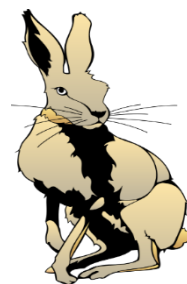


6/1/2018

Watton Character Appraisal



Watton Neighbourhood Plan

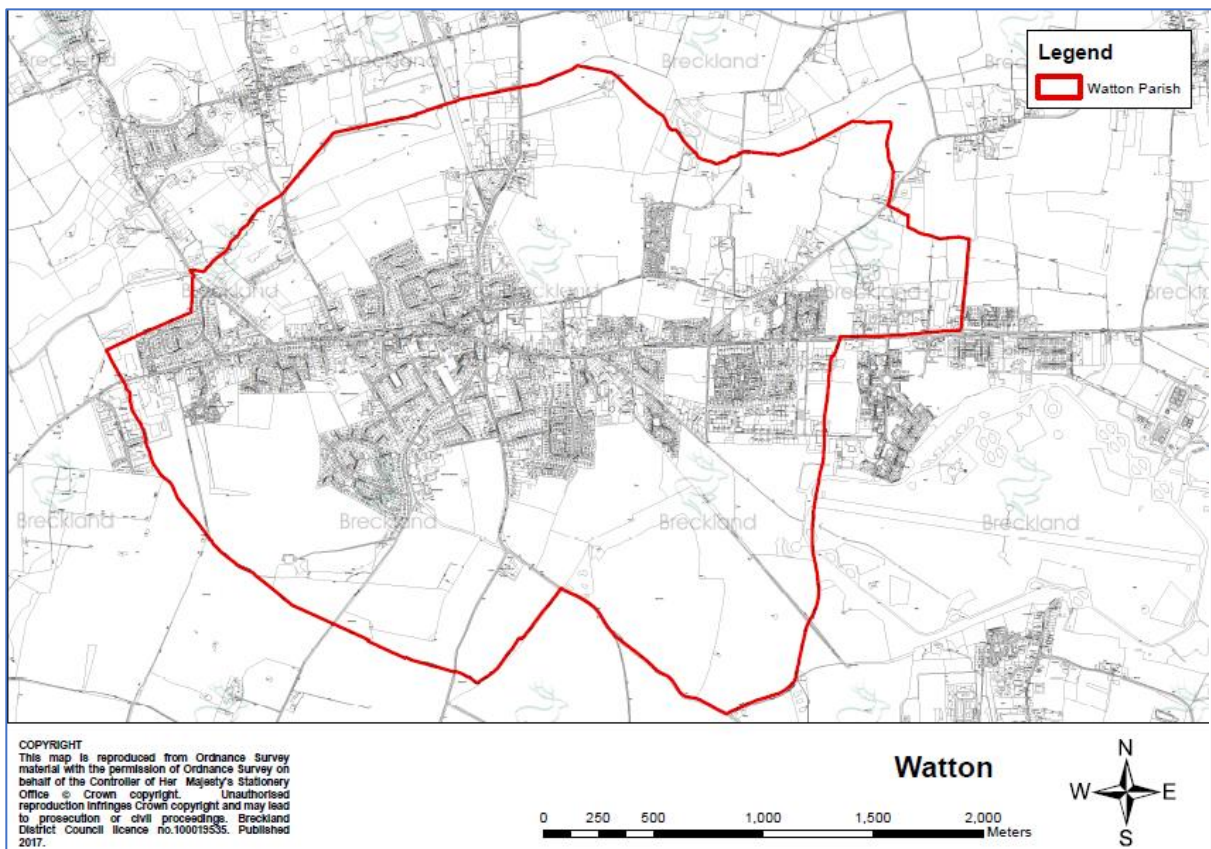
Looking for a brighter future

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document is the Character Appraisal for the parish of Watton in Mid Norfolk.
- 1.2 It is intended that this Character Appraisal will be a piece of evidence used to support the policies in the emerging Watton Neighbourhood Plan which covers the period 2018 to 2038.



- 1.3 Work began on the Watton Neighbourhood Plan in 2016 and the Neighbourhood Plan area was designated on 8th August 2017 and covers the entire parish of Watton
- 1.4 This Character Appraisal has been informed by the Survey work undertaken in March 2018 by local residents. Other sources of information include Parishioners' own recollections and photographs, data from Norfolk Heritage Explorer, Norfolk Historic Environment Record and information from Natural England and Historic England data sets.
- 1.5 The Survey work was undertaken using a modified version of the Planning Aid in

England, Character Assessment Document Template.

- 1.6 Historic England have also produced some useful guidance on incorporating heritage into Neighbourhood Plan preparation. (<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/planmaking/improve-your-neighbourhood/>) which has also helped to inform the production of this document.
- 1.7 This document is not intended to act as a full or historical assessment nor is it intended to be the definitive commentary on the evolution town.

There are already a wealth of publications, websites and sources that contain detail historical information on the history of the town. Anyone who is interested in more detailed historical accounts should visit the newly opened Museum based at Wayland Hall or visit its website. <https://www.museumforwatton.org.uk>. Another useful website is <http://www.historyofwatton.org.uk/index.htm>.

2.0 What is a Character Appraisal?

2.1 A character appraisal is a document that describes the distinct appearance and feel of an area or settlement. It identifies the key physical features and characteristics that give a settlement its unique identity and local distinctiveness. It sets out what makes that settlement special and indicates what is valued by its local community.

2.2 Many of the country's statutorily designated Historic Conservation Areas are underpinned by Character Appraisals for the following reasons:

- As a tool to demonstrate the area's special interest
- As explanation to owners, businesses and inhabitants of the reasons for designation
- As educational and informative documents created with the local community, expressing what the community particularly values about the place they live and work in
- Provide greater understanding and articulation of its character which can be used to develop a robust policy framework for planning decisions
- Informing those considering investment in the area in guiding the scale, form and content of new development

2.3 Conservation Area Appraisals traditionally take the form of an appraisal of the historic character of the Conservation Area which describes in detail the delineation of the Conservation Area and sets out the rationale for its designation.

2.4 There is a statutory responsibility placed on Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to review their Conservation Areas "from time to time" and to produce up to date appraisal documents and management plans.

3.0 Purpose and benefits of a Character Appraisal

- 3.1 The purpose of a Character Appraisal is to describe in some detail the existing character of an area, commenting on its current condition and value to its community, but also identifying positive action including areas for potential enhancement and even mechanisms for achieving those enhancements.
- 3.2 The Character Appraisals can be used to develop local planning policies at all levels including Neighbourhood Plans. Using the Character Appraisals, policies can be developed that result in good design which is both visually attractive and not only respects the existing character but also enhances its form, character and setting. To achieve this, there needs to be a good understanding of the character of the area and its value to its community.
- 3.3 It is often a lack of understanding of this that can lead developers or individuals to propose development which fails to consider or enhance the existing unique qualities of an area and may result in erosion or harm of that existing character.
- 3.4 The benefit of preparing a character assessment is that a local community will feel it can shape and influence future development in its area.
- 3.5 By using the opportunity to clearly document and describe the important characteristics of an area, the community can begin to influence developers and their architects to help them understand the local character and the value that is attached to it. In turn this should aid the production of sensitively designed proposals which respect and complement the existing local character. The result of this should enable greater integration of the development within the existing community and potentially greater acceptance of it.

3.7 Relationship with Neighbourhood Plans

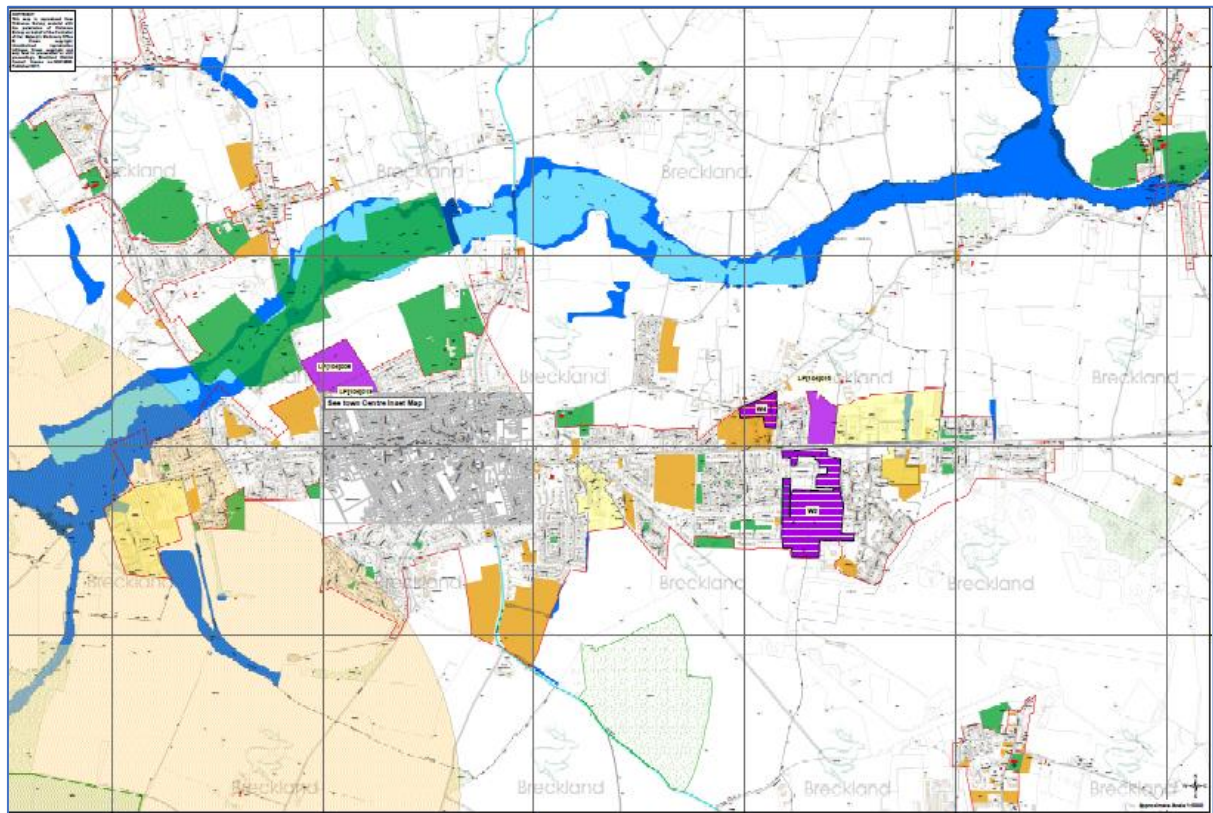
- 3.8 Character Appraisals can provide good evidence for the formulation of Neighbourhood Plan policies. The appraisal can identify elements of local vernacular including building, design, styles, forms, massing, scale and materials which can all help to inform design policies aimed at influencing new development to ensure it is appropriate to the character of the area.
- 3.9 Character Appraisals can also make recommendations for specific actions relating to pieces of land. For example, where an assessment identifies an undeveloped area of green space that adds to the character of the area and its development would erode its special qualities or the character of the area then it may be possible to designate that piece of land in the Neighbourhood Plan as a Local Green Space. The criteria used for determining whether a piece of green space should be designated as Local Green Space are set out in paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as follows:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

3.10 In addition to identifying important green space for protection, the character appraisal can do the same for buildings. Where a building or structure contributes to the special qualities and character of the area and is not already protected (i.e. a designated heritage asset) by virtue of a National Listing, Scheduled Monument or falls within a Conservation Area, there may be merit in putting it forward to the Local Planning Authority as a candidate for any Local List they may have (or plan to produce) and identify them within a Neighbourhood Plan policy as a non-designated heritage assets. Non-designated heritage assets are afforded some degree of protection under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Paragraph 135).

4.0 Watton Character Appraisal Context

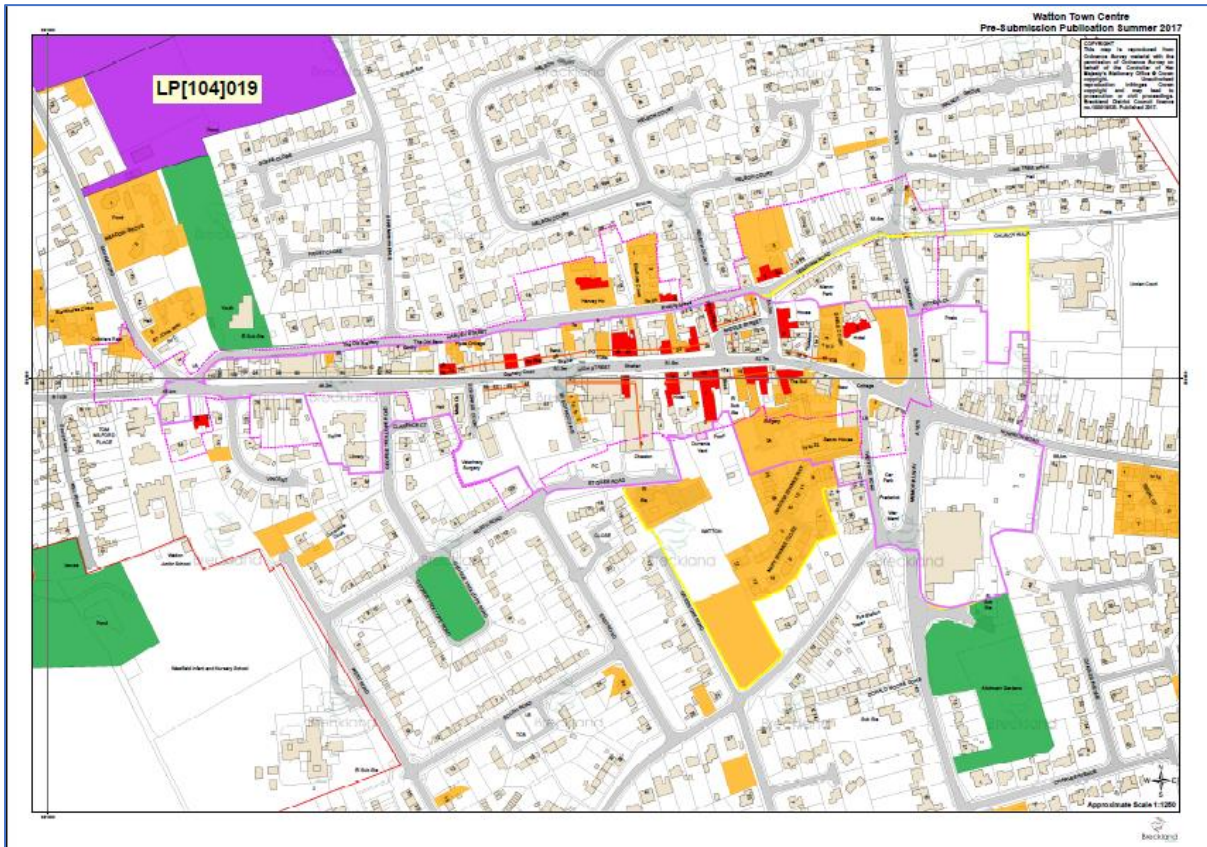
- 4.1 Watton is a market town located in Mid Norfolk with the District of Breckland. In 2011 its population was 7,202. It is located on the intersection of the A1075 between Dereham and Thetford and the B1108 which leads to Norwich. The Watton Neighbourhood Plan is in its early stages.
- 4.2 The existing Breckland Local Plan allocates 1305 dwellings in Watton over the plan period which runs from 2011 to 2031. Of these dwellings 1130 are currently either committed or completed and therefore this leaves a further 175 dwellings for consideration through the emerging Local Plan to 2036.
- 4.2 The high level of development already committed in Watton together with the prospect of further new development (albeit at a reduced rate than that experienced in the town to date) prompted the Town Council, encouraged by the Mid Norfolk MP George Freeman to consider the production of a Neighbourhood Plan to allow local residents to have some influence over where new development may come forward within the town but also to have a greater influence on making sure that the necessary infrastructure to support that growth would come forward.



**Watton Proposals Map – Breckland Local Plan
(Pre-Submission Publication November 2017)**

- 4.2 The work undertaken on the Neighbourhood Plan to date has highlighted some priority issues identified by the local community. One of these is the desire to influence the visual appearance of new development

“The distinct character of the Town must be respected and reflected in any new development”



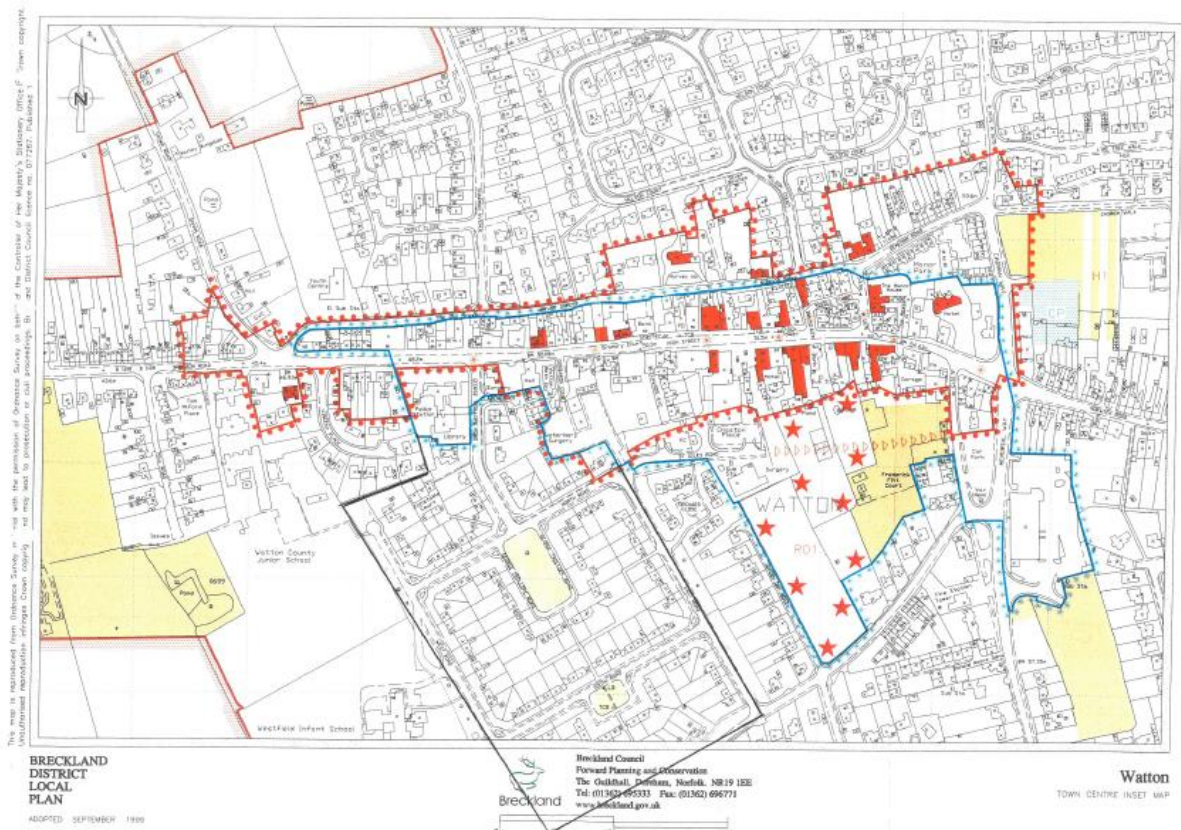
**Watton Town Centre inset Map - Breckland Local Plan
(Pre-Submission Publication November 2017)**

- 4.3 This in turn has led to the formulation of the following draft objectives for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan:

Objective: To encourage good urban design that contributes positively to the fabric of the Town and to prevent further proliferation of estate housing.

Objective: Development will be supported where it respects the local character and historic and natural assets of the surrounding area, and takes every opportunity, through design and materials, to reinforce the distinctiveness of Watton and a strong sense of place

- 4.4 In order to develop robust Neighbourhood Plan policies that can deliver these draft objectives, the existing character of the area needs to be defined and documented and the idea of character assessment and survey work was born.
- 4.5 There is an existing Conservation Area in Watton, drawn relatively tightly around the historic core of the town centre, which was designated by Breckland District Council in the 1970s, however it does not have an up to date Conservation Area Appraisal attached to it nor does it have a Management Plan.

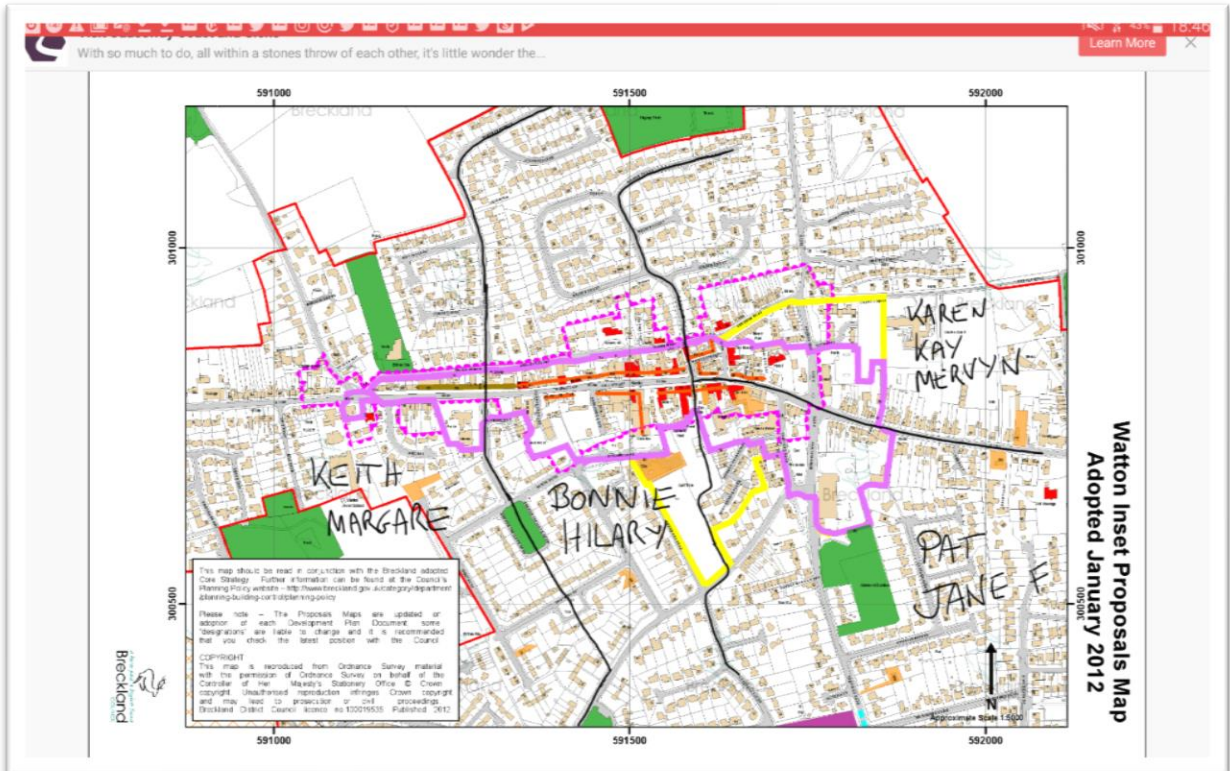


Watton Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

- 4.7 Initially it was thought that through the Neighbourhood Plan process, the Town Council would produce their own Conservation Area Appraisal for Watton. However because so much new development is being proposed in the town, the majority of which would fall outside of the Conservation Area, it was decided to broaden the Appraisal work away from concentrating only on the historic aspect but to undertake a wider character appraisal of the whole town and try to establish some new design policies in the Neighbourhood Plan area that would positively influence the new development taking place. Therefore, the approach that has been taken is a blend of historic Conservation Area Appraisal work with Character Appraisal work to have maximum effect.

4.8 The Character Appraisal for Watton was carried out by a mix of Watton Town Councillors and Local Volunteers following a Character Assessment Training Session held on 9th March 2018. The survey focused on an area wider than just the town centre but does include the area covered by the Conservation Area designation.

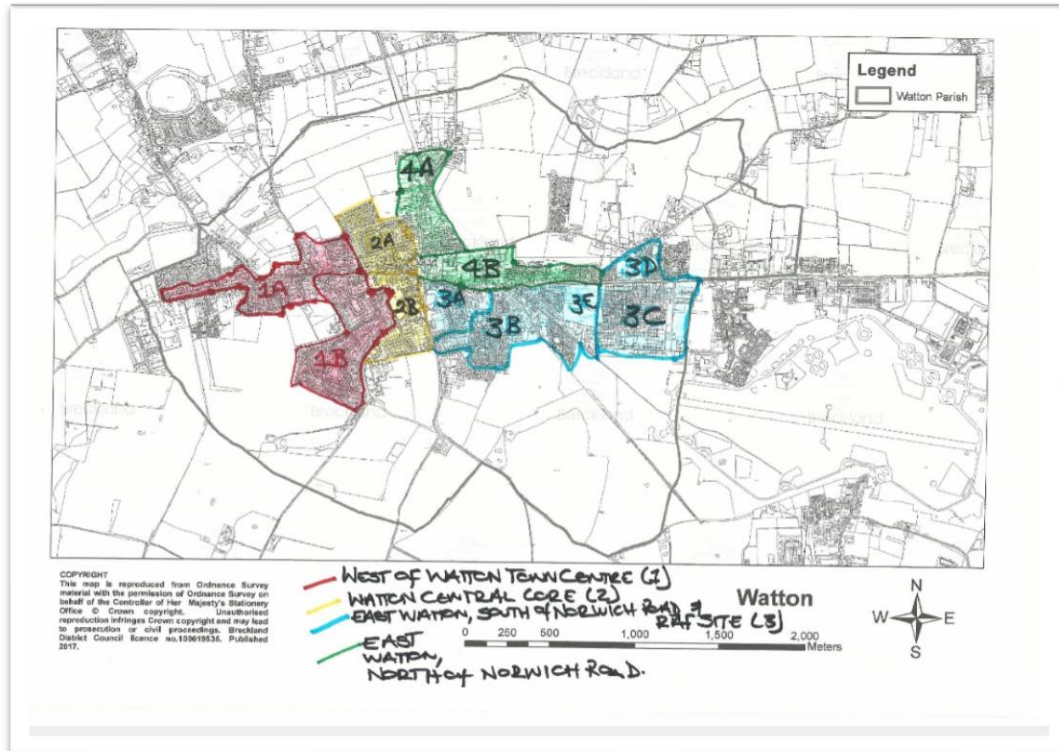
4.9 The town was divided up into 4 broad areas for the purposes of the Survey work. The Character Assessment in each Survey Area was carried out by a specific team.



4.10 The 4 Survey Areas broadly cover the following:

- West of Watton Town Centre
- Watton Central Core
- East Watton, south of Norwich Road and the former RAF Site
- East Watton, north of Norwich Road.

4.11 As the Survey Work progressed, it became clear that there were distinctly different character areas within the broad Survey Areas and the teams decided to undertake detailed assessments for each one. This has resulted in 11 separate character areas being identified and Sections 7-10 of this document examines each of them in turn.



Broad Location of Character Areas

5.0 The Landscape Setting of the Town and the Importance of the Brecks

- 5.1 One of the key determinants that will contribute to the character of a town is the landscape setting within which it sits. Watton is one of 5 market towns that sit within a national and regionally recognised landscape known as the “The Brecks”. The Brecks which gives Breckland District its name, spans an area of 393 sq. miles/1019 sq. kilometres across Norfolk and Suffolk and has one of the most distinctive landscapes in the UK and boasts the best overall climate with low rainfall and hot summers. Watton is located on the north-eastern edge of the Brecks.
- 5.2 The word “Breck “, is medieval, meaning an area of sandy heathland and gorse that was broken up for farmland and then allowed to revert to wilderness once the soil was exhausted. The area comprises vast forests of native coniferous softwood, lines of Scots pines called 'Deal rows' some of which are still maintained as true hedges, also patches of classic historic heathland that were formed thousands of years ago by the felling and burning of forests for grazing land, and wide arable fields.



'Deal rows' are unique to the Brecks.

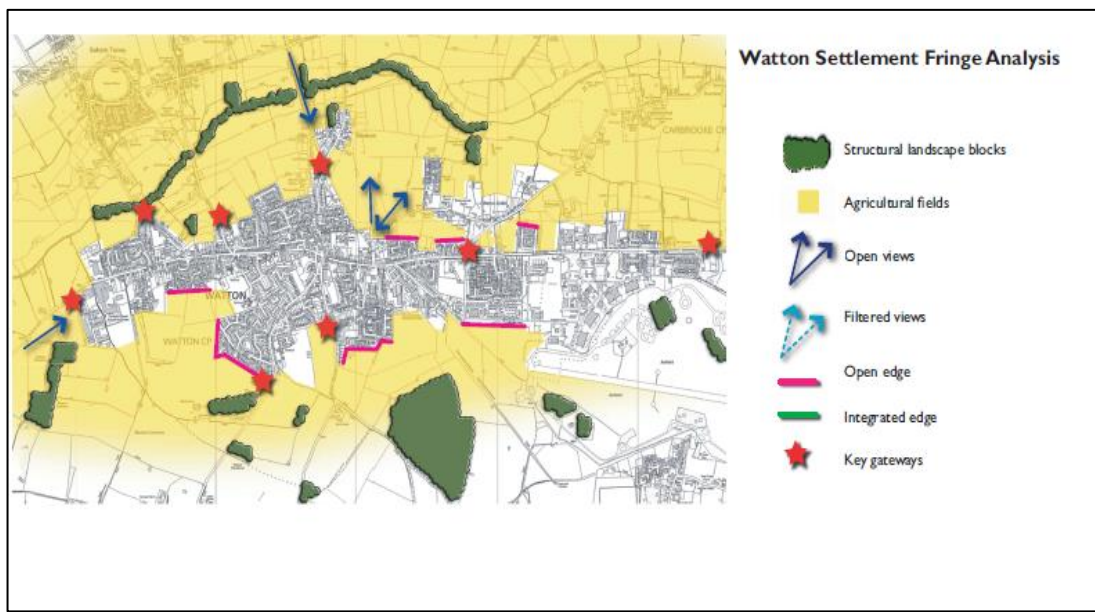
- 5.3 Also found in the Brecks, are the prehistoric pingos which are a landscape feature formed during the last ice-age. Pingos are formed when ice mounds in the topsoil melt and collapsed to form irregular pools. There are three pingos remain in the Brecks – with the most notable being Thompson Common just south of Watton.



Pingo at Thompson Common

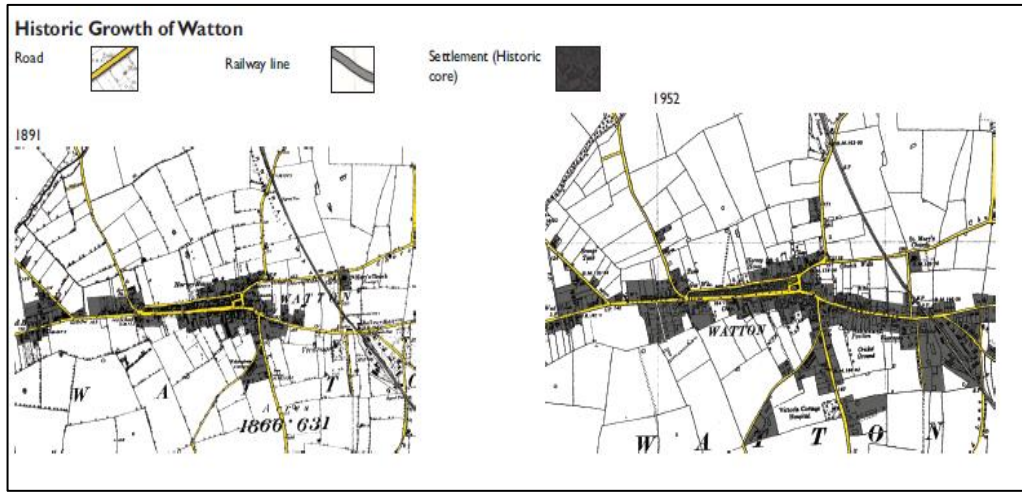
- 5.4 A significant proportion of the Brecks is designated as a European protected site, forming the largest terrestrial protected area in Norfolk. The heathland serves as an important habitat designated for its suitability to support internationally important bird species, particularly Stone Curlew, Woodlark and Nightjar.
- 5.5 The site is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the European Council's Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. The East of England supports 65% of the UK's breeding pairs of stone curlew where most breeding is located within the Brecks. The rich biodiversity of the Brecks is also recognised by many other statutory conservation designations which include four Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves (NNR), where the latter (NNRs and SSSIs) make up 40% of the total area.

- 5.6 The Brecks provides the setting for the town of Watton particularly when travelling towards the town from the west or the south and therefore the design of any new development to the west and south of the town would need to consider the impact on the traditional Brecks landscape and aim to create a softer transition between urban and rural characters.
- 5.7 In 2007, Breckland commissioned LUC to undertake a landscape assessment of the settlement fringes to support the emerging Breckland Local Plan.
[https://breckland.gov.uk/media/2070/Settlement-Fringe-Landscape-Assessment/pdf/Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment - July 2007.pdf](https://breckland.gov.uk/media/2070/Settlement-Fringe-Landscape-Assessment/pdf/Settlement%20Fringe%20Landscape%20Assessment%20-%20July%202007.pdf).
- 5.8 The purpose of the Study was to inform and guide future decisions on planning applications, define inherent sensitivities to development as well as setting out detailed considerations in respect of landscape management and design principles for future development.



Extract from Breckland District Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment 2007 (c LUC)

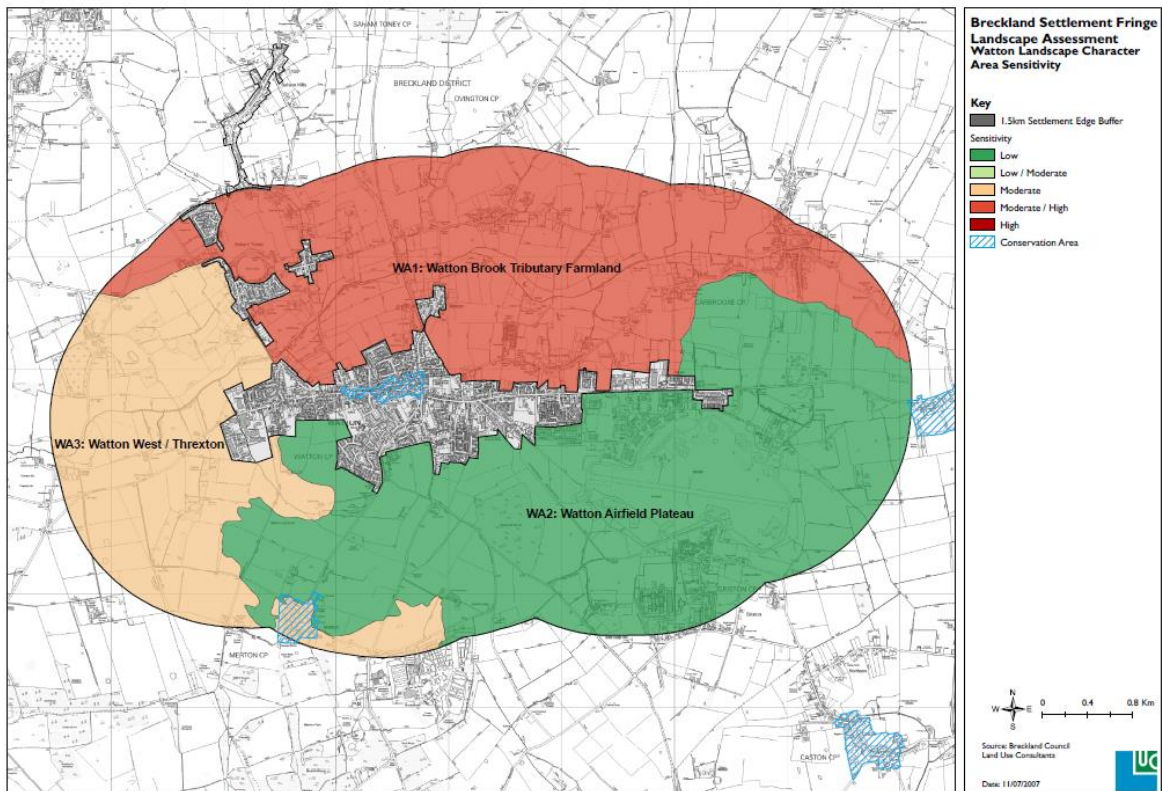
- 5.9 The study examined the historic growth of Watton and undertook a detailed assessment of the local landscape character building on that already undertaken at a District and national level.



Extract from Breckland District Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment 2007 (c LUC)

5.10 In examining the landscape around Watton, the study identified 3 specific Local Landscape Areas:

- WA1 Watton Brook Tributary Farmland
- WA2 Watton Airfield Plateau
- WA3 Watton/West Thrextton



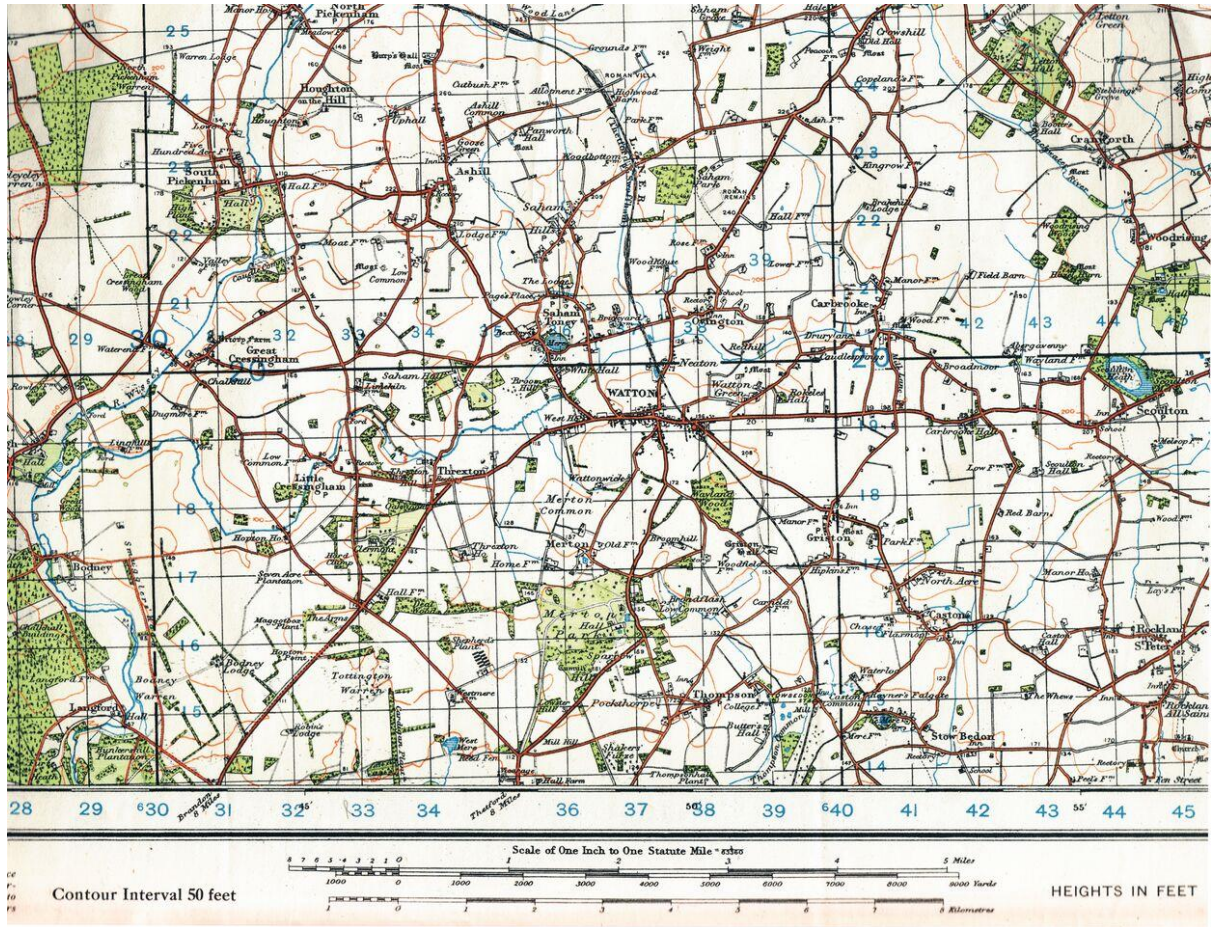
Extract from Breckland District Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment 2007 (c LUC)

- 5.11 For each character type the general landscape sensitivities were identified and evaluated under broad headings looking at Landscape Character Sensitivity, Visual Sensitivity but taking account of the quality and condition of the landscape, cultural and architectural built form, natural elements, accessibility and integration and gateways resulting in an overall sensitivity judgement for each landscape character type and suggestions for principles to be adopted in relation to new development.
- 5.12 The overall conclusion for Watton was that the northern Watton Brook Tributary Farmland was the most sensitive landscape, that the rural character and separation of Watton from Watton Green should be maintained and that in considering allocations for future development in Watton large geometric blocks of development jutting into farmland should be avoided.

6.0 Watton Character Appraisal

6.1 Introduction and Historical Context

6.1 The parish of Watton is situated in the centre of the District of Breckland District of Mid Norfolk. It lies north of Merton and Thompson, east of Saham Toney, south of Ovington and west of Carbrooke and Griston.



Map Courtesy of Julian Horn

6.2 The name Watton is believed to derive from the Old English meaning ‘Wada’s enclosure’. Another popular image associated with the town is a hare (watt) leaping over a barrel (tun) and this is reflected in the town sign. The parish has a long history and was established by the time of the Norman Conquest and it is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. At that time Watton possessed a church, mill, woodland and many pigs. Before 1066 the parish lands were held by Aldreda and later by Ranulf son of Walter. During the reign of King John (1190-1216) a market charter was granted to Watton and this Wednesday market is still held today.

- 6.3 The earliest archaeological find from the parish dates to the Mesolithic period and is a stone mace head (See Norfolk Historic Environment Record Number [NHER 8778](#)). However, many of the early prehistoric finds date to the subsequent Neolithic period and these comprise flint tools and various flint axe heads
- 6.4 The Bronze Age is the first period to have a more definite presence with a barrow existing on land at RAF Watton. Excavations here in 2005 as much of the land was being redeveloped recorded a central cremation urn, together with a possible associated inhumation.
- 6.5 There is less evidence available about the Iron Age in Watton. Two potential Iron Age pits have been identified from the presence of pottery sherds in their fill. During the Roman period it is possible that a road ran through Watton as part of the east to west Roman road from Denver to Caistor St Edmund. Although unfortunately, excavations found no Roman material along the road.
- 6.6 More information is available about the Saxon era. The Norfolk Heritage Explorer records a significant Saxon discovery in the 1950s. An Early Saxon uncovered, and an analysis of the individual's skull showed that the body belonged to a young adult male. Most of the other Saxon finds date to the early part of the period, and these objects comprise part of a girdle hanger, part of a square-headed brooch, a cruciform brooch and an iron spearhead
- 6.7 In medieval times Watton was a prosperous market town with a church dedicated to St Mary. This church has a Norman round tower of 13th century date and the core of the church is of this date. However, the church was altered in the 15th century and the exterior reclad in the late 19th century. The churchyard is a regionally important example of an ornamental churchyard and is the only Grade II* Listed Building in the town.
- 6.9 The site of the original town has been suggested to lie to the north of the church in the 'Watton Mount' area. In addition, extensive metal detecting in 1998-99 has identified the possible location of the medieval market. This site lies to the south of the modern town and had many cloth seals and coins, artefacts indicative of trade.

6.10 Sadly, much of the medieval town burnt down in a fire in 1674 so no other buildings survive.

THE WAYLAND NEWS

Published in Watton for the Month of October In the Year of Our Lord Sixteen Hundred and Seventy Four

GREAT FIRE STRYKES WATTON

The normal course of this paper having been interrupted for severall months by the sad and lamentable accident of Fire happened lately in the town, it hath been thought by Mr Christopher Hey and the other Chief Inhabitate of the towne that a full account of it should be made in The Wayland News for the benefit of divers readers.

On the morning of Saturday 25th April at ten of the clock in the morning there happened to break out a fire in the houses of the towne. Where the fire started we cannot say for it is not known unto us; It fell out most unhapply that the wind fermented it in the thatch of the houses and great damage was suffered by many of the towne.

Seeing that the fyre was not beat downe and extinguished, vicar Henry Tooley sayeth that the men should pluck down some houses to make a gap that the fyre can not cross but so many thought that was doing the worke of the fyre that they continued in there great labour and diligence to preventeth the spread, but to no good cause. So it was that the words of our vicar were heard and some houses were made sacrificed to be certain the course of the fyre should be stopped and it was; by the blessing of God brought to be controled and seasonally beaten down.

On the Sunday after; the whole towne did attend in Church and gave thanks that no person had been lost to fyre and though many have lost their houses they were all of good spirit at this memorable deliverance.

Led by the Churchwardens and the Overseers of the Poore an appeal was made unto His Majestie that the towne might be granted a bryef to collect monies from all over the Kingdom that reliefe might be given to them that hath suffered most. This His Majestie was pleased to grant and so appeal has been made unto the whole inhabitate of the country and may continue until 20th September in the year 1675.

On Wednesday 15th May Mr Hey and severall others did attend to Norwich and the Court of the Maior where Aldermen of the severall wards of ye city were desired to send for the churchwardens & overseers of the poore in the parishes of their wards and signifie an order to them that Mr Maior and ye court doe require them upon the Monday next to give to the inhabitants in their severall parishes and receive their charitable contribution to the relief of the poor distressed inhabits in Watton who suffered by the late fire and to bringe ye whole moniye they collect to ye court upon Wednesday 20th instant.

It doth seem that there was some small fecling in the parishes of the City that they should not be paying unto their Maior for it was not



The Gentlemen and others of the Towne try to prevent the spread of the fyre by the pulling down of buildings. Our vicar Mr Henry Tooley doth pray for deliverance

until July that Mr Hey was called again before the Court to receive such monies as has been given by the good people of that place. And so it came to pass that upon the day of the 10th of July that Mr Christopher Hey & severall others of the inhabitants of Watton went to the court and gave their humble and hearty thanks to the Court for promotinge the charitable benevolence of the inhabitants of the city towards the reliefe of the poore of this towne. The final account having been made it is now recorded the fyre did burn down above 60 houses, besides barns, stables and outhouses, the luthers shambles, &c. to the value of 7450l and goods to the value of 2660l.

It is thought by those affected by the fyre that they shall not attempt to rebuild what is left of the old towne and that from this time all peoples shall lyve neare to the shoppes and the Market Place.

Mr Christopher Hey hath let it be known that he is to put up a tower next to his house and that this tower will hold a dook and a bell. The bell is to be rung should the towne suffer another burning warning all peoples of the conflagration so that they and their tenements might be saved more easly.

It is thought that in the countie of Norfolk there be other publiκ docks in Norwich and Kings Lynn only and there will be much of benefit to the people of the towne when they might be able tell when they should be at their business or praising God for their salvation this yer. Once again goodwill of Mr Hey towards the towne and it inhabitate is shewn.

An Account of the Tryal and Condemnation of Eliz. Lillyman, who killed her Husband.

For which she was condemned to be Burned, with the manner of her Department at her Tryal at the Proceedings at the Sessions-House in the Old-Bayly, upon Wednesday the 7th of July instant

There was tryed that unhappy creature that kill'd her Husband at Goodmans Fields, viz. Elizabeth Lillyman; she seem'd to be a person of some 50 years of age, old both in years and wickedness; her carriage was very strange both at her Arraignment and Tryal; for after her Indictment read, and the Clark demanded her Plea to the same, she fell into a kind of passion, and desired of the Court that she might see her dear Husband before she pleaded, which she insisted upon with seeming earnestness for some time; but this appeared to the Court to be but a mad kind of Artifice, designed out of her feigned passionate Zeal to her Murdered Husband to take off the suspicion of her being instrumental to his death, but this would not serve the turn, for upon her Tryal the Fact was evidently proved against her by several witnesses, the people of the house where they were when the Murder was done, did attest how that a little time before the Murder, the party murdered, (having got a dried mackerel for his supper, went out to a Collier that kept a Stall next adjoining to the house, and borrowed his knife of him to dress his Fish; that while the Fish was a broying, the people of the house being gon out of the Room, at their return, they found poor Lillyman with the aforesaid knife in his body, and the blood streaming out after it in this condition, nevertheless he had so much strength as to go to the door, and called to the Collier of whom he borrowed the knife, to come to him, and then embracing him, cryed out dear Countryman, my wife has stab'd me with a knife I borrowed of you, which words he reiterated 3 or 4 times, and then sunk down dead; The Chirurgion that searched the wound did attest that the knife was entred into his very heart; notwithstanding all which evidence, this bloody woman had the confidence to deny the Fact, and to pretend her self to be clearly innocent of it; but it was too evidently proved against her, and the whole matter being left to the Jury, they brought her in guilty of petty Treson.

Elizabeth Lillyman had judgment to be burned to ashes, when she came to the Bar, she did, as formerly, passionately request to see the body of her husband before she died, saying she could not else dye in peace. But this action of hers, was suspected rather as a fit of raving, then the result of a considerate mind, from one who was so apparently proved to be his Murtheress.

Let it be known that
Mr Christopher Edwards
a Honest, Just and Honorable Man
and one with whom many of the
towne transact thier business
Now carries good stocks of papers,
quills and all manner of wryting
materials for the akademic and
those studious of nature

Publik Announcement
Mr Christopher Hey
of The Worshipful Company of Mercers
desireth it known by
all people of the parishes
of the countie
that he holdeth large stocks
of the finest doths and silks
to be had in all of the Kingdom
at most reasonable pryces

Mr Spcyer

Can supply divers people with the
best Herring From Yarmouth upon
his Market Stall every Wednesday

If hunger and thirst doth
"ale" thee then you will
find much comfort at the
THE ANGELL
in Watton Street

Courtesy of Julian Horn

- 6.11 None of the original manorial sites survive. Documents suggest that Rokeles Hall (Grade II) was founded in 1237 and may once have had a moat. However, the present Hall is of 17th-19th century date and the only water features to have been identified are two small ponds to the east of the Hall. The two medieval market crosses in Watton were incorporated into the Clock House (Grade II) when it was constructed after the fire of 1674.
- 6.12 Wayland Wood is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 and has its place in folklore as the original setting of the fairy tale by Thomas Millington “Babes in the Wood” It is said that the uncle lived at the nearby Griston Hall. The ghosts of the murdered children are said to haunt Wayland Wood. The Watton Town sign depicts the story.



Watton Town Sign

- 6.13 A good number of the archaeological records for Watton relate to the post medieval period. Numerous residential properties were erected in this period, some presumably to replace those lost in the fire. Many of these are found in the High Street, Harvey Street and Dereham Road where most of Watton’s Listed Buildings are located today. Harvey House is a fine red brick mansion largely built in 1720 in the Georgian style. It has a massive Tuscan doorcase on the third bay from the east. Wayland Hall occupies an important visual position in the town and was built in 1853 by E. B. Lamb. The exterior is of red brick and the interior features a hammer beam roof in the main hall.

- 6.14 Another important post medieval building is Clock House (Grade II). This clock tower is narrow and stands three storeys high. The clock itself dates to 1827 and is set below the lintel of a medieval cross and above a shield depicting a hare and barrel. The hare has been informally adopted as part of the logo for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The rear wall of the clock tower is now inside a recent link block between numbers 30 and 32 High Street.
- 6.15 Watton also has several post medieval gardens and promenades. The Loch Neaton pleasure garden was originally a railway ballast pit formed in 1872. However, at some date between 1877 and 1893 this was converted into an ornamental water pond with a watermill at the north end. In 1907 it was presented to the town and a bandstand was made, but by the 1920s the emphasis had changed to sports usage. A post medieval bowling green also exists to the south of the road opposite clock tower and behind the former George Inn. The green was mentioned as early as 1681 and is now preserved in a private garden.
- 6.16 The area around Church Walk/Walsingham Way also dates from this era. It was in existence as an avenue before 1792 but was established as a way to the church by the Enclosure Commissioners in 1801. The avenue was bisected by the railway in 1868 but was replanted in 1901-2 as Coronation Walk, with ornamental gates at each end given by Lord Walsingham from Merton Estate and an avenue of lime trees backed by hedges. Despite the refusal to remove the gates for scrap during World War Two they were removed in 1966; but the flanking railings remain in situ. This path has been certified as being of national importance as an example of an 18th century public walk (Grade II).
- 6.17 It also appears that the inhabitants of Watton were engaged in the process of timber working. The Ordnance Survey records two post medieval saw pits where tree trunks were sawn into planks that could be then used in construction. It is possible that trees were felled from Wayland Wood for this purpose.
- 6.18 The most significant other period of Watton History relates to World War Two. Watton Airfield (was used both by the United States Army Air Force and the RAF. It is rumoured that Allied spies were flown from here before being dropped by parachute into Germany. After World War Two the station was used as a Radio Warfare Establishment (and became known locally as the RADAR Site) and since 1965 air traffic management has operated from part of the site. During the Cold War surface to air missiles aimed at Russia were based here. The airfield closed in 1989.

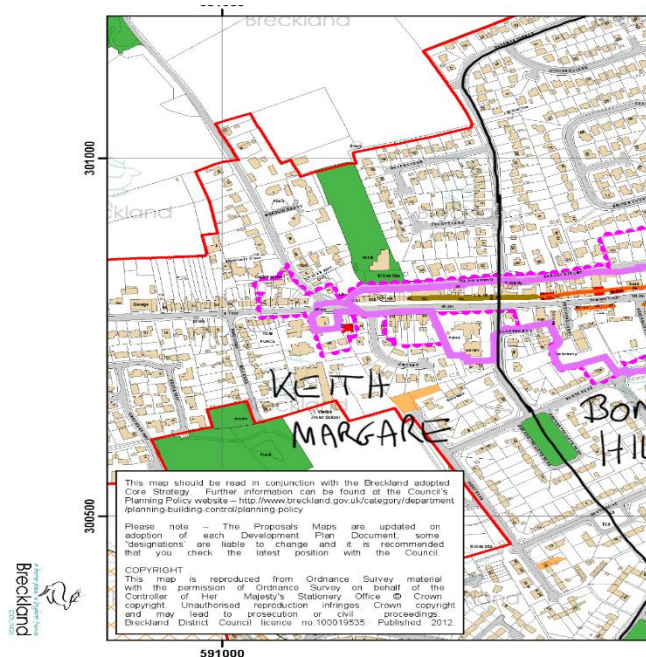
- 6.19 Two World War Two concrete pillboxes have also been discovered. One survives in an overgrown state in a hedge to the northeast of the church on the north side of the lane. The other was a very rare PBX U/F roofless and pentagonal pillbox) that stood to the west of Lovell Gardens and is now partially buried.
- 6.20 In terms of its current built form Watton has a long linear High Street running west-east which joins the main Dereham to Thetford Road the A1075 at a cross roads to the east of the main historic town centre. It is this crossroads of two significant routes that gives Watton its central location in the District.

7.0 Survey Area 1 – West of Watton Town Centre

7.1 Brief Overview of Character Area

This area encompasses the Conservation Area west of The Old Brewery located in the High Street and the area known as the George Trollope estate to the south of the High Street. The area surveyed includes the west end of the High Street, Brandon Road, George Trollope Road, East, West, North and South Roads as well as part of Merton Road to the immediate south.

The survey work took place on 15th March 2018 and the weather was dull and overcast. It became clear during the survey work that there were two distinct character areas within this larger survey area and therefore this appraisal has been subdivided to reflect this.



Survey Area 1

7.2 The George Trollope Estate – Area 1A

The George Trollope estate which lies south of the High Street, includes North, South, East and West Roads is a good example of a circa 1950s new council housing estate. Much of it remains unaltered from that time although the ownership has moved significantly from public to private ownership since the introduction of Right to Buy legislation in the 1980s. The estate was named after George Trollope who was a local councillor. Many of the houses on George

Trollope Road were originally built to house nurses from the hospital and policemen from the police station (on the High Street).

7.3 Age and Use of Buildings

As might be expected the buildings nearly all date from the 1950's when the entire estate was constructed effectively all in one go. There are a few more modern buildings close to George Trollope Road where it gets closer to the High Street.



West side of East Road

The estate was purpose built for residential use and that remains the prominent use today however there are a few buildings that either still have or have had a community use.



West Road, near to the school

These include the Library on George Trollope Road which was originally built as a court house and therefore sits behind the police station fronting the High Street which again was built around the 1950s together with the Nursery Infants School built in the 1970s.



Library and Old Police House, George Trollope Road

7.4 Condition and Additions

The condition of buildings on seems very good and they are largely as originally built with a few minor extensions and the occasional infill new build.



New Build on West Road

7.5 Orientation and Street Pattern

As the names suggest North, South, East and West Road when taken together follow a regular rectangular estate pattern lying to the south of the Hight Street (which is orientated east-west) but connected to it by George Trollope Road which runs North south and forms a central square which is currently an open space.

George Trollope Road forms a crescent and is mainly semi-detached dwellings assembled around a formally laid out green space at its centre. The only other exit for the estate is via East Road and its junction with Merton Road to the south. Merton Road runs south west to north east with the small village of Merton at its southern point and joins the A0175 Dereham Thetford Road at its origin. The area has a regular and uniform pattern with the house to plot ratios being regular throughout the development giving it a pleasant development rhythm.



Merton Road

7.6 Undeveloped and open areas

The undeveloped green area at the centre of the George Trollope Road is the most significant undeveloped space in the area and is the focal point of the estate and intrinsic to the character of the area. It is laid to grass with no intervening structures and its value is recognised by the fact that it is protected from development in the Breckland Local Plan.



Green at centre of George Trollope Road

There is also a small green to the south of South road which provides a similar undeveloped function to that of the larger green above although it does not have the same protection. It would therefore benefit from some form of protection to retain its undeveloped nature as it is a focal feature of the character of this area.



Green on South Road

There is one additional small green space or large verge in East Road which is characterised by trees.

7.7 Materials

The buildings are of identical uniform design using red brick and darker tiled roofs. The window patterns are symmetrical, and many of the houses are semi-detached with front and rear gardens. Almost all of the original 1950s buildings were two storeys.

7.8 Trees and Hedges

There are few trees and hedges in this character area. The main grassed areas are totally open with no intervening features. The main area of trees is along East Road – the eastern side of which has a wide variety of species of trees including maple and almond with some specimens being quite mature and contributing to the character of the area.



Trees on east road

7.9 Conclusions and comments

The area is an excellent example of volume-built council housing that was common in the 1950s. What is more interesting, is that so many of the houses are unaltered and there has been very little extension or infilling. The area is generally in good condition. The main green areas also remain undeveloped and intact; the area remains largely as it would have been when first built. The largest green is protected but the smaller green in South Road would benefit from Local Green Space designation to protect undeveloped character and to retain the contribution it makes to the area. The area has a regular pattern, with a well-kept and orderly character, which over time at a point in the future (post 2050) may be considered worthy of conservation status as an example of the architectural styles and layout of the immediate post war period.

7.10 High Street west of the Old Brewery and Brandon Road - Area 1B

This area includes the western part of the existing Conservation Area from the Old Brewery on the north side of the High Street heading west towards newer estate development at Brandon Road. The area is characterised by buildings close together with small residential terraces next to commercial buildings.

7.11 Age and Use of Buildings

The buildings within the conservation area in the High Street range in age with a proliferation of Victorian buildings and some earlier buildings displaying dates from around the 1800s. There are also signs of modern infilling between the older buildings. As you go further west towards Brandon Road the buildings become gradually newer until you reach the small mini round-about and the modern estate development south of Brandon Road known as the “Birdland Estate” due to the road names having a common bird theme. This estate was built during the late 1990s onwards.

The buildings closest to the town centre are a mix of residential and commercial uses but as you travel west the use becomes predominantly residential and is characterised by a mix of small terraced cottages and bungalows.

7.12 Condition and Additions

Again, the condition of the buildings is, generally good despite the wide range of ages and materials used. There were very few additions particularly in the centre of the town however it is clear that many buildings were no longer in the use they were originally constructed for e.g. The Old Brewery and The Old Gas House.

7.13 Orientation and Street Pattern

Unsurprisingly the street pattern is dominantly linear following the line of the High Street. The majority of the buildings fronting onto the High Street follow a common building line being set very close to the road. Only a few are orientated side on or set back any real distance – and this tends to be as you move west along towards Brandon Road.

7.14 Undeveloped Spaces

There are almost no undeveloped spaces in this area with buildings being very close to each other.

7.15 Materials

The prevalent materials include brick which varies from red to dark grey. There are some flint buildings towards the edge of the conservation area. Roofs tend to be pantiles with some glazing. There are some small coloured rendered cottages along Brandon Road. The new development south of Brandon Road has taken its lead from the buildings in the locality and features a mix of materials including red brick, pantiles, flint panels and some render.

7.16 Trees and Hedges

As expected in a town centre location there are few trees and hedges. There are a few flower planters in the High Street and there is a very urban feel to the character of this area.

7.17 Conclusion and Comments

Several important buildings were identified in the survey as adding something special architecturally, culturally or historically to the character of the area. Some are already nationally Listed, and their special qualities already recognised. However, others are not and could potentially be put forward to Breckland as candidates for a future Local List and/or identified as non-designated heritage assets in a future Neighbourhood Plan policy. The full list is as follows:

- **Wayland House** – home to the Wayland Partnership with a small police presence at one end, originally built as the town's police station in the 1950's with fully functioning cells for use in conjunction with the Court House behind which is now the Library. Site lies within the Conservation Area.



Wayland House

- **2 blocks of Victorian Terraces** adjacent to Wayland House and within the Conservation Area



Victorian Terraces

- **Alms Houses** – built in 1831 and restored in 1975, still retain original use as Almshouses and Grade II Listed



Almshouses

- **The Stone School** – this replaced the original school which is now the home of the Men’s Shed in Church Walk. It was used as the Infants’ School in the 1950s and is now occupied by Eirlys Johnson Funeral Directors. After it was closed as a school it was used as a Youth Club for a short while. Unlisted but within the Conservation Area.



The Stone School

- **The Old Brewery** – part of the Watton Brewery built between 1858 and 1877 and believed to be the tallest building in Watton. It dominates this part of the High Street and since its closure has had a range of business uses including

Antiques, Printers and Photography Studio. The ground floor is now offices and the upper floors are short let residential apartments and hotel rooms. Within the Conservation Area.



The Old Brewery

- ***The Old Gas House*** – this lies between Harvey Street and Saham Road to the north of the High Street and was originally the home of the local gas works engineer when there was an adjacent gas works holder. It has been recently restored and is now used as a private residence. Unlisted but inside the Conservation Area.



The Old Gas House

- ***Flint Cottages*** – these can be found either side of Saham Road in a row. The last cottage used to be the Black Horse Pub and later Mr Codling's Shoe repair shop. Inside the Conservation Area.



Flint Cottages

- ***Burleigh House*** – this lies on Brandon Road between the Esso Petrol Station and the flint cottages. Outside of the Conservation Area but sits in a prominent position and has no recognition. Constructed of the prevalent materials in the area – red brick, black pantiles some flint edging. Possible non-designated heritage asset.



Burleigh House

- ***Disraeli House*** – this dominates the corner of Swaffham Road and is a large private residence. Outside of the Conservation Area and unlisted. Possible non-designated heritage asset due to its prominent position and well-maintained hedges and boundary walling. Constructed from lighter brick with dark roof materials and symmetrical fenestration.



Disraeli House

- ***The Hare and Barrel*** - originally a hotel/coach house it was opened as a pub in the late 1970s and has had some additions and extensions since originally built. To the west was originally a builders' yard and saw mill although this has now been replaced by large modern houses. Has been significantly altered over the years



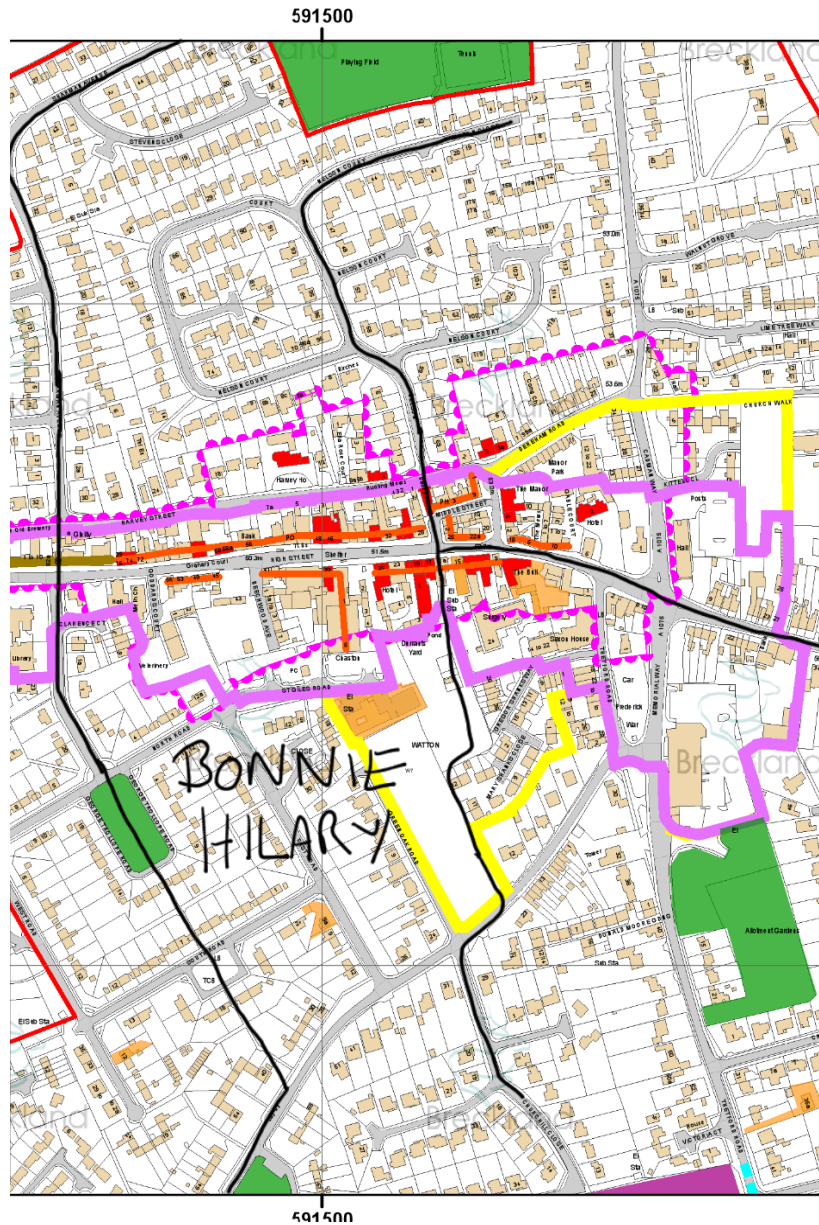
The Hare and Barrel

The area contains a mix of ages of building. They are generally in good condition and as you might expect in the town centre a mix of residential and commercial uses with residential dominating as you move out of the town centre and the Conservation Area.

8.0 Survey Area 2 – Watton Central Core

8.1 Brief Overview of Character Area

This area covers the central part of the town centre and focusses on the High Street, and Harvey Street both in the Conservation Area.



Survey Area 2

It covers the area both north and south of the High Street moving away from the historic, retail and commercial core into housing estates north of Harvey Street such as Nelson Court, Sharman Avenue and Hamilton Close which and their southern counterparts south of the High Street such as Green Oak Road, Merton Road and Churchill Close.

The High Street is the most dominant street in Watton with a strong west-east

linear form where the majority of the retail and commercial activity of the town takes place. Moving away from the High Street you encounter more mixed residential including Victorian terraces in Merton Road and more modern housing including bungalows in Churchill Close and Sharman Avenue.



A bustling Watton High Street one Wednesday in 1935

Courtesy of Julian Horn

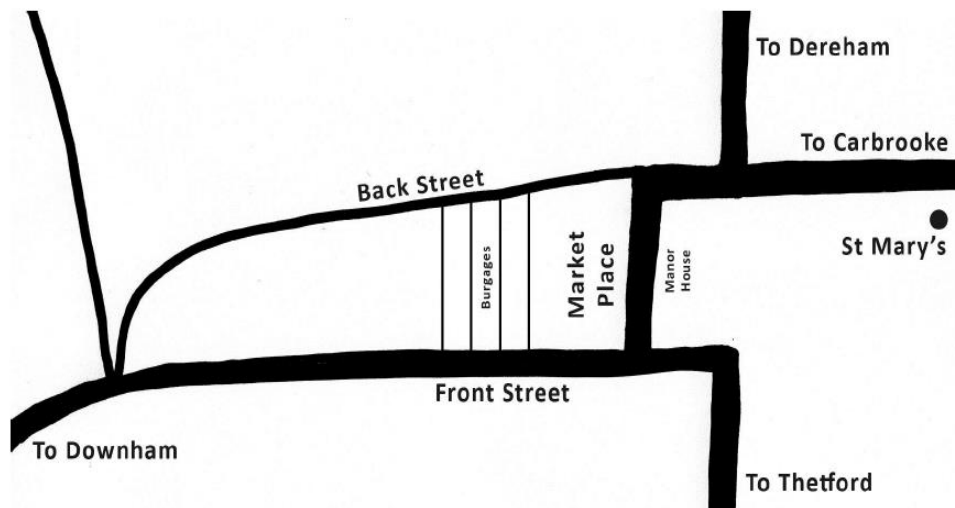
The survey work took place between 14-16 March 2018 and the weather was cool with some showers. As the survey work progressed it became clear that there were two distinct Character Areas within the overall Central Core and these have all been described separately

8.2 Harvey Street (North) – Area 2A

The survey work here focuses on the North Side of Harvey Street which lies immediately behind (and north of the High Street) and runs parallel to it. Two key roads adjoin Harvey Street and lead into significant residential estates to the north of the town - Sharman Avenue and Nelson Court. The estates here are modern with a mix of bungalows, chalet bungalows and executive housing.

8.2 Age and Use of Buildings

Harvey Street was previously known as Back Street due to its location to the rear of the High Street and its name was changed between the 1960s and 1970s. The north side of the street is entirely in residential use except for the telephone exchange. The age of housing in this location varies widely with some buildings being dated as early as 1700s in Harvey Street itself with others on the estates being as recent as 2005. The residential offer here is also mixed ranging from small terraces through to single storey bungalows in relatively spacious plots to modern executive houses. Harvey House (Grade II) is the most dominant individual building in this location and would have at one time been a substantial residence surrounded by agricultural fields. The estates were built in the 1980s by Ted Savory's Modus and he and his family lived in Harvey House.



Original Street Pattern, map courtesy of Julian Horn

8.3 Condition and Additions

The general condition of buildings here is good. The Old Stables/Granary in Harvey Street have been preserved and there is evidence of a timber frame. There is also evidence of smaller residential developments being built in the grounds of larger houses e.g. Ella Rose Court, a small group of bungalows built in the grounds of a grander residential dwelling. At least one small terrace appears to have been converted into a single property.

8.4 Orientation and Street Pattern

The dominant street pattern is the west-east linear line of Harvey Street which in turn mirrors the High Street. There are however two important junctions on this north side of Harvey Street at Sharman Avenue and Nelson Court which bisect Harvey Street and lead away from the town centre into nearby residential estates. There are two pedestrian alley ways which also give access from Harvey Street into the residential areas.

8.5 Undeveloped and Open Spaces

There are no open or undeveloped spaces in Harvey Street with buildings quite close together in places save for the large grassed area to rear of 100 Harvey Street. There are a few small green spaces on the residential estates usually at the intersections or corners, but none are large enough to be vulnerable for development and they have little functional open space use and are largely cosmetic. There are very few trees here. The most northerly section of Sharman Avenue starts to delineate the built-up limits of the town and is bordered by open farmland.

8.6 Materials

The north side of Harvey Street is predominantly red brick construction with some render with one possibly clay-lump building. There is also some lighter brick on the larger houses. Roof materials are generally red or black pantiles with some grassed areas to the frontage or gravel for driveways or parking. The telephone exchange has a concrete frontage with upvc windows and doors. There is however some flint work to the side elevations and the roof is black shingles.



Evidence of flint in side elevations

8.7 Trees and Hedges

There is no public ownership of trees or hedges in this area. Where trees are located they are situated in domestic gardens and usually behind private fencing. There are more trees towards the north of Sharman Avenue where the built development meets the open farmland beyond.

8.8 Summary and Comments

Apart from Harvey House and a few other notable large houses, the east end of the northern side of Harvey Street would have been largely agricultural land. Harvey Street (N) and the new residential estates seem to have little connection with the southern side of Harvey Street. The recently renovated Harvey House is the jewel in the crown of Harvey Street. There are some Victorian buildings that have retained their character and some good examples of leaded windows complete with handles and although the area is well maintained the character is very mixed.

8.9 Harvey Street (South) – Area 2B

The area surveyed here was the south side of Harvey Street which immediately backs onto the north side of the High Street, hence its former name as “Back Street”. The street runs parallel to the High Street and is long and linear running west-east. This side of the street is a mix of residential properties and the rear accesses to the retail and commercial buildings located in the High Street giving it a very mixed character.



Harvey Street – rear of commercial buildings on High Street

8.10 Age and Use of Buildings

The age of buildings here ranges from the 1700s to 2000s. The buildings tend to be tightly packed with few spaces in between and there has been a significant amount of infill taking place over time. Some originally commercial buildings have been converted to residential use, some are a mix of residential and commercial or commercial and retail. The residential elements tend to be on the upper floors although some can be found at ground level. The buildings are tall here – 2-3 storeys on average.

8.11 Condition and Additions

The condition of the buildings is very mixed. Many of the older buildings have been converted and there are also signs of red brick showing through under the render possibly as a result of erosion by the weather. Some other properties are new and

therefore in good condition. Several buildings have good condition Crittall windows and the roofs appeared to be in good condition. Many buildings at the east end of the street have been renovated, extended and rendered. A previously undeveloped space behind the Post Office has been infilled by an unsympathetic red brick box like building which is disappointing given its location in the Conservation Area. Other new additions have cosmetic features to give them character.

8.12 Orientation and Street Pattern

The strong line orientation here is the linear west-east line. The surfaces are generally tarmac and there is very little pavement. There is a significant amount of on-street parking here both for residents and for commercial operators. There are several paths and access routes through from Harvey Street to the High Street although some of them have either been cut off by development or appear to be blocked by storage.



Alley between High Street and Harvey Street

8.13 Undeveloped and open spaces

The buildings here are very close together and any undeveloped spaces have been infilled with new development. There is no green space or treed areas here.

8.14 Materials

Harvey Street is predominantly red brick construction with some clay lump under robust render In Davey Yard. There is no obvious flint work here and windows and door frames are a mix of wood and upvc. Roof materials are red or black pantiles.

8.15 Conclusion and comments

The area was clearly hugely influenced by the Harvey Family from 1720 when Harvey House was built as a Merchant's house for the family. The street once houses the Fire Service Centre and in 1859 the first sewerage works were laid. The North and South Sides of Harvey Street are very different in character. The North side hosting larger properties set back from the road with some green and gravelled areas with the south side a mix of residential and retail uses in 2-3 storey close knit properties.

The area is very mixed with some newer properties clearly having been designed with the character of the area to the fore and there are also some sensitive conversions. There is hidden evidence of more prosperous times for the town in the Victorian Villa behind Connolly's Shop. The stables and the over door are a reminder of agricultural times and the Old Brewery is further evidence of a more varied industry with its imposing building. The area has a very commercial feel with a general air of hustle and bustle with little room for greenery or space.

8.16 Estates south of the High Street - Area 2C

The area surveyed includes Green Oak Road, Merton Road and Churchill close all lying south of the High Street. The area consists of a large post war council built residential estate with large greens and alleyways that lead to Merton Road. Green Oak Road immediately abuts Durrant's Field a large L shaped green area currently grazed.

8.17 Age and Use of Buildings

The east end of Merton Road is typified by Victorian Terraces whilst the western end is more modern with prevalent bungalows. Churchill Close is an estate of modern executive houses and bungalows with No24 standing out as a single dwelling from 1930/40s. Much of Green Oak Road was built in the 1940s. Almost all the buildings are in residential use.

8.18 Condition and Additions

The condition of the buildings is generally good with all buildings appearing to be occupied and gardens well cared for. There are very few obvious alterations or additions here.

8.19 Orientation and Street Pattern

There is no dominant street pattern or orientation here with Merton Road running NE-SW and Churchill Close bisecting it from North to South. Green Oak road lies north of Merton Road. The properties nearly all front the street but are set back with front gardens and gravelled driveways.

8.20 Undeveloped or open spaces

The crescent on Merton Road (from the 1950s) includes properties set back with a green open space in front. This space is protected in the Breckland Local Plan but there are few public open spaces in the area. Many of the properties on Green Oak road have mature gardens with some significant trees. There is an abundance of car parking on the verges in Merton Road which has over time damaged the grass.



Crescent on Merton Road

8.21 Materials

There is a mix of materials here – the Victorian terraces on Merton Road are of red brick and some of the older houses have timber frames. The properties on Churchill Close tend to have black pantiled roofs.

8.22 Trees and Hedges

There are few publicly landscaped or green areas in here. There are however many mature trees in private gardens which give the area an overall green feel. Durrant's

Field is the most significant area of green space, lined with trees and is currently in agricultural use for grazing.

8.23 Comment and Conclusions

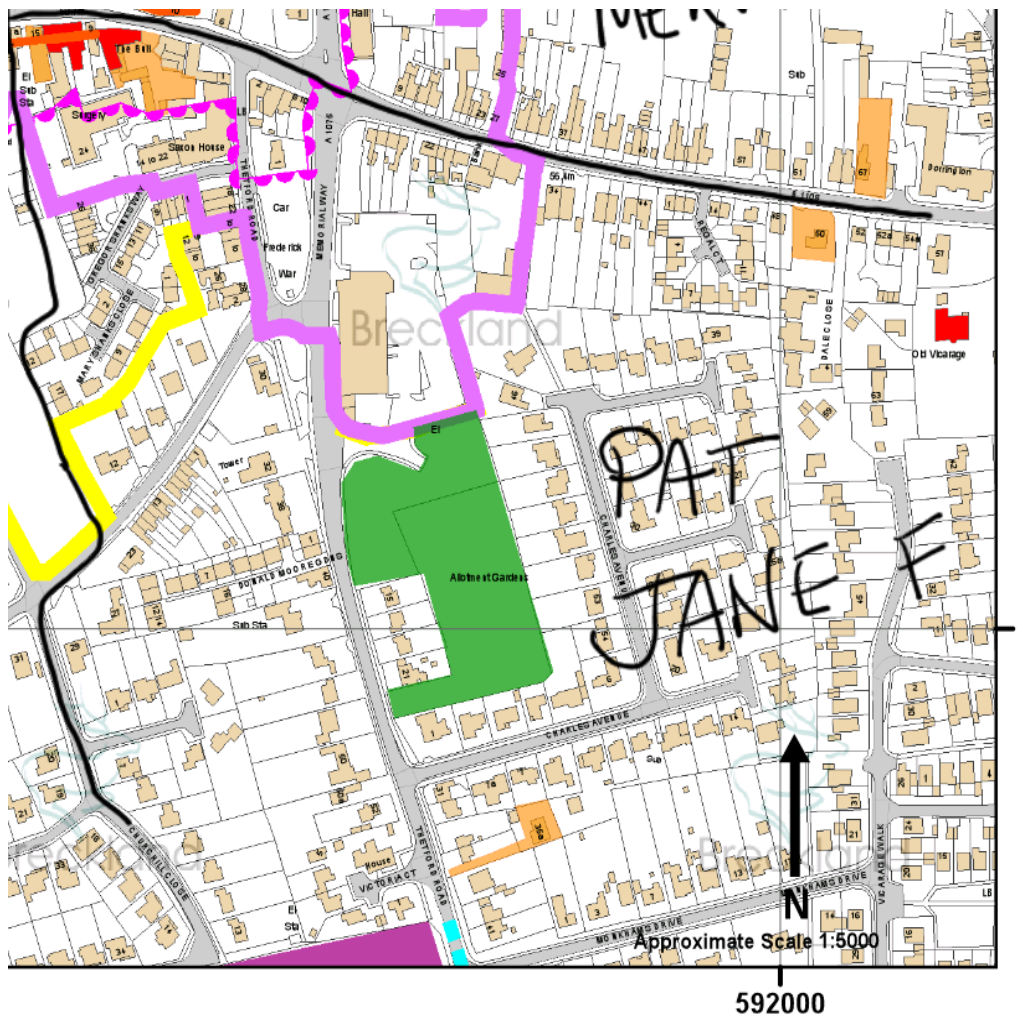
The area is predominantly residential with a mix of public and private housing constructed from the 1940s to the present day. There are some large properties in large plots set-back for the road but there are few trees or open grassed area with the trees and hedges all being in private gardens. The only areas of publicly accessible open space are in the post-war council estates which are uniformly set out.

9.0 Area 3 – East of Watton Town Centre, south of Norwich Road and the former RAF Site.

9.1 Brief Overview of Character Area

This area encompasses the east end of the High Street and the Conservation Area as well as the area south of the High Street known as Durrant’s Yard, Gregor and Mary Shanks Way, Memorial Way moving east of Thetford Road and south of Norwich Road. In general, the area is a mix of retail, commercial and residential uses.

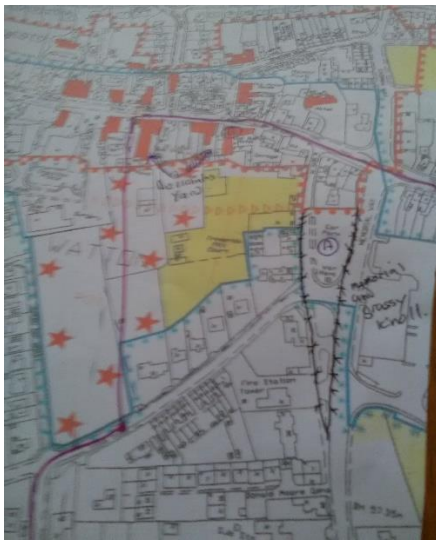
The survey work took place on 10th and 12th March 2018 and the weather was dull and overcast. It became clear during the survey work that there were five distinct character areas within this larger survey area and therefore this appraisal has been subdivided to reflect this



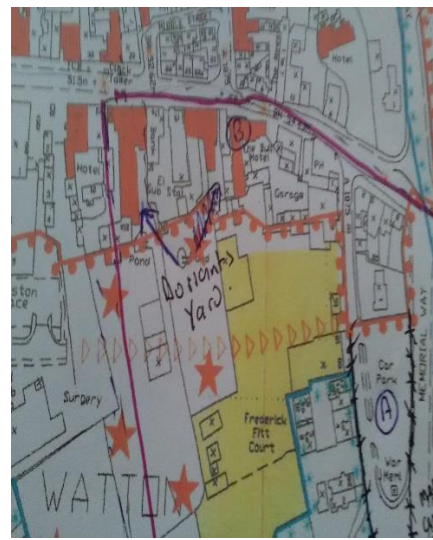
Survey Area 3

9.2 Thetford Road, Gregor Shanks Way and Memorial Way - Area 3A and High Street, Durrant's Yard, New Inn and Bull Yard - Area 3B (Combined)

This survey area covers the Eastern End of the Conservation Area at the eastern end of the High Street as well as the land immediately south and behind the main High Street frontage and includes a complete mixture of styles, uses, ages and designs of buildings. The area was identified as a redevelopment area in previous Local Plans and therefore has seen considerable change in the last 20 years.



Area 3A



Area 3B

9.3 Age and Use of Buildings

A number of buildings had dates on them and it was clear that there was a wide range with 1880 being the earliest officially dated building. The area also included new build from around 2006 where land to the rear of the High Street had been redeveloped for residential uses. There are several date signs that indicate when restoration took place. The area's character is a real diverse mix of uses with residential at ground floor and first floor in some locations all in close proximity to commercial uses such as Banks and public houses at ground floor with flats above. There is also retail on ground floor with retail storage uses above. Buildings here are tall with three storeys not being uncommon.



Date sign at Old Police Station

9.4 Condition and Additions

The modern buildings are in a good state of repair. However, some of the commercial buildings fronting the High Street are looking a bit tired. The Bull Public House was refurbished relatively recently but needs maintenance on the front elevations where paint has begun to peel off. Some of the buildings would appear to be unused and a flat is being advertised for rent. There are some flower planters in the area that are well maintained, and the public signage is unobscured



The Bull PH,

Former New Inn

The area has seen a high degree of change with some areas having been redeveloped, some evidence of buildings being restored and new development. The former New Inn has been converted to residential units and a new block of flats.

Saxon House has been erected on some underused former brownfield land.



Some traditional lampposts are still in existence.

9.5 **Orientation and Street Pattern**

Watton is largely dominated by the long linear High Street which runs east-west with buildings largely fronting the main thoroughfare. This area is characterised by development that sits behind the main frontage with little alleys and yards that have clusters of buildings around them sitting side on to the street. The pavements are narrow here. There are also pockets of buildings set back from the main street with some wide open former commercial yards. The buildings vary in size, age, shape, materials and use.



Bull Yard,

Durrant's Yard,

The area also includes some interesting archways and features that signpost the entrance to these back-street yards



Entrance to Durrant's Yard

9.6 Undeveloped and Open Areas

This area has seen significant change and redevelopment over the years and there is very little in the way of open areas. In terms of green-space the only notable green area is the small “grassy knoll” at the corner of Merton Road and Thetford Road. It is not under any threat of redevelopment due to its size and location and therefore does not require any form of additional protection.



Grassy Knoll, Corner of Merton Road/Thetford Road

Green Area at Corner of Thetford Road/Merton Road

Some of the yards open out into wider spaces once you walk through from the High Street but the only real undeveloped area that could support some form of redevelopment is the rear of 15 High Street.

In addition, on Memorial Way, there is a formal space known as the Memorial Gardens which has formal paving and a seating area and is home to the weighbridge. Formal street furniture includes the Memorial itself and the Town Noticeboard



Memorial Gardens



Weigh bridge in Memorial Gardens

Memorial Gardens,

Weighbridge,



Memorial in Car Park



Quaint Town sign/notice board, within car park

Memorial,

Notice Board,

9.7 Materials

There is a mixture of some clay lump and render with red facing bricks for elevations. Slate is often used for roofing and the redevelopment in the Bull yard has used black pantiles, recycled the original red bricks and black shiplap cladding. The New Inn restoration has used render with red brick and some plastic for the fenestration. The new infill over the entrance to Durrant's' Yard has used wood with large areas of glazing.

9.8 Conclusions and Comments

One of the most significant building is the Old Police Station which has a boarded-up window common of buildings in existence during the 18th and 19th centuries. It has a prominent location at the corner of Thetford Road but has seen some significant changes to its existing windows in recent years. It sits just inside the Conservation Area and therefore its cultural and historical significance is recognised. The buildings in the east of the High Street and immediately to the rear of it are also inside the Conservation Area. However, the Suffolk Pink and flint house located just north of the junction of Merton Road and Thetford Road lies outside and may be suitable for identification as a non-designated heritage asset in a future Neighbourhood Plan policy.



Suffolk Pink Render with flint

Generally, the area is well used. There is a significant amount of residential accommodation on the town centre at first floor level and above and much of the redevelopment and restoration that has taken place has provided a high level of new homes in what might have appeared previously to have been very small spaces. The area varies so much in style and use but where redevelopment has taken place it has tried to take on board the prevalent materials.

9.9 Former RAF Watton Site, Norwich Road – Area 3C

RAF Watton was opened in 1939. Squadrons 21 and 34 were the first to be based here and their work was largely reconnaissance. By 1946, the base was designated as the Central Signals Establishment. After the war the base had several visiting units including an American Unit operating the Lockheed U2. By 1968, it had ceased to be an operational airfield and by 1971 only the Radar Unit was operational, until its closure in 1988.

The survey area consists of the former RAF Watton Technical site located to the south of Norwich Road and the nearby streets of Elworthy Close, Tedder Close, Portal Avenue, Trenchard Crescent, the RAF Blenheim Centre and Lancaster House. The area has a clear military character with many of the road names and buildings referencing the previous RAF uses. The area includes the site of the former RAF married quarters with some of the buildings still in that use and others in private ownership. Lancaster House is now in use as a care home and the approach to it gives a wide tree lined vista.



Area 3C

9.10 Age and Use of Buildings

The buildings were all built between 1930 and 1980 and built with the specific military purpose in mind. With the closure of the site in the 1990s much of the area has either been redeveloped or where original buildings remain the uses have changed. The Bunker is now in use as commercial storage and Lancaster House is now in commercial office use whereas the former military residential use has now largely been replaced by private residences as the buildings were sold off. The Blenheim Centre is now a community centre for RAF families and has an adjacent play area.



The Blenheim Centre and Play Area

9.11 Condition and Additions

Generally, the area is in good condition and the grassed areas are well maintained. There are few additions or extensions to the former RAF residential stock and the remaining buildings are as originally constructed.



Portal Avenue, ex RAF

Tedder Close, RAF Married Quarters

Portal Avenue,

Tedder Close,

9.12 Orientation and Street Pattern

The area lies to the south of Norwich Road which runs east-west. The main access from Norwich Road is via Lovell Gardens. The area takes the form of a residential estate with a circular spine road with several cul-de-sacs that spur off the main spine road. The houses all face the street, and many are set back with large open green areas to the front. The houses have a uniform and regular pattern – many are semi-detached and therefore share the same materials. There are some larger detached houses in a mix of styles but again with large grassed areas to the front – these are most likely to have been Officer housing.



Detached house on Portal Avenue

9.13 Undeveloped and Open Spaces

In addition to the formal play area at the Blenheim Centre the area has large areas of informal open space and has an open and undeveloped feeling in many areas. There are large areas of greens in front of and at the side of the houses and between the various groupings of houses, all of which is generally well maintained.



Trenchard Avenue,

Trenchard Close,

One of the former RAF areas is in the process of having its ownership transferred to the Town Council for public open space.

9.14 Materials

As many of the buildings were constructed at the same time they share similar materials. Much of the former RAF housing is red brick with concrete tiles. The functional buildings e.g. the Blenheim Centre and the Bunker are of concrete construction. There are also black metal railings (typical of estates of this age) that are used in the larger residential areas and around the green areas.



RAF Bunker,

Teddar Close,

9.15 Landscape Features

The area has a high proportion of trees. There are occasional pockets of woodland and the main approaches and avenues have mature trees lining them.



Trees on Elworthy Close

9.16 Comments and Conclusions

The area's former RAF and military heritage is still prevalent in the character of the area today, not only in the building and street names but also in the layout and street patterns. Some significant military themed buildings remain including the Bunker and the Blenheim centre for RAF Families. The area has a green and open feel with the trees adding greatly to the character and creating pleasant treelined approaches. The Bunker does look to be in poor condition and would benefit from some restoration.

9.17 Breckland Business Park and Ventura House – 3D

This survey area covers the former RAF buildings to the north of Norwich Road which is currently known as the Breckland Business Park. The main buildings are laid out as 4 H blocks fronting but set back from Norwich Road with Ventura House at the centre. The area around Ventura House is laid to grass and there are some larger buildings just in front of the H blocks. The site was formerly the Officers' Mess, and the Junior Ranks Club and Mess. The original RAF buildings are all single storey with flat roofs.



Area 3D

9.18 Age and Use of Buildings

The buildings are predominantly 1930s to 1950s consistent with the age of the former RAF buildings on the southern side of Norwich Road. There are some newer commercial buildings in front of the H blocks which date from the 1990s when the area became more commercial. There is no residential or community use here. The current uses are generally commercial and retail (carpets) and range from sales yard and auction house car sales and offices.

The former RAF uses have all gone from this part of the site.



Ventura House

9.19 Condition and Additions

The buildings are generally in good condition and appear to be well maintained. Ventura House was undergoing some maintenance when the survey took place. The grassed areas and exterior landscaping also appears to be maintained. There are some new additions to the site – the industrial building in front of the H blocks and some additions to the H blocks presumably as the internal configuration of the H blocks themselves may not readily lend themselves to large scale uses. The newer buildings are larger in scale than the original RAF buildings and have pitched roofs.

9.20 Orientation and Street Pattern

Norwich Road (B1108) is the dominant street here and runs east-west. There would have been a single access off Norwich Road to the which brought anyone entering the site directly to Ventura House which dominates the centre of the site. The 4 H blocks all face Norwich Road and there are two each side of Ventura House giving it its central position. The newer industrial buildings are less regular in their layout with some forming L shapes and others are rectangular. They are more scattered throughout the site, but care has been taken to ensure they do not obscure the views of Ventura House from the streetscape.



Entrance to site and Ventura House

9.21 Undeveloped and Open Spaces

The area in front and to the side of Ventura House is laid to grass and is well maintained. The original RAF gates and railings around the area still remain. The green area is not protected in the Breckland Local Plan. It does add considerably to the character of the area however it does not appear to be under threat of development.

9.22 Materials

The materials used here are industrial and commercial in nature with concrete cladding and blockwork, metal windows and metal railings with some wood. The original entrance gates to the site are still in situ – black metal railings with brick pillars displaying the RAF crest.



Entrance gates and pillars

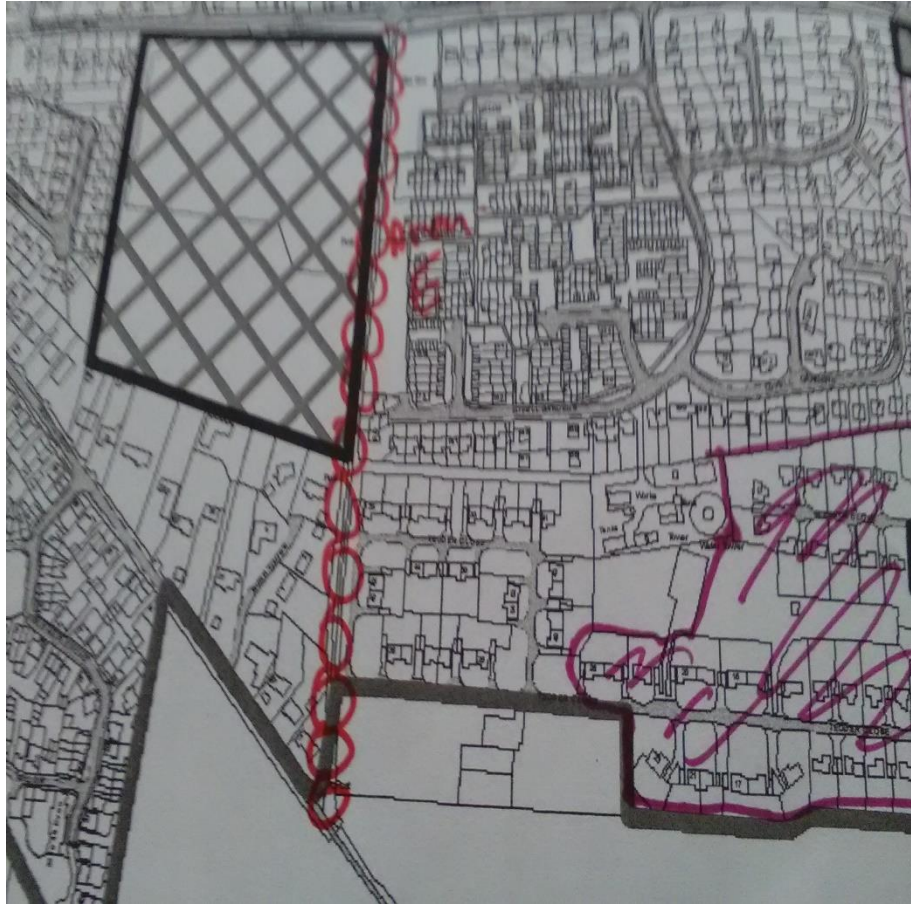
9.23 Trees and Hedges

There is one large tree on the roadside boundary of the site, but the rest of the green areas are open, functional and simply laid to grass with no other planting.

9.24 Comments and Conclusions

The RAF legacy is still prominent in the character of the area – not just the entrance gates and the central feature of Ventura House which dominates the space but also the physical layout of the H blocks themselves. The character of the area has undoubtedly been changed by the later industrial additions which have interrupted what was a regular and formal pattern of development and made it seem more irregular with varying shapes and sizes of buildings. This has no doubt eroded the character to a degree. The buildings and outside spaces appear to be well maintained although the inside of the buildings may require some attention. Ventura House is a dominant building but its contribution to the character of the area comes from its setting and its former use rather than from the design of the building itself which is very simple and functional in nature. The H blocks are a less common feature and therefore there may be worth considering, through the Neighbourhood Plan process whether if taken as a group the H Blocks and Ventura could be considered as non-designated heritage assets. It is their cultural heritage – RAF legacy - as a group that is their strongest feature rather than their individual designs and it is acknowledged that when taken individually their special architectural interest is limited.

9.25 Gilman's Drift - between Norwich Road and Griston Road – Area 3E



Area 3E

9.26 This area is an important connection between the south of Norwich Road and Griston Road. Much of the route is a wide treelined, tarmac pathway which runs north to south. There are no intervening buildings and the southern portion of the route there are residential rear gardens on either side. The route is an important link to part of the Sustrans National Cycle Network known as Route 13 which runs from London, through Essex, Suffolk and Mid Norfolk until it reaches Fakenham.



Gilman's Drift – Route 13

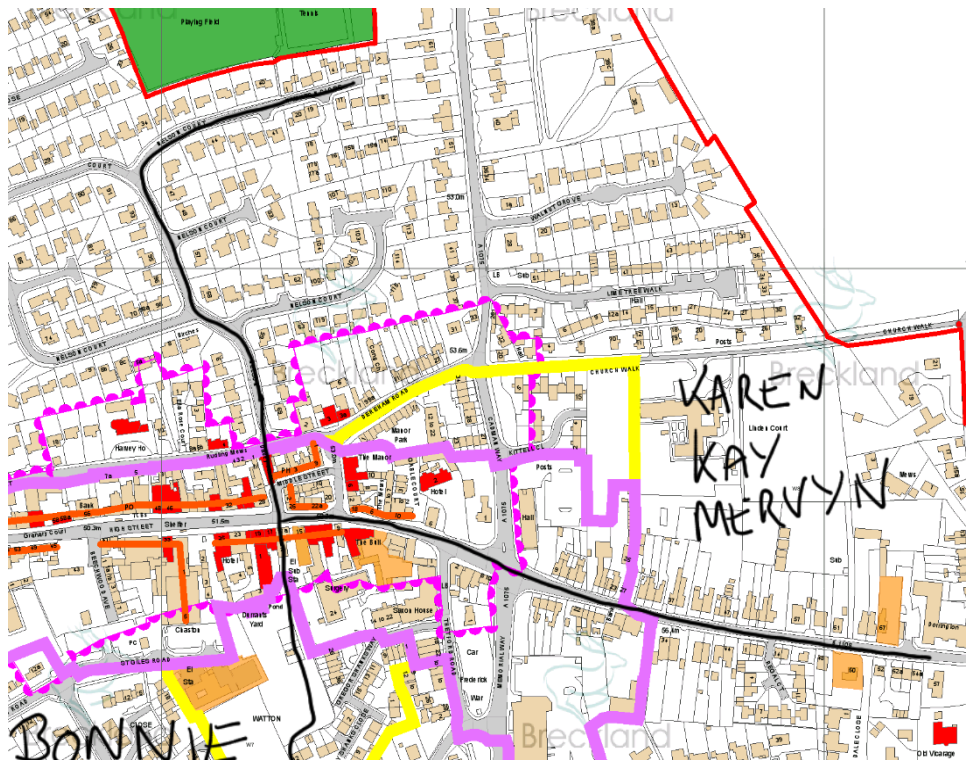
10.1 Area 4 – East of Watton Town Centre and North of Norwich Road

10.2 Brief Overview of Character Area

This area encompasses the area east of Watton Town centre and north of Norwich Road. It covers the east end of the High Street, from its junction with Cadman Way to its junction with Middle Street as well as the east end of Harvey Street up to its junction with Dereham Road and then the north side of Norwich Road including Church Walk.

The area is very mixed in character with the area closest to the town centre having a more mix of uses with predominant uses in Dereham Road and the north Side of Norwich Road being residential.

The survey work was carried out between the 12-15 March 2018 during which it was initially damp but later dry weather with some sunny spells. As with the other survey areas it became clear that there were 3 distinct character areas within this larger survey area.



Survey Area 4

10.3 High Street, Middle Street and Cadman Way with Nelson Court and Hamilton Close – Area 4A

The area surveyed included the east end of the High Street (north side) from its junction with Middle Street up to its junction with Cadman Way, the east End of Harvey Street and Dereham Road, together with Nelson Court and Hamilton Close.

The High Street and Harvey Street are town centre locations with a mix of residential and commercial uses whilst the other streets are predominantly residential estates.

10.4 Age and Use of Buildings

Much of this area comprises of a mixture of commercial, mainly shops and residential (flats), including pubs such as the Willow House (a Grade II listed building) and the King's Head together with the Wayland Hall which houses the Town Council (Grade II).

On Harvey Street there are the back of commercial properties which front onto Middle Street. Dereham Road comprises largely residential, including Khyber House (a Grade II listed building), a row of Victorian cottages, Manor House (commercial), Manor Park (town houses and flats) and Manor Mews (residential units, mostly flats). There is also the Pentecostal church (formerly Watton Congregational Church)

Nelson Court and Hamilton Close are residential estates with a series of cul de sacs, with a high percentage of bungalows.

The buildings at this end of the High Street and Harvey Street date from the late 1800s with many being early 1900s. Dereham Road is largely residential and many properties date from the early 1900s. Nelson Court and Hamilton Close are considerably newer with Nelson Court circa 1960s and Hamilton Close constructed during the 1980s.

Harvey Street and the High Street are a mix of uses – commercial and retail with some residential at first floor whilst the others are almost exclusively residential – and include both 2 storey house and bungalows.



Frontages in Middle Street

Many of the town's Listed Buildings are in this area and a large part of the Conservation Area thereby indicating that the overall historic value of the area is high.

10.5 Condition and Additions

The commercial and residential properties in High Street, Middle Street & Dereham Road are well maintained with the age of some properties in need of repair.

The Grade II listed wall around the Manor House land is in serious need of renovation whilst the residential estates of Nelson Court and Hamilton Close well maintained.



Brick Wall around Manor House

At the east end of the High Street there have been extensions to both the older buildings and the new. In Middle Street the buildings have had some additions and conversion of some first storeys to residential flats. There is a false façade (circa 1960s) on top of the roof edge of 2, 4 Middle Street and 26 High Street. At the end of Harvey Street, Khyber House has undergone extensive restoration. Much of the work would appear to be in keeping with its original character, but notably a pitched rather than flat roofed hood to a porch has recently been added. In Dereham Road, the Manor House has obviously had several additions over the years, most recently the converted stable block into modern flats, Manor Mews.



Rear of Manor House showing extensions

10.6 Orientation and Street Pattern

At the East end of High Street there are predominantly front facing properties such as Willow House, which is set back from the road. In Middle Street the buildings are either street facing, parallel or perpendicular to the High Street.



Middle Street

At the East end of Harvey Street (Back Street) and Dereham Road, the majority are front facing on the north side but on the south side they tend to be rear facing or side on. In Nelson Court and Hamilton Close the properties are mostly front facing with some corner plots.

The street pattern at the east end of the High Street is strongly linear. Middle Street forms a small square and the east end of Harvey Street (Back Street) is also linear. Dereham Road is linear running into one side of the square of Middle Street and Nelson Court and Hamilton Close are linear with some cul de sacs as off-shoots.

10.7 Undeveloped and Open Spaces

Given its town centre location it is not unexpected that there are few green open spaces here. However, there are some undeveloped spaces that have yet to be infilled. The land between Belvoir, 6, High Street and the Gables would benefit from some enhancement to deter fly tipping which detracts from the area.

10.8 Materials

At the East end of High Street, the modern properties are generally red brick and pantile. The older properties are a mixture of brick and painted render with red or brown pantiles or slate roof. Willow House is timber framed with brick and lath and plaster infill (rendered and painted) and a thatched roof. In Middle Street, the buildings are a mix of red brick or painted brick with red pantile. Wayland Hall is of red brick with gault brick dressing and corrugated tiled roof. There is a false brick façade on the front of 2 & 4 Middle Street continuing to the corner with High Street. Some of the windows and doors on the south side have been bricked up and there is a coach-house style door.

At the east end of Harvey Street (Back Street) the cottages are of painted brick and red pantile. Khyber House is of gault brick on the west end and painted brick on the east end – the roof is of pantiles.

In Dereham Road there is a mixture of red brick or painted brick with pantile or slate roof. The Pentecostal church is black flint with white brick dressing. The more modern development in Nelson Court and Hamilton Close has used a mixture of red or yellow brick with weathered red or brown pantile roofs.

10.9 Trees and Hedges and other Landscape Features

There are few trees or hedges in the area but the ones that are present are more noticeable. No. 31 Dereham Road is an attractive railed corner plot, set well back from the road. The Manor Mews complex is set in an attractive courtyard with tall red brick Grade II Listed wall on the north boundary. There are a number of grass verges in Nelson Court, giving it character and softening the look of the estate.

10.10 Comments and Conclusions

As mentioned earlier this part of the town has a high proportion of the Town's overall number of Listed Buildings. The Willow House is one of the oldest houses in the town, dating back to 1556. It was the Vicarage in 1769, occupied in all by 13 vicars. The Wayland Hall was built as a much-needed place for the community, historically uses have included a place for farmers and merchants to barter, many social events, dances, dinners & auctions and for the Wayland Petty Sessions – Lady Walsingham laid the foundation stone on 26 April 1853.

There is a wide range of styles also prevalent including the Pentecostal Church, formerly the Congregational church, which is of Gothic style.

The original part of the Manor House was built in 1719 for the poor and other charitable purposes, erected on part of the land of the Manor of Watton Hall by agreement with the Lady of the Manor for a yearly fee. Manor House, Manor Park and Manor Mews are part of an original group of buildings with the Manor House being the original Town House of 1719.

The newer development of Gable Court probably sits in the grounds of the Gables.

The Pentecostal Church and Loch House, 83 Dereham Road (see separate section on Dereham Road from Cadman Way northwards) have both been used as the Congregational Church. Clayland House, 1, Norwich Road, (Old Cunningham John Property) fills a very prominent position on the traffic light junction with very interesting roof edges and is worth preserving. The Willow House, being 16C one of the oldest houses in the town, with its thatched roof and timber cladding is of great historical interest.

This area also hosts some interesting decorative features -there are some ornate curved chimneys on the top of The Gables, High Street, which are very attractive and the shaped drain pipes down the painted fronts of 14-16 High Street are a notable feature.

Wayland House occupies a prominent position in the former Market Place and is of great historical interest, being a major meeting place for both trade and social events of the local community over the ages from 1853 to the present day.

The Pentecostal church built in the Gothic style is quite distinctive and linked to the Grade II listed Loch House in Dereham Road in religious use.

The location of Khyber House is prominent and gives a distinctive character to this area of Harvey Street\Dereham Road.

There is a unique style of street lights throughout Middle Street and High Street which adds character to the main shopping centre.

The survey team concluded that “from our research of the history of Watton in relation to the areas we have surveyed, we feel there are several properties that manage to retain a piece of Watton history and an insight into how Watton might have looked in years and centuries past. We would like to ensure these properties continue to be preserved within the Conservation Area of the town, in particular the older properties around Middle Street, the old Dereham Road and the East end of the High Street”.

10.11 Dereham Road through to Church Walk – Area 4B

The area surveyed here was Dereham Road heading towards Church Walk in a northerly direction. This is a residential area with a variety of houses and bungalows generally set well back from the busy main road.

On the western side is Loch House, a Georgian Grade II listed building, next to which is Loch Neaton, a lake with trees and paths around it and a grassed area. Behind Loch Neaton is the Sports Centre with associated playing fields, football and hockey pitches and children’s play area to the south.

A walkway between houses on the southern boundary connects the sports centre grounds to Nelson Court.



Link from Nelson Court to the Sports Centre

Past Loch Neaton in a northerly direction is Loch Lane (crossed by the former railway embankment) and north of this a residential home, though not visible from the road. On the east side there are a few much older properties before Church Walk, then three side roads including an off-shoot of Dereham Road with a number of houses set in large plots. Opposite Loch House is a bungalow (No 62) with extensive grounds extending from the course of the former railway line to 96 Dereham Road.

10.12 Age and Use of Buildings

On the west side Dereham Road there are several notable residential properties which date from the early 1800s together with several Victorian terraces. The Sports Centre was built between 1973 and 1984. The earliest building appears to be what is now 108 Dereham Road built around 1460 but is not listed but might be worthy of some additional protection.

Apart from the Sports Centre, the uses in this location are almost exclusively residential.

10.13 Condition and Additions

The houses are generally well-maintained. There have obviously been some extensions to properties which largely are in keeping with the character of the area.

10.14 Orientation and Street Pattern

Most of the properties are street front facing unless they are at the end of an off-shoot/cul de sac when they tend to be end on. The dominant street pattern is linear – north-south.

10.15 Undeveloped and Open Spaces

The most significant green area here is at Loch Neaton which is protected in the Local Plan as is the area surrounding the sports centre. At the end of Loch Lane on the north side there is a piece of land associated with the former railway which is in need of cleaning up. It includes some form of derelict building, a large tank and discarded waste.



Area of Loch Lane in need of visual enhancement

10.16 Materials

The more recent properties are mostly of brick (red and grey) with pantile roof. The older properties vary from brick, painted brick and painted render with slate or pantile roof. Loch House is of Gault brick with pantiled hipped roof.

10.17 Trees and Hedges

Loch Neaton provides a much-needed green space for recreation including an area to walk, relax and fish.



Green space at Loch Neaton

There is a notable grass Verge with two very large mature trees between Kittell Close and Church Walk and a grassed bank and mature hedge along large stretch of Dereham Road on east side from No 62 to No 96 which gives the area a more predominant green feel and certainly you start to feel you are heading out of town towards the countryside.

10.18 Comments and Conclusions

The area has a transitional feel about it. At the High Street end of Dereham Road the area is still very urban with properties closer together. There are some notable properties including Nos 85 & 87 which are linked with the former railway and No.108 Dereham Road built in 1460 is one of the oldest in the town.

Further out of town, the character changes and things feel greener and closer to the countryside. Loch House and Loch Neaton dominate this area. Loch House was used as the Congregational Church from 1818 until a new building was built in Dereham Road for this purpose in 1856. Loch House is of the same style as some of the other houses in the town, notably a pair of large semi-detached houses 41 & 43 Norwich Road, the Gatehouse, 15 Church Road and 31 Dereham Road.

Loch Neaton was created as a result of significant local endeavour and funding by local people, previously including an open air swimming pool, bowling green and band stand. In addition, in 1906 by raising the funds from local townsfolk the Loch was conveyed to trustees on behalf of the town for all time. In the past Loch Neaton provided many generations with endless hours of pleasure

Watton Sports Centre was built as a result of local initiatives and a large proportion of the cost from local donations and fund raising. It provides much needed green space and sports amenities for the local community

No 108 Dereham Road built in 1460, while not listed, is obviously of great local historical interest due to its age and may be worthy of putting forward as a candidate for a Local List or identification as a non-designated heritage asset in a suitable Neighbourhood Plan policy.

Loch House, likewise, with its association with the Congregational Church and similarity in style to other Georgian properties in the town is of great significance which is recognised through its Listing (Grade II). It is important that the setting of the property when viewed from the street is not impeded by any future development in the front gardens of the properties either side (No 71 & 83A).

Loch Neaton is of great value to the local community as open recreational space as the town lacks a park.

The railway cottages (Nos 85 and 87) depict the line of where the former railway once crossed Dereham Road are of significance due to their link with the former railway and similar properties in the town.

10.19 Church Walk and Norwich Road – Area 4C

This survey area includes Church Walk & Church Road and the north side of Norwich Road from Queens Hall to Key House.

The area is a mixed area dominated by the main junction at Norwich Road and Dereham Road. The Town Centre lies to the west of the junction and this area is mainly transitional between town centre uses moving into residential and some commercial.

Church Walk as its name suggests is the main access to the St Mary's Church & churchyard, between 1100 and 1135 – the oldest building in the town. It probably stands on the site of the Watton Church mentioned in the Domesday book. At either end of Church Walk are Walsingham Gates (Grade II listed) 1902.



Walsingham Gates

10.20 Age and Use of Buildings

On the West side of the junction with Norwich Road there is a residential home, Dorrington House and on the East side of this junction is H Brett & Son Monumental Masons - the rest of the road is residential either side, with St Mary's Church at the end as the road bends to the East and also the start of Church Walk on the opposite side to the church in a westerly direction. There is a residential home with access off Church walk.



Church Walk looking east

On the junction with the traffic lights sits a community hall, followed by a mix of residential dwellings extending in an Easterly direction - terraced, semi-detached,

detached, mostly from the late Victorian to Edwardian era, with a residential home, Dorrington House, on the junction with Church Road - on the east side of this junction, a Monumental Masons, followed by some cottages (now flats) formerly associated with the disused railway and modern residential town houses built over the line of the former railway & the former Railway Hotel.



Former Railway Hotel

On east side of Road there is a relatively new development of executive houses (St Mary's Close) adjacent to the church and also of note 2, Church Road, the former Old Station House, circa late 1800s

On the east junction with Norwich Rd is H Brett & Son Monumental Masons, redeveloped from the original 300-year-old building. On the west side next to Church Walk there are four houses, Railway Mews.

Either side of the former level crossing on west side are The Gatehouse, No 15, circa late 1800s and Hingham Cottage 1912.



The Gatehouse and Old Railway Line

From Hingham Cottage to the junction with Norwich Road there are terraced cottages circa 1930s, ending with Dorrington House (approx. 1980s) on the junction. The Former Infant School 1876 (now Men's Shed) is located at the west entrance.



Former Infant School, now Men's Shed

On the north side of Norwich Road is Queens Hall which is a community building opened in 1956.

10.21 Condition and Additions

The buildings are generally well-maintained in Church Walk. The Former Infant School in reasonable condition and has a beneficial use. On the north side of Norwich Road, the majority of the residential houses are generally well-maintained - No 55, while it obviously became derelict, is in the process of being restored; No 79 Key House could do with some improvements. The recreational and commercial buildings are generally well-maintained. There have been a wide range of extensions and additions to properties in this area included some conversions.

10.22 Orientation and Street Pattern

On Church Walk, St Mary's Church, the terraced cottages and No 79 are all street front-facing, the Gatehouse is set at an angle to the road and in line with the former railway line. The house on the south side of the entrance to St Mary's Close is end on to Church Road. The former Infant School faces the road, whilst there is a group of retirement bungalows which are orientated end on behind a hedge and are accessed

via Lime Tree Walk. The Houses on Kittel Close are rear-facing and located behind a hedge. Norwich Road is a long linear street orientated west-east. Church Walk is also linear with a sharp bend as one reaches the Church.

10.23 Undeveloped Areas and Green Spaces

There is a very attractive view to the north of Church walk out across farmed fields to Ovington and beyond to a hill line – idyllic English countryside scene.



View of Church Walk

There is a substantial piece of undeveloped land behind the houses on Norwich Road extending to Church Walk and wrapped around Linden Court. The piece of this land adjacent to the Queens Hall car park is visible and obviously overgrown with brambles.



Land adjacent to Queens Hall

There are a few means of access to this area of undeveloped land between the houses on Norwich Road and on one part of it (between No 55 and 57) there is an old industrial unit in use. There is also a small piece of land, bare earth, used by a few cars, to the east of Queens Hall.

10.24 Materials

The modern buildings are of red brick with pantile roofs, the older terraced cottages are of red brick with the top half rendered and pantile roofs while the Gatehouse is grey brick with slate roof and the former Station House dressed red brick with pantile roof.

The more modern additions e.g. the residential care home is of modern brick and pantile construction. On the north side of Norwich Road, the majority of the properties are of red brick and pantile (red and brown) construction. There are also some with rendering or painted brick and one set of semis with grey brick and slate roof. The windows and brickwork show a variety of style, as do the open porches.

10.25 Trees and Hedges

There are a number of trees and hedges in this location with the churchyard and Church Walk being the most notable examples. This is an attractive lime tree lined avenue with beautiful views across to open countryside (from the section nearest St Mary's church) crossed by the line of the former railway and edged either end of the walk by Grade II listed cast iron white gates from 1902.

On the north side of Norwich Road, most of the Victorian and Edwardian houses have low walls with wrought iron work on top edging the front gardens. These houses are all set back from the road and there are boundary hedges.

The churchyard has churchyard dependent species of wild flowers and is being monitored by a local team of volunteers under the guidance of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. It is very likely to become part of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust Conservation Scheme soon.

10.26 Comments and Conclusions

St Mary's Church built between 1100 and 1135, is the oldest building in the town. It is the only church in Norfolk which is wider than it is long. It has a Norman round tower with a hexagonal top. The Gatehouse (No 15) circa late 1800s, Hingham Cottage 1912, the level crossing gate posts and the Old Station House (No 79) are all associated with the former railway, opened in 1869.



St Mary's Church

Church Walk was gifted to the town to commemorate the coronation of Edward VII on 9 August 1902. The lime trees are the original trees planted at the time. The gates either end of the walk, were gifted by Lord Walsingham and have since been refurbished by the inmates of Wayland Prison.

The Men's Shed building at the west end of the walk was originally built from funds raised by public subscription in 1876 and housed the first Infant School.

On Church Road) The Gatehouse (No 15) circa late 1800s, Hingham Cottage 1912, the level crossing gate posts and the Old Station House (No 2) all associated with the former railway, opened in 1869. On Norwich Road, Key House (No 79), previously the Railway Hotel, also has railway connections.

The Survey Team felt that it is important that the posts to the old railway crossing on Church Road remain and that it was pleasing that the newer developments have been designed in such a way that a clear path/track, across which the railway once ran, remains clearly visible. Also, that the Gatehouse, Church Road, has the same brick and slate roof construction as other early C19 houses in the town, for example, Loch House, Dereham Road, 41 & 43 Norwich Road and 31 Dereham Road. The Gatehouse is set at a nice angle to the road and in line with the former railway line.

It is extremely valuable to the local amenity that the beautiful view across to open countryside from the north side of Church Walk remains.

The Queens Hall is a great asset to the recreational side of Watton and there is a small piece of land to the east of the hall which would make a very useful extension to it to provide refreshments for those needing disabled access.

The low walls with wrought iron work on top edging the front gardens of the majority of the Victorian and Edwardian houses on Norwich Road is a pleasant feature.

11.0 Summary of Appraisal Findings and Recommendations for Neighbourhood Plan policy.

- 11.1 The findings from the survey can be used to underpin and to inform planning policies contained in the Watton Neighbourhood Plan as it develops.
- 11.2 The key areas that it will inform are:

Design Policies – evidence from the survey work can identify elements of the local vernacular including commonly used materials, roofscapes, fenestration patterns, locally distinctive heritage themes, street patterns and building scale

Non-designated heritage assets – the survey work may identify individual or groups of buildings that contribute to the character of the area through their architectural quality or their local cultural associations. Many buildings of this type may already have some planning policy protection against inappropriate development by being Nationally Listed in their own right or by being included within a Conservation Area however there may be buildings identified in the survey as being special in a local context that would benefit from being identified in neighbourhood plan policies as non-designated heritage assets and being put forward to the Local Planning Authority as candidates for a Local List should one be produced or reviewed in the future.

Local Green Spaces – Similar to the approach taken with built heritage above, the survey may identify green spaces that through their undeveloped and open nature, contribute to the character of the area. Larger green area and formally laid out play spaces tend to be protected in Local Plans. However smaller spaces with a more informal nature and a local amenity value may not be protected from development that could erode their character and that of the wider area and therefore they may also benefit from being identified as Local Green Spaces in neighbourhood plan policies

Areas for redevelopment or enhancement - The survey may also identify areas that are of local concern in respect of their current visual or amenity value. This can include derelict sites in built up areas or untidy sites at the edges of a settlement. Evidence from the survey can be used to inform site specific policies in the Neighbourhood Plan aimed at encouraging the development or enhancement of an area and can identify suitable uses or enhancements.

The purpose of this document is to inform the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and the policies within it. Therefore, the following key recommendations are made for consideration within future Neighbourhood Plan Policy

- 1. Design Policy:** to include reference to locally prevalent materials of red brick, red and black pantiles with flint details. Reference could also be made longer term aspiration for the George Trollope Estate) to become a Conservation Area (post 2050)

- 2. Non-designated heritage assets:** Inclusion of Neighbourhood Plan policy on non- designated heritage assets to include the following (subject to further individual investigation and consideration):
 - Disraeli House
 - Burleigh House
 - 108 Dereham Road (from 1470)
 - 4 Merton Road (Suffolk Pink House)
 - 85 and 87 Dereham Road (Railway Heritage)
 - 15 Church Road (Railway Heritage)
 - Former RAF Officers Mess (Ventura House)

Subject to the further investigation highlighted above these could be put forward to Breckland Council as Candidates for inclusion on any Local List to be produced by the District Council in the future.

- 3. Local Green Spaces:** Inclusion of a Neighbourhood Plan policy on local green spaces to include the following (subject to further assessment against the criteria outlined in paragraph 3.9 of this document and paragraph 77 of the NPPF):
 - Green space at South Road,
 - Memorial Green, Memorial Way
 - Church Walk
 - Green Space surrounding Ventura House

- 4. Areas for Redevelopment and/or enhancement:** Inclusion of site specific policies in the Neighbourhood Plan that identify specific areas in need of re-development and/or enhancement and encourage and support appropriate proposals that bring visual improvements and enhance the character of the area. Consideration should be given to identifying acceptable uses where possible. The following areas have been identified in the survey and will require further investigation:

- Land at the end of Loch Neaton (visual enhancement)
- Land between Wayland Hall and No 8 Norwich Road (visual enhancement)
- Row of shops between No 6 High Street and The Gables (visual enhancement and redevelopment opportunity)
- Small undeveloped areas to the rear of the High Street (visual enhancement and redevelopment opportunities)

5. Strong Cultural Themes: Investigate the potential for the RAF /Military Associations of the town and its former Railway History to be reflected in appropriate Neighbourhood Plan policies. Try to prevent further loss of existing RAF buildings, promote their re-use rather than redevelopment.

11.3 It has become clear from the survey work that as well as being extremely knowledgeable about their areas, the Survey Teams also had a great attachment and fondness for the town.

11.4 They were keen to retain a piece of Watton history and an insight into how Watton might have looked in years and centuries past. This overwhelming affection for the town can be summed up in the concluding remarks of one of the survey teams:

“In conclusion we (the Survey team) felt that there are several properties that manage to retain a piece of Watton history and an insight into how Watton might have looked in years and centuries past. It is important to ensure that not only the properties within the conservation area of the town are preserved but also the areas outside of the current Town Centre Conservation Boundary including Loch Neaton, Loch House, the Queens Hall, the old Railway line and associated properties along the disused line, and not forgetting the beautiful view along Church Walk to St Mary's Church looking north towards Ovington which is very precious to many local people using this walkway on a very frequent basis.” There are also areas and buildings further along the Norwich Road on the site of the former RAF Watton which have been lost to new housing estates, losing a big part of the history of Watton.”

Appendix A – Survey Teams

West Watton	Keith Gilbert,
Watton Central Core	Bonnie Robertson Hilary Athey
East Watton and the former RAF Site	Jane Fountain Pat Warwick
East Watton and North of Norwich Road	Karen Tigue Kay Wilcox Mervyn Wilcox

Appendix B – Photographic Credits

This Character Appraisal has benefitted hugely from the photographs, illustrations and drawings provided by others.

A big thank you to the Survey Teams who provided all of their own photographs to illustrate their survey findings.

In addition, we are very grateful to Julian Horn for sharing his historical knowledge and information about the town with us.

Other Photographs were kindly provided by Watton Town Council and the Brecks Partnership.

Appendix C List of Heritage Assets

Listed Buildings

Description	Location	Grade
Church of St Mary	Church Lane	II*
No 3a	Dereham Road	II
Khyber House	No3 Dereham Road	II
No6	Dereham Road	II
The Manor House (incl Wall to the North)	No8 Dereham Road	II
Loch House	83, Dereham Road	II
Harvey House	Harvey Street	II
No 4 and 6	Harvey Street	II
Clock Tower	High Street	II
Willow House	High Street	II
Bull Hotel	High Street	II
No 11 and 13	High Street	II
Durrant	17 High Street	II
No19	High Street	II
Entrance Arch leading to	21 High Street	II
Crown Hotel	25 High Street	II
Crown Hotel Stables	High Street	II
No 33	High Street	II
No 36	High Street	II
No 44 and 46	High Street	II
No 56 and 58	High Street	II
No 60 and 60A	High Street	II
Nos 77-83	High Street	II
No 74, 76 and 76A	High Street	II
Vicarage	Norwich Road	II
Wayland Hall	Middle Street	II
Gates and Piers	East end of Church Walk	II
Gates and Piers	West end of Church Walk	II
Rokeles Hall	Watton Green	II



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