

# **Bury St Edmunds Victoria Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan**





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Conservation Area Appraisal  
and Management Plan**

**Planning & Economic Development  
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# Introduction

This conservation area appraisal and management plan has been approved as planning guidance by the Borough Council on 15 December 2009.

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 Statement 5: Planning for 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.

This document is an appraisal of the special character and appearance of the Bury St Edmunds Victoria Street Conservation Area and has been produced in accordance with the advice contained in 'Guidance on conservation area appraisals' and 'Guidance on the management of conservation areas', both published in February 2006 by English Heritage. It includes a summary of key features and characteristics to guide future development in the conservation area. It will be used in the determination of applications to ensure proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. Developers should have regard to the appraisal in the preparation of proposals, and Design and Access Statements and Heritage Statements should address the key findings of the appraisal and demonstrate how a proposal will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the locality (see section 5).

This appraisal expands on the information within the policies 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; and DS3: development design and impact.

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

It is not the purpose of this appraisal to provide a detailed account of the history of the conservation area. 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 area's rich history.

## **Summary of the special interest of the Conservation Area**

The Victoria Street area of Bury St Edmunds comprises predominantly residential streets laid out from the mid-19th century. The development of this area is part of the first expansion of Bury St Edmunds since medieval times. The area is dominated by rows of terraces with uniform features giving the conservation area a very strong and readily identifiable character. Throughout the conservation area the buildings display a huge amount of good quality individual embellishment integral to the area's special interest.

The conservation area also contains an abundance of vegetation which makes a significant contribution to its character and appearance. The cumulative and combined collection of the details, features and vegetation all play a role in the resultant richness and quality of the area as a whole.

# Assessing special interest

## 1 Location and setting

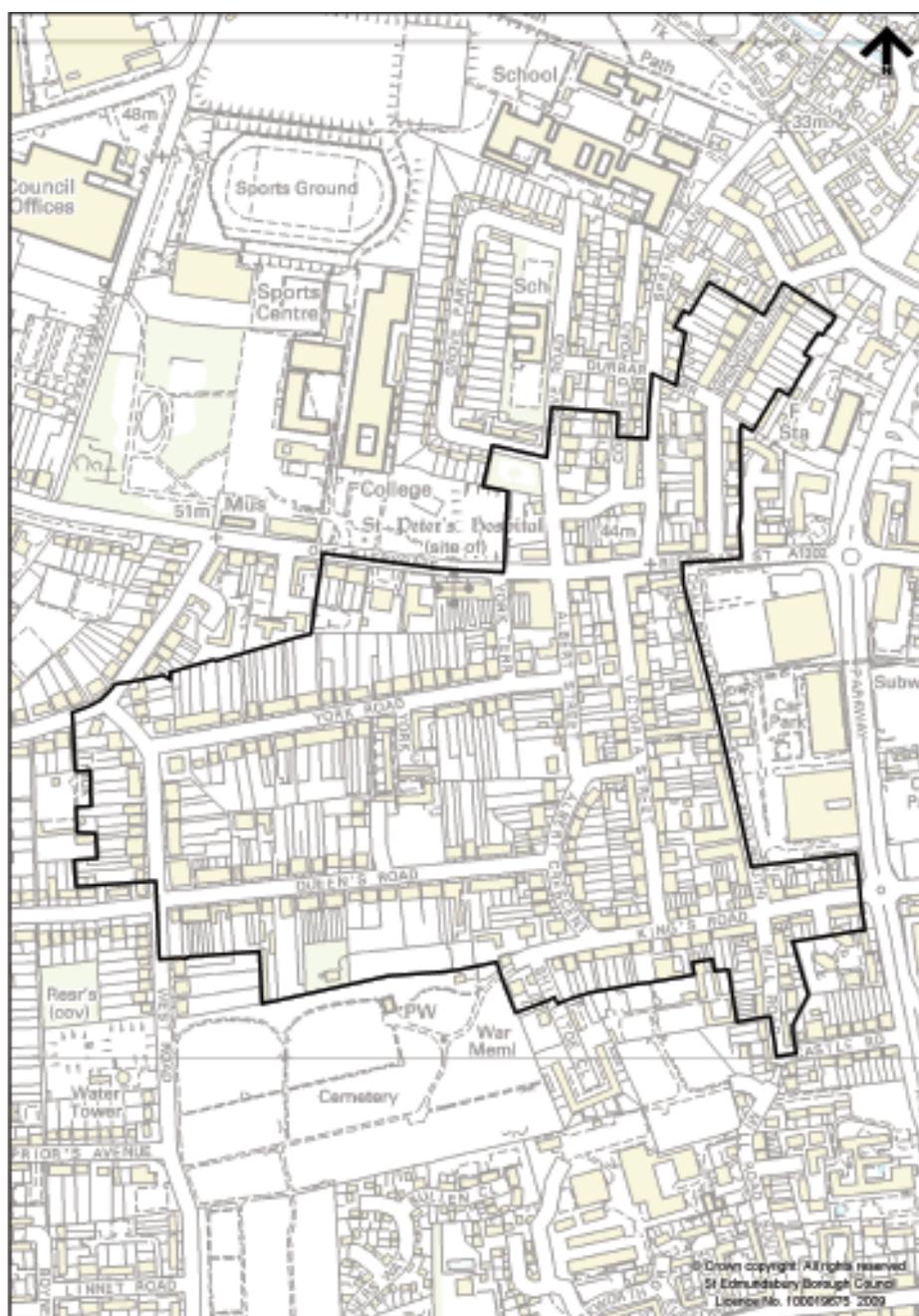
### Context

Bury St Edmunds is a 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 Victoria Street Conservation Area lies to the west of the town centre. Risbygate Street/Out Risbygate runs through the centre of the conservation area, and is a medieval (or earlier) route into the town.

In recognition of its architectural and historic importance, the Victoria Street area was designated a conservation area on 5 March 1987. The boundary is shown on map 1.



Map 1: The Victoria Street Conservation Area

## Plan form and general character

The area is characterised by streets which are predominantly residential in nature and scale. Those to the south of Risbygate Street and Out Risbygate are more formal in their layout, with Albert Street, Victoria Street and Chalk Road running north-south parallel to one another and York Road, Queens Road and Kings Road running east-west, also parallel to one another. In contrast is Albert Crescent, designed as a curve.

To the north of Risbygate Street and Out Risbygate are the later streets of Grove Road, Cornfield Road, Springfield Road and Spring Lane. Although these all run in a north-south direction and are loosely parallel, their layout is more fluid, not as defined as the rest of the conservation area.

The majority of the buildings are Victorian and Edwardian terraces and villas which are essentially the same in terms of their scale and form, being predominantly two storey buildings under slate hipped or gabled roofs, with sash windows and panelled doors. The potential monotony which could prevail with the uniformity of the properties and the repeated use of sash windows and panelled doors is relieved by the variety and richness of the embellishment of the properties which enhances the special character and appearance of this conservation area. At the time this area was being developed it was common practice for builders to buy plots of land to build their terraces or villas and decorate them with their own favoured details and embellishment. This probably explains why there are some decorations which are found in different parts of the conservation area.

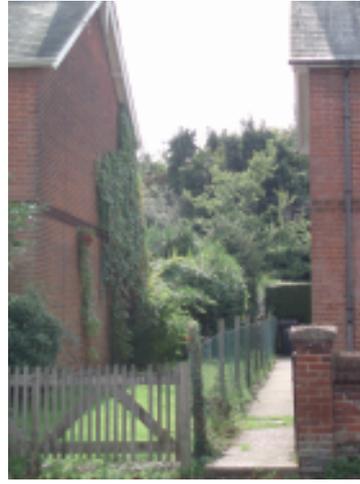
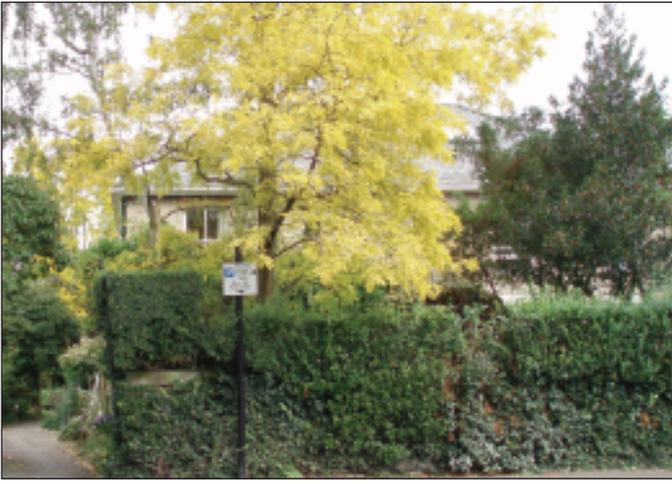
The majority of the houses in the conservation area are covered by Article 4 Directions which were made by the Borough Council in 2001. The purpose of the Directions is to restrict external alterations in order to protect original features from being lost. They are also used to encourage owners to reinstate traditional features where they have been removed in the past. Their use is particularly important in this conservation area because of the strong uniformity of the buildings derived from their common materials and features such as sash windows and panelled doors. The Directions are also used to protect boundary structures to maintain the established sense of enclosure along the streets.

There are only a few listed buildings within the conservation area. The two terraces of houses at the western end of Kings Road were built as part of the former barracks of the West Suffolk Militia Regiment in 1857/8. The stone lodge at the entrance to the cemetery at the west end of Kings Road dates from 1855 (photo 1). All of these buildings were listed in 1997.



*Photo 1: Cemetery Lodge in Kings Road*

The urban nature of the conservation area is softened in some streets by the presence of trees lining the streets and planting in front gardens. Large rear gardens are also a significant feature with the planting seen in these making an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area (photo 2).



*Photo 2: examples of planting in front and rear gardens and the streets within the conservation area*

## 2 Historic development and archaeology

### Origins and historic development of the conservation area

The first completely new street which can be identified in the town since medieval times is Prospect Row (not part of this conservation area) which was shown on Lenny's map of 1823 and given the name Prospect Row on Payne's map of 1833. This was the start of the Victorian expansion of the town, which took place to the north of the town centre (the Brackland area) and to the west, in the Victoria Street area. The earliest part of this latter development is Chalk Road, formerly Chalk Lane and called Waterloo Street on Lenny's map. Kings Road began as Field Lane, becoming Cemetery Road in 1855 with the opening of the cemetery, and subsequently Kings Road in 1911 to commemorate the Coronation of King George V. Upper Brown Road became known as Queens Road in June 1887 to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria, and Lower Brown Road was renamed York Road in 1893 after the Duke of York, who was later to become King George V. Upper and Lower Brown Road were originally named after George Brown, who owned the land on which they were built. Victoria Street and Albert Street were built on a market garden.

The 1880 Ordnance Survey map shows development had already begun along Risbygate Street/Out Risbygate and, to the south, Chalk Road, Victoria Street, Albert Street, Mill Road and the east end of Cemetery Road (Kings Road). Although the other main streets are laid out, there are almost no houses built along them. By 1900, however, the rest of Cemetery Road, Mill Road and Albert Crescent are developed, with the first terraces appearing along Upper Brown Road (Queens Road) and Lower Brown Road (York Road). The next 20 years saw some infilling along Risbygate Street/Out Risbygate and a little more development along Upper and Lower Brown Road, although there still remained a number of undeveloped sites along these two roads. West Road was also developed during this time between its junctions with Upper Brown Road and Westley Road.

To the north of Risbygate Street/Out Risbygate, Springfield Road is evident on the 1880 map but with little development along it, and Spring Lane appears as an undeveloped track. By 1900, however, considerable development has taken place along Springfield Road and the outline of Grove Road is visible but as yet not laid out. Between 1900 and 1920, Cornfield Road and Grove Road are laid out with terraces appearing along Cornfield Road. There is still little development along Grove Road by this time, however.

### Archaeology and scheduled ancient monuments

The site of the former St Peter's Hospital is of considerable archaeological importance. Located to the south of Out Risbygate in the area of the St Peter's Cottage Nursing Home, the hospital was founded in the 12th century for the maintenance of leprous, infirm or invalided priests, or other elderly or sick people. By the 14th century it was exclusively used for lepers. The full extent of the hospital and associated cemetery is currently unknown as there has been little systematic archaeological investigation of the site. Finds to date, however, include skeletons when excavating foundations at St Peter's Cottage in 1989, numerous human bones in the garden of St Peter's Cottage and the graves of at least 12 individuals and the footings of a medieval building, possibly a chapel, when digging foundation trenches for an extension at 25 Out Risbygate in 2003. These remains are assumed to be part of a large cemetery located in the eastern half of the precinct of St Peter's Hospital. In addition, there are a number of undated chalk mines towards the southern and eastern parts of the conservation area.

Elsewhere, with the possible exception of Risbygate Street/Out Risbygate (which is a medieval or earlier route into Bury St Edmunds) the archaeological potential of the conservation area is considered to be low.

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the conservation area.

### 3 Spatial analysis

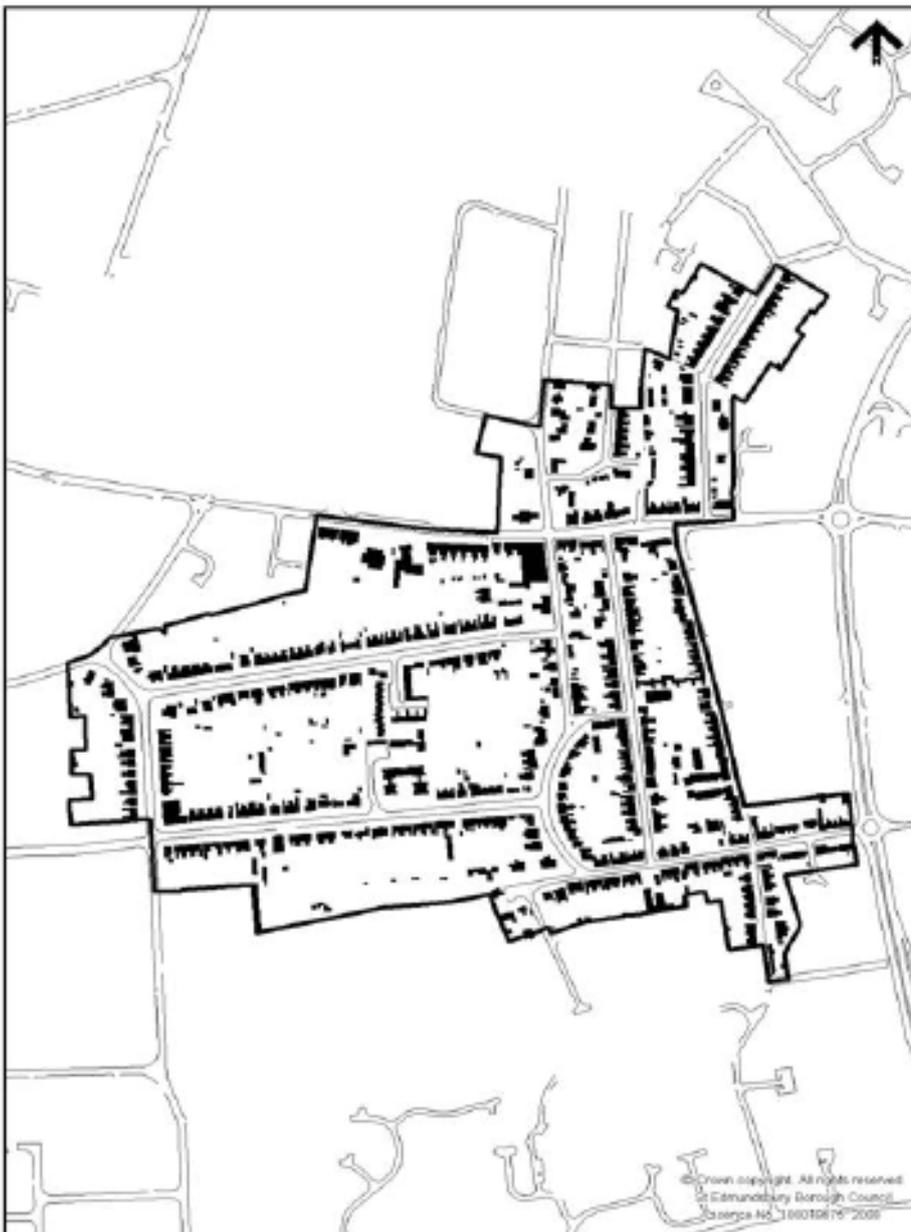
#### Character and interrelationship of spaces

The conservation area is characterised by residential streets of terraced properties with few open public areas other than the streets themselves. Many have large rear gardens with mature trees and vegetation which can be seen from the streets through gaps between the terraces and some have front gardens which are characteristically enclosed by walls and railings. Both front and rear gardens contribute considerably to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

There are only a few isolated open spaces within the conservation area. Of note are the urban square at the front of the Victoria Street doctors' surgery, the community garden in Grove Road and the space in York Close. Adjoining the boundary of the conservation area in Out Risbygate is St Peter's Pit. These are described in more detail below.

#### Private gardens

In contrast to the lack of open space within the conservation area, there is an abundance of private gardens. Map 2 illustrates the contrast between buildings and spaces, particularly in western part of the conservation area. The vast majority of the space is made up of individual private gardens which together contribute to a substantial area of urban green space.



Map 2: comparison of buildings and spaces

The planting in the gardens is clearly visible from the streets, enhancing the appearance of the whole area. In particular, the properties in York Road, Queens Road and West Road enjoy reasonable sized front gardens and long rear gardens.



*Photo 3: the importance of planting in private gardens*

## Victoria Street Square

This is a paved area with some tree planting (photo 4). Along the southern edge is the vehicular access to the surgery car park (located to the rear) and the northern edge is formed by St James Lane, a narrow pedestrian cut-through to Chalk Road. The area has been refurbished with new materials that are not particularly attractive, however the trees soften the streetscape, contributing to visual amenity. They are an important feature within the street and should be included in any future improvement scheme for this space.



Map 3: Victoria Street Square



Photo 4: Victoria Street Square

## Grove Road Community Garden

This space comprises a grassed area with planting around the perimeter and in the centre (photo 5). It could be the remnant of a larger garden which was once the setting for a Victorian detached property, typical of others close by. The area is currently a community garden and its management reflects this.



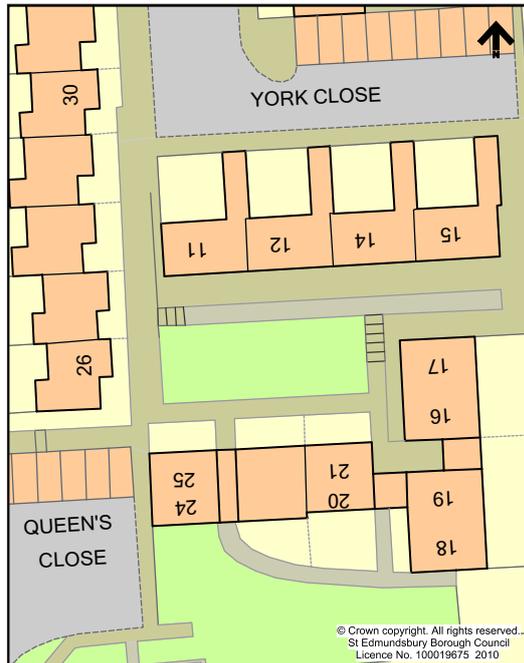
Map 4: Grove Road Community Garden



Photo 5: Grove Road Community Garden

## York Close

Although this is an open space within the conservation area it has a semi-private feel as it is only visible when walking through York Close; it cannot be seen from York Road. It is a pleasant enclosed grassed area with trees which help to soften the view of the buildings and provide an attractive outlook for the occupants (photo 6).



Map 5: York Close



Photo 6: York Close

## St Peters Pit

Although this grassy space is not within the conservation area it adjoins the boundary and gives a pleasant open feel to this part of the conservation area. St Peter's Pit is an old lime pit, now evident as a deep hollow in the ground. The space is enclosed along the northern and eastern boundaries by tall trees (photo 7). To the west of the pit is an open grassed area with a children's playground.



Map 6: St Peter's Pit

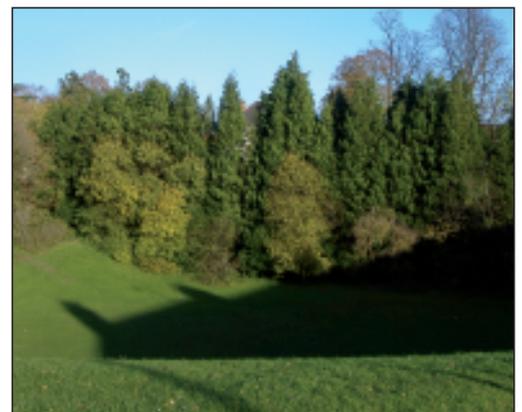


Photo 7: St Peter's Pit

## Key Views and Vistas

The linear nature and slope of many of the streets allow for some reasonable views within and beyond the conservation area. Of particular note are:

- the tree-lined views north along Grove Road, which is terminated by the Classical style entrance to King Edward VI Grammar School (photo 8);
- the view west along Kings Road, which focuses on the attractive arrangement of the oak tree, gates and lodge at the cemetery entrance (photo 1);
- the view north down Victoria Street to the terraces in Out Risbygate framed by the trees beyond (photo 9);
- the view east along York Road which shows a very attractive tree-lined street (photo 2); and
- the view west out of the conservation area along Out Risbygate and north from West Road which shows a striking view of the Gibraltar Barracks (photo 10)

Numbers 17-28 Out Risbygate overlook the open space containing St Peter's Pit (see photo 7).



*Photo 8: view north along Grove Road*



*Photo 9: view north down Victoria Street*



*Photo 10: the Gibraltar Barracks from West Road*

The presence of street trees and planting generally improves the amenity of views within, into and out of the conservation area (photo 2).

## 4 Character analysis

### Definition of character areas

Three areas of distinct character have been identified within the conservation area which are described below and shown on map 7. Although the areas are defined below, there are zones of transition between:

- 1 Streets to the north of Risbygate Street/Out Risbygate**, including Grove Road, Springfield Road, Cornfield Road and Spring Lane. This area is slightly later in date than the rest of the conservation area and has a more informal character.
- 2 Risbygate Street, Out Risbygate and streets to the south**, including Victoria Street, Albert Street, Albert Crescent, Kings Road, Chalk Road and Mill Road. This part of the conservation area comprises terrace-lined streets with small or absent front gardens.
- 3 York Road, Queens Road and West Road**. These streets are more spacious and the properties typically have larger front gardens and very large rear gardens compared to elsewhere in the conservation area.



Map 7: conservation area character zones

# 1 Streets to the north of Risbygate Street/ Out Risbygate

## Prevailing and former uses

The area was originally laid out as a residential area and this remains the prevailing use. There is no evidence of any former uses in these streets.

## Buildings

Typically, two and two-and-a-half storey terraces interspersed with larger detached houses set back behind small front gardens enclosed by a variety of boundary treatments line these streets. Frontages range from the very simple, as found on Cornfield Road (photo 11), to the more decorative on Springfield Road where canted bays with contrasting brick mullions provide additional space at ground floor level, whilst gabled dormers light the attic space (photo 12). Terraced roofs are typically stepped to accommodate the gradient and are largely covered with slate where the original roofing material remains. Large chimney stacks with varying degrees of decoration are a prominent feature to the skyline.



Photo 11: Cornfield Road

Some original boundary treatments have been replaced with a mixture of fencing, brick walls and hedging, however a number have been demolished to allow for off-street parking compromising the sense of enclosure. Spring Lane provides access to the rears of properties fronting onto Cornfield Road and Springfield Road, with rows of garages, back gardens and outbuildings providing a subservient contrast to the more formalised areas. In contrast to the rows of terraces, substantial detached houses of two and two-and-a-half storeys sit on generous plots lining Grove Road. The larger plots allow for off-street parking without compromising the special character of the area. Two storey bays provide additional space at both ground and first floor, whilst recessed external lobby areas provide protection from the elements (photo 13).



Photo 12: Springfield Road



### Buildings materials

Red and gault bricks are used for the majority of buildings, sometimes used together to provide contrast. Roofs are typically of slate, which have sometimes been inappropriately replaced with concrete tiles, whilst clay plain tiles are not uncommon on the larger detached properties. A variety of boundary walls exist, some retaining their original detail of brick walls and shaped copings, or dwarf walls with railings. However others have since been replaced with inappropriate detailing and materials or hedging.



*Photo 13: examples of properties in Grove Road*



*Photo 14: examples of traditional boundaries*

## Details

Oversailing courses decorating chimneys are common to the majority of properties, whilst slate roofs embellished with ridge cresting are typical of Cornfield Road and Springfield Road. Moulded rafter feet, paired modillions and tiered egg-and-dart cornices provide decoration at the eaves along Grove Road. Saw-toothed banding is used to demark the first floors in Cornfield Road whilst oversized moulded keystones provide subtle detail.

A variety of doors exist, however typically four panelled doors prevail, many with fanlights above to provide additional light without compromising security. Sash windows predominate throughout with tripartite sashes and others with two-over-two and one-over-one panes all used.

The villas located to the southern end of Springfield Road have more decorative frontages with pediments supported by contrasting brick pillars providing an elaborate surround to panelled doors decorated with bolection mouldings and/or raised and fielded panels. Stained glass margin lights, panels and fanlights add further detail to these doors. Terracotta banding, plastered hood moulds with scroll patterns together with decorated keystones embellish many of the terraces further north along Springfield Road, whilst recessed door openings are common to provide additional protection from the elements. Canted bays with timber mullions and lead or slate hipped roofs are common to many, whilst tile hanging, decorated bargeboards and finials provide unusual additions to the palette of materials within this area.

Concrete paths have replaced many of the original tiled paths, with the exception of Springfield Road where many of the decorative chequered paths still survive.

## Green Spaces

Green spaces are largely confined to the small front gardens of terraces set back from the pavements edge with the exception of Grove Road where a much leafier environment prevails, resulting from the tree lined streets, the mature gardens and the community garden on the corner of Grove Road and Grove Park (see Section 3).



Photo 15: examples of building details

## 2 Risbygate Street, Out Risbygate and streets to the south

### Prevailing and former uses

This area displays the greatest variety of uses. Although the prevailing use within this area is residential use, some of the houses incorporate earlier shopfronts. The houses are interspersed with other uses such as garages, St Peter's Nursing Home and the doctor's surgery along Victoria Street, together with former Hanchet's Yard on Kings Road and former Cecil and Larter premises in Out Risbygate.

### Buildings

Typically, two storey terraces set back behind small front gardens, enclosed by a mixture of boundaries, line Out Risbygate, Risbygate Street and the streets to the south. Gabled roofs are typical with eaves fronting onto the road; however it is not uncommon for the unusual arrangement of hips abutting gables to occur down Victoria Street indicating different building phases.



Photo 16: examples of terraces

Stepped ridgelines accommodate the natural slope of Victoria Street and Albert Street. Canted bays at ground floor level are found on some of the properties which are set back from the pavement, such as in Kings Road, Mill Road and Victoria Street. Entrances are commonly paired together, some with recessed lobbies providing shelter from the elements, whilst alleyways enable access to the rear of some properties (photo 16). A row of flint cottages in Kings Road adds contrast to this predominantly brick built area.

A parapet roof to the corner of Victoria Street and Princes Street interrupts the regular arrangement of rooflines and adds prominence to its presence, augmented by its large traditional shopfront on its ground floor (photo 17).

The larger, more decorative terraces and individual houses of Albert Crescent are set behind front gardens.



*Photo 17: former shop on Victoria Street with a parapet roof*



*Photo 18: examples of properties in Albert Crescent*

Houses along Albert Street are interspersed with garages and parking spaces, weakening the uniformity evident elsewhere and giving a more modest feel to the street. Elevations to Chalk Road are very simple and lack much of the detail evident elsewhere within the conservation area. Some elevated entrances maintain their original curved return walls between properties, however unfortunately it is more common for these to have been inappropriately replaced together with the original fleur-de-lys and arrow head railings which would typically have enclosed front gardens.



Photo 19: Chalk Road

Houses along Risbygate Street and Out Risbygate demonstrate similar characteristics but on a larger scale with two and two-and-a-half storey buildings sitting quite comfortably on this wider road. Accommodation within the attic space breaks the continuous rooflines, whilst basements are evident where access to the ground floor is elevated via a flight of steps (see photo 16). The former Cecil and Larter site on the corner of Out Risbygate and Albert Street provides a brief interruption to this largely residential area, with its wide span, shaped gables and shopfront identifying its commercial use.

Many of the original boundary structures survive in this part of the conservation area (see photo 20).

## Building Materials

Buildings are generally constructed of red or gault brick whilst most rooflines are covered with slate, the original roofing material. Boundaries are typically of brick, some with railings (photo 20).



Photo 20: examples of traditional boundaries

## Details

Ridge cresting, finials, wide eaves soffits and paired modillions are not common but provide interest to some rooflines, whilst large chimney stacks with oversailing courses and decorative chimney pots adorn the majority of rooflines (see photos 16 and 18). Hood moulds over door and window openings decorate many of the facades, whilst fanlights, together with glazed upper panels of panelled doors provide light to entrance halls. Although many of the original doors have since been replaced four panelled doors were typical. Those which survive today display a variety of embellishments including cock beading, raised and fielded panels or bolection mouldings. Simple projecting bands, to emulate stone, demark floor levels to gault brick elevations along Mill Road, whilst terracotta grapevine banding together with decorative date plaques add subtle detail to its red brick terraces. Canted bays provide additional space to many of the houses set back behind small front gardens, typically detailing two-over-two paned sashes. Six-over-six and eight-over-eight paned sashes add to the richness of detailing in this area (see photo 16). Recessed lobby entrances with decorative tiled floors, often elevated and accessed via a short run of steps, emphasise many of the door openings, whilst decorative terracotta detailing provides adornment to some elevations.

Front gardens are typically enclosed with either original brick walls, some dwarf with railings, or modern replacement walls. Some original decorative and coloured paths lead to the front doors.

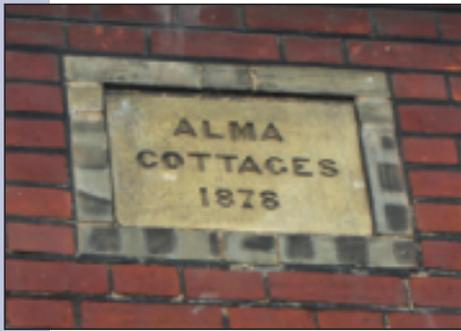


Photo 21:  
examples  
of building  
details

## Green Spaces

Green Spaces are largely restricted to the small front gardens of terraces set back from the pavements edge, or the larger gardens of detached properties. The mature trees outside the Victoria Surgery and in Risbygate Street provide some relief within this rather hard landscaped area (see photo 3).

## 3 York Road, Queens Road and West Road

### Prevailing and former uses

The area was originally laid out as a residential area and this remains the prevailing use. One of the houses in Queens Road was formerly a post office. There is no evidence of any other earlier uses in these streets.

### Buildings

Typically, two storey terraced properties and villas line the streets set back behind attractive front gardens with defined boundaries (photo 22). In York Road, the buildings are partly obscured by the trees lining both sides of the street, which give it a very attractive appearance. Some properties in York Road and Queens Road are elevated and approached by steps to account for the slope of the roads. There is some modern development amongst the Victorian and Edwardian buildings which generally follows the established building lines and pattern of development. Roofs display a combination of hipped and gable ends, with eaves mostly lining the front elevations, although gables are found occasionally. In the main, rooflines are unbroken by dormers, and chimneys are a prominent feature. The strong rooflines are further emphasised by the sloping nature of York Road and Queens Road.

Sash windows and panelled doors, some with glazed upper panels, prevail, although some have been replaced with modern alternatives in a variety of styles.



Photo 22: examples of terraces and villas in York Road, Queens Road and West Road

## Building materials

Again, red and gault brick are typical with the occasional rendered building or terrace. Terracotta is commonly used for decoration with some name and date tablets being in stone. Roofs are predominantly slate, the original roofing material, although some have been replaced with concrete tiles.

Boundary materials vary (photo 23). In Queens Road, most of the original boundaries were brick walls with shaped copings and piers with pyramidal capping stones. Others have been rebuilt in a modern style but still retain the walled enclosure to the front gardens. A few close-boarded fences are also found although these are not a typical or traditional boundary treatment in this area. Original railings are found outside 12-14 Queens Road. York Road has a combination of walls and plinth walls with railings, with some original ones still in place. In West Road there is a similar mixture of walls and railings.

## Details

As within this conservation area as a whole, there is a huge variety of detail found in this part of it, that creates a high level of local identity. This includes decorative brick and terracotta string courses, patterned window and door heads and ornamental key stones. Some of the properties in West Road have ornate balconies. Sash windows and panelled doors prevail. Bargeboards, ridge cresting and large chimney stacks with oversailing courses add interest and variety to the eaves and roof line (see photo 22).

Some original railings and brick boundary walls survive (see photo 23) and some have been reinstated with modern copies. Some paths still have their original black and red tiles.



*Photo 23: examples of traditional boundaries*

## Green spaces

The grassed space in York Close is described in section 3. The large gardens in this part of the conservation area are an integral feature, giving this character area its particular spacious and green, leafy feel (see photos 2 and 7). In York Road this is further emphasised by the trees lining the street.



Photo 24: examples of building details

## Surfaces and Street furniture

### Surfaces

Throughout the conservation area surfacing materials are inconsistent, patchy and unrelated to the buildings and accesses. In addition, there is no consistency in the surfaces used for private driveways. The roads and footpaths are safe to use but there is considerable scope to improve the appearance of the conservation area through highway works. Some traditional kerbs survive in Grove Road and these should be retained.

Tree roots in Springfield Road are causing uneven raising and cracking of the footpaths. Currently the footpaths are simply resurfaced over the roots to try to even the surface. A longer-term solution to the management of this problem should be considered.

### Street furniture

There is no standard design or suite of street furniture used in this conservation area; it comprises a mixture of ages, styles and materials.

Traditional lamp columns can be found in parts of the conservation area such as Albert Street and Victoria Street (photo 25), but these are sporadic in their positioning, interspersed with modern lighting columns. Unfortunately, these have reached the end of their useful life. Appropriate replacement lighting needs to be found in consultation with Suffolk County Council and local residents.

There are some green plastic meter boxes within the conservation area which jar with their surroundings. A simple coat of paint to minimise their appearance would help. An even greater improvement, however, would be to use ones of a more traditional design such as the electricity box at the northern end of Albert Street and the box in Albert Crescent (photo 26).

Bollards and barriers of varying designs can be seen within the conservation area. Some of these, such as the bollards in Durbar Terrace, could be removed as they are redundant or can be rationalised to remove excessive numbers, such as those at the junction of St James Lane and Chalk Road (photo 27). Plastic bollards should be replaced with appropriate black metal bollards if their presence is necessary for highway safety.



*Photo 25: decorative base of a traditional lighting column*



*Photo 26: examples of traditional meter boxes*





*Photo 27: bollards and railings at the junction of St James Lane and Chalk Road*

### **Neutral and negative areas**

On the whole, the conservation area is attractive with only a few areas in need of improvement.

The two former Cecil and Larter sites in Out Risbygate and the former Hanchet's site and office in Kings Road are currently vacant and provide opportunities to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. There may be scope to introduce further terrace frontages along parts of Albert Street, replacing the existing garages.

Overhead wires are seen throughout the conservation area, blighting views and detracting from its appearance (photo 28).



*Photo 28: overhead wires in the conservation area*

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

Although there are some parts which would benefit from improvement, overall the conservation area is generally in good condition.

There are no Buildings at Risk within the conservation area.

## Problems, pressures and the capacity for change

**Parking/loss of front boundaries:** there is considerable demand for on-street parking in this conservation area and some streets have a Residents Parking Scheme in operation. Some front boundaries have been removed to allow cars to be parked in the larger front gardens in Springfield Road, York Road, Queens Road and West Road. This seriously weakens the strong and established sense of enclosure, can result in the loss of original boundary structures and, overtime, the loss of vegetation will erode the character and appearance of these streets.

**Building in gardens:** there is some pressure to allow new houses to be built in the larger gardens in the conservation area. These gardens are an integral part of the character and appearance of the conservation area, however, and should normally be protected as such.

**Satellite dishes and similar equipment:** the growing demand for digital television has seen an increasing number of satellite dishes, antenna and similar equipment appearing within in the conservation area. There are size limitations affecting where such equipment can be installed without planning permission. In addition, within a conservation area planning permission is required to put equipment on any elevation (including the chimney and roof slope) which faces and is visible from a highway. In order to protect the character and appearance of the conservation area, planning permission is unlikely to be granted for equipment in such locations.

**Replacement windows and doors:** many of the original sash windows and panelled doors have been lost to inappropriate modern replacements. Consequently the underlying rhythm fundamental to the appearance of these terraces has been disrupted, compromising the regularity so important to the collective character of these buildings. The loss of such traditional features from properties can have a marked and detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area over time.

Windows and doors are particularly vulnerable to replacement, often with modern designs and materials which do not reflect the traditional details. With pressure to conserve energy, some owners are installing UPVC double glazed windows and doors. These use far more energy in their manufacture and disposal, however, that they are not sustainable (environmentally-friendly) in the longer term and the pay back time in terms of fuel cost savings is several years. Traditional timber windows are far more sustainable and their energy-saving performance can be upgraded with modern secondary glazing or draught-proofing systems. In recognition of the importance of the traditional features of the houses in the conservation area many of them are protected by an Article 4 Direction. This means that planning permission is needed to make changes to the elevations which face the roads. Planning permission is unlikely to be granted for changes which result in the loss of traditional features or details.

**Highway improvements:** surfacing within the conservation area is patchy with no consistency of materials and finishes. This can be improved with a consistent approach to the choice of materials used when highway works are carried out. Good quality, and preferably traditional, natural materials, should be used. Where traditional surfaces survive they should be retained and repaired.

**Installation of micro-generation equipment:** there is increasing interest in the installation of equipment such as solar and photovoltaic panels, domestic wind turbines, ground and water source heat pumps and biomass heating systems. There are certain conditions affecting where such equipment can be sited without planning permission. Within a conservation area there are additional requirements in some circumstances that the equipment should not be on a principal or side elevation of a building and visible from a highway. This is to protect the 'public' appearance of the conservation area and planning permission is unlikely to be granted for the installation of equipment in visible locations. Whilst the need to become a more 'energy efficient' society is recognised, this has to be balanced against the statutory duty to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas and this is reflected by current planning legislation. For further information about the installation of micro-generation equipment please contact the Planning Helpdesk (see section 7).

## 5 Key Characteristics to inform new design

### Form

The residential streets generally comprise rows of uniform Victorian, Edwardian and later terraces either built hard against the pavement edge or with small front gardens. Those properties in York Road and Queens Road have larger front gardens. The building lines are 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 a few properties with gables. Almost all roof slopes are unbroken by dormers and rooflights, with dormers only being found in any number in Springfield Road. Chimneys are a prominent and very varied feature.

### Scale

The majority of buildings within the conservation area are of two storeys. There is some consistency of plot widths within terraces but overall throughout the conservation area there is variety of plot widths. The elevations are well articulated so that the sense of scale remains even on the widest of frontages.

### Details

Good quality detailing is seen in abundance throughout the conservation area and is an integral part of its special character and appearance. Sash windows with traditional glazing bars, four and six panelled doors with mouldings, patterned door and window heads, some with ornate and over-sized keystones, detailed terracotta work on string courses and cornices, overhanging eaves with modillions, carved bargeboards, ridge cresting and name and date stones are all found in abundance. Some properties in West Road have ornate balconies. Entrances are either recessed into lobbies or flush with the façade; projecting porches are not typical of the conservation area.

Alterations to existing properties within the conservation area should ensure that original detailing is retained.

### Materials

Red and gault brick are the prevalent building material. Painted render is used on a much lesser scale whilst flintwork is found on some secondary elevations. Timber sash windows and panelled doors prevail, although some are modern replacements.

Slate is the predominant roofing material. Occasionally plaintiles are found.

### Boundaries

Front boundaries are marked by walls of brick or with railings on plinth walls. Some older flint walls survive. Timber fences are not typical. Between plots, historic boundaries are often demarcated with brick and flint walls.

### Surfaces

Surface treatments are usually simple, of tarmac and plain slabs. New work and enhancement schemes should use good quality, preferably natural, materials which are appropriate to the character of the conservation area.

Many private paths retain their original red and black tiles and these should be kept. Original red and blue clay pavers survive in some of the gated passages between buildings.

### Spaces

The private front and rear gardens of properties within the conservation area are very important in giving the area its special character and appearance and should be preserved. The conservation area is not typified by the presence of public open space. The few areas that exist, however, contribute to its green, leafy quality and do not weaken the strong urban character and defined boundary and building lines.

## 6 Management proposals for the Bury St Edmunds Victoria Street Conservation Area for 2009-2013

Provision to protect conservation areas is included in Policy HC6 "new development in conservation areas" of the adopted replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan 2016. It 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 had been produced in accordance with the advice contained in the English Heritage document 'Guidance on the management of conservation areas' published February 2006.

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

**Monitoring of Article 4 Directions** – Article 4 Directions are used on residential properties within the conservation area to protect those buildings, features and details that contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area. A regular monitoring and review programme is required to ensure that unauthorised alternations are identified and dealt with promptly. The Borough Council will look at different ways of ensuring residents are aware of the requirements of the Article 4 Directions.

**Street furniture** - An audit of existing street furniture will be undertaken to assess whether it can be rationalised. Inappropriate designs and materials should be replaced as opportunities arise.

**Surfacing** – a more consistent approach to the surface finishes throughout the conservation area is required. A study of the existing surfaces and proposed replacement materials or finishes is required. 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, detracting from their appearance. The possibility and cost of routing them underground needs to be explored with the relevant utility companies. In addition, the implications of any such work for the vegetation and buildings affected will be fully investigated to ensure such work would not be detrimental the character and appearance of the conservation area.

**Parking** – there may be scope to increase the amount of on-street parking available without compromising the character and appearance of the conservation area. Possible solutions and ideas need to be investigated.

## 7 Useful Information and Contacts

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

Planning Helpdesk  
Planning and Economic Development  
St Edmundsbury Borough Council  
West Suffolk House  
Western Way  
Bury St Edmunds  
IP33 3YU

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)

### Bibliography

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Maltster, Robert, *Historic Britain from the Air – Suffolk* (1999)  
Meeres, Frank, *A History of Bury St Edmunds* (2002)  
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### Historic Maps

J G Lenny – Town Plan 1823  
R Payne - Plan of the Borough of Bury St Edmunds 1834