

Clare

Conservation Area

Appraisal and Management Plan





**Clare
Conservation Area Appraisal
and Management Plan**

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Introduction

The conservation area appraisal and management plan has been approved as planning guidance by the Borough Council on 23 September 2008.

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.

This document is an appraisal of the special character and appearance of the Clare 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 a conservation area; 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 Council's Corporate Plan to secure a sustainable and attractive environment and the long-term visions of 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 Clare 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 Clare's rich history.

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Summary of special interest

Clare is an attractive and vibrant place located in the Stour valley on the Essex border, surrounded by common land and open space providing a picturesque rural setting. Historically, Clare was important and prosperous, resulting in the high quality architecture we see today. The historic centre between Callis Street and Nethergate Street comprises a mix of buildings from the medieval period to the twentieth century. The combination of traditional buildings, both listed and unlisted, materials and styles give Clare a special character which is worthy of recognition and protection. It is impossible to include every building of note or importance but some are described in this appraisal.

Assessing special interest

1 Location and setting

Context

Clare is situated in southwest Suffolk on the north bank of the River Stour, which forms the border with Essex. The river has cut a valley through the overlying boulder clay of High Suffolk. Clare lies within this valley at some 50 metres above sea level. To the north, beyond the common, the land rises to 120m within 4 kilometres; to the south across the river into Essex the land rises more gently to a height of 80 metres. The boulder clay, a mix of clay, chalk and gravel, was the basic building material for the infill panels of Clare's timber frame buildings and is still used today for repairs and restoration.



Map 1: the Clare Conservation Area

Clare is served by classified roads to Sudbury and Haverhill. The navigable Stour did not extend beyond Sudbury. The railway reached Clare in 1865 and finally closed to all traffic in 1967. This relative isolation, coupled with an economic downturn in its fortunes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, saved Clare's historic heritage from the rapid development that is evident in other Suffolk towns and villages.

Notwithstanding the expansion of Clare in the later half of the twentieth century along its three main approaches, Clare retains its rural character, a well wooded 'hollow' by the River Stour surrounded by intensely farmed agricultural land. The valley floor and sides are included in the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Stour Valley Project Area and are covered by its Management Strategy and Action Plan.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council designated the conservation area in Clare on 14 February 1974. The boundary is shown on map 1.

General character and plan form

The Church of St Peter and St Paul dominates the centre of Clare. Its isolated setting in the extensive churchyard fronting to the highway on three sides, offers unimpeded views of every elevation, reinforcing its mass. The majority of the streets are built up to the footpath edge with few front gardens. Significant gaps along the street frontages are rare but these openings provide tantalising glimpses of countryside between otherwise solid building lines and make a very significant contribution to the character of Clare. Plot widths vary throughout Clare. Most buildings are two storeys in height, often with attic, and the few three storey buildings are located in the commercial centre. The central commercial area is predominantly retail, notable for the absence of strong corporate branded shop fronts. Moving out of the centre the change to residential is almost total.

The relatively low economic activity in Clare since the nineteenth century means that the old settlement, although much improved in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, has escaped the developments of the 1950s – 1980s that have compromised the individual character of many other Suffolk towns and villages, and the centre of Clare remains today much as it was, complete with the surviving medieval street patterns with several small lanes, footpaths and tight corners. The rears of properties are often visible from nearby lanes and streets, giving a different view of Clare.

The conservation area is centred on Market Hill, around which development is dense and compact. From here, linear development follows Bridewell Street to the north, Cavendish Road to the east and Nethergate Street to the south-west. Market Hill is a busy place, heavily trafficked by pedestrians and vehicles. In contrast, the spacious Nethergate Street and the quieter High Street have more relaxed characters.

To the south of Market Hill is Clare Castle Country Park which includes the redundant railway station and the remains of the castle. The outlying areas to the east, west and south are large areas of open space and common land, contrasting with the dense character of the centre of Clare.

The streets are lined with historic buildings, of which there are 175 listed buildings within the conservation area. They vary considerably in age and style, despite the majority being timber framed structures behind later façades, and are a major contributor to the special character and appearance of Clare. In addition, there are many unlisted buildings worthy of retention for the contribution they make to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

From all directions the conservation area is approached along the main roads leading into Market Hill, the centre of Clare; Bridewell Street/Callis Street/Church Street from the north, Cavendish Road from the east and Nethergate Street from the south-west. All of these are lined with historic buildings.

It was not until the later half of the twentieth century that Clare grew to its present size with the development of new housing estates on the roads to Cavendish, Stoke and Chilton. These estates lie outside the conservation area.

Archaeology and scheduled ancient monuments

The surviving historic core is an important example of a structured i.e. planned settlement laid out by a major family (the de Clares). The castle acts as the focus, but the street layout provides a link with the church and, beyond this the settlement (camp) on Lower Common, to the north. It is assumed that the shopping/housing block to the west of Market Hill is encroachment into what was originally an open market area between High Street and Market Hill and the castle bailey and church and churchyard. The further developments along Callis Street and Nethergate Street are likely to be secondary, although many date from the 16th and 17th centuries.



Photo 1: Clare Castle

There is great potential for archaeology to contribute to the understanding of medieval urbanism, manufacturing and trade within the region in this local context. Those medieval settlements which developed tend to be on county margins and are important links with the economies of the surrounding counties. There will be good survival of archaeological deposits associated with early housing on the street frontages below the surviving buildings and of occupation deposits (industrial functions and rubbish disposal) in the back yards to the rear of the buildings.

The surviving setting of historic landscape and low lying meadow land to the south and east and the commons to the west are an essential part of the historic value of the site. The commons are of very early origin and can be assumed to be part of the original design for the settlement.

The camp with its major ditched enclosure came back into use during the early medieval period when it became the focus for the medieval manor of Erbury. There is below ground evidence for major buildings within the enclosure and medieval clay pottery has also been found.

The castle is one of the largest and best preserved 11th century Norman motte and baileys in Suffolk (the only comparable sites are Eye and Bungay). The motte and its ditch are the focus of the settlement and determine the curved street pattern at the southern end of Market Hill. A medium-large inner bailey runs east from the motte but has been badly damaged by the mid 19th railway. To the north-east a very large outer bailey with high surviving bank is clearly visible within the country park. When the castle was built there was a broad, swampy moat between the inner and outer baileys, with further swamps flanking the east side of the castle motte.

The priory was founded in 1248 and was also part of the de Clare family foundation. The remains of the cloister survive at the rear of the building. A bronze medieval brooch has been found on the site.

The entire group of monuments (castle, camp and priory) and settlement are an unusual survival nationally and are remarkable in that the level of integration into the original urban street scene survives and the overall scale of the Medieval settlement has not been overwhelmed by post-medieval and modern development.

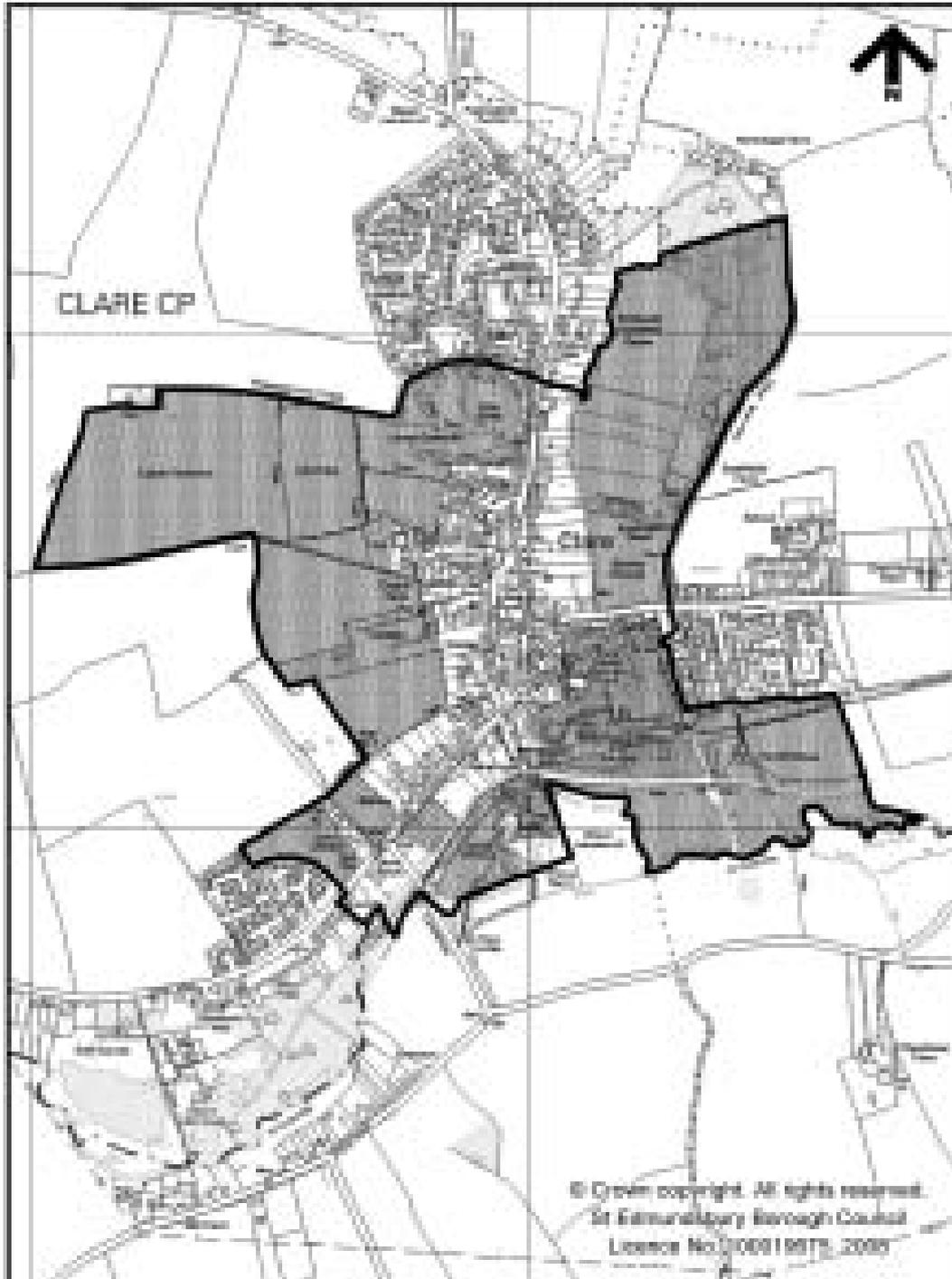
Beyond the boundary of the conservation area is an area of below ground archaeology in farmland to the west of Clare. Although not included in the conservation area it demonstrates the extent of the archaeological remains known about today.

The remains of Clare Castle (photo 1), the uninhabited parts of Clare Priory and the earthworks on Lower Common (see photo 6) are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

3 Spatial analysis

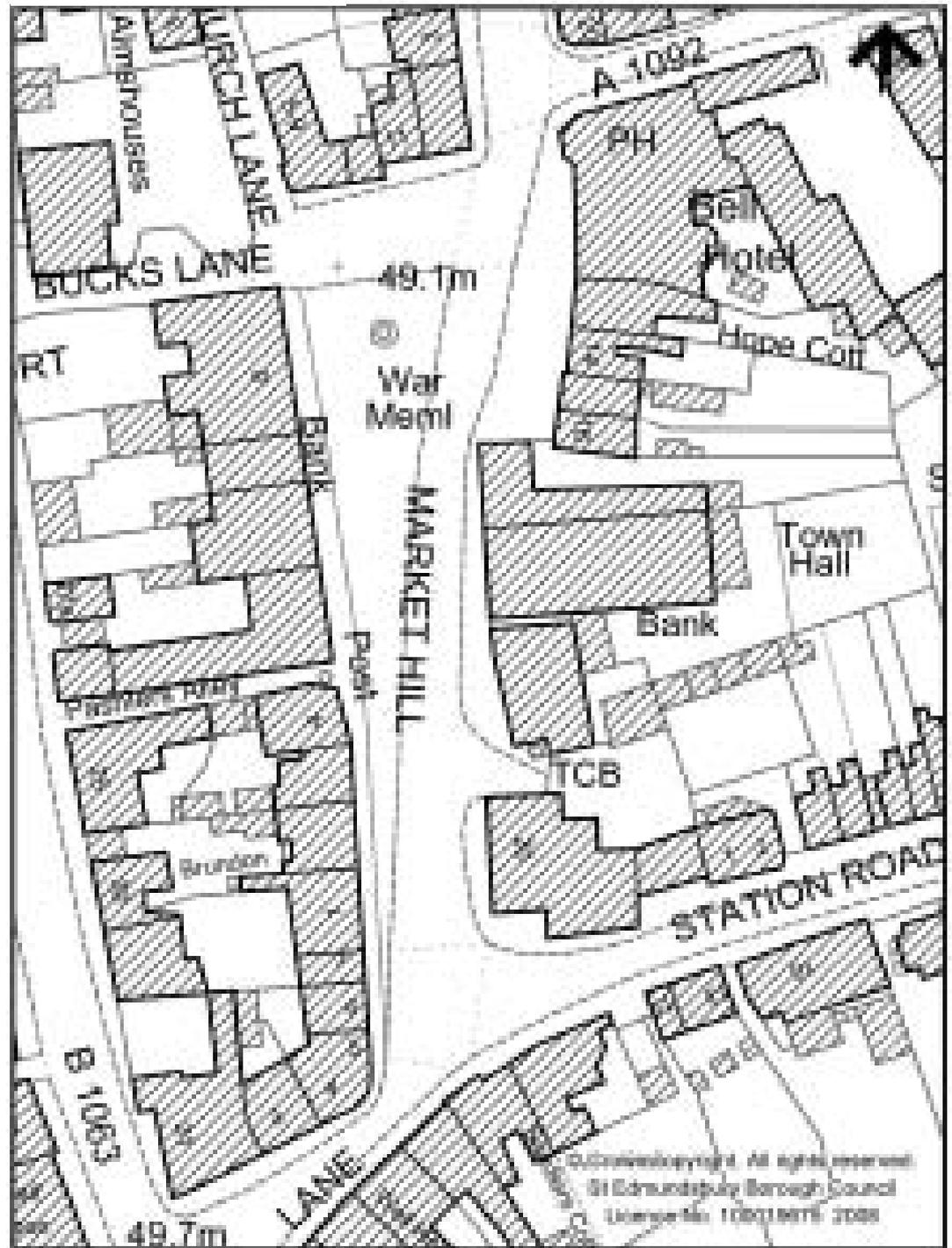
Character and interrelationship of spaces

Clare is rightly famous for its timber framed buildings and it is easy to overlook the abundance of trees and the extent of open spaces that surround it and which provide a landscaped setting and cover the greater part of the conservation area (map 3). From any point in the historic centre of Clare the open countryside is no more than a short stroll and the rear of many properties give way to open fields. There are several smaller open spaces within its core which provide a green setting for the buildings around them. Mature trees and shrubs are abundant throughout Clare and make a positive addition to the streetscape and the overall character of the conservation area.



Map 3: extensive open spaces surrounding Clare

Market Hill



Map 4: Market Hill

This is the focus of the centre of Clare and is a rectangular hard space used as a car park. It is bounded on all sides by two and three storey buildings dating from the 16th century, some with traditional shopfronts and signs (photo 2). Most are in commercial use but there are houses on the east side and on both sides at the south end. There is a war memorial at the north end of the space. Church Street, Well Lane and Cavendish Road converge on Market Hill making it a busy place. Bucks Lane, Pashlar's Alley and Church Lane are narrow historic alleyways which provide pleasant links through from Market Hill to the High Street (photo 3).



Photo 2: examples of buildings in Market Hill



Photo 3: view along Pashlar's Alley to High Street

Clare Castle Country Park and Clare Priory Grounds



Map 5: Clare Castle Country Park and Clare Priory Grounds

To the south and east of Market Hill is Clare Castle Country Park, an important historical site which includes Clare Castle, the old railway station buildings and a cast iron bridge across the River Stour. From the car parks at the end of The Broadway and Station Road visitors walk into the spacious park, which is quite a contrast to the built up centre. It can also be accessed via the narrow footpaths from Bailey Lane, part of the modern housing development adjoining to the north and east. The surviving castle mound with a fragment of the castle keep and wall (see photo 1) is to the north of the former railway line. Part of the outer bailey survives in the part of the park at the east end of Station Road, which breaches it. In addition, an extensive part of the inner bailey also survives. The survival of such an extent of Norman earthworks as found in the Country Park is remarkable. The park offers excellent opportunities for walks with open and wooded areas (photo 4).



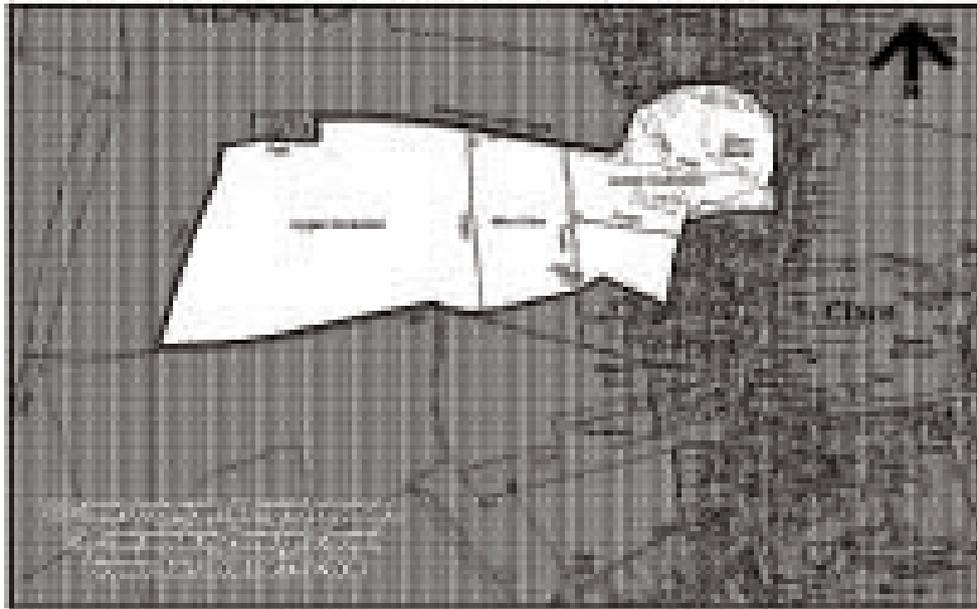
Photo 4: View along the River Stour, Clare Country Park



Photo 5: Walls within the Priory grounds

The grounds to Clare Priory are private and provide a quieter, tranquil space. They may sometimes be entered on foot down a wooded track at the bottom of The Broadway and through a heavy gate set into a brick and flint wall. This way, entry is directly into the peaceful garden. Vehicular access to the priory is from Ashen Lane. Smaller in size than the country park, the priory garden contains the ruins of the old priory, whose tall brick and flint walls sub-divide the area around the present priory (photo 5), and the church. The open grassed area to the east is bounded by trees.

Upper and Lower Common



Map 6: Upper and Lower Common

To the north west of the settlement are Upper and Lower Common. This has belonged to a charitable trust since 1610 and is on the site of Erbury, the Anglo-Saxon site. Approached on foot along Sheepgate Lane, a grassed track off Bridewell Street, or from Common Street, the common is on exposed high ground which affords views over the properties in Bridewell Street to the countryside beyond. Lower Common contains the Erbury earthworks still in excellent condition. Although an exact date for the earthworks has yet to be established, they are generally considered to be of either Saxon or Iron Age origin. If Erbury is found to be a Saxon Burgh it would be a national rarity as so few examples have been found to date. Alternatively, the survival of Iron Age earthworks over 2000 years old so close to the centre of Clare is remarkable. Either way, they are extremely important (photo 6).



Photo 6: Erbury earthworks on Lower Common

Grazed every summer, the common has a natural appearance in contrast to the mown areas in the Clare Castle Country Park. It is a highly valued open space, appreciated for its tranquility, timelessness and absence of intensive management. Continued grazing and the resistance of inappropriate actions such as tree planting are paramount to the long-term survival of its character. Clare can be approached on foot by a network of footpaths across the common.



Photo 7: Callis Street spaces

Callis Street

The south end of the street opens out into an informal spacious, green area before narrowing again in front of the church. The space is split into three by Common Street and the vehicular accesses to The Cock Inn and numbers 4-12 running parallel with Callis Street. The three areas are all simple grassed spaces with a few trees. They are a little cluttered with a variety of advert boards, litter bins and signs.



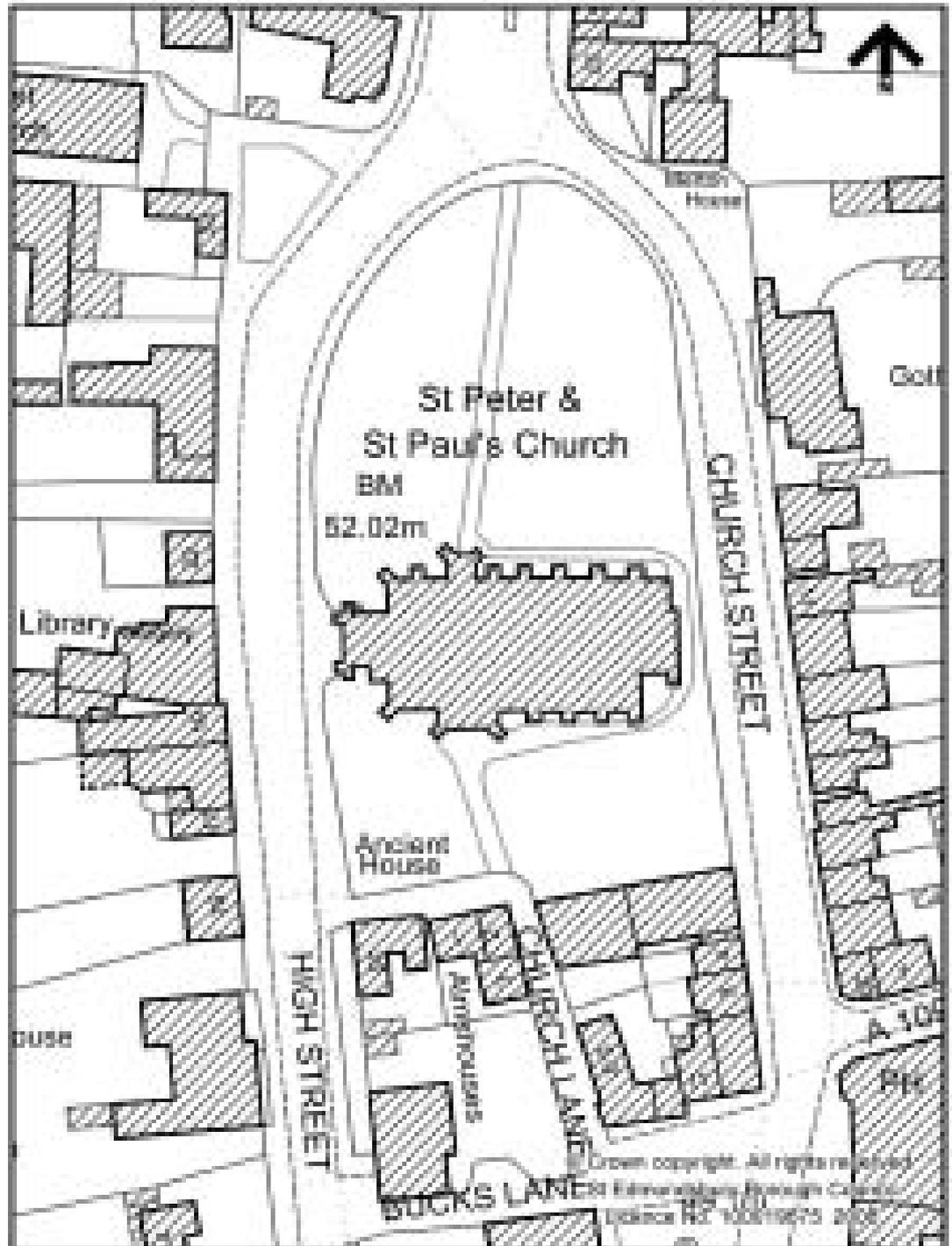
Map 7: Green areas in Callis Street

Churchyard

The churchyard around the church of St Peter and St Paul is quite small but provides it with an attractive setting. Clear views into the churchyard are possible from High Street, Church Street and Church Lane. There is a brick wall along its boundaries with Church Street and High Street, with a low plinth wall and a pair of metal gates around the curved northern edge. Arrowhead railings form the boundary with Church Lane. Within the churchyard are several Irish Yews which have been reduced to give them a distinctive shape (photo 8).

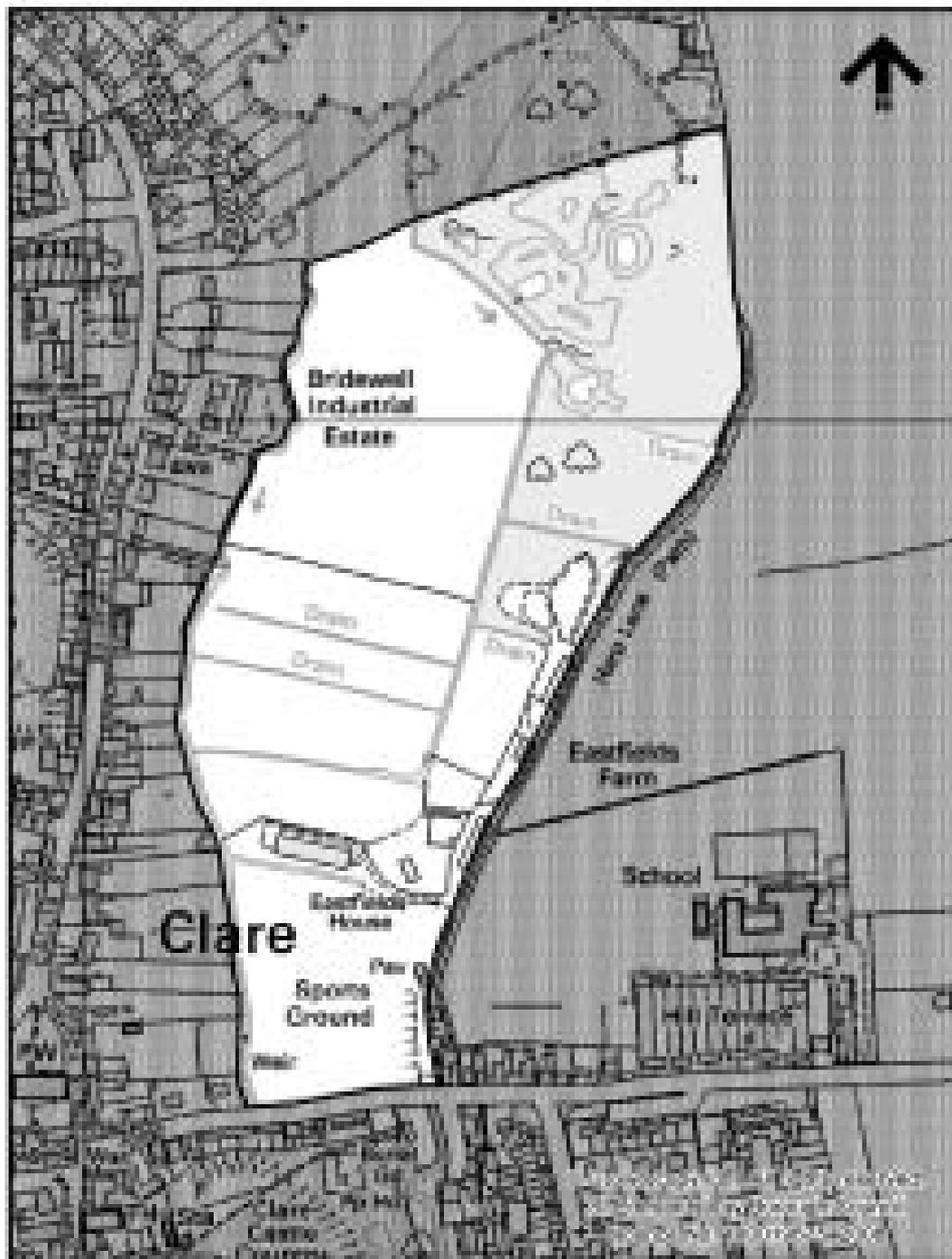


Photo 8: The churchyard



Map 8: Churchyard of St Peter and St Paul

Cavendish Road



Map 9: Open space in Cavendish Road

To the north of Cavendish Road is a large green open space including the playing fields, with a fine backdrop of mature trees along the rear boundaries of properties in Callis Street (photo 9). Its west boundary is formed by Chiltern Stream and it is intersected by a series of drains, with lakes in the north-east corner.

The historic centre is abutted by modern development only on the northbound Callis Street and a small area behind the High Street. Along Cavendish Road and Nethergate Street there is a buffer of open space between historic Clare and the new developments.



Photo 9: Open space with a backdrop of mature trees along the western edge

Key views and vistas

A walk around Upper and Lower Common, past the allotments, offers a panoramic view of Clare. Before the autumn leaf fall an observer will see a few tiled roofs and the church tower, amidst a fine collection of mature trees. From Lower Common there is a good view over Bridewell Street to the fields beyond (photo 10).



Photo 10: View from Lower Common



Photo 11: View of countryside between 3 High Street and The Swan

The view south from Callis Street is impressively terminated by the church. The castle ruins can be glimpsed from Market Hill. From the country park one can look over the river into Essex and the opposite side of the Stour Valley. Glimpses of countryside are gained through the gaps between buildings (photo 11), Bucks Lane and Pashlar's Alley allow views into High Street and a narrow view of the church is seen from Market Hill down Church Lane (photo 12).



Photo 12: View of church from Church Lane

4 Character analysis

Definition of character areas

Six areas of distinct character have been identified within the conservation area. These are shown on map 10 and described below. Although the areas are defined, there are zones of transition between.

- **Market Hill** the main shopping area in the centre of Clare, including Well Lane at the southern end.
- **High Street** a quieter, secondary shopping street, with residential uses at the north end.
- **Nethergate Street** a wide street, predominantly in residential use, leading out of Clare to the south-west.
- **Clare Castle Country Park and Clare Priory** two historic open spaces accessed via Station Road (Country Park only), Malting Lane and The Broadway.
- **Bridewell Street/Callis Street/Church Street** a single street leading into Market Hill from the north. It is divided along its length into three distinct sections. This area includes Common Street, off Callis Street.
- **Cavendish Road** a busy road leading out of Market Hill to the east.



Map 10: Character areas

Market Hill

Prevailing and Former Uses

The commercial area still thrives in Market Hill and Well Lane. Market Hill is a busily trafficked area, being located at the junction of the A1092, the main through road between the A134 and Haverhill, with the B1063, the southbound approach to Clare from the A143. It provides the main parking area for shoppers and visitors. Market Hill is surrounded by shops and business premises with traditional shopfronts and signs.

Buildings

Historic buildings of two and three storeys surround Market Hill, all hard up against the footpath giving a clearly defined building line and a strong sense of enclosure (photo 13). The group of buildings forming the northern boundary are 16th and 17th century timber framed buildings of which number 10, with the large, single gable facing Market Hill, is the surviving cross-wing of an earlier building (photo 14).



Photo 13: Buildings around Market Hill



Photo 14: 16th and 17th century buildings in Market Hill

The Bell Hotel started life as a chandlery and in 1823 incorporated the adjoining cobblers shop. In the 16th century it was an inn known as the Green Dragon. It is an impressive building although the timber framing on the front, facing Market Hill is applied. 20 Market Hill was the Bear and Crown Inn. Listed II*, it is reputed to have previously been the wool hall (photo 15).



Photo 15: 20 Market Hill



Photo 16: Well Lane

Clare Town Hall is a unique building in Market Hill, being 20th century but of a traditional style with the front elevation of render and dark stained timber with a large overhanging gable. It is the only unlisted building in Market Hill.

Well Lane forms the southern edge to Market Hill and follows the curve of the castle mound. Well Lane contains a fine collection of listed buildings, mostly two storeys in height and all but one with rendered and painted fronts (photo 16).

Building Materials

The majority of buildings in Market Hill and Well Lane have painted, rendered walls. Gault brick is also found. Slates are found on most roofs with clay plain tiles on the older properties.

Details

Windows tend to be small and large paned sashes, those to the first floor of 7 and 8 have cornices on console brackets. To the rear of 17, however, are a small Victorian window with margin panes and an old leaded light window on the rear wing. Doors are mostly panelled, many with detailed door surrounds and fanlights. Overhanging eaves are found on several properties, those of 1, Clare House, and 18, the Old Bank House being particularly decorative examples. There are some hipped roofs on the ends of terraces. Many of the buildings in Well Lane have parapets. There are some good traditional shopfronts, both in current and former shop premises. A small metal gate survives at the rear of number 17 and the railings to the rear of 27 High Street and the Station Road elevation of number 20 are visible from within Market Hill. There is a listed red K6 telephone box outside the Old Bank House (see photo 77).



Photo 17: Details found in Market Hill

Green Spaces

There are no green spaces within Market Hill and Well Lane as all of the buildings line the pavement edge. The garden and trees to the rear of 27 High Street are visible from the north-west corner along Buck's Lane and Church Lane. Looking out of Market Hill along Station Road there is a garden to the side of number 20 and part of Clare Castle Country Park.

High Street

Prevailing and Former Uses

More shops are found in the south end of High Street, but this is a more peaceful area than Market Hill, lacking its bustle. Many of the existing shops have been converted from dwellings, and some medieval shops have been converted to residential use. The north end of High Street contains residential properties and a Baptist Church and is overlooked by the church of St Peter and St Paul. It has a more spacious feel compared to the southern part of the street. A fourteenth century vault beneath one of the shops provides further evidence of Clare's earlier medieval past. The Nethergate

Brewery used to occupy the site to the rear of numbers 11-13 though this site has now been redeveloped for housing (Bloomfield Court) but 13 still includes the jug and bottle shop (photo 18).

15 was the former vicarage, which is now found at number 14. The 15th century rear wing of 20 (now part of 21) is reputed to have been a Guildhall. 21 itself is now occupied by the Guildhall Surgery, with a flat in the rear wing. A library has been built to the rear and houses (St Peter's Court) built in the former Charringtons Coalyard, which occupied the whole of the site to the west of 17-22, with its access between 21 and 22 (photo 19).

Buildings

Along the High Street are buildings of two and three storeys, most of which are built up to the footpath edge although there are some set back a little with small front gardens. The rooflines along High Street are unbroken with no dormers. There is a high concentration – 36% - of Grade I and II* listed buildings in the street.

Of particular interest is the Ancient House, a 14th century house with heavy pargetting (photo 21). The church is of course a very important and fine building and dominates the northern half of High Street. Church Farm is a late 15th/early 16th century jettied farmhouse, its unusual location being a reminder of the proximity of the



Photo 18: The Jug and Bottle Shop



Photo 19: New development in St Peter's Court



Photo 20: The north-west side of High Street



Photo 21: The Ancient House

countryside to the centre of Clare (photo 22). To its rear is an extensive range of farm buildings.

Number 21 is a late 16th century jettied house (formerly 20 and 21) with a 15th century wing to the rear. Sigor's House, formerly the vicarage, is a 16th century jettied house with a listed 19th century red brick castellated boundary wall to the north (photo 23). There is a similar wall opposite, forming the southern boundary wall of the Ancient House. Numbers 11-13, dating from the late 15th/early 16th century, is one of the few timber framed houses in Clare with exposed timbers (photo 24). The Swan Public House, built c.1600, has a very fine re-used carved oriel window sill at first floor level with a swan in the centre (photo 25).

The new developments behind 11-13 and 17-22 are of high quality and reflect the traditional details and materials found in the High Street (see photo 19).

The rears of some of the properties along the west side of Market Hill are clearly visible and form a significant part of the east side of High Street (photo 26).



Photo 22: Church Farmhouse



Photo 24: 11-13 High Street



Photo 23: Sigor's House and castellated wall



Photo 25: The Swan



Photo 26: Rears of properties in Market Hill

Building Materials

Red and Gault brick, render and timber framing are all evident (see photos 20 and 24). Weatherboarding is used on the 15th century wing to the rear of 21 and on the modern library building next to it, and for ancillary and small buildings. Roofs are predominantly slate with clay plaintiles found on older buildings (photo 26). The community centre at the northern end of the street has slates laid in decorative bands (photo 27). The new development in Bloomfield Court uses red brick and weatherboarding, reflecting the former brewery buildings.



Photo 26 (above): Example of clay plaintiled roof

Photo 27 (left): Patterned slates on the Community Centre roof

Details

There are several traditional shopfronts, some with original blind boxes in High Street. Numbers 2-3, the ironmongers, is a particularly good example. Jetties are found along this street and a few properties have decorative terracotta string courses. Eaves, some slightly overhanging but unadorned, typically line the road and rooflines are unbroken with no dormers. Some gables have bargeboards. Chimneys are a very striking feature. There is more variety of windows in High Street with mullion and transoms, leaded lights and casements all found alongside the ubiquitous sash. There are several examples of good panelled doors and canopies. Number 27 has a Doric porch – the only one in the street. An old elaborate hanging sign bracket survives on the front of Half Moon House and The Swan has a gas lamp on its front elevation (photo 28). Boundaries are of red brick and railings, those to the churchyard along Church Lane having arrowhead tops.

Green Spaces

The churchyard to the north of the church and the small triangular green opposite, in front of number 24, the Baptist Church and community centre, together provide an open feel to this part of the street in contrast to the densely built up character of its southern end (photo 29). There is a visible garden to the side and rear of 17, a small garden outside number



Photo 29: Churchyard and green in High Street

27 and several small front gardens scattered along the street. There are several mature trees behind the High Street including a fine Field Maple in the garden of the former police station (and now a private house) on the Erbury estate.



Photo 28: Details found in High Street

Nethergate Street

Prevailing and Former Uses

There are some commercial properties at its eastern end, nearest to the centre, but these are soon replaced by large residential properties set in spacious grounds. Hotel and bed and breakfast uses are found in the street. The Clare Hotel has been a pub known as The Seafarer and The Rose and Crown. The timber framed pargetted building on the corner of the Broadway, at the north end of Nethergate Street, used to be a fulling and dyeing house. Old Court was formerly the police station and the cells still survive. The former Nethergate Garage (number 3) is now a house.

Buildings

Buildings are predominantly two storeys. Despite the buildings being positioned close to the footpath edge, similar to the rest of the centre of Clare, the character of this street is much more open and green due to the width of the street and the generous tree planting. Buildings only continue for a short distance along the southern side and many of those on the northern side are set back along a secondary access road running parallel with Nethergate Street (photo 30). Buildings tend to increase in size to the west, where there is a good collection of noteworthy grand houses, with smaller properties closer to the centre. There is a high concentration of Grade I and II* listed buildings in the west end of the street.



Photo 30: North side of Nethergate Street

Cliftons is a large 16th century plastered timber framed house with two 18th century side wings. Despite its age it has a Georgian appearance (photo 31). There are two 16th century barns to the rear of Cliftons, now converted to dwellings. 8, Nethergate House, is a large, early 16th century jettied house with closely spaced exposed studding – a sign of wealth (photo 32).



Photo 31: Cliftons



Photo 32: 8 Nethergate Street

Number 15, Netheridge, is a 15th century house set at right-angles to the street with two gables facing the street and some exposed timber framing and pargetting. Thornton House, on the corner of Ashen Road, is a 16th century timber framed house with 19th century Gothic style arched windows. One gable has exposed 16th century ornamented timber framing (photo 33). Towards the edge of the conservation area are Stour House (photo 34) and Riverside, both early 16th century jettied timber framed houses. Stour House is thatched – the only one in the conservation area – and has a carved bressumer and exposed timbers. There are some tall red brick and flint walls forming the boundaries to The White House, Stour House and Riverside. Lower flint walls line both sides of Ashen Road.

Nearer the centre is an attractive terrace, numbers 27-34, of early 19th century unlisted houses (photo 35). Stone Hall has a 16th century timber frame which was considerably rebuilt when the building was renovated in the 1930's.

Building Materials

Red and gault brick and painted render are the predominant building materials with a little timber framing visible. Roofs have a mixture of slates and plaintiles on the roofs. There is one thatched property. Brick and flint are used for boundary walls along Nethergate Street and Ashen Road (photo 36).



Photo 33: Thornton House



Photo 34: Stour House



Photo 35: 27-34 Nethergate Street



Photo 36: Flint wall along Nethergate Street

Details

Roofs mainly have their eaves lining the road but these are interspersed with the occasional gable. Dormers and chimneys are prominent features – several properties have chimneys of clustered octagonal shafts. There are many examples of good quality doorcases, fanlight and porches, some with Classical detailing. Windows are mostly small and large paned sashes, with some leaded lights and one example of Victorian 'Gothic' style arched windows. Some properties have bays. There are low boundary walls to some properties which presumably once supported railings. There are a few timber framed properties with exposed timbers and jetties.



Photo 37: Details found in Nethergate Street

Green Spaces

The western half of Nethergate Street has an impressive informal avenue of mature Plane, Lime and Beech trees (photo 38). The north side has a large grass verge with trees between the main road and the secondary access road to many of the houses along this side of the street. The garden to The White House is partly visible with a large open area next to it, giving a long stretch of green space. Opposite, next to Cliftons, is a large open space providing a buffer between the historic centre and modern development and there is a large Cedar tree visible in the garden to the side of Cliftons (photo 39).



Photo 38: Avenue of trees along Nethergate Street



Photo 39: Open space next to Cliftons

Clare Castle Country Park and Clare Priory

Prevailing and former uses

The Country Park is approached on foot via Station Road or along Malting Lane. The castle remains (see photo 1) dominate the country park, which also is the home for Clare's redundant railway station; the only railway station built in the grounds of an eleventh century castle, a choice of location that many thought eccentric. This large, open space provides a pleasant, tranquil contrast to the busy centre. The late nineteenth/early twentieth century warehouse in Malting Lane has found a new use as an antiques warehouse (photo 40) and the old railway station as an office for the country park (photo 41).

Clare Priory, the first home of the Augustinians in England, is the oldest in the worldwide Order still in use. It is set in its own private grounds to the south west of the country park. It is accessible on foot through a small gate from the path leading from the footbridge to the north. Vehicular access is via Ashen Lane. Although the grounds are private, visitors who respect the priory and its grounds as a quiet, tranquil space are welcomed.



Photo 40: Warehouse in Malting Lane



Photo 41: Former railway station

Buildings

Numbers 1 and 2 The Broadway date from the 15th century and have some ornate pargetting work on the front (photo 42). Trinder's shop, opposite, is in the extensions to the house called The Griffins on Well Lane. The extensions follow the curve of the road and face into The Broadway. The southern-most extension includes a carriage arch (photo 43). The warehouse in Malting Lane is an imposing building of three tall storeys (photo 40). Also in Malting Lane is a row of five cottages, contrasting in scale with the maltings.



Photo 42: 1 and 2 The Broadway



Photo 43: Trinder's carriage arch

Terraces of two storey cottages of varying designs line Station Road; one pair is a rare example of rat-trap bond (photo 44). Within the country park is the ruined keep of the castle set on top of the mound. In the flat ground to the south are the former Victorian railway buildings, an attractive group comprising an engine shed with tracks and hoist, the station (photo 41) and a waiting room on the opposite platform (photo 45).



Photo 44: Example of rat-trap bond on properties in Station Road



Photo 45: The old waiting room



Photo 46: Clare Priory

Most of the present priory building dates from the 14th century with a distinctive buttressed stone front to the west (photo 46). Built in to the old priory walls to the south-west is a room with an ogee-shaped roof topped with a ball finial. Some of the old priory walls enclose the gardens. The chapel in the priory grounds was originally the Infirmary then used as a barn in 1748 and has been used as the chapel for the priory since the 1950's.

Building Materials

Red brick and flint, sometimes with gault brick dressings, and render are the typical building materials in this part of the conservation area (photo 47). The Griffin's extensions are of exposed timber frame (see photo 43). The warehouse in Malting Lane has blue engineering brick detailing (see photo 40). Slate is the main roofing material, found on all roofs in Station Road, Malting Lane and those of the former station buildings. Rooflines on these buildings are unbroken without dormers. Tiles are used on the older buildings with shingles (wooden tiles) on the chapel's modern entrance porch, a rare example of a once common building material.



Details

The varying nature of the buildings and ruins in the country park and priory grounds mean there is little common detailing. The old station (see photo 41) and waiting room have quoins and window surrounds in gault brick, contrasting with the red brick of the walls. Chimneys are a notable feature. 1 and 2 The Broadway have pargetted designs in the render. 3-7 Station Road have arched casement windows and doorways with arched heads and planked doors, whilst 8 and 9 have shaped bargeboards and timber porches. Boundaries are formed by railings along the side of 20 Market Hill, facing Station Road, and in the front of 8 and 9, whilst a tall flint wall runs along the east side of Malting Lane.



Photo 47: Examples of building materials in the country park area



Photo 48: Details found in the country park area

Green Spaces

In addition to the extensive country park and priory grounds, which are described in section 3, there are gardens visible in the fronts of 9 and 11 Malting Lane and 8 and 9 Station Road and the side of 20 Market Hill. The trees in the back gardens of the properties in Market Hill can be seen from the fire station site at the end of Station Road and those in the garden to Larks Hall, a modern property, can be seen above the tall flint boundary wall along Malting Lane.

Bridewell Street/Callis Street/Church Street

Prevailing and Former Uses

Most of the properties in these streets are in residential use. There is a shop (which was formerly a house), two pubs and a community centre, formerly a National Board School, around the green in Callis Street and a few shops at the south end of Church Street, close to the shopping area. 14 Callis Street was originally a Guildhall, the surviving wing being part of a much larger property, and a library (photo 49). The 17th century 45 Bridewell Street was formerly the Red Lion Inn and is mentioned in a probate inventory of 1688. There are some surviving historic shopfronts reflecting former uses.



Photo 49: 14 Callis Street



Photo 50: The former Red Lion Inn

Buildings

The majority of buildings in these streets, including Common Street, are two storey with the occasional single or three storey property. Along the east side of Bridewell Street, buildings line the pavement edge. On the west side they are set back with small front gardens (photo 51). The buildings along Common Street, between Callis Street and the common, are of different ages and styles in an informal line with buildings arranged at varying distances from the footpath (photo 52). The buildings along the east side of Callis Street are similarly set back from the footpath, some with quite large front gardens whereas those on the west side are hard up to the edge of the access road serving them (photo 53). Properties along both sides of Church Street, with the exception of the church, are all hard against the pavement edge (photo 54).



Photo 51: Bridewell Street



Photo 52: Common Street



Photo 53: Callis Street



Photo 54: Church Street

There are many listed properties in Callis Street and Bridewell Street and all properties in Church Street are listed. 1-8 Bridewell Street is a terrace of eight houses, seemingly uniform, but 1-4 are slightly earlier in date and there are some minor differences in the glazing of the windows and door details, with the doors of 1-4 having more formal surrounds (photo 51). 30-34 Bridewell Street is a 15th century timber framed house with a 16th century cross-wing. The jettied front has exposed timber framing (photo 55). Good quality close studded framing is also seen along the side elevation of 48 Bridewell Street, a late 15th/early 16th century property (photo 56). 12-15 is a 17th century thatched building – the only one in this part of the conservation area (photo 57). 16, Boyne House, is an attractive, unlisted, Victorian house which retains a former shopfront.



Photo 55: Cross-wing of 30-34 Bridewell Street



Photo 56: Side of 48 Bridewell Street



Photo 57: 12-15 Bridewell Street



Photo 58: The Grove, Callis Street

In Callis Street, number 14, the former Guildhall is an impressive building with more close studded timber framing evident (see photo 49). Number 30, The Grove, is a jettied 15th century house which was originally a hall house. It has elegant early 19th century 'Gothic' style arches within the windows and a Doric portico (photo 58). Ship's Stores is a 17th century building, originally a house, the shopfront being a 20th century addition. Set back along the access road is a terrace of two storey cottages between the Cock Inn, a 17th century or possibly older, timber framed building, and The Globe Inn, dating from the 18th century. Number 4 and 5 are part of the same building as the Cock Inn. Some properties in the terrace have bay windows to the ground floor (see photo 53). 19-21 Callis Street is a smart terrace of unlisted late 18th/early 19th century cottages with good quality detailing, including the dentil courses around the chimneys (photo 59).



Photo 59: 19-21 Callis Street



Photo 60: Gothic House, Church Street

Gothic House in Church Street is a 17th century timber framed house refaced in the 19th century when the parapet and Victorian 'Gothic' windows were added (photo 60). One of the few three storey buildings in the conservation area, number 11 is a striking double-pile house which towers above its 1 1/2 storey neighbours, numbers 8-10 (photo 61).

The rest of the east side of Church Street comprises a terrace of properties built or re-fronted in the 18th and 19th centuries, some with earlier timber frames. The west side of Church Street is dominated by the church, a large building of flint with ashlar dressings dating from the 13th century. The east end faces Church Street but excellent views of the north and south elevations can also be had (photo 62). The tiled rear roof slopes of 9-11 Market Hill and the properties along the northern end of Church Lane can be seen across the churchyard from Church Street (photo 63).



Photo 61: 11 Church Street



Photo 62: Church of St Peter and St Paul



Photo 63: Rear view of 9-11 Market Hill

Building Materials

Red and gault brick and render are all prevalent. Some exposed timber framing is also seen. Flint is used on the church. Slate and pantiles are the main roofing materials with pantiles found down Common Street.

Details

In Church Street and Bridewell Street most properties have plain overhanging eaves to the road. Some gables have bargeboards, especially in Callis Street where there is more of a mixture of eaves and gables on front elevations. Dormers are a rarity - most rooflines are unbroken (see photos 51-54). Chimneys continue to be a prominent feature. A little ridge cresting is found on 1-3 Bridewell Street. Windows are mostly sashes but casements, leaded lights and 'Gothic' arches are also seen. Many doors have good quality Classical surrounds or porticos. Railings are used to mark the Callis Street boundary of the community centre. Other boundaries are brick and flint.



Photo 64: Details found in Bridewell Street, Callis Street and Church Street

Green Spaces

In this part of the conservation area several properties have small front gardens. The churchyard is clearly visible as the north end is open and the east and west sides have a wall which can easily be seen over. The Irish Yews are prominent features (photo 65). Glimpses of countryside can be gained between houses in Bridewell Street (photo 66). Sheepgate Lane off Bridewell Street provides pedestrian access to the common and is a grassed track informally lined with bushes and trees.



Photo 65: View of the churchyard from Callis Street



Photo 66: Glimpse of countryside from Bridewell Street

Cavendish Road

Prevailing and former uses

All of the properties along Cavendish Road are in residential use. There is a small photographic studio in the single storey part, possibly the former forge, of Forge House. Bareham's Yard was a former milliners premises which has been rebuilt as new housing replicating the former building in terms of appearance, materials and scale (photo 67).



Photo 67: The rebuilt Bareham's Yard

Buildings

There is a great variety in age and style but all are two storey. The two sides of the road have different characters. The south side has buildings along its whole length; some are set back a little from the edge of the footpath with small front gardens (photo 68). The north side comprises the open space behind a low boundary wall for half its length, with two modern properties – Burlington House and Ashley House - behind a continuation of this wall and screened by trees (photo 69). Only the three properties at the west end are set against the edge of the footpath.



Photo 68: South side of Cavendish Road



Photo 69: North side of Cavendish Road

In contrast to other streets in Clare, there are only two listed buildings within the conservation area in Cavendish Road. Number 33, Rushbrooke House, is a late 18th/early 19th timber framed house with a carriage entrance in the west end (photo 70). Number 34, Bareham House, is an 18th century timber framed house with a Roman Doric doorcase.

There are several unlisted buildings of note. The rebuilt Bareham's Yard still retains the distinctive appearance of the original 19th century building. Its main elevation, with rows of narrow windows, faces east so is viewed on the approach along Cavendish Road to Market Hill. It is a well-known property and instantly recognisable (see photo 67). 1 Cavendish Road (photo 71) is red brick with gault brick detailing which is also used on 32, Bailey Cottage, a very narrow property. 36 and 37, Erbury Villas, is an attractive pair of early 20th century houses (photo 72). Next door, 38, is a detached villa of similar age and size but with different detailing.



Photo 70: Rushbrooke House

The rears of the properties along Church Street are partly visible.



Photo 71 (left): 1 Cavendish Road
Photo 72 (above): Erbury Villas

Building Materials

Painted render is the predominant material found along Cavendish Road with some red brick and painted flint. Bareham's Yard is weatherboarded. Roofs are mostly slate. The long boundary wall along the north side is red brick.

Details

There is a mixture of eaves and gables to the road. Plain overhanging eaves are a typical detail, that of Rushbrooke House has paired modillions. Some gables have simple bargeboards. Ridge cresting is used on the roof of 38.

The mixture of building ages and styles is reflected in the variety of windows. Sashes are used on many of the historic properties, with casements and modern windows used elsewhere. 38 has panes of coloured glass in the upper lights of its windows. 33 has a panelled door in a doorcase with pilasters and cornice. The Classical doorcase to 34 is more ornate with columns, frieze and open pediment. A small section of railings with a matching gate is found outside 33.



Photo 73: details found in Cavendish Road

Green Spaces

The large open space to the north of Cavendish Road is described in detail in section 3. The willow tree in the south-east corner of the sports ground is a prominent feature in the street from the west (see photo 69). In addition, the trees in country park are visible from Bareham's Yard. There are hedges and trees along the north side of the road in the gardens of Burlington House, Ashley House and Forge House, and the planting in the small gardens in front of many properties on the south side contributes to the greenery. Towards the east end there are many trees in the garden of Bridge House (photo 74) and to the rear of the burial ground the trees in the Clare Castle Country Park are visible.



Photo 74: Trees in the garden of Bridge House

Surfaces and Street Furniture

Surfaces

Market Hill has a rolled gravel finish with parking bays demarcated by blue clay setts, to give a traditional appearance to the space and reduce its visual dominance as a car park (photo 75). A similar informal surface is used for the country park car park at the end of Malting Lane and the main pathway to the old railway station and for the access roads serving the properties set back behind the wide grass verges in Callis Street and Nethergate Street. The short east-west part of Church Lane is surfaced with stone slabs.



Photo 75: Rolled gravel with blue clay setts in Market Hill

Elsewhere blacktop is used on the roads to give a simple finish. Footpaths are also simply finished with blacktop, sometime with an aggregate rolled in.

Street furniture

The war memorial and red K6 telephone box in Market Hill and the 'Clare' sign in High Street are interesting pieces of street furniture.



The same type of light fitting is used in Church Street, Well Lane and Nethergate Street, where they are green and white, and in Market Hill where they are black and white and wall-mounted. Elsewhere, lighting, where it is provided, is varied in style but generally simple and unobtrusive (photo 76).



Photo 76: Street furniture found within the conservation area

The greens in Callis Street and the north end of High Street are cluttered with uncoordinated seats and bins. Those in Callis Street also have a variety of signs and High Street's green also has a Clare Trail post and a timber lamp column. These should be rationalised and coordinated. Market Hill has a similar uncoordinated range of street furniture including plastic and wooden planters and benches of different designs (photo 77).



Photo 77: Clutter and uncoordinated street furniture within the conservation area

Neutral and negative areas

Clare is fortunate that so much of the external historic built environment has survived.

Few unsympathetically designed buildings intrude on the streetscape. Modern development in Callis Street, although trying to reflect the nineteenth century terraces along the street, has failed to achieve this in the detailing. The modern windows, the lack of chimneys, the harsh lines of the entrance, the concrete tiles and inappropriate bricks do not enhance the streetscape.



The modern houses in Erbury Place are included in the conservation area because of their position between the rear of the historic properties in Callis Street and the common. It is a pleasant treed lane which does not detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Except in Market Hill and Nethergate Street, overhead wires are a very intrusive feature, blighting views and detracting from the fine buildings (photo 78). There is even a row of telegraph poles through the middle of the historic grounds of Clare Priory.

Photo 78: Overhead wires in High Street

General condition of the area and buildings at risk

The conservation area is on the whole of very high quality with many listed buildings. There are no properties on the Buildings at Risk Register within the conservation area and no problems of vacant properties, commercial or residential.

Problems, pressures and capacity for change

There are no particular problems or pressures affecting Clare at the moment, although pressure for more residential development is likely in the future. This should be located outside the conservation area and not affect the important open spaces in and around the historic centre.

There is a need to continually monitor and balance the needs of residents and tourists within an historic settlement to ensure that any problems can be identified and dealt with at an early stage.

5 Key characteristics to inform new development

Form

The buildings tend to be grouped in terraces with a mixture of gables and eaves fronting the streets. The building line is strong and well defined throughout the conservation area, with most properties typically built hard up to the pavement edge with a few set back a little with small areas of planting front gardens.

No one style or material dominates but within the variations vernacular design and traditional materials provide a distinctive form for the conservation area. Where new development embraces these traditions, the character and appearance need not be compromised. New buildings must not have a visual disruptive impact on the medieval street patterns that dominate Clare. The rich diversity of style between streets, even within streets, calls for a detailed appraisal of the immediate adjoining buildings to ensure new development has regard to the existing historical pattern and architectural form.

Scale

Most buildings are two storeys in height, some with attics lit by dormers. There are a few three storey buildings within the conservation area. The well articulated, symmetrical Georgian frontages of many properties impart a regular rhythm and scale to the streets despite the variation in plot widths throughout Clare. The scale expressed by doors, windows, floor heights and roof slopes of new developments should be in harmony with neighbouring properties.

Details

Roof profiles vary considerably, in some cases from building to building, giving added interest to the street scene. Ridge cresting, gables with bargeboards, overhanging eaves and chimneys are prominent features contributing to the interest and variety of the roofscape. Roof slopes tend to be unbroken, with few dormers in the conservation area. The prevalence of Georgian facades and Victorian and early twentieth century development has left a rich legacy of sash windows, fanlights and doorcases, which are as important to the character of Clare as its exposed timber framed and pargetted buildings. Clare is fortunate that it has not been blighted by the proliferation of uPVC double glazed windows. Many fine traditional shop fronts survive in the commercial centre of Clare and in former shop premises converted to new uses. These are important features which make a very definite contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The survival of individual architectural details is crucially important if that indispensable quality that is Clare is to be passed on to future generations.

Materials

A variety of traditional materials are found within the conservation area, providing an unbroken history of Suffolk vernacular building

The majority of buildings in the centre of Clare are timber framed, some of which have exposed timber frames but mostly they are rendered externally, some with pargetting in a variety of styles, and painted or limewashed in traditional colours. Clay plain tiles are the predominant material on steeper pitched roofs of earlier properties. Slate is used on the shallower roof pitches often found on Victorian and later properties. Clay pantiles are also used.

Many of the early timber frame buildings were re-roofed in slate and the front elevations clad in a brick façade, some with a parapet. Red and gault brick are used with the new brick buildings dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries almost exclusively constructed in a Flemish brick bond, with one example of a rat-trap bond in Station Road. The introduction of slate and bricks from outside the immediate vicinity are linked to the arrival of the railway in 1865. There are a small number of flint domestic buildings and weatherboarding is used sparingly throughout the conservation area. There are some good examples in Station Road, Cavendish Road and Church Street.

Generally, materials should match those which are historically dominant in the immediate area.

Surfaces

A simple and understated tarmac finish is used on most of the road surfaces and footpaths.

Spaces

The conservation area contains a great deal of open space to the south, east and west of the centre. The churchyard is a significant open space within Clare and affords unimpeded views of the church. Nethergate Street and the south end of Callis Street are wide, tree-lined streets, spacious and green in contrast to the relatively narrow streets elsewhere in the conservation area. The countryside beyond is glimpsed in the occasional gaps in the street frontages. The Market Place is an important space within the centre of Clare.

6 Management proposals for the Clare Conservation Area for 2008-2012

Policy HC6 "new development in conservation areas" of the adopted replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan 2016 states:

Proposals for new development within a Conservation Area must have regard to the special architectural or historic character or appearance of their setting in the following respects:

- i) the scale, height, massing, alignment, style and materials of existing buildings;
- ii) the form, function and manner of construction of the existing buildings;
- iii) the relationship between building and spaces; and
- iv) plot divisions and boundary treatments.

This section sets out a medium to long-term strategy to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and in particular to deal with the negative areas, problems and pressures identified in the appraisal.

It has been produced in accordance with the advice contained in the English Heritage guidance 'Guidance on the management of conservation areas', published February 2006.

The following issues have been identified whilst writing the conservation area appraisal.

Article 4 Directions should be introduced within the conservation area to protect unlisted residential properties from unsympathetic alterations which would not preserve or enhance the conservation area. Even minor alterations, which may individually seem to be of no importance, can cumulatively be very detrimental to the character and appearance of the Conservation area.

A list of '**Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Significance**' is required to identify those buildings which, although not listed, are important to the history and appearance of Clare and should be retained.

Co-ordination of street lighting and street furniture would help to reduce clutter and improve the appearance of the conservation area, particularly the open spaces. To complement this, new surfacing schemes would enhance the high quality architecture. A public realm study would be helpful to identify areas for improvement and suitable schemes.

A scheme for **undergrounding of overhead cables** should be investigated to improve the appearance of the streets. In the grounds of Clare Priory, which are a Scheduled Ancient Monument, rerouting the wires would be more appropriate.

There is a demand for **on-street parking** throughout the conservation area serving both the shopping area in the centre and the residential properties along the streets. There is an identified need for a public car park and a site or sites need to be found to increase the provision of off-street car parking.

7 Useful Information and Contacts

If you have any queries about the Clare 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

Or

the conservation team at the above address

Tel: 01284 757356 or 757339
E-mail: conservation@stedsbc.gov.uk

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