



SAXMUNDHAM CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

March 2016



On 1 April 2019, East Suffolk Council was created by parliamentary order, covering the former districts of Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council. [The Local Government \(Boundary Changes\) Regulations 2018](#) (part 7) state that any plans, schemes, statements or strategies prepared by the predecessor council should be treated as if it had been prepared and, if so required, published by the successor council - therefore this document continues to apply to East Suffolk Council until such time that a new document is published.

CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE NO.
INTRODUCTION	
1 CONSERVATION AREAS: Planning Policy Context	1
2 GENERAL CHARACTER SUMMARY	3
3 TOPOGRAPHICAL SETTING	4
4 ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY	5
5 QUALITY OF BUILDINGS	8
6 TRADITIONAL BUILDING MATERIALS	10
7 CHARACTER OF SPACES	11
8 TREES AND GREEN SPACES	12
9 COUNTRYSIDE SETTING	13
10 FORMER USES	14
11 PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS	16
12 STREET –BY-STREET APPRAISAL	18
12.1 South Entrance – East side	19
12.2 South Entrance – West side	23
12.3 Chantry Road	27
12.4 Church Street and Church Hill	29
12.5 High Street – General character	32
12.6 High Street – Southern end	33
12.7 High Street – Northern end	39
12.8 Market Place	43
12.9 Station Approach / Albion Street	48
12.10 North Entrance	51
13 CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN	56
13.1 Alterations to existing Buildings	57
13.2 Design of New Development	57
13.3 Conservation Area Boundary	58
13.4 Demolition	58
13.5 Enhancement Opportunities	58
13.6 Landscape and Trees	58
13.7 Contacts	59
14 REFERENCES & FURTHER INFORMATION	60
15 SUMMARY OF CHARACTER FEATURES MAP	61

Public consultation: this took place between 1st September and 30th November 2015 and included:

All building owners/occupiers in the conservation area were written to advising them of the consultation and providing a web-link to the appraisals and offering to send printed copies on request; the Ward Members were written to; the Town Council was written to with several printed copies of the draft appraisal provided and a web-link for downloading; the draft appraisal was placed on the District Council's website for downloading; a press release was issued; posters were supplied to the Town Council for display on noticeboards; printed copies were available for inspection during office opening hours at the Council's planning helpdesk; printed copies were furnished member of the public on request; monthly adverts were placed in the East Anglian Daily Times promoting the consultation and providing contact details; invitations for responses were sent, alongside printed copies, to Suffolk Preservation Society; Suffolk County Archaeology.

A total of 9 responses were received which led to 6 changes to the draft appraisal and conservation area management plan prior to adoption in March 2016.

INTRODUCTION

The Suffolk Coastal District currently has thirty four designated Conservation Areas, and these range in size from small coastal settlements, such as Walberswick and Dunwich, to the historic centres of larger towns such as Framlingham and Aldeburgh.

The Saxmundham Conservation Area was originally designated by East Suffolk County Council in 1970, extended by Suffolk Coastal District Council in 1980 and re-designated in 1991.

The designation and re-appraisal of Conservation Areas is an important process and one that is governed by the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Council has a duty to review its Conservation Area designations and this appraisal examines Saxmundham in accordance with Historic England's guidance document '*Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*' (2011, under revision).

As such this is a straightforward appraisal of Saxmundham's built environment in conservation terms and is followed by a gazetteer describing the town in detail.

This document is neither prescriptive nor overly descriptive, but more a demonstration of 'quality of place', sufficient to inform those considering changes in the area. The photographs and maps are thus intended to contribute as much as the text itself.

As the Historic England guidelines point out, the appraisal is to be read as a general overview, rather than as a comprehensive listing, and the omission of any particular building, feature or space does not imply that it is of no interest in conservation terms.



Town sign



Saxmundham Market

1 CONSERVATION AREAS: Planning Policy Context

There are currently thirty four Conservation Areas in the Suffolk Coastal District.

The identification and protection of the historic environment is an important function of the planning system and is done through the designation of Conservation Areas in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Conservation Areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. These areas make an important contribution to the quality of life of local communities and visitors by safeguarding their physical historical features which sustain the sense of local distinctiveness and which are an important aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside.

As part of this commitment, there is a need to ensure there are the means available to identify what is special in the historic environment and to define through the development plan system their capacity for change. Such changes can act to help to address environmental quality in addition to achieving the aims of planning for sustainable development.

National planning advice on the identification and protection of historic buildings, Conservation Areas and other assets of the historic environment is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (Chapter 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of March 2012.

At the District and local level, the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan recognises that development within Conservation Areas will need to accord with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Core Strategy of the Local Plan contains an objective 'to maintain and enhance the quality of the distinctive natural and built environment'. The Core Strategy also provides general advice supporting the retention and enhancement of Conservation Areas whilst minimising any significant adverse impact upon them. Conservation Areas are also included under general development control policies, particularly those in relation to design where one of the key criteria requires that all new development must have regard to the character of the area and its setting.

This Conservation Area Appraisal provides details and identifies particular features which contribute to and justify its status. The purpose of this Conservation Area appraisal includes:

- a definition of the special character of the Conservation Area through its special qualities: layout, uses, architecture, setting, open spaces and archaeology
- an analysis of the area's history, development and current status
- a guide to managing future change: small scale affecting households and larger scale affecting new development.

2 GENERAL CHARACTER SUMMARY

The overall character of Saxmundham is one of a reasonably well-preserved historic Suffolk market town of picturesque and attractive appearance. In particular the town centre and roads leading from the High Street retain the special characteristics that strongly justify its Conservation Area designation.

At the heart of the town is the historic Market Place. This area is located to the west of The High Street, and hidden from the road by a row of commercial premises and dwellings. The High Street runs approximately north – south, and generally the most high status buildings found in Saxmundham abut this road. Those premises located within the town centre are largely commercial (often with domestic accommodation above) whereas to the northern and southern extremities of the Conservation Area, as well as to the tributary roads to the east and west, domestic properties are found. Those dwellings located close to the railway station tend to be of nineteenth century date, smaller in scale and more concentrated in terms of spatial density. Scattered around this area are former commercial and industrial sites, including land once occupied by the gas works and the site of a maltings complex north east of the station.

Closer to the Market Place buildings tend to be of sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century date, whereas to the north and south extremities of the Conservation Area sizeable individual properties from the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and set in private gardens and landscapes, are found.



Saxmundham: Aerial View 2001

3 TOPOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Saxmundham is a small market town in the east of Suffolk, situated to the east of the main A12 road from London to Great Yarmouth. The town's main street was the former turnpike road, as evidenced by a surviving toll-house of the Ipswich to South Town Turnpike Trust (1785), north of the town at the parish boundary with Carlton.

Between the old road through the town and the modern A12 to the west lies the parallel route of the Ipswich to Lowestoft branch line, formerly the East Suffolk Railway, with its station at Saxmundham, which first opened in 1859.

Also parallel, but to the east of the town, is the River Fromus, a tributary of the River Alde, that ultimately reaches the sea south of Orford Ness, after skirting past Snape, Aldeburgh and Orford.

The river valley brings Saxmundham just between the Rolling Estate Sandlands and Rolling Estate Claylands (to the west) as defined by the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment. Peripheral parts of the town also fall within the Ancient Rolling Farmlands character type. The underlying geology is essentially crag deposits, sands and gravels laid down during the Pliocene period over the chalk, which underlies all of Suffolk at depth.

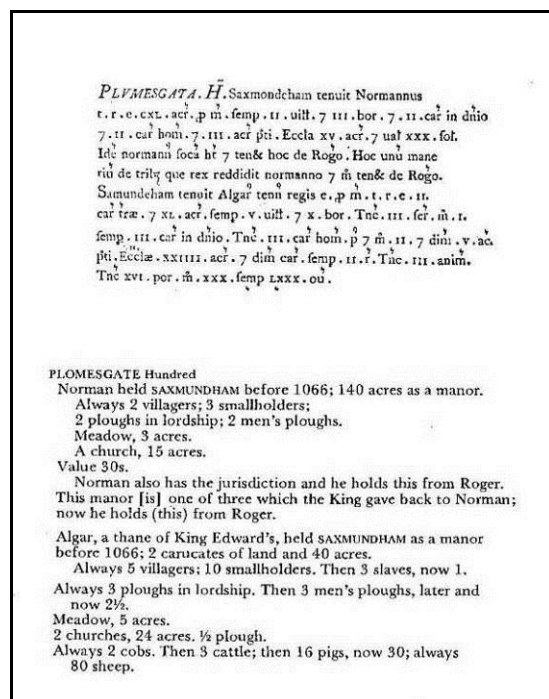


Extract from Ordnance Survey Map

4 ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

The exact meaning of Saxmundham is not fully understood although several interpretations have been suggested. However, what seems to be accepted is that the name has Saxon origins.

The Domesday survey of 1086 makes reference to: *“Saxmundham... with 140 acres as a manor. Then as now 2 villeins and 3 bordars. 2 ploughs in demesne and 2 ploughs belonging to the men. 3 acres of meadow. A church with 15 acres. It is worth 30s.”*



Extract from the Domesday Survey

In 1272 the first market charter for Saxmundham was granted by King Edward I to John De Ramsey, Lord of the Manor.

The Historic Environment Record for Saxmundham lists sixty sites of potential archaeological interest (2014). The oldest of these is a Bronze Age arrowhead, and there is some Iron Age and Roman pottery. Other finds include a Roman lamp and an undated cropmark, and possibly a road.

Of medieval origin are a horse bit and the church and graveyard. A post-medieval windmill site off the Rendham road is known.

The Church of St John the Baptist can be found slightly remote from the town to the east. The founding of the church is thought to have been funded by wealth generated through the wool industry. Extant fabric dates from the 14th and 15th centuries: the west tower is of 14th century date, and the hammerbeam roof to the nave is 15th century. Much rebuilding and restoration work took place during the 19th century, and a north vestry was added during the early part of the 21st century.

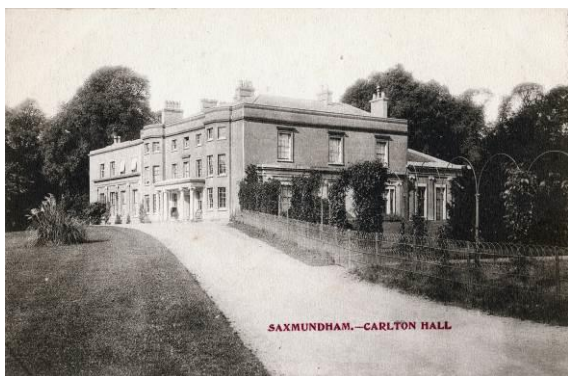


St John's Church tower

South-east of the church, set in parkland, is Hurts Hall, home until 1957 to the Long family. The Grade II listed house, erected in 1893 in a neo-Jacobean style, replaced a house of 1803 designed by Samuel Wyatt. While the hall exists outside the Conservation Area, the start of its approach drive and the north-west tip of the park are within the boundary. The patronage and architectural legacy of the

Long Family can still be seen in the town, with the town pump and Market Hall having both been funded by the family (the latter incorporates the Long coat of arms over the main entrance).

To the north of the town (and again outside the Conservation Area) is Carlton Hall, the family home of Richard Garrett, a manufacturer of agricultural machinery, steam engines and cast iron goods whose works were based in Leiston (the town pump in Saxmundham was cast by his foundry). Carlton Hall has been rebuilt and is now in multiple ownership.



Carlton Hall, c.1900.

The early structure of the town can still be seen, particularly on the east side of the High Street, where a series of houses along the road, with wings and yards and outbuildings to the rear, form frontages to a series of parallel medieval burgage plots that formerly ran from the road right down to the river bank.



View of High Street, looking north

The west side of High Street was probably similar at one time, but has been much altered by subsequent developments,

such as the Market Place that runs parallel to the High Street at its northern end, and the later railway and car parks.

The early 19th century saw considerable change in Saxmundham. During the first quarter of this century George Alexander Cooke, writing in 'Topography of Great Britain' described Saxmundham thus: *"No particular manufacture is carried on here... This town is so much improved, though small, that within the last thirty years almost every house has either been new-fronted or rebuilt."* This would certainly appear to be accurate when referring to the majority of structures clustered around The Bell Hotel and adjacent properties fronting the High Street where careful observation reveals 'polite façades', often of gault brick, having been applied to much older structures.



Re-fronting of an earlier structure, High Street

Sizeable houses of the late 18th and early 19th century exist within the Conservation Area, indicating something of the prosperity and desirability of the town at this time. These include Langley Manor (to the north of the town) Fairfield House (to the west of the High Street, and now much surrounded by modern development) and the Grade II* listed The Beeches (to the east of High Street).

Outside the Conservation Area, and located to the top of Albion Street and Rendham Road, is the remaining brick base to the former post mill. Now converted to a dwelling this circular gault brick structure, listed Grade II, survived the dismantling of the rest of the mill in 1907.

The development of Albion Street and Rendham Road began in 1848 and included a Congregational chapel of 1850. The railway reached Saxmundham in 1859 and having a junction that served not only goods from Leiston but also holiday passengers from Thorpeness and Aldeburgh ensured the line was busy. In terms of the development of the town, the existence of the station ensured considerable building took place to the west of the town, and cottages in Albion Street are known to have been erected to house employees of the railway.



Saxmundham Station, c. 1901

Also developed around this date, and in close proximity to the station, were the former Police Station on the corner of Albion Street and Alma Place and to the east was The Railway Public House (closed at the time of writing).



Former Police House, Albion Street

The development of Fairfield Road (only a very small part of the eastern end lies within the Conservation Area) began in the early 19th century, and comprises good quality workers' cottages to the south side of the road and larger villas and a chapel to the north.

Mid-20th century development tended to be small scale and restricted to infill plots – the exception being the Telephone Exchange and Post Office building to the east side of High Street. Built on the site of the Coach and Horses Inn, the building was completed in 1954. The New Police Station, on Station Approach, dates from the third quarter of the 20th century and its appearance is uncompromisingly from that period. The structure was erected on the site of the former gas works.

Development during the last quarter of the 20th century and early 21st century includes the Lambs Meadow development to the east of the High Street (and abutting the southern boundary of Langley Manor) as well as a cluster of houses immediately to the west of the High Street. The area surrounding Fairfield House (Grade II listed) has also seen change. The main house and associated outbuildings were subdivided c.1973 and are now in multiple ownership, and some newbuild has occurred within the curtilage.



Fairfield House development

In recent years the centre of the town has seen the redevelopment of the former garage and industrial unit site to the south of Church Street, to form retail units, including a supermarket and separate smaller retail spaces.

Notable individuals from Saxmundham include the landscape painter Henry Bright (1810-1873) who was born in Ashford House, High Street and Thomas Thurlow (1813-1899), a respected sculptor whose work can be found in various East Anglian churches.

5 QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

Saxmundham has many listed buildings but only two of a Grade II* listing.

The Church of St John the Baptist dates mostly from the 14th and 15th centuries, although significant alterations and additions were made during the 19th and early 20th century. Both the west tower and Swann Chapel (of 1308 off the eastern end of the south aisle) are Decorated in style, whilst the south aisle itself is Perpendicular. The north aisle was rebuilt in 1853 to designs by Henry Roberts, and the whole church restored by R M Phipson in 1873, which included work to the fine 15th century hammerbeam roof.

The other Grade II* listed building is The Beeches and associated stable block at No.5 North Entrance - comprising three houses now made into one. A small timber-framed 17th century cottage is tucked in behind two early 18th century red brick houses, one close to the road, the other set back a little.

Had the original Hurts Hall of 1803 by Samuel Wyatt not burnt down in 1889, it too may have achieved a higher grade of listing. The present house of 1893 in neo-Jacobean style, red brick with a plain tile roof, is however listed Grade II. Pevsner has little more to say of it except to mention '*about 200 yards SE of the house the largest dovecote in Suffolk, brick, octagonal, with a high-pitched roof and a glazed lantern*', now sadly gone.

The Market Hall in the centre of town is also Grade II listed, its flanking screen walls adorning the adjoining buildings seemingly turning its elevations inside out to create a courtyard at the front.



The Beeches



Market Hall



Red brick, terracotta and slate



Render with 'ashlar' scoring



Painted brick, slate and an exceptional 'Gothick' doorcase



White or gault brick and black pantile

6 TRADITIONAL BUILDING MATERIALS

Although not immediately apparent, many of Saxmundham's buildings are in fact of timber-framed construction. They now present either a rendered façade or one of brick, having been re-fronted in the 18th or 19th century with more fashionable and robust materials.

The bricks used are generally one of the local Suffolk varieties, either soft reds or the harder whites, occasionally both with the former at the rear and the latter on the main façade.

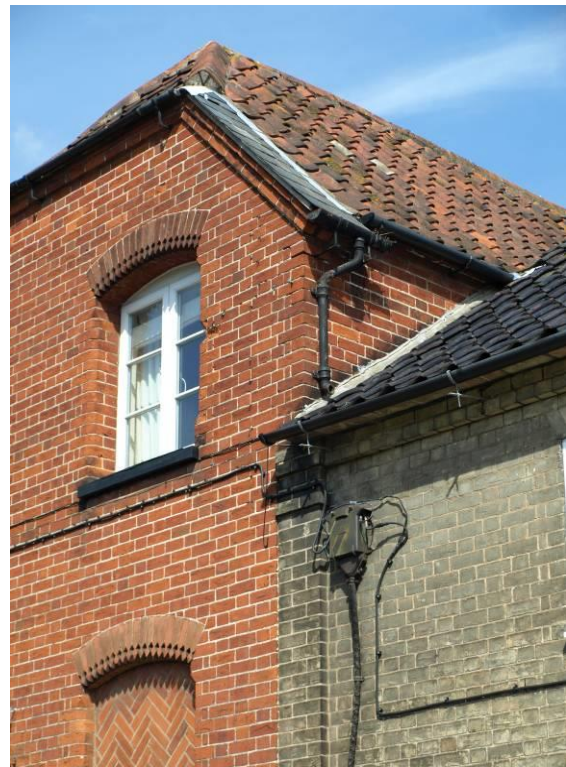
New buildings from these periods also employ the same bricks, and the High Street in particular has a large quantity of buildings constructed or re-fronted using the more expensive Suffolk white brick. Notable examples include the Bell Hotel and Old Bank House, and to the west the Railway Station (this last now largely unfortunately painted over).

Rendered elevations are fairly common although decorative treatments such as pargetting or ashlar scored lines imitating stone blocks is uncommon. Examples of pargetting can be seen at Monks Cottages and ashlar scoring at Brook Cottage.

Flint appears in the occasional boundary wall, but most obviously in the Church of St John the Baptist along with limestone dressings.

Steep plain tile roofs, sometimes hidden behind rendered parapets, usually indicate a timber-framed building within. Pantile roof coverings, either red or black glazed, are commonly seen. Less frequently found are slate covered roofs and where this material is evident it tends to be on low pitched roofs of 19th century brick buildings.

Thatch is rarely seen, perhaps as might be expected for a town, although an example to the extremity of the Conservation Area exists on No.s 40 to 43 Church Hill.



Red brick, white brick and red and black pantiles



White brick and plain tile

7 CHARACTER OF SPACES

The historic town is essentially linear in pattern along the line of the old main road through. From the southern end South Entrance gives way to High Street and then to North Entrance.

South Entrance becomes High Street at a crossroads; here Chantry Road heads westwards uphill to cross the railway line at a level crossing. To the east Church Road crosses the river before heading uphill past the church and onwards to Leiston.

About halfway along High Street the road bends slightly to the west where Station Approach joins it from the west. North of here Market Place runs parallel to High Street on its western side providing a more informal space without through traffic. Undoubtedly this was a much larger space in the earlier medieval period prior to infilling and would have been the principal space in the town.

Beyond the northern end of Market Place, High Street continues for a further short distance before passing under the railway bridge and becoming North Entrance.

It is this medieval core of High Street and Market Place, with its mainly 18th and 19th century frontages, that forms the basis of most of the Conservation Area; in fact this area was the total extent of the town as late as 1840 when the Tithe map was drawn.

Later development seems to have favoured the western side of the town. The by-passing of the town to the west has further encouraged this bias with recent housing estates occupying the land between the town and the A12.

The new commercial development either side of Church Street has ensured that this part of Saxmundham has a very different character to the High Street and the residential areas to the west, which are now joined by recent residential development to the east of the Fromus.



Station Approach junction



Entrance to Fromus Square

8 TREES AND GREEN SPACES

Whilst the central High Street area is urban in character and effectively devoid of trees, the eastern edge of the town along the Fromus and substantial areas adjoining both North and South Entrances are well tree-ed.

At the northern extremity of the Conservation Area, adjoining the parish boundary with Kelsale, Langley Manor on the east side of North Entrance has substantial tree-filled grounds. Further trees can be found scattered amongst properties on the west side of the road and further west a small development within the former grounds of Fairfield House has a number of trees remaining. These last include oak, Norway maple, walnut, catalpa, tulip tree, lime and beech and are the subject of Tree Preservation Order no.45.

Another TPO, no.74, protects a group of hybrid black poplar on the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area here, adjoining a double strip of trees either side of the railway line as it heads off north-eastwards.

Further south along the eastern edge of the Conservation Area there are numerous trees along the banks of the Fromus which lead southwards into the grounds of Hurts Hall. Here there are formally planted areas and avenues of trees.

The west side of South Entrance has some tree cover to the rear of several properties.

Green spaces within the Conservation Area are largely lacking and the usual contribution made by private gardens is limited in Saxmundham. However, there are exceptions, including the park surrounding Langley Manor, the northern tip of the park associated with Hurts Hall, pockets of land to the west of the South Entrance approach, and the churchyard. The latter is the largest publically accessible green space in Saxmundham.



Trees at Langley Manor



Churchyard trees

9 COUNTRYSIDE SETTING

Recent residential development east of the Fromus off Church Hill means that the open countryside that was formerly near to the town centre on this eastern bank of the river and formed the setting to the Conservation Area is now more distant. It is not accessible to the public, there being no footpaths south of Church Road in the grounds of Hurts Hall, nor to the north through the fields around Street Farm. Indeed the river itself winds through this backland area largely unseen, although new connections across it have been formed from adjacent development.

To the west there is also little in the way of footpath access near the town centre as most of the land is now developed in some way. However further west and to the north and south there are footpaths that link right around this side of the town from South Entrance (footpath no.16), via footpaths no.s 15, 13, 11, 8 and 4 in turn to North Entrance (footpath no. 2). Further paths beyond this loop lead out into the wider countryside to the south, west and north.

Also from North Entrance, footpath no.1 heads north-eastwards from the railway bridge along the side of the railway embankment for some distance before it crosses under the tracks where the goods line to Leiston and Sizewell branches off eastwards.

The setting of the Saxmundham Conservation Area is much enhanced by private parks – with Langley Manor to North Entrance and Hurts Hall to South Entrance providing expansive attractive rural character before entering the density of the town.



Start of Footpath No. 2



Start of Footpath No. 1

10 FORMER USES

The town's past prosperity seems to have depended largely on its position as a trading post, and only just came within the area of the north Suffolk linen industry based on the Waveney valley.

Late 17th century records indicate the presence here of the typical farming community: 10 yeomen, a husbandman, a thatcher, a saddler and two blacksmiths along with a Maltster, a woollen draper and a linen draper.

By the 19th century the town had its own maltings, brewery and leather working industry and could boast the tallest post and roundhouse mill in Europe until it was dismantled in 1907.

The Tithe apportionment of 1841 confirms entries of 'Tan Office' and 'Mill Meadow' along with various Sand and Clay Pits, and entries of 'Hemland' and 'Winding Field', indicative of the linen industry.

The town grew significantly during the latter part of the 19th century, aided significantly by the arrival of the railway in the town in 1859, and Saxmundham became more of a local service centre with a variety of shops. The railway station boasted not only a thriving goods yard but also the junction for the branch line serving industrial Leiston.

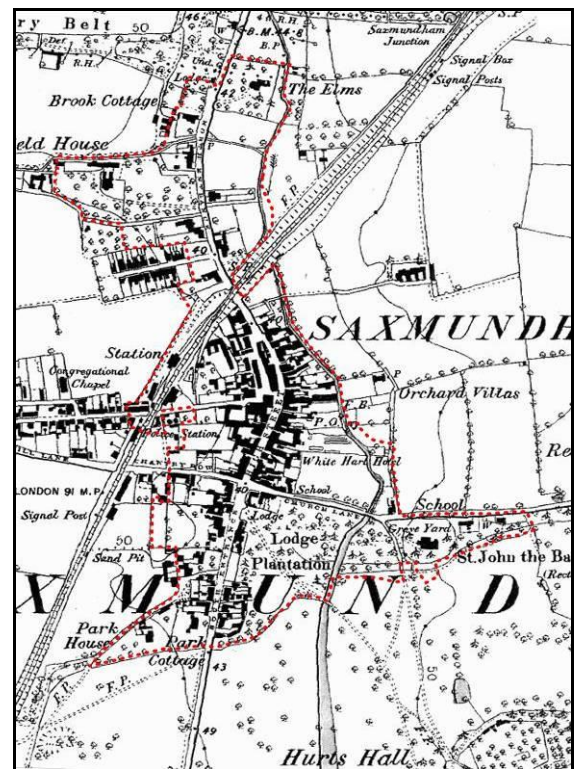
Saxmundham has always been central to local communications, and was a staging post on the London to Yarmouth toll turnpike. The Bell Hotel in the High Street, rebuilt between 1842-3, is purportedly the last coaching inn to have been built in England.

Saxmundham has retained a shopping centre of moderate size, anchored by two large supermarkets and the smaller Co-op in High Street, which now accommodates the Post Office. There are also banks, estate agents and other professional firms. Importantly, there remain a number of local family run businesses which attract loyal customers, some of which have been established in the town for

some considerable time, including Crisps Booksellers, Printers and Stationers at 25 to 27 High Street (est. 1834) and Kerseys Clockmakers and Jewellers at 23 High Street (est. 1769).



Detail of shop front, 46 High Street



19th century map



34 High Street



4 Market Place



32 High Street



Railway Station

11 PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

High Street is the principal shopping street in the town and before the by-pass was built it formed part of the A12 trunk road and suffered badly from heavy traffic and congestion. Now without the through traffic, the passing trade the A12 brought in has reduced. The impression gained of the town centre is one of an historic market town attempting, with some success, to maintain and develop itself as a service centre for an expanding population and passenger hub for access to the Heritage Coast and Snape Maltings.

The empty shops and derelict buildings at 32 and 34 High Street, however, create a poor image in the town, as they form an important focal point along the curving High Street. The White Hart Inn is a prominent building located on the High Street and, at the time of writing, is empty and awaiting re-use. Furthermore, behind many frontage buildings in High Street and Market Place the picture is sometimes poor with views and glimpses of underused and derelict land and buildings. One such example is the grade II listed Wingfield House – a timber-framed property in very poor condition and on the SDCD 'Buildings at Risk' register (now in new ownership).



The White Hart Inn, High Street

The Railway Station and the Railway Public House adjacent are both in a poor state of repair. Both structures are attractive and their re-use would provide a

more welcoming first impression for those arriving at the station.

The development of land to the south of Church Street to provide retail units has brought benefits and disadvantages to the town. The supermarkets along this road draw people to Saxmundham, but at the same time have contributed to the build up of vehicular traffic and occasional congestion.

The incidence of uPVC windows being installed to properties in the town is increasing. Unlisted buildings remain particularly vulnerable to having their doors and windows replaced.



Replacement windows

The bus station area is no longer used to pick up passengers and appears run down and under-used. With their vehicular access off Church Street, the car parks serving the Waitrose supermarket on the north side as far as the bridge over the Fromus are rather intrusive and could be better screened by tree planting instead of the current low shrubbery.



Former bus station site.

Old photographs of the town show how imposing the trees were in both Church Street and South Entrance. The trees beyond the bridge and around the church have survived, as have a number at the southern end of South Entrance and in private gardens. North Entrance remains well tree-ed, which is why the route into Saxmundham from the south is so attractive. Attempting to reintroduce the trees which have been lost in Church Street and elsewhere in the town centre would be a highly desirable long term aim.

Historic shop fronts, signs and advertisements are a major feature in any town centre. In Saxmundham over the years some intrusive signs have been erected and inappropriate changes have been made to some historic buildings. Improving the appearance of shop fronts and signs would be advantageous in assisting and promoting the commercial viability of Saxmundham as a shopping and tourist destination of historic character.



Historic shop front, High Street

Similarly, on certain historic properties in the town, original architectural features and detailing have been lost and replaced with new features which lack the quality of the original. As a result the attractiveness and historic character of some buildings have been undermined. Additionally in the High Street and South Entrance, the existing materials on the footways and carriageways do little to reinforce the streetscape qualities of this historic market town and could be improved in the future as part of any planning gain or major Highways works.



Modern signage and blinds

**12 STREET BY STREET
APPRAISAL**

12.1 South Entrance (east side)

On the eastern side of South Entrance the buildings are tightly grouped, all unlisted, and date primarily from the late 18th and 19th centuries. The buildings generally are either pairs or rows of cottages, located close to the street.



View of Hurts Hall and associated park, as seen to the east of the approach road to the South Entrance of Saxmundham

When approaching the Conservation Area boundary from the south there is a panoramic view of **Hurts Hall**. Set in undulating parkland, Hurts Hall remains largely unaltered as the 1893 replacement for an earlier Samuel Wyatt house which burnt down in 1890. The replacement house was designed in the neo-Jacobean style by the Ipswich architect T W Cotman.



View into the Conservation Area from the South Entrance

Upon crossing the Conservation Area boundary there is an abrupt change between the open countryside and the town. The buildings are screened, at least initially, by trees including some fine mature holm oaks. Although the road appears quite wide and there remains a feeling of open space, the majority of buildings are located fairly close to the edge of the footway, a key characteristic.

Beyond the tree belt, South Entrance appears as a wide avenue where open space, trees, shrubs and hedges make an important contribution. This is despite the loss of a number of large trees over the past few decades.

Most of the buildings in South Entrance are older properties which contribute greatly to the architectural and historic character of the town. Despite some changes, the majority retain their fenestration and detailing and are well cared for.



No. 49 and 51

First encountered is **No. 49 and 51**, a detached two storey structure probably dating from the early 19th century. The compact elevation and graceful swept roofline hide an extensive range of outbuildings located to the rear. The single storey canted timber bay is likely a mid-19th century addition.



No. 47

Set back slightly from the road is the double fronted **No. 47**. Of mid 19th century date the three bay wide principal front is framed by a pair of two storey canted bay windows. The roof pitch is shallow and covered with slate, and the brick elevation facing the road has been painted. The house fortunately retains its original sash windows with margin light glazing bar arrangement, as well as an attractive iron lattice porch.



No. 45, Holly House

Further north is **No. 45, Holly House**, an attractive early 19th century red brick structure of three bays width, built abutting the footpath. To the centre of the main façade is a simple pedimented timber doorcase with loose classical detailing. Brickwork scars suggest the possibility of blocked door openings to each end of the main elevation, indicating that the property was built as a pair of cottages. The retention of the 6-over-6 pane sash windows greatly enhances the historic appearance of the dwelling and deserve to be retained.



No.s 41 to 43

A row of red brick cottages, **No.s 41 to 43** (the latter known as **Crown Cottage**) appear to be of late 18th or early 19th century date. To the side of the property a double end gable can be seen. It is highly likely that this property, now two units, was built as at least three cottages. Crown Cottage retains a simple projecting timber shop front window of some interest.



No.s 29 to 35

No.s 29 to 35, are an extremely attractive row of early 19th century gault brick cottages. Remarkably, the row retains its entire compliment of 8-over-8 pane sash windows, and this, combined with the small front gardens and the long uninterrupted expanse of black glazed pantiles, makes a very important contribution to the Conservation Area. The end gables are rendered and reveal catslide roofs to the rear of the property. It is possible that the gault brick elevation is a re-fronting of an earlier structure. Immediately to the rear of this row is **No. 37**, barely visible from the street, although the hipped black glazed pan tile roof and central chimney stack can be seen.



No. 27

Nestling between two larger structures, and located some distance back from the road is **No. 27**, a single storey structure of mid-19th century date. Essentially two gable ends and with a modern flat roof porch to the front, the structure adds a pleasing change of scale to the streetscape and is of fine picturesque character adding to the delight of the streetscene in this area.



Southwood Close

Southwood Close is a fairly modern infill development located halfway down on the eastern side of South Entrance, backing onto the driveway to Hurts Hall which emerges nearer the town centre. Whilst some of the materials and detailing reflect the character of the buildings in the area, the stepped layout and suburban planting, paving, driveways and parking areas fail to reinforce the historic townscape in this part of Saxmundham and make a neutral contribution.



No.s 19 to 25

Similarly, the plastic windows and doors installed into **No.s 19-25 South Entrance** undermine the otherwise simple red brick terraced houses, which appear to have been converted from former 19th century commercial premises.



No.s 11 to 15

Of mid to late 19th century date **No.s 11 to 15** are little altered examples of a former commercial premises (**no. 15**) and adjoining living accommodation (**no. 11**). The retained joinery greatly enhances the appearance of the buildings, and combined with the shallow pitched slate roof covering the effect is one of understated quality and fine historic character.



No.s 5 to 9

Of smaller scale than the adjacent building, **No.s 5 to 9** are a well-composed terrace of modest cottages. Dating from the early 19th century their painted render elevations and red clay pantile roof presents a muted material palette, and this combined with the arched heads to the ground floor door and window openings, produces a very attractive row of cottages.



Approach drive to Hurts Hall

The driveway to **Hurts Hall** is an important open space close to the town centre. The gates, piers and railings should, in retrospect, have been more substantial visually, in order to make a clearer statement about the relationship between the Hall and the town, and the brick paviour apron to the drive is an unfortunate urban detail for an approach to a country house and its park.



No.s 1 to 3

No. 1 South Entrance on the corner of Church Street is a replacement for an older property, which had a gabled pantiled roof and large ground floor shop windows with semi-circular heads. These are reflected in the new design, although on such a prominent site this modern building lacks a quality of detail and material use appropriate for such a location. Furthermore, the loss of the railings, trees and shrubbery which previously existed on both sides of South Entrance at its junction with High Street has been detrimental to the townscape of this part of the town.



No. 3

Attached and to the south is a property occupied (at the time of writing) by **The Golden Fish Bar**, although of some historic interest this property has been heavily altered. Better preserved is No. 3, a building whose quality has not been too seriously undermined by replacement joinery and a concrete tile roof covering. Still extant are the fine gault brick elevations. The ground floor doors and

windows are all contained within tall recessed openings with semi-circular heads. To the first floor are squat windows openings, placed in the restricted space between the top of the arch below and the eaves. To the centre of the first floor is a blind window recess.

12.2 South Entrance (west side)

The character of the west side of South Entrance differs considerably to that of the east. There exist greater numbers of detached dwellings, and those which are attached tend to be more substantial buildings. In addition approximately half of the buildings located to the west side of the road are listed and there is greater variety in the appearance and build dates. Properties tend to be located away from the road, and some are surrounded by sizeable private gardens.

The first dwelling encountered on entering the Conservation Area is **No 34**, which is located some distance to the west of the road on higher ground. This property is not clearly visible as it sheltered by groups of trees.



No. 32 (Park Cottage)

Further north, and closer to the road is **No. 32 (Park Cottage)**. The single-storey building, dating from the mid 19th century, is an attractive dwelling located behind a good quality brick and cobble wall. The house has two gables facing the road, each with decorative crocketed barge boards. To the black glazed pantile roof are a series of chimney stacks which help provide verticality to the design of the house. The building retains many original windows, with those to the front elevation having attractive hoodmoulds over.



No. 30, Crown House

Crown House is a Grade II listed early 19th century painted brick house, with a shallow pitched slated roof. The symmetrical facade is extremely well-proportioned and comprises five sash windows surrounding a central panelled front door and timber doorcase.



No. 28, The White House

Attached to the north is the Grade II listed **No. 28, The White House**. With lower eaves and a steeper pitched slated roof, the White House has a late-18th century painted brick facade. The windows are similarly board and squat, being 8-over-8 pane sashes. The off-centre panelled door has a pedimented door case with a blind window directly above. The loss of the hedge to the front boundary has improved views of the house, but eroded the green character of the immediate area.

Located within a fairly modern brick pier, directly in front of the house, is a Victorian post box inscribed "VR".



No.s 22, 24 & 26, Monks Cottages

No.s 22, 24 & 26, Monks Cottages are a Grade II listed row of three houses that abut the footpath. Dating from the early 18th century they are amongst the oldest dwellings in the town (the very earliest dating from perhaps the 16th century). Timber framed and rendered, they have steeply pitched plain tiled roofs (the roof of No. 26 is higher than that on Nos. 24 and 22). Each house has a six-panelled door, with good quality timber doorcases, and the windows are 18th century metal casements, some with square leaded lights. No. 26 has panelled pargetting in a chequered pattern, probably a reproduction of the original pargetting.



No. 20, Pine Villa

No. 20, Pine Villa is a substantial unlisted three storey double fronted house, constructed of gault brick. According to the stone tablet between the first and second storey the property was originally known as Pine Villa, and constructed in 1891. The centrally located entrance door

is flanked by single storey canted bay windows with shallow pitched slate covered roofs that abut the underside of the cills to the first floor windows. The property benefits from retaining its plate glass sash windows. The imposing urban scale of this villa and its attractive well maintained appearance make a very good contribution to the Conservation Area.



No. 18

Adjacent is **No. 18**, unlisted and again constructed from gault brick. However, the elevations are lower, and the slate covered roof is of shallow pitch, which gives the house a modest character. To the right side of the main façade is a substantial brick stack. The appearance of this house is enhanced by the retention of the original window joinery.



No. 16

With a large front garden containing some fine specimen trees, shrubs and some rather attractive barns and outbuildings **No. 16** is a Grade II listed mid 17th century timber-framed house. One-and-a-half storey, it has rendered walls and a steeply pitched pan tiled roof with square dormers. The porch to the entrance front

is later in date, perhaps late 19th or early 20th century. However, the whole is rather marred by the close-boarded timber fence erected along the front boundary.



No.14 and garage to No. 12

To the north, **No. 14** is a commercial premises built during the last quarter of the 20th century. This and a detached domestic garage further north occupy the site where a garage stood. Photographs from the 1920s show the old gabled garage workshops close to the road frontage and vehicles being filled up with fuel on the roadside.



No. 12, Ivy House

Next to the garage are two substantial yet contrasting Grade II listed buildings. **No. 12, Ivy House** is a long, brick fronted house with a hipped pan tiled roof. Now rendered and having lost its parapet, the 18th century façade, with its many sash windows, panelled door and tall door surround, hides a 16th century timber-framed core.



No. 10, Beech Lawn House

Set back slightly, is the impressive Grade II listed, three-storey, white brick, **No. 10, Beech Lawn House**. Dating from 1820 the house has a shallow pitched slate roof with pedimented gable ends. On the ground and first floor are some fine, tall sash windows with delicate glazing bars, whilst the second floor attic windows are much smaller and square. The central porch has fluted Doric columns supporting an entablature which forms a first floor balcony with wrought iron railings.



No. 8, Beech Lawn Cottage

Adjacent is the Grade II listed **Beech Lawn Cottage**. The house is tall and narrow fronted and of three storeys. Dating from the 17th century, it was refaced in red brick (now painted white) around 1840. The hipped, pan tiled roof has tall, red brick chimneys and the windows are cross casements. Above the central half-glazed door the windows on the two upper floors are blind. To the front garden is a mature lime tree and yew hedge which has managed to survive when many others along South Entrance have been lost.



No.6

The stucco-fronted building at **No. 6** is something of a puzzle. The building appears to be first shown on the 1904 OS map, although the detailing of the shop front looks to be mid 19th century. It is an extremely fine example of a commercial premises with high quality detailing. The structure is without parallel in Saxmundham and is a welcome highlight of the Conservation Area, to which it makes an outstanding contribution in terms of its ongoing commercial use and its well maintained appearance.



No. 4, Priory House

No. 4, Priory House, is a Grade II listed property which hides an earlier (late 17th century) timber-framed building behind its rendered facade. Once two houses, it was much altered and re-fenestrated when converted into a single dwelling in the mid 20th century.



No. 2

Located on the corner of Chantry Road **No. 2** is an impressive late 19th century red brick property with sash windows and extremely prominent chimneystacks. To the rear of the property (see Chantry Road) is a detached coach house and red brick boundary wall. The house, set back from the road and behind a hedge, is a major townscape feature at these important crossroads and makes a very good contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

12.3 Chantry Road



Chantry Road, looking west

From the crossroads junction with South Entrance, High Street and Church Street, Chantry Road climbs westwards towards the railway crossing. For the first few metres the road is quite narrow, the return elevation and high walls of No. 2 South Entrance creating a pinch point and visual sense of enclosure. Beyond the high wall are views of mature trees making it apparent that there is a pleasant area of open space and landscape to the rear of the properties fronting onto South Entrance. One large beech tree is especially prominent.



Coach House to No. 2 South Entrance, with No. 2 to 12 Chantry Road beyond

Beyond the late 19th century brick wall and Coach House is a terrace of six early 18th century Grade II listed cottages, **No.s 2-12**, located on the back edge of the narrow footway. These simple cottages have walls of painted brick with render

over a timber frame at first floor level – the upper floor being slightly jettied forward. The east end gable of the row has a weather-boarded elevation.



No.s 14 and 16

Attached to the western end are **No.s 14 & 16** which are also Grade II listed. They are a pair of tall mid 19th century three-storey houses with painted brick walls and, like the adjoining terrace, have a shallow pitched pan tiled roof.

Turning back towards the crossroads, on the northern side of Chantry Road the land rises, held back in places by red brick retaining walls.



No. 13

Set back, on higher ground, **No. 13** is an imposing house of c.1870. The detailing of this house, including the red brick with contrasting stone dressings, is of high quality, and combined with the retained original joinery the whole is impressive.

An attractive brick-built outbuilding exists to the west of the site.



No.s 9 and 11

Immediately east are **No.s 9 and 11**, a much smaller pair of red brick cottages, and perhaps of slightly earlier date than No. 13. The detailing here is restrained and much more commonplace, but not without interest – the central access to a rear courtyard provides an unexpected and interesting feature. **No. 11** retains a fine iron gate and railings to the front boundary. Both houses have sadly lost their original doors and window.

Tucked in between these houses and the service yards of the buildings fronting onto High Street is a modern bungalow (**No. 7 Chantry Road**). An improved sense of enclosure in the streetscape could be achieved here by some careful planting above the red brick boundary wall.

12.4 Church Street and Church Hill

From the crossroads eastwards Church Street drops gently towards the river. The road continues beyond the bridge, rising up and veering leftward leaving the Church of St John the Baptist closing the vista.

The view down Church Street from the crossroads has changed significantly since the early part of the 20th century.



No.s 28 to 35

At the western end of the street, on the north side, is a row of cottages of varying dates and styles. **No.s 34 and 35** are modern, although their elevations have been detailed in a reasonably sympathetic way. More interesting, both visually and historically, are **No.s 32 and 33**.



No.s. 32 and 33

The original role of No. 32 is believed to have been that of a school, and the large ground floor openings would suggest such a use. The half-hipped roof is an

interesting feature that greatly reduces the impact the gable end has on the streetscape.



No.s 28 to 30

The final cottages that comprise the row are **No.s 28 to 30**. Most interesting is **No.30**, a two storey range of gault brick cottages, now converted to a single dwelling. These date from the early-to-mid 19th century and are attractively detailed – the regiment of brick pilasters and arched brick lintels over the openings are particularly good.

No. 28 is a pair of red brick cottages, now painted. These likely date from the early-to-mid 19th century. Like all the cottages that comprise this row, the original doors and windows have regrettably been replaced with modern units.

Beyond is the Waitrose supermarket and associated car parking. This large building exists in contrast to the densely grouped row of cottages, although the material palette of this structure has made an effort to follow the local vernacular. The site boundary treatment of simple 'estate' railings and hedge / shrub planting provides a welcome rural quality to an otherwise very urban area.

The impact of the large expanse of car parking could be reduced by the planting of trees, especially along the Church Road frontage.



Waitrose supermarket

To the north west of the Waitrose supermarket is Fromus Square, an enclosed area at the rear of properties on the High Street. To the centre of this space is a modern stone war memorial of polished Cornish granite. The square and memorial were created and opened in 2004.



Modern war memorial, Fromus Square

Fromus square and the car parks that serve the Waitrose and Tesco supermarkets are, themselves, important public spaces, although of very different character. This fact should always be borne in mind in terms of their design, maintenance and changes to them.



View of retail development to the south side of Church Street

Opposite Waitrose, on the south side of Church Street is a further supermarket development, and to the east of this a range of modern commercial units. Being located here has had the benefit of maintaining commercial development adjoining the town centre. The supermarket building forms a local landmark by virtue of its scale and use.



View looking east, towards the bridge and the church

At the point that the road crosses over the River Fromus the character of the Conservation Area changes dramatically from one of bustling commercial activity and hard landscaping to one of leafy green and enclosed spaces.

The bridge across the Fromus is somewhat discreet: from the road the only evidence of the river crossing is the simple parapets on each side. The tree cover which originally extended much further into the town survives here and is a major feature of the streetscape.



The Church of St John the Baptist

Located on rising ground to the south side of Church Street is **The Church of St John the Baptist**. Listed Grade II*, the square tower is 14th century, as is the south chapel on the east end of the south aisle dating from 1308. Windows are generally in the Perpendicular style. The flint walls have ashlar stone quoins and the roofs are of slate and lead. The churchyard is simple, with grassy banks sloping up steeply from the road merging into the churchyard with tall trees dotted about.

Within the churchyard, and to the south-west of the tower, is an unusual headstone incorporating a sundial, in memory of John and Mary Noller (1725 and 1724). Also worthy of note is the fine table tomb to the east end of the church to Joseph Packard (d. 1825) of Sternfield Hall. The detailing and design of the tomb is very much in the manner of Sir John Soane, and it is a memorial of high status and quality.

The unusual 1820s Freeman memorial at the entrance to the churchyard possibly marks the entrance to a burial vault. The churchyard also contains other notable eighteenth and nineteenth century memorials which, in addition to their own intrinsic significance, make a strong contribution to the setting of the church.



Table tomb to Joseph Packard



No.s 40 to 43

Beyond the churchyard on the eastern boundary is a row of thatched cottages, **No.s 40 to 43**. These were built by the Long family, as a single-storey Church School in 1836. Forty years later a second floor was added as a library and reading room. The buildings were later converted into four 'tied' cottages for estate workers.

The terrace is distinctive in appearance and highly attractive in character, largely due to the thatched roof, which is unexpected. As one of the first properties seen on entering Saxmundham from the east, this terrace is visually important, a prominence afforded by its position on the rising land out of the town.



No.s 35 and 36

The eastern boundary of the Conservation Area includes an attractive pair of traditional rendered cottages (**No.s 35 & 36 Church Hill**) with pantiled roofs, set behind a frontage hedge, that make a good contribution to the Conservation Area.



Church House

On the opposite side of the road the Conservation Area boundary excludes the land and recent housing development to the north of Church Hill but includes the track which runs northwards adjacent to the Grade II listed **Church House**. This incorporates an earlier mid 18th century dwelling with an attached stable and loft, which now forms the rear wing of an early 19th century house built at the front. The earlier portion is of flint and brick, with weather-boarding under a pan tiled roof, whilst the later structure is white brick with a slate roof. The windows are a mixture of casements and sashes with some with decorative glazing bars.

12.5 High Street – General Character

High Street itself can be considered in two separate sections. The southern part is fairly straight, its northern vista partially closed on the left-hand side when looking north by the island block of buildings between High Street and Market Place. The northern part gently curves away westwards thus closing the right hand vista, but leading one northward to where Market Place rejoins on the left. High Street then continues a little further, before ending at the railway bridge.

High Street, from the South Entrance junction to beyond Market Place, consists almost entirely of built up frontages on both sides with only a few small gaps in between. Behind these frontages are numerous rear extensions and outbuildings, many of which contribute to the historic character and appearance of the town centre. Likewise, there is a considerable amount of open space which is potentially an attractive feature in the townscape, especially where gardens and mature trees exist. Access to these spaces however, is limited by the narrow frontages and plot widths, the River Fromus to the east and the road layout to the west. .

On the western side of High Street, behind the Queens Head, is a large area of recently developed land which was once the site of a former glass works.

On the eastern side, behind the White Hart, is the Waitrose supermarket with its associated delivery and parking areas. The area of land between the pub alleyway from High Street and the supermarket entrance has fairly recently been enhanced as Fromus Square and provides a location for the War Memorial. Some of the spaces alongside the north wall of the supermarket remain rather unsightly.

High Street itself is potentially an attractive street, but unfortunately ordinary concrete kerbs have been laid and the slabs and blocks used on the footways are rather harsh and ‘busy’ in terms of their laying

pattern. As such, they are not particularly sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

High Street, architecturally, has some fine buildings, many of which are listed. Others are of significant local interest and it is important that their architectural and historical integrity is retained and not undermined by inappropriate change and the loss of fabric, detailing and materials. Indeed, many of the 18th and 19th century frontages hide much earlier structures.

12.6 High Street – Southern End

Both sides of High Street at the southern end initially consist of mostly two-storey domestic scale buildings. Many were probably houses, some converted into commercial use during the late 18th and 19th centuries.



No. 20

Interestingly, there is only one red brick building, an Edwardian bank (**No. 20 High Street**), whilst the majority are faced in Suffolk white brick, sometimes rendered or painted over. Roofs are generally clay pantile, some the black glazed variety, plus plain tiles and slate.



Dutch gable to south elevation of No. 1



No.s 1 to 3

Starting on the western side, **No.s 1 to 3 High Street**, on the corner with Chantry Road, has an ornate Dutch style gable. This attractive detail is impaired by the proliferation of waste pipes, street furniture and uPVC windows. The elevation facing the High Street contains two shop fronts, the example to No. 1 being the more interesting. Although the building has suffered from having some replacement doors and windows and some openings widened, some sash windows remain.



No. 5, and No.7 The Co-op

No. 5 is a narrow, storey and a half property, with steeply pitched roof covered with red clay pantiles. The door and window joinery are modern.

The single-storey **Co-op shop, No. 7 High Street**, although not a poor design in itself, does not have the interest and townscape quality of the two-storey premises it replaced in the early 20th century. It has greatly benefited from redecoration with a scheme highlighting the detailing of the pilasters, fascia and cornice on the shop front.



No.s 9 to 13

A mix of painted brick and painted render elevations, and three different shop fronts (all of historic interest) combined with a large plate glass window opening to the first floor of **No. 9** confuse the likelihood that these three units were built as a single unified structure. A parapet to the front elevation hides a hipped plain tile roof.



No.s 2 and 4

On the eastern side of High Street, the prominent site at the Church Street junction is occupied by an early 19th century house and shop. The listed **No. 2 High Street**, along with the unlisted **No. 4**, was formerly occupied by a builders merchants and building contractors who also used the buildings and yard to the rear in Church Street. This business, along with the complex of buildings it occupied, now converted into shops, offices and dwellings, was for many years an important feature in the town centre. The buildings retain much joinery of age and quality.



No.s 6, 6a and 8

There are a number of other listed buildings on this side of High Street. **No.s 6, 6a & 8** were originally a mid-18th century house, and this is evident in the uniformity of the roof, but not in the elevations, as the section now known as **No. 8** has had a large shop front inserted. The rest of the building is now converted into shops and flats.



No. 10

No. 10, also Grade II listed, was built originally as a house. Altered in c.1840, when the facade was raised to create a fine three-storey property with white brick walls, slated roof and sash windows. Most of the ground floor has been opened out to form a shop premises and retains a good early 20th century shop front. The side gables to this building are partly built of white brick and partly of red brick, perhaps a measure of economy or a re-fronting of an earlier structure.



No. 12, Holly Lodge

No. 12, Holly Lodge is set back from High Street, down a narrow driveway. It is an attractive early 19th century Grade II listed house, built of white brick with red brick detailing comprising a gabled three-storey central block with lower extensions either side.



No.s 14, 16 and 16a

The street-facing white brick elevation of **No.s 14, 16 and 16a**, with parapet detailing obscuring the roofline, may be a re-fronting of an older structure. Note that the parapet detailing to **No. 14** is decorated and therefore the re-fronting occurred in phases. To the centre of the building is an arched opening leading to a contained courtyard. The shop fronts to **No.16** and **No. 16a** are of very good quality, and the first floor windows are original to their respective sections of white brick façade. The building makes a good contribution to the Conservation Area through its uses and historic interest and quality.



The White Hart Hotel

Further along High Street, beyond another 19th century two-storey white brick property, is the Grade II listed 17th century **White Hart Hotel**. The original building has been altered and now has 19th century rendered brick walls, tripartite sash windows and two matching doorways with panelled doors and pilastered doorcases. The plain tiled roof has a slate eaves course and parapet gables with impressive 19th century octagonal chimneys terminating in star shaped tops.



No. 20 (rhs) and No. 22 (lhs)

No. 20 is an unusual structure within the context of the High Street. Late 19th century in date, its height and mansard roof answers the height of the property to which it adjoins to the north. The use of red brick and terracotta is unusual and of high quality, with some fine Queen Anne revival detailing between the first and attic storey. The capped triangular attic gable is also worthy of note. To the ground floor, and perhaps in an attempt to unite this section of the elevation with the rest of the

High Street, the material use is stucco. The detailing is classical and heavily handled. This is a very fine unlisted building currently in a very good state of preservation.

No. 22 is a three storey white brick property with a very fine sandstone shop front with pedimented doorcase with 'Post Office' lettering. Above this are the original sash windows, the lower sections to the first floor having been replaced with plate glass.



The Queen's Head

On the west side of the street, and to the north of the **Queen's Head Public House**, are a further group of listed buildings. The Queen's Head is an attractive early to mid 19th century white brick building, elevated up slightly from the footpath, and retaining its sash windows.



No. 23

No. 23 High Street is a Grade II listed late 17th century timber framed building with an

18th century rendered facade. A house and jewellers shop, it has sash windows and gabled dormers and a particularly fine early 20th century shop front, very worthy of retention.



No.s 25 and 27

Beyond are **No.s 25 and 27** which originally were a single house, subsequently converted to incorporate a shop. Circa 1790 with 19th century sash windows and early 20th century shop fronts. The building is Grade II listed.



The Market Hall

An unexpected highlight of the High Street is **The Market Hall**, set back from the road and framed by arcaded side walls. The Grade II listed Market Hall was built as a Corn Exchange in 1846, and given to the town by the Long Family (whose coat of arms is located above the door) and is now used, amongst other things, as an indoor market. An imposing composition, its stuccoed brick facade having semi-circular arches, pilasters and a parapet. The recessed front elevation has a central

doorway with a projecting flat canopy above which is a window and clock. Either side are tall windows with semi circular heads and glazing bars. A shallow flight of steps lead up from a brick paved forecourt with a simple curved metal balustrade. Originally the forecourt – an important open space, albeit of modest scale, in the High Street - had tall railings along the frontage with a pair of lantern lights.



The Bell Hotel

Along with the Market Hall, the adjacent **Bell Hotel** forms an important focal point in the town, located in the centre of High Street at its junction with Market Place and Station Approach. The Grade II listed Bell Hotel was rebuilt in 1842 on a site which had been occupied by a coaching inn for centuries, a regular stop for the stage and mail coaches that ran from London to Yarmouth. With a hipped and slated roof, it is of three storeys built of Suffolk white brick, rendered and painted on the ground floor, with sash windows and a central doorway with a projecting porch of two Tuscan columns supporting a plain entablature.

The Bell Hotel is an extremely imposing and prominent structure, and one that benefits from retaining its original external joinery and its historic use. This building forms an extremely attractive group with **No.33 High Street** and **No. 2 Market Place**.



No. 24

No. 24 is a pleasing white brick, four bay property with slate roof covering. The building likely dates from the mid 19th century. To the first floor are four plate glass sash windows (with surprisingly random spacing between each opening). To the ground floor is a large mid to late 20th century shop front – incongruous in the context, but one that is not without some growing historical interest.



Ashford House

Attached to the north is the Grade II listed **Ashford House**, which is 16th century in origin, altered in the 17th century and remodelled in the 19th century. The render finish on the parapeted walls covers brick and some timber framing. Like the adjoining property, the first floor has four large sash windows with glazing bars, whilst the ground floor has an almost continuous early 20th century shopfront with an off-centre entrance.



No.s 26 and 26a

No.s 26 and 26a were originally built as a 17th century house with a hayloft, stables and coach house to the rear. It is now a shop with flats over, and the hipped plain tiled roof is set behind a parapeted, white brick 18th century facade, with large first floor sash windows. The shopfront dates from late 19th century and is a key feature in the High Street by virtue of its fine quality and is worthy of retention.

12.7 High Street – Northern End



No.s 28 and 30

Alongside the drive serving Ashford House, **No.s 28 and 30 High Street** comprise a pair of Grade II listed houses and shops built c.1840. They have Suffolk white brick walls (No. 28 is unfortunately painted), a hipped slated roof and two interesting shop fronts of fine quality.



No. 32

No. 32 High Street is similar in style to Nos. 28 & 30, and likely of similar date, but differs in having a shallow archway through, restricting the width of the shop front. The brickwork is painted, although the likelihood is that beneath this is white brick, in keeping with the majority of buildings along the High Street.

Through the archway in No.32s façade is a footpath to the new housing estate on Church Road. Attached to its rear are the truncated remains of a derelict row early to mid c.19th red brick cottages. The entire block here has consent for replacement.



No. 34

No. 34 is a former garage premises, likely of early-to-mid 20th century date, and currently used as an artist's studio. Attached to the north, and set back slightly, is a house dating from the last quarter of the 20th century.

Beyond the junction with Market Place and Station Approach, the northern end of High Street becomes considerably narrower as it gently curves to the left.

No. 33 High Street, on the western side, and **No.s 28, 30, 32 and 34** on the eastern side are particularly prominent as the vista is closed by buildings when looking northwards along High Street.



No. 33

The Grade II listed **No. 33 High Street** which faces south at the southern end of this island block, is a focal point when heading into the town from the south. Built in the early 19th century, this three-storey white brick building has a hipped slated roof and sash windows on the

upper floors. A very fine early 20th century stone-faced frontage was added when it was converted to a bank. This has particularly fine detailing, including an inscribed scrolled cartouche.



Cartouche to the corner of No. 33



No. 35

Attached and to the north, facing High Street, is **No. 35** is a Grade II listed mid 18th century timber framed house, now a shop and flat.



No. 39

No. 39 High Street is Grade II listed, and is an early-to-mid 19th century Suffolk white brick building with a slate roof. Unfortunately, its front elevation has been painted over. However, the arched heads to the doors at either end of the elevation, the attractive bowed ground floor shop window and first floor sash windows combine to form a building of considerable charm and elegance.

One of the more interesting elements of the townscape in Saxmundham is the relationship between High Street and Market Place, in particular the 'island block' of buildings in-between. In the 1980s the Angel Yard development changed the character of these buildings considerably because, for many years, commercial uses tended to front onto both High Street and the Market Place. Now, with many of the properties solely in residential use, the vitality of this part of High Street has been affected.

Furthermore, with the gaps created for the gardens of the houses in the Angel Yard development, bounded by serpentine walls, it is Market Place which most of the buildings now face onto with the High Street frontage becoming more of a secondary element.



Serpentine wall to the east of Angel Yard

Notwithstanding the loss of the commercial uses of the buildings which comprise the Angel Yard site, the forms and much of the original character of the buildings survive. The serpentine walls are a highly unusual and interesting townscape feature although the narrow footway alongside them, together with the curve of the road, can make this part of High Street a little uncomfortable for pedestrians.



No. 41

At the northern end of the island block, facing north is **No. 41 High Street**. Although a typical building in Saxmundham with its hipped slate roof, painted brick walls and 19th century first floor windows, it does not have the same visual impact as its counterpart No. 33 at the southern end. The shop front is poorly detailed and the railings and paved area in front appear visually weak for such a prominent location.



No.s 38 to 44

On the eastern side low-key, domestic scale buildings characterise this part of High Street, until the tall, steep, gable end of the former ironmongers premises of *W Wells & Son*, **No. 46**, comes into view. Of the row of cottages numbered **No.s 38 to 44** those to the south exist in a better state of preservation than the rendered pair to the north end. Where unspoilt, the cottages are attractive and provide an interesting domestic character to a predominantly commercial streetscape.



No. 46

No. 46 High Street is a Grade II listed early 19th century painted brick building with a plain tiled roof, sash windows and with an 18th century rear wing. The shop front is of very high quality, combining well detailed joinery with glazed tiles and copper panels with raised Art Nouveau lettering and decoration- one of the finest shopfronts in the town.



Former Telephone Exchange and Post Office

To the north, contrasting sharply with the vernacular form of No. 46 and the other buildings in High Street is an uncompromisingly large block completed in 1954 as the **Telephone Exchange and Post Office**. Dominating this part of High Street, the scale of this building forms a dramatic contrast with its neighbours and makes its own positive contribution to the townscape qualities of this part of the Saxmundham Conservation Area through its period detailing and considered design representing post-war architecture (1953-54).

The railway bridge forms the northern end of High Street. On the eastern side, opposite the bus station and Telephone Exchange, two early 19th century buildings front onto High Street between the bridge and Market Place. Both with hipped roofs, one is white brick, the other red.



No.s 24 Market Place (lhs) and 43 High Street (rhs)

The postal address for **No. 24** includes it as part of the Market Place, but in terms of the streetscape it contributes valuably to the High Street. Alongside **No. 43 High Street** to the north, the whole is a sizeable white brick structure with a shallow pitched slate covered roof. **No. 24** retains a good shop front facing the Market Place and smaller fronts facing east to the High Street. **No. 43** retains a matching shop front, although the rendering to the elevation has detrimentally affected the appearance.



No.s 45 to 49

To the centre of **No.s 45-49** is a five bay wide two storey red brick structure, likely of early-to-mid 19th century date. To the ground floor is a well-preserved shop front dating from the mid to late 19th century (the town's museum). Flanking the central building are additions with lively stepped parapet gables.

12.7 Market Place

Market Place has been a venue for traders for many centuries and still accommodates a weekly market. The town pump was originally located on the western side of the street and was reinstated at the north end of Market Place (see later).

When the town was a bustling trading post, Market Place, just off the main route through the town, must have been a hive of activity. Today, it is a little quieter and functions as a secondary shopping street. Although the majority of buildings are of architectural and historic interest, and retain much of their historic detailing, some alterations, including replacement windows, doors and shop fronts have somewhat undermined an otherwise very attractive and historically interesting part of the town.



No.s 1 and 3

The majority of the 'island' buildings on the east side of Market Place are listed. **No. 1 Market Place** forms the west return elevation of No. 33 High Street. The ground floor of **No. 3** was rebuilt at the same time as the facade for the bank was installed, although this part was done in red brick – however, the quality of the stone doorcase with its baroque detailing helps to visually link the side elevation with the main front. Above, the sash windows and plain tiled roof survive from an earlier structure.



No. 5

No. 5 is an attractive unlisted structure of modest scale and character, retaining some good 19th century joinery.



No. 7

No. 7 is Grade II listed, and is a tall three-storey mid-19th century building with painted white brick walls and a slate roof; there are some surviving sash windows amongst later alterations.



Rear elevation of No. 39 High Street

The rear elevation of **No. 39** High Street, facing Market Place, contrasts with the elevation facing the High Street. Here, the façade is rendered with 8-over-8 pane sash windows to the first floor and good quality 19th century shop fronts and bracketed door canopies to the ground floor.



No.s 9 to 19 Angel Yard

Parts of the Grade II listed former Angel Inn complex (**No.s 9 to 19 Angel Yard**) date from the 16th century, making them some of the oldest buildings in the town. Though the timber-framed core is rendered over, a first floor medieval mullioned window provides some clue as to the structure and antiquity of this building. At the rear, facing onto High Street was the yard with stables and loft. A small alleyway through the Market Place frontage now forms a pedestrian link with High Street.



No.s 21 to 23

The Grade II listed cottages known as **No.s 21 to 23 Market Place** were

originally a 17th century row of houses and business premises, but became part of the Angel Inn around the mid 1700s. The buildings are timber-framed, with rendered walls and pan tiled roofs. Many of the windows and doors were replaced as part of the 1980s conversion and restoration work. Much altering and spoiling the appearance of the row are the three rooflights, which break up the expanse of the roof covering.



No. 2, Old Bank House

The western side of Market Place starts where Station Approach tucks behind the Bell Hotel before climbing westwards. An important space is thus created here in front of **No. 2 Market Place, Old Bank House**, which forms an attractive centrepiece by closing the vista westwards from High Street. Grade II listed, the structure represents another fine white brick building, this was Saxmundham's first bank, built by Gurneys in the early 19th century. Three-storeys, with a hipped black glazed pan tiled roof, the property has a profusion of sash windows on its symmetrical facade. The central doorway has a pair of panelled doors and a doorcase with thin pilasters and entablature.



Wingfield House

Attached to the rear of Old Bank House is the Grade II listed **Wingfield House**. Previously three very small cottages, the original house is an early 17th century timber-framed building said to be as old as the Angel Inn. It is apparently the truncated remains of a much larger structure that was reduced in size when Old Bank House was constructed. The property is in urgent need of conservation and repair and has now changed ownership, which bodes well for its future.

The western side of Market Place leads off from the front of No. 2, the space tapering northwards between buildings on both sides. In fact the western side is also an 'island block' with the short row of buildings backing onto a narrow lane running parallel known as 'Back of Market Place'.



No.s. 4 to 6

Nos. 4-6 Market Place are similar in style and scale to, but of slightly later date, than Old Bank House. Despite being Grade II listed, they have unfortunately lost a number of original features such as sash windows and a shop front.



No. 8

No. 8, Martin's Newsagents, also Grade II listed, is a timber framed property dating from the mid 17th century. The roof pitch facing the Market Place is covered with black glazed pantiles, while the pitch to the rear is covered with red clay pan tiles.



No. 10

Likely of early to mid 19th century date, **No. 10** has been heavily altered and lacks any visible sign of historic joinery or wall finish.



No.s 12 and 14

These properties have also suffered from a number of unsympathetic alterations and additions. However, some un-horned sash windows exist to the first floor of No. 14, and it is possible that the structure is timber-framed.

To the north of this side of Market Place runs a parallel lane known as '**Back of Market Place**', and here the elevations of the properties to the west side of the Market Place can be seen.



'Back of Market Place', looking south

While the majority of the elevations here are lesser rear façades, and have suffered from considerable alteration, one property is worthy of note.



Rear elevation of No. 8 Market Place

The rear elevation of **No. 8** Market Place, although re-fenestrated and re-rendered is jettied out between the ground and first floor, and also the first floor and the second storey. This indicates a structure of some considerable age and significance lies behind the cement render, and also suggests that the 'better' façade of this property originally faced west, away from Market Place.



No.s 1 to 3 Back of Market Place

No.s 1 to 3 appear to be of mid-19th century date, although late-20th century alterations and additions obscure much of the historic fabric. Attached and to the east of **No.3** is a modest 19th century

structure, with a pantile roof and part black tarred elevations. The whole is now much altered although an element of character is retained.



No. 16

To the right of the car park entrance, **No. 16 Market Place** is however, a particular highlight. Grade II listed and occupying a prominent location, the structure dates from the mid 17th century. This timber-framed building has a main range with an offset gabled cross wing. The walls are rendered and the steeply pitched roof is covered in attractive plain tiles with decorative ridge tiles. The east gable end facing Market Place is jettied.



The Town Pump

To the south is the old **Town Pump**. Cast in 1838 by Garretts of Leiston it was given to the town by the Long family.



No.s. 18 to 22

A curved parapet upstand on a single-storey structure links No. 16 to the adjoining property **No.s 18-22 Market Place**. With its hipped roof and painted brick walls, No.s 18-22 Market Place are not unlike the adjacent buildings which project forward to the north. In fact from here to the railway bridge, including No.s 18-22, there are only three substantial properties. With their linking structures these buildings, like other unlisted buildings in the vicinity, retain their overall form and character, but some of the important detailing has either been lost or replaced.



No. 24

The south facing return elevation of **No. 24 Market Place** is quite a prominent feature in Market Place when looking north. By projecting forward it has the effect of partially enclosing the vista beyond the rows of buildings on each side of the street, which is a very attractive townscape effect.

12.9 Station Approach / Albion Street

Station Approach connects High Street and Market Place with the Railway Station. Linking through to the southern end of Market Place, Station Approach climbs gradually to the west and is terminated by the level crossing. It has a varied mix of building types and density, and aesthetically lacks the cohesive qualities of other areas of the town.



Old Bell Yard

Located to the west of The Bell Hotel, on the south side of the road, is a modern housing development known as **Old Bell Yard**. The sensitive and prominent location of the site has ensured that the new structure has made some visual reference to its surroundings and material use.



Outbuilding to the west of Old Bank House

To the north of the road (and to the west of Old Bank House) is a detached red brick outbuilding. Of mid-19th century date the property has been altered although it retains some interesting windows,

including a first floor opening with loosely gothic detailing. To the west of the building is an interesting boundary wall, built of randomly placed bricks and tile.



Detail of brick wall to the west of Old Bank House

Modern residential infill development accounts for the remainder of the north side of Station Approach until the station building itself.



The Gannon Institute

The pleasant **Gannon Institute** building, is a particular highlight of the area. Despite being of modest size, the building is extremely well detailed. Note the decorative ridge ventilators and the joinery to the bay windows linked by an open porch. The parapet end gable contains a stone tablet inscribed with the name of the building.



No.s 1 and 2

No.s 1 and 2 are a pair of substantial late-19th century villas. The detailing to the building is of good quality, as is the material use, and this can be seen to the stone ground floor bay windows and pilastered doorcases. The structure retains a near complete compliment of historic joinery. By virtue of its urban scale, fine architectural quality and well maintained appearance, this building makes a key contribution to the streetscene in this part of the Conservation Area.



The Beeches

Less imposing, although possessing a fine pilastered brick porch is **The Beeches**. A late 19th century three bay dwelling of white brick with red dressings. It is an attractive property, set back from the road. The insertion of uPVC windows has however done little to enhance the character.



The Railway Station, south-east elevation



The Railway Station, north-west elevation

The unlisted **Railway Station** was completed in 1859. It is a fine white brick building with shallow hipped slated roofs, numerous tall chimneys and sash windows. Unfortunately some of the brickwork on the front elevation has been painted over and the building (at the time of writing) is unused and boarded up. To the platform side of the building is a fine decorative canopy. Incorporated into the front elevation is a 19th century 'VR' postbox, unusual in having a weather guard to the rear of the posting slot.

The station buildings are a key complex in the town centre, their architectural pattern similar to others on the East Suffolk line including Darsham, Marlesford, Wickham Market and Melton. Passenger numbers have doubled in the last couple of years, making the station a very important transport hub. Its retention, restoration and revitalisation are essential, therefore, for the benefit of the town and Conservation Area.



'VR' postbox within the wall to the front of The Station



Signal box

On the opposite western side of the tracks are part of the former goods yard and a signal box of 1881, the latter now with uPVC windows and cladding. The manually opened wooden gates at the level crossing have been replaced by automatic barriers and the pedestrian bridge over the tracks has long since disappeared.



No.s 1 to 15 Albion Street

Also on the western side of the railway line, in Albion Street, is a row of eight mid-19th century Grade II listed cottages (**Nos. 1-15 Albion Street**) built to house railway employees. White brick, with some flintwork to the rear and a black glazed pan tiled roof, the original windows were sashes with glazing bars. Some have been replaced with plate glass sashes. To take account for the drop in level of the street, those cottages to the eastern end have steps up to their front doors. At the centre of the terrace is an oval arched carriageway with a stuccoed arch and keystone.



No. 2 Albion Street

Opposite this terrace is **No. 2 Albion Street**, which was the town's Victorian Police Station. Now a private dwelling, the red brick building, with steeply pitched slate roof, still retains its old cell.



The Railway Public House, east elevation



The Railway Public House, north-west elevation

Back on the eastern side of the railway line is **The Railway Public House**, built as a refreshment room for rail passengers, but (at the time of writing) disused and boarded up. A detached red brick store exists to the south of the site, and appears to be of the same date as the public house.

12.10 North Entrance



North entrance, looking south

The railway bridge and adjoining steep embankment create a strong physical and visual barrier between Saxmundham town centre and the aptly named North Entrance. Beyond the bridge there is a marked change in the character of the streetscape. There is a feeling of open space and compared to the built up High Street and Market Place, buildings appear as objects in landscaped spaces. Brick walls, hedges and trees link and define the spaces, and as a result an essentially urban townscape rather than a rural one continues in this part of the town.

As the road travels northwards, it gently curves to the east and the first cluster of buildings appears, all of which are listed.



No. 5, The Beeches, south block

On the east side is the very fine Grade II* listed **The Beeches (No. 5 North Entrance)**. This is a complex of three houses and former stables now combined

to form one dwelling. The earliest structure is a 17th century cottage which is almost completely absorbed into the later buildings.



No. 5, The Beeches, north block

The two other houses date from the early 18th century and have fine brick facades with sash windows, panelled doors and classical detailing to their doorcases. The southern building has a parapet wall and is set back behind a tall hedge whilst the one to the north, which is similar but a little less formal, steps forward to the back edge of the footway. Only the concrete tiles to the roof of the north block detract from this otherwise delightful composition.



Stable block, to the north east of The Beeches

The stable block is beyond the frontage building, set back within a courtyard. A gap within a high curving brick wall forms the entrance way and this wall continues northwards along the back edge of the footway screening a large garden that now contains two new dwellings.



No. 2, Lynwood House

On the western side of North Entrance, St John's Road joins just as the road emerges from under the bridge. Another old red brick wall forms the southern boundary of the Grade II listed **Lynwood House, No. 2 North Entrance**. Dating from the late 1700's, Lynwood House is a painted brick two-storey property with a gabled, slate covered roof and six sash windows on the front elevation.



Fanlight and doorcase to No. 2, Lynwood House

In the early 1800s a single-storey entrance extension was added to the south of the main house, and includes a highly decorative doorway incorporating a Gothick fanlight and crocketed doorcase of exceptional quality.



Housing development to the corner of Fairfield Road

Beyond Fairfield Road, a former industrial site has been redeveloped. The red brick buildings are of interesting form and sit reasonably well alongside the listed buildings in the vicinity.



No. 4, Varley House

Beyond is another Grade II listed building, **No. 4, Varley House**, originally a pair of early 18th century dwellings which were remodelled some years later. It is painted brick with a slate roof and two panelled doorways survive along with some interesting sash windows with decorative surrounds.



No. 6, North Lodge

Set back beyond Varley House is **No. 6, North Lodge**. A large, imposing, Grade II listed white brick building with slated hipped roof, sash windows and a projecting brick porch. North Lodge was originally a house, then used as a school and now serves as a guesthouse. The property has sizeable gardens and a number of ancillary buildings, brick walls and some important trees along the frontage.



Fairfield House

Close to North Lodge is Harpers Lane and Fairfield Drive. Fairfield Drive leads through some recent housing to the former **Fairfield House**, a white brick property dating from 1828.



Fairfield House from the north

Retaining many of its original features, **Fairfield House** has been sub-divided and now accommodates three dwellings. Some sensitively designed new housing has been constructed within its garden. Within the garden the roof of a folly or similar structure can be glimpsed.



No.s 14 to 24

Beyond some bungalows is a short terrace of cottages, attractive but fairly heavily altered. At the north end of the row is a largely unspoilt 18th century house, **No. 24.**



No. 24

This Grade II listed house was originally two cottages. It is a rendered timber-framed property with pan tiled roof, and retains many features, including 18th century windows and doors.



Brook Cottage

To the north, the Grade II listed **Brook Cottage** is one of the oldest properties in the town, apparently dating from the late 1600s. Along with its mature landscape setting, it is a particularly attractive vernacular building on the edge of the Conservation Area. With its gable end facing the road, the original timber-framed house was altered and extended in the 18th and 19th centuries. It now has ornate 19th century bargeboards and casement windows with decorative surrounds.



Brook Farm Dairy

Detached and located to the south west of Brook Cottage is **Brook Farm Dairy**, an attractive weather-boarded structure with a red brick lean-to attached to the east side. This picturesque structure and reminder of former uses now sits amidst a late 20th century housing development.



No.s 7 and 9

On the eastern side of North Entrance, beyond the walled garden of The Beeches, **No.s 7 & 9 North Entrance** are a pair of semi-detached Victorian villas. These houses create a strong architectural statement where a small area of low-key modern development exists on both sides of the road.



Langley Manor

The northern boundary of the Conservation Area is heavily tree covered, the garden of Brook Cottage on the western side of the road and grounds of **Langley Manor** on the east forming a very attractive entrance to the town. Langley Manor is an impressive neo-Jacobean red brick house with tall curvilinear parapet gables. The house is surrounded by landscaped parkland. Both house and parkland make a key contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

13 CONSERVING SAXMUNDHAM'S SPECIAL CHARACTER

The overall character of Saxmundham is very much one of an historic Suffolk market town which retains its traditional form and appearance. Despite some intrusive 20th Century development, a degree of neglect, and some small scale incremental change having taken place, the town centre retains the special characteristics which strongly justify its Conservation Area designation.

These special characteristics include, amongst other things, the number and quality of its traditional buildings and the fact that most still retain their traditional features; the shape, form and layout of the settlement itself; and the attractive relationship that exists between the older buildings and the spaces between and around them.

Important landscape features such as trees, shrubs, hedges, old walls and railings all make a major contribution. It is vitally important therefore, that these special characteristics are retained and reinforced.

Inappropriate development, neglect and the cumulative effect of incremental change are a constant threat to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. Detrimental change can take many forms, from infill with poorly designed new development to modern replacement windows and doors in old buildings.

Other changes can include: inappropriate alterations and extensions which do not respect the scale, form and detailing of existing buildings, the use of modern materials and details in the area, insensitive highway works and signage, unsympathetic shopfronts and advertising, the construction of intrusive non-traditional walls, fences, driveways, garages, outbuildings and other structures.

In terms of materials and finishes, the use of concrete tiles, artificial slates, plastic and aluminium windows and doors, cement render and modern bricks, should all be avoided. So too should the use of brown stain on timber joinery, windows and doors as it invariably appears as a particularly discordant feature in an area where the tradition of using white paint forms an important unifying element in the street scene. Old facing brickwork should not be painted over and where this has happened in the past the Council will provide advice on the potential for its removal.

The surfaces between buildings also need very careful consideration. Special materials, including natural stone, bound gravel and exposed aggregate kerbs, paving slabs and blocks will normally be the most suitable. Certain types of concrete brick paving should not be used because they have a harsh modern appearance which is very much at odds with the traditional character of the Conservation Area.

In order to protect the character and appearance of the Saxmundham Conservation Area the District Council will, wherever possible, seek to prevent such inappropriate changes from taking place. To this end the Council has published design guidance and other advisory material which supplements the design and conservation policies contained in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan.

13.1 Alterations to existing buildings

The particular character of Saxmundham, with its strong prevailing historic appearance, renders it particularly sensitive to the cumulative loss or alteration of key features that contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Such features include windows, doors, front boundaries, chimneys, and roof coverings. Whereas some Conservation Areas can benefit from the enhancement of their mixed character, others will be slowly degraded over time through the exercise of permitted development rights.

It is proposed, therefore, that a survey be undertaken to identify the extent of existing harmful change and that an Article 4(2) Direction be considered for making in the Conservation Area which will require householders to seek planning permission when changing any of the following features:

- Front windows
- Front doors
- Chimneys
- Roof coverings
- Removal of front boundary walls and railings

An Article 4(2) Direction removes the permitted development rights of householders within a Conservation Area to undertake works to their houses without planning permission. Such a Direction is only justifiable where erosion of the Conservation Area's character through the cumulative effect of unsympathetic works is happening and may not be relevant in every Conservation Area. The purpose of a Direction would be to encourage retention and repair of original features or their sympathetic replacement or reinstatement, where necessary.

An application for such a planning permission is currently free. The purpose of this proposal would be to encourage retention and repair of original such features or their sympathetic replacement or reinstatement, where necessary. Residents of the Conservation Area will be sought their views on the proposal for an Article 4(2) Direction before proceeding with it.

13.2 Design of new development

In a Conservation Area such as Saxmundham the prevailing historic character can make it a challenge to consider what is appropriate for the design of new development and can include high quality modern design. Pastiche or historicist re-creation can be acceptable but is not always achieved well, particularly where existing buildings abound in decorative features. Certain characteristics can be used as inspiration without resorting to copying – perhaps a high degree of modelling (three-dimensional effect), the use of projecting bays, or a bold scale or character. Such an interpretation can ensure that new design is both creative and contextual. New development should always respect the grain of the Conservation Area, including preservation of building lines, relationship to gardens, streets, parking and farmland, scale, density and uses.

Proper account should also always be taken of the impact that new development adjacent a Conservation Area can have on its setting. Although a Conservation Area boundary represents a demarcation enclosing a special area of historic interest, changes immediately outside of it can still have a significant impact on character and appearance. The setting of the Conservation Area, therefore, has an intrinsic value that must be acknowledged in any proposals for change to it.

13.3 Conservation Area boundary

On completion of appraisals for all 34 of the District's Conservation Area a review will be commenced of their boundaries as a separate exercise. There is no timetable as yet proposed. Full public consultation will be undertaken on any suggested revisions to the position of the boundary that may be proposed as part of the future review. Suggestions for consideration arising from the public consultation include: the exclusion of Harpers Lodge; and the extension of the conservation area to the north and to the south of the town.

13.4 Demolition

Saxmundham has a finite quantity of historic buildings which are integral to the character of the Conservation Area. Their loss, through unwarranted demolition or neglect, would erode the special status and distinctive character of Saxmundham and undermine the Conservation Area. The National Planning Policy Framework at paragraph 138 states that *"loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area ... should be treated as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area ... as a whole."* A brief checklist of characteristics which make a positive contribution can be found in Historic England's *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (2011, under revision). Further, the Council is publishing the criteria that it uses to identify non-designated heritage assets which will include those identified in this appraisal as making a positive contribution.

13.5 Enhancement opportunities

Opportunities to enhance the Conservation Area have been identified by the appraisal including signage and overhead wires. Where possible the Council will work, through its enforcement role and in conjunction with utilities framework providers to promote the visual improvement of the Conservation Area. The Council will also work to ensure that in terms of the highway, footpaths and open spaces, the distinctive character of Saxmundham is maintained and protected.

13.6 Landscape and Trees

The positive management and design of the landscape of the Conservation Area is a key consideration in planning related work. Inappropriate planting (design and species) can detract from the character of the settlement. Using plants which are found naturally within the locality and taking guidance available from the Suffolk landscape character assessment website (www.suffolklandscape.org.uk) and Suffolk Coastal District Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance can be useful tools.

The key consideration regarding trees is to ensure that the spaces they need to grow and thrive are preserved and enhanced.

Suitable replacement planting to ensure longevity and succession in the treescape of the settlement will be encouraged in addition to the positive management of existing trees. Where space for larger trees is not available character can be achieved through other species, climbers and distinctive shrubs.

New boundary treatments to property can also provide enhancement to the Conservation Area and here the use of materials which in character with the settlement should be considered. Walls, fences, railings and hedges (whether native or ornamental) can be carefully chosen to reflect local styles and respond/create a sense of local distinctiveness.

13.7 Contacts

Further advice, information and support can be provided by officers of Suffolk Coastal District Council:

Design and Conservation Service

Tel. 01394 444616 conservation@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Arboricultural and Landscape Manager

Tel. 01394 444241 nicholas.newton@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Further information regarding the Suffolk Historic Environment Record can be found at <https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk>; by contacting tel. no. 01284 741237; or by emailing archaeology.her@suffolk.gov.uk

14 REFERENCES & FURTHER INFORMATION

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For further information regarding Conservation Areas and Listed buildings please visit the Council's web site www.suffolkcoastal.co.uk or contact the Design + Conservation Team, Planning Services, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Melton Hill, WOODBRIDGE, Suffolk, IP12 1AU Tel: (01394) 383789 or email: conservation@eastssuffolk.gov.uk.

