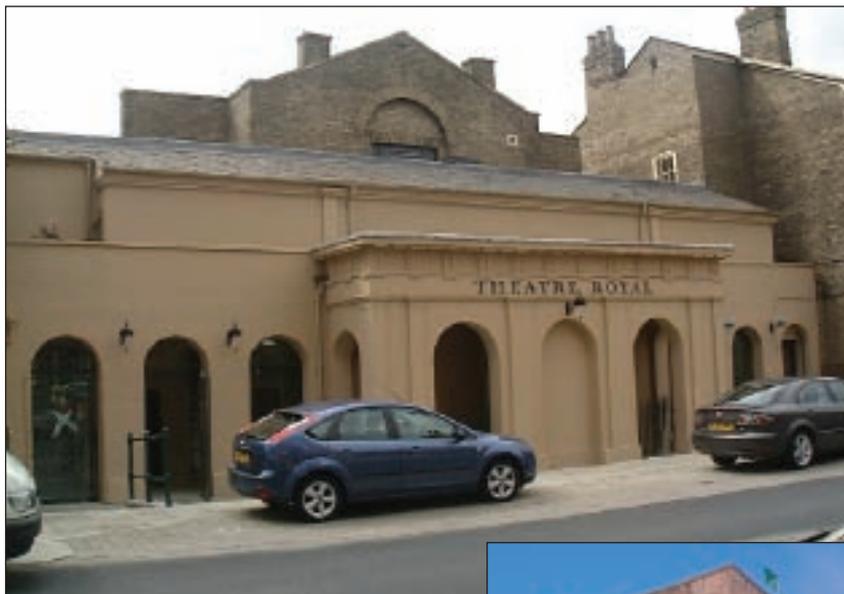


Photo 44:  
Theatre Royal

Photo 45:  
The Art Deco  
brewhouse of the  
Greene King  
brewery

The east end of Westgate Street has a very distinct character and appearance due to the presence of the Greene King brewery. Predominantly of flint and/or red brick, the variety in scale and design of these buildings reflects the office and industrial uses associated with the brewery. The Greene King complex is kept neat and tidy and the buildings are identified by the use of dark green paint on the woodwork and gates and combine a rustic theme with larger, starker industrial elements. The main Greene King

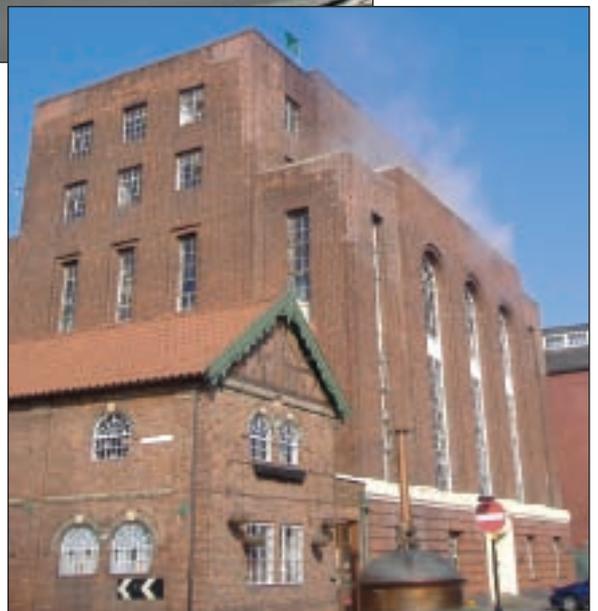




Photo 46: Church of St Edmund, Highbury House and the Rose and Crown

brew house on Westgate Street is an attractive Art Deco building with tall, arched windows (photo 45). At the east end of Westgate Street, forming the south-west corner of St Mary's Square, is a two storey 16th and 17th century timber framed building encased in 19th century brick. It is the oldest building of the Greene King brewery and was originally part of the Maulkin's maltings. The former Victorian maltings on the corner of College Street and Westgate Street was built in 1880 with a mixture of rustic and industrial elements. It is now converted to flats with new buildings adjoining to the east of varied scale and materials, reflecting the diversity of Westgate Street. The modern chimney serving the brewery was designed by the well-known architect Sir Michael Hopkins. Controversial at the time, it was designed as three separate flues to minimise its bulk when viewed from any direction (photo 51). The Church of St Edmund of 1837 has tall fluted Ionic columns supporting the entrance. The Rose and Crown dates from the 17th century, with possibly a 15th century core. It is timber framed and encased in red brick with the only example of tile hanging in Westgate Street. 57, Highbury House, is a large, early 17th century timber framed house with a Georgian exterior (photo 46). Out Westgate has an attractive terrace of four houses with arched sash windows and a recently restored row of 10 cottages.

### Building materials

Red and gault brick is found in the medieval suburbs, where it is interspersed with medieval timber framed properties, some with Georgian facades. Those timber frames which were not faced in brick have survived with either the frame wholly or partly exposed or plastered. Flint is used on some buildings, usually with brick to form the corners and surrounds.

The Church of St Edmund in Westgate Street has a stone façade. For domestic and more modest buildings, the later use of stone was limited to detailing such as quoins, doorcases and window surrounds (photo 47). Brick, and in particular, flint are used for boundary walls.



*Photo 47: Stone detailing on a Victorian building*

Roofing materials are similarly varied, with slates, plaintiles or pantiles all used.



*Photo 48: Flint boundary wall*

### Details

Property frontages are varied in terms of height and width but their overall proportions are similar to those of properties in the town centre, with both eaves and gables facing

the roads. Some of the streets slope and this emphasises the variations in heights and roof profiles and gives added interest. Dormers, chimneys, decorative bargeboards and ridge cresting are all found. Contrasting brick bands and detailing and decorative terracotta work are seen on some Victorian and Edwardian properties.



Photo 49: Building details found within the medieval suburbs

Small and large paned sash windows and panelled doors prevail on both traditional and modern developments, although there are numerous replacement windows and doors, particularly in Eastgate Street and the south end of Southgate Street, which are not appropriate to their property and which dilute the strong uniformity found elsewhere in the conservation area. Many doorcases and surrounds are well designed, many with Classical details. There are some particularly grand examples in Northgate Street. Doric is the favoured style but numbers 1-3 have Ionic door surrounds and 17 has a porch with Ionic columns. Ionic and Corinthian detailing is not commonly found in Bury St Edmunds; the simpler Doric style is more typical. Canopies with ornate brackets and fanlights are also found. Lined overhanging eaves are a typical detail, some of which have scrolled or decorated corbels on the soffit. Some historic shopfronts survive in buildings now used as houses. Railings are used to delineate the boundaries of some properties (photo 49).

### Green spaces

There are green spaces in all of the streets – the gardens to the Quaker Meeting House and the church in St John's Street; the grassed area around the river in Southgate Street at its junction with Maynewater Lane, the small, pleasant garden in the front of Maynewater Square and the trees in the grounds of the Nuffield Hospital; the gardens and allotments along Barn Lane and the grounds around The Glen in Eastgate Street; the



Photo 50: Greenery in the medieval suburbs

trees in the Abbey Gardens lining Mustow Street; the garden of 57 Westgate Street and the trees down Friar's Lane with the view to the meadows beyond; and the gardens at the front of North Court, St Michael's Close and 15 (Ounce House) and 16 Northgate Street (photo 50).

In addition there are small pockets of planting in the fronts of houses or in highway verges and trees visible in rear gardens or above high boundary walls. Landscaped roundabouts terminate views out of the conservation area from Northgate Street, Southgate Street and Risbygate Street.

## Streets to the south of the town centre

### Prevailing and former uses

This is a primarily residential area, with terraces of historic houses built up to the footpath edge. Some properties were previously in retail use and the historic shopfronts have been kept when they became houses. There are buildings forming part of the Greene King brewery at the southern ends of Bridewell Lane and Sparhawk Street. Shire Hall, the police station and the records office are modern buildings found in Honey Hill and Raingate Street.

### Buildings

The appearance and scale of the buildings and the relative narrowness of many of the streets give them a different character to those of the medieval suburbs and town centre (photo 51). Despite individual variation the area possesses a special and recognisable character. College Street and the southern parts of Guildhall Street and Whiting Street are very similar in appearance. Most of the buildings in this area are built against the footpath edge. Many are two storeys high, some with dormers lighting a second floor. Roof profiles vary with eaves and gables used.



Photo 51: Streets south of the town centre – Whiting Street, Guildhall Street South, Sparhawk Street and Bridewell Lane (with the Greene King chimney)

In amongst the housing are a few shops: some former shops still retaining their historic shopfronts. Bridewell Lane has a different character due to the presence of the Greene King brewery and the Guildhall Feoffment School. The scale and design of the brewery buildings and the school complements the rest of Bridewell Lane but gives a different character to this area as the architecture is clearly not domestic in nature. The southern end of Sparhawk Street is also dominated by the striking, red brick Greene King buildings. Other buildings in this street are two or three storeys, some with dormers and there are several jettied properties. Crown Street and Honey Hill are wider but still retain the strong building line (photo 52).



*Photo 52: Crown Street*

The north end of Raingate Street is wider giving a spacious, open appearance. There is a contrast between the modern public buildings and the historic brick and flint boundary walls. It narrows further south, lined with two storey buildings.

The Dog and Partridge in Crown Street is a 17th century timber framed jettied building and there are other jettied properties in this part of the conservation area. The Manor House in Honey Hill is a grand red brick townhouse with stone dressings built in 1736-8. The Old Workhouse in College Street is an attractive building of red brick and flint (photo 53).



*Photo 53: The Dog and Partridge, Manor House and Old Workhouse (now townhouses)*

## Building materials

All of the buildings in this area are in red and gault brick or render, some with exposed timber framing. Brick and flint are also used, particularly in the Greene King buildings at the southern end of Bridewell Lane and for boundary walls. The Old Brewers House, next door to the Dog and Partridge in Crown Street, has stone bays to the ground floor. Some stone can be seen in the side elevation of De Carle House in Honey Hill. It belonged to the De Carles, a family of stonemasons, and is the only 18th century house in the town which has a complete elevation in stone. Steeply pitched roofs are covered in clay tiles, shallower ones in slate. Pantiles are also used. There are railings around St Mary's Church and a post and chain fence around the small planted area on the corner of Crown Street and Honey Hill.

## Details



Photo 54: Details in the area south of the town centre

There is a variety of roof profiles with dormers and chimneys. Owing to the prevalence of Georgian façades within this area, there is a proliferation of small and large paned sash windows with fine brick arches and panelled doors with fanlights and well detailed doorcases, many with small canopies over. 24-27 Crown Street has large, stone hoods over the entrance doors and cast-iron windows in a lozenge design. The Greene King museum building has metal arched windows.

Even on simple, understated buildings, the attention to detail is obvious and this level of quality should be continued on new developments within the conservation area.

### Green spaces

The largest public green space in this part of the conservation area is St Mary's Square, described in detail in section 3 (photo 2). Good views into the square are seen from Sparhawk Street, Southgate Street, Swan Lane and Westgate Street. There is also a good view into the Great Churchyard from Honey Hill. Around St Mary's Church is a small but pleasant garden with a small planted area on the opposite corner of Honey Hill. At the junction of Guildhall Street and Westgate Street is a high quality landscaped area with seating. There is a small planted area in the corner of Chequer Square, also described in more detail in section 3. At the north end of Raingate Street are grassed areas on both sides of the road, giving a pleasant and spacious appearance. There is an attractive private garden in the front of College Square behind a brick wall with ornate railings (photo 55). A small garden and planters in Church Walks add greenery. Elsewhere planters and window boxes provide colourful displays.



*Photo 55: College Square*

## Abbey Precinct

### Prevailing and former uses

The Abbey Precinct provides a peaceful and green environment in contrast to the busy shopping area and built up streets. Its use as a churchyard and religious haven has remained unchanged for centuries. The garden area within the precinct was formerly a botanical garden and the earlier layout is retained in the current garden (photo 56). The precinct is described in detail in section 3.



*Photo 56: The gardens within the Abbey Precinct*

### Buildings

The 14th century Abbey Gate provides the entrance into the gardens from Angel Hill. The Norman Tower (photo 1) was built in the 12th century as a monastic gate centred on the west front of the abbey. It is now used as a belfry for the cathedral. The impressive 11th and 12th century abbey ruins dominate the grassed area to the east of the cathedral, down to the River Lark. The West Front is unique for houses were built into the remains of the abbey from the late 17th century. In front is a statue of St Edmund by Dame Elizabeth Frink. The nave of the Cathedral Church of St James dates from the 16th century, with alterations made in the 19th century. It was extended in the 1960's and the magnificent tower was built as a Millennium project by the same architectural practice which carried out the 20th century extensions. St Mary's Church occupies the south-west corner and dates from the 14th and 15th centuries. Its ornate 1440's Nottingham porch contains a re-used 14th century door. Alwyne House dates from the 14th century and includes a wall of the Abbot's Palace. Facing the Great Churchyard is the former Clopton Asylum, built as a superior almshouse in 1744 under the will of Dr Poley Clopton. It was given to St James' parish and the central and western part became the vicarage for St James' Church in 1900. It is now known as The Deanery. The east part known as Clopton Cottage was separated and for a time was lived in by the donor. 1 and 2 Abbey Precinct was originally a single large house before being divided into two after being acquired by the Cathedral. It is built of red brick with a two storey canted bay to number 1. The Great Churchyard contains over 200 listed tombs (photo 57).



*Photo 57: (top clockwise) the former Clopton Asylum, the Abbey Gate, the Great Churchyard, St Mary's Church, the abbey ruins and Alwyne House*

## Building materials

Flint is the principal material found in the Abbey Precinct, used in extensive boundary walls, the abbey ruins and Alwyne House. The Abbey Gate, Norman Tower, cathedral and St Mary's Church are all built of stone. The abbey was originally faced with stone which has long since been removed, the best stone being sold and now found throughout the town in walls and cellars. Red brick is also used. Lead, slate and clay tiles are the main roofing materials.

## Details

The varying nature of the buildings and ruins in the Abbey Precinct means there is no uniform character and little common detailing. The West Front has numerous window styles reflecting works done over a period of time and extremely steep roof slopes, indicative of the unusual nature of the houses (photo 58).



*Photo 58: Rear roof slope of the West Front*

Alwyne House has a crenellated parapet on the two storey canted bay on the south elevation and wide overhanging eaves. 1 Abbey Precinct has a similar two storey canted bay. St Mary's Church and the cathedral have similar west fronts, with crenellated parapets and tall Perpendicular traceried windows.

## Green spaces

The Abbey Precinct is essentially one open space with areas of differing character and containing buildings and ruins (photos 4 and 5). It has a well-treed boundary with many trees around the garden area, providing wonderfully shady places. The Great Churchyard has attractive tree-lined paths. The grassed area containing the abbey ruins is very open with just a few scattered trees (photo 57).

## Victorian expansion of the town

### Prevailing and former uses

The area to the north was included in the walled town but for many centuries was largely undeveloped, mainly comprising pasture, orchards, gardens and allotments. Warren's map of 1747 (map 4) shows the streets laid out largely as they appear today but with few buildings, and on Lenny's map of 1823 development is still sparse. Today it is a predominantly residential area known as Brackland with attractive brick terraces. There is some business use near to the town centre, in the southern parts of Church Row, Garland Street, Short Brackland and Pea Porridge Green but is scarce elsewhere in this part of the conservation area. The streets are quite narrow but many of the houses have small front gardens behind low walls or railings, giving the area an open and spacious character in places.

### Buildings

In this area the buildings are mainly two storeys in height, with some three storey properties in Garland Street and Well Street. Simple rooflines prevail with few dormers and rooflights breaking the uniformity. Tall chimneys are a striking feature of the historic buildings. Properties with gardens tend to have low brick boundary walls, some with their original or reinstated railings and others have hedges behind (photo 59).



*Photo 59: Typical properties in the Brackland area.*

Most of the properties in the Brackland area date from the late 18th and early 19th centuries onwards. 37-39 Cannon Street, however, conceal the remains of a 13th century timber framed house within a row of 19th century cottages.

As this part of the conservation area contains many unlisted houses Article 4 Directions are used to restrict alterations to the main elevations (in most cases, the fronts). This is to retain the traditional features which give this part of the town its special character and interest and prevent the demolition of front boundaries. Article 4 Directions are also used elsewhere within the conservation area to protect unlisted houses from unsympathetic alterations.

## Building materials

Roofs are predominantly covered with natural grey slate although tiles have been used on some of the older and more modern developments. Gault brick is prevalent in most streets, with red brick and render used to a lesser degree. The exceptions are St Martin's Street, where the buildings are of red brick, some half rendered, and Short Brackland which has red brick and random rubble stone buildings.

## Details

Most properties have large-paned sash windows, some with margin panes, a typical Victorian detail. Bay windows are found in Church Row, St Martin's Street, Garland Street, Cannon Street and Orchard Street (photo 59). Traditional panelled doors are typical of this area. Some have glazed upper panels, fanlights and ornate surrounds. Decorative details vary between streets; some properties in Garland Street have brick arches over the openings and an ornate terracotta string course, in St Martin's Street the houses have a detailed terracotta string course and some roofs have ridge cresting and Dolphin House in Cannon Street has ridge cresting and scalloped slates on the roof (photo 60). Many of the buildings still have their original cast iron boot scraper by the front door.

## Green spaces

Despite the name Pea Porridge Green has no greenery in it (photo 8). Green spaces are limited to the front gardens of properties in Cannon Street, St Martin's Street, Orchard Street and Well Street (photos 59 and 60). There are small grassed areas in St Martin's Street and outside 17-22 Church Row. Trees in the grounds of St John's Church, Garland Lodge and 3 Cadney Lane add to the greenery of the area.



Photo 60: Building details found in the Brackland area

# Surfaces and Street furniture

## Surfaces

A variety of materials is used for roads and footpaths in the conservation area. The prestigious traditional material used for paving and steps was York stone, of which very little survives. Original setts used in the smaller lanes and alleys survive on the narrow footpaths in Angel Lane, along the length of the road surface in Skinner Street, in small areas in Pea Porridge Green and in the narrow part of High Baxter Street, close to its junction with Abbeygate Street. High quality, traditional materials and products have been used in enhancement schemes in Angel Hill, Chequer Square, Eastgate Street and The Broadway. The Traverse, Abbeygate Street and Brentgoval Street are surfaced in small setts whilst a traditional style modular block is used in Hatter Street and Whiting Street. Guildhall Street, College Lane and Tuns Lane are surfaced with a rolled gravel finish. Churchgate Street has small block paving and Church Walks has a concrete surface. In the Abbey Precinct, paths are simple and understated.

Elsewhere, the streets are surfaced with black tarmac roads and pavements with large and small concrete slabs or tarmac surfaces.

There is no cohesive use of surfacing materials for footpaths, giving a patchy appearance. Some of the surfaces are in need of repair or replacement.

## Street furniture

A number of interesting items of historic street furniture are found within the conservation area, many of which are listed. These include the centrepiece in St Mary's Square (photo 2), the drinking trough in The Broadway, the Pillar of Salt road sign in Angel Hill, the obelisk in Chequer Square and the martyr's memorial and stone drinking fountain in the Abbey Precinct. Listed red K6 telephone boxes are found outside the Queens Head in Churchgate Street and at the corner of Guildhall Street and Westgate Street, with two pairs of listed bollards in College Lane (photo 62). There are two old utility cabinets in front of the tall red brick boundary wall to the side of 54 St John's Street.

The special character and interest of the conservation area is enhanced by continued attention to detail when introducing new features. In Angel Hill, the guards around the trees and flower beds and the bollards were designed by the Borough Council's landscape officer specifically for that location (photo 62).

The 'gateways' at the Crown Street entrance to the Historic Core Zone were specially designed to incorporate necessary traffic signs in the sensitive location by St Mary's church. The seating areas around the trees in Cornhill were cleverly detailed to provide attractive seating but allow access to the meter cupboards now hidden from view. In the summer a number of basket trees are installed throughout the town centre. These each hold several hanging baskets and contribute to the floral decoration of the town as part of the annual Britain in Bloom competition.

Within the town centre, modern street furniture tends to follow a black and gold theme. In the Abbey Precinct are some timber slatted litter bins which suit its park-like feel. Lighting within the conservation area is provided by a combination of traditional styles within the town centre and simpler styles elsewhere, to enhance the appearance of the conservation area. In most areas these are discrete, harmonising with the

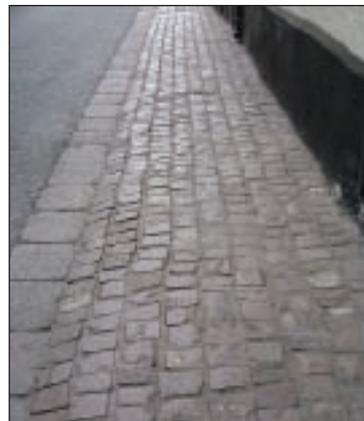


Photo 61: Examples of surfaces in the conservation area – Angel Lane, Tuns Lane and Angel Hill



Photo 62: (top clockwise) Street furniture within the conservation area – drinking trough in Eastgate Street, drinking fountain in the Abbey Precinct, Eastgate Street sign, flower bed guard and bollard designed for Angel Hill, the Pillar of Salt, obelisk in Chequer Square and listed bollards

buildings so they are barely noticeable. In Risbygate Street however, the lighting columns appear large and overhang the road, detracting from the fine buildings there.

Care must be taken to avoid clutter and to rationalise and improve street furniture when opportunities arise; the use of plastic street furniture is not acceptable within the conservation area and the brown plastic bins in the Abbey Precinct should be replaced at the earliest opportunity.

#### Neutral and negative areas

Skinner Street is a narrow cobbled road running between the backs of the properties on The Traverse and Buttermarket. Historically, some of the properties had frontages onto Skinner Street but now most of these have become service entrances. Refuse collection for these properties is from Skinner Street so it now serves as a storage area for bins and rubbish bags (photo 63).



*Photo 63: Skinner Street*

The rears of the properties along the northern side of Cornhill face onto Brentgoval Street, where there is a space for deliveries and servicing these buildings. This has resulted in an unattractive scene of fire escapes and rubbish bins (photo 64).



*Photo 64: Brentgoval Street to the rear of Cornhill*

Throughout the commercial parts of the conservation area there are ground floors and shopfronts which do not reflect the quality of the architecture of the upper floors of the buildings. Some modern shopfronts have been inserted into traditional buildings without regard to the style and features of the building as a whole, making upper floors seem isolated.

The Greene King depot in Bridewell Lane makes an opening in the street with views of the yard. The modern mesh boundary along the street is a jarring feature amongst the traditional walls and buildings.

With the exception of the town centre, overhead wires are visible throughout the conservation area, blighting views and detracting from the architecture of individual buildings (photo 65). There are several poor views out of the conservation area.

Scattered throughout the conservation area are modern buildings which do not reflect its special character or appearance, either because of their materials or their scale. Fortunately these are not numerous. Modern designs are encouraged in appropriate locations but they should have regard to their context.



*Photo 65: example of overhead wires in the conservation area*

### General condition of the area and Buildings at Risk

The conservation area is on the whole of very high quality with many listed buildings and other properties protected by Article 4 Directions to limit unsympathetic alterations. There are no properties on the Buildings at Risk Register within the conservation area and no problems of vacant properties.

# Problems, pressures and the capacity for change

## Commercial issues

As with any commercial centre, there are pressures for corporate signage. The Borough Council has guidance about shopfronts and advertisements of which shop owners and occupiers are made aware. This specifies the types of shopfronts, signs and materials which are acceptable. Many shops are occupied before consent has been given for new signage, however, and standard corporate signage is often unacceptable within the conservation area.

The town centre is to undergo a major change in the next few years as the former cattle market site is developed with a mixed use scheme incorporating shops, housing and a public building. Every effort is being made to ensure that it integrates with the historic centre and that the existing shopping area does not suffer. The commercial units which will be available in the new development are larger than those offered by many of the historic buildings used as shops so the new development will complement the existing shopping core and should attract a wider range of shops to the town, enhancing its overall viability and prosperity.

Many of the commercial buildings in the town centre are underused, with upper floors being vacant or used for storage. The use of upper floors for residential use is encouraged but can present difficulties in listed buildings. Every effort is made, however, to co-ordinate the requirements of the different legislation covering planning, conservation, building regulations and environmental health to provide satisfactory accommodation.

## Residential issues

There is a high demand for parking spaces within the residential streets in the town centre. Listing and the Article 4 Directions prevent the demolition of front boundary walls so parking in front gardens, where they exist, is not possible. Parking has been provided where possible within the constraints of a busy historic town centre and there are several residents parking zones. Signage has been kept to a minimum and located as discretely as possible.

There is a demand for satellite dishes and plastic windows in the residential properties within the conservation area. There are restrictions affecting both of these and planning permission and/or listed building consent may be required in many instances. The Borough Council takes enforcement action where windows and satellite dishes are unauthorised.

## 5 Key Characteristics to inform new design

### Form

The residential streets generally comprise rows of uniform Georgian and Victorian terraces built hard against the pavement edge often without front gardens. The building line is therefore very strong and well defined. The occasional building or group set back from the pavement edge does not weaken the building line as the boundaries continue the built up frontage. Typically roof eaves line the road interspersed with properties with steep gables. Jetties survive on some buildings, particularly in the medieval suburbs. The buildings in the centre of the conservation area display more variety in their form.

### Scale

The majority of buildings within the conservation area are of two and three storeys with attics used to gain extra space. There are some 'landmark' buildings, such as Cupola House, which are taller, but these are the exception. Plot widths vary, the narrower ones probably indicating the survival of the medieval burgage plot divisions. The elevations are well articulated so that the sense of scale remains even on the widest of frontages.

### Details

Good quality detailing is seen throughout the conservation area. Sash windows with traditional glazing bars and gauged brick arches, doorcases with Classical detailing and ornate fanlights, detailed terracotta work on string courses and cornices, overhanging eaves with decorative brackets, carved bargeboards and ridge cresting are all found. In some streets attics are typically lit by dormers of various designs which add interest and variety to the streetscene and roofline. Chimneys are also a notable and very varied feature.

### Materials

Limewashed or painted plaster is used on many of the timber-framed buildings. Colour must be appropriate to the style of the buildings and the historic area. The earlier Georgian facades are in red brick and later ones in gault brick, with timber sash windows with brick arched heads. Red brick and flint are typically used on outbuildings, ancillary structures and Victorian and Edwardian buildings. Small areas of tile hanging are found on some buildings and some have wrought iron balconies.

Clay plaintiles are the predominant roofing material on the steeper roof pitches of earlier properties. Slate is used mainly on the Victorian and later buildings, particularly houses, most of which have shallower roof pitches. Pantiles are also found.

### Boundaries

Boundaries are marked by walls of brick or flint, or railings. Timber fences are not typical. Between plots, historic boundaries are often demarcated with substantial brick and flint walls.

### Surfaces

Surface treatments are usually simple, of tarmac and plain slabs. Surface dressing and high quality natural materials have been used in some of the spaces and some streets. Abbeygate Street has been resurfaced with setts to highlight the pedestrian priority. Similar materials were used in Hatter Street to differentiate between parking bays and the carriageway. Natural materials are encouraged.

### Spaces

The layout of the town centre includes several large and historically important open spaces with different uses together with substantial private gardens to the rear. New development should reflect this mix of open and built areas.

## 6 Management proposals for the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Conservation Area for 2007-2011

This section sets out a mid to long-term strategy to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and seeks to address those issues identified in Section 4 of the appraisal. It will be reviewed and updated every five years in accordance with the requirements of BVPI 219.

Commercial pressures for corporate signs – the Borough Council has produced a design guide for shopfronts and advertisements and business owners are frequently referred to it. The Town Centre Manager is often the first point of contact a business owner has with the Borough Council. In order to prevent unacceptable signs being installed without consent, the Borough Council will work with the Town Centre Manager to raise awareness of the requirements affecting commercial users within the conservation area, advise business owners of them and encourage them to discuss their proposals with the planning department at an early stage.

Demand for plastic windows and satellite dishes in residential properties – the Borough Council has produced a series of advisory leaflets relating to listed buildings, conservation areas and properties affected by Article 4 Directions, in which owners are informed of, amongst other things, the requirements relating to plastic windows and satellite dishes. A seminar for solicitors and estate agents is proposed so that they can inform prospective purchasers of the implications. Articles in the Borough Council's newsletter *Community Spirit*, which is sent to every household in St Edmundsbury, are proposed and all of the information is available on the Borough Council's web site [www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk](http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk).

Monitoring of Article 4 Directions – Article 4 Directions are used on residential properties within the town centre conservation area to protect those buildings and features that contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area. A review programme is required to ensure that unauthorised alterations are identified and dealt with promptly.

The list of 'Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Significance' will be updated and extended to identify unlisted buildings which are important local features and which should be retained.

Street furniture. An audit of existing street furniture will be undertaken to assess whether it can be rationalised. Initially, the concrete planters and large tiered plastic planters will be removed and replaced with basket trees where appropriate. An audit of traffic signs will also be undertaken and, where possible, large signs will be replaced with smaller versions using smaller lettering.

Surfacing. A study has been commissioned by the Borough Council to analyse all aspects of the public realm in the town centre, including surfacing. This is being carried out by Landscape Design Associates and when adopted will provide the basis for a programme for planned improvements within the town centre. Any schemes for enhancement works within the conservation area will be the subject of public consultation in accordance with Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Overhead wires are visible in many of the streets outside the market place. The possibility and cost of routing them underground needs to be explored with the relevant utility companies.

## 7 Useful Information and Contacts

If you have any queries about the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Conservation Area, or need advice about development and alterations within the conservation area, please contact:

Planning Helpdesk  
Planning and Engineering Services  
St Edmundsbury Borough Council  
Western Way  
Bury St Edmunds  
IP33 3YS

Tel: 01284 757675  
E mail: [planning.helpdesk@stedsbc.gov.uk](mailto:planning.helpdesk@stedsbc.gov.uk)

Or

the Conservation Team at the above address

Tel: 01284 757356 or 757339  
E mail: [conservation@stedsbc.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@stedsbc.gov.uk)

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### Historic Maps

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