



EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Local Development Framework

Little Downham Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document

MAY 2013



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The village of Little Downham stands on the Ely ridge that runs from Sutton to Downham Market. The Conservation Area here was originally designated in September 1975 and is focused around the settlement centre and main thoroughfare.
- 1.2 This document aims to fulfill East Cambridgeshire District Council's duty to "draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement" of these areas as required by the provisions of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990.
- 1.3 The document includes; a review of the boundaries of the Conservation Area, a character appraisal, design guidance for new development and policies for the management and monitoring of the area in order to preserve its character.

2 Public Consultation

- 2.1 The public consultation will be carried out in compliance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (17/10/06).

3 What are Conservation Areas?

- 3.1 Conservation Areas are defined as "*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*".
- 3.2 When a Conservation Area has been designated, it increases the Council's controls, with planning applications judged by their impact on the character and appearance of the area. Greater controls over the demolition of buildings and structures are imposed whilst the rights that owners have to do works to their properties without the need to obtain planning permission (known as permitted development rights) are reduced or can be taken away. Stricter controls are also exercised over the design of new buildings, and owners must give the Council six weeks notice of their intention to carry out works to trees. Planning applications affecting a Conservation Area must be advertised on site and in the local press to give people the opportunity to comment.

4 What is a Conservation Area Appraisal?

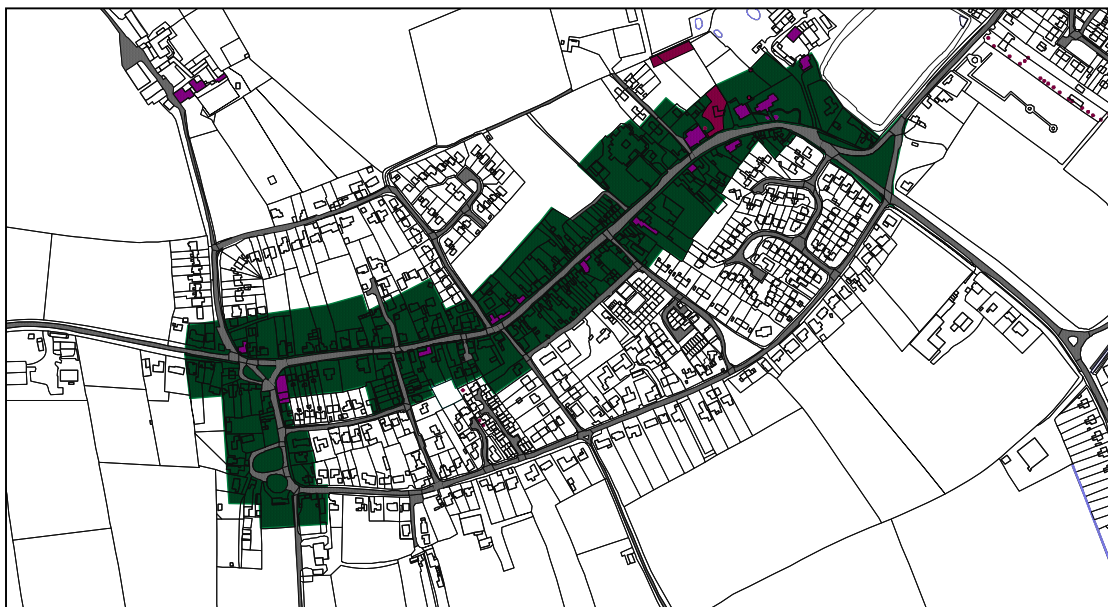
- 4.1 The Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest, and review their existing designations and boundaries. This is to ensure the area is still considered to be of value and to determine whether any areas have been overlooked or changes have occurred that may require the boundaries to be redrawn.
- 4.2 The appraisal document sets out the historical and economic context for the locality and identifies what it is that makes the Conservation Area significant. It serves to provide clear guidance on what should be conserved in the area with specific policies for Development Control to assist in determining planning applications in the area.

5 Overview of the area

- 5.1 Little Downham is one of several villages situated to the north of Ely. This village is one of the oldest areas of settlement in the District and archaeological evidence of prehistoric settlement in this location has been discovered in the village centre.
- 5.2 The settlement pattern is very linear, with the main public highway running through the centre. The village is situated close to the A141 Ely to Chatteris road and the Ely to Peterborough railway line can be found approximately 1 mile northeast of the village.
- 5.3 The land to the south of the village was once cultivated as orchards and historically the village was once an extension of the mid-Cambridgeshire fruit growing area.
- 5.4 Historically the village was known as Downham-in-the-Isle because it previously stood on an island within the Fen area. The draining of the fens in the 1800s had a great influence on the development of the village. The surrounding land was regarded as being too valuable to be retained as woodland and was therefore extensively cultivated.
- 5.5 The Parish of Little Downham is the largest farming parish in East Cambridgeshire with over 10,000 acres of arable farming land. It includes the villages of Little Downham and Pymoor as well as the smaller settlements of Oxlode, Hundred Foot Bank and The Drovers.

6 Boundaries and Extent of Conservation Area

- 6.1 The current boundary of the Conservation Area stretches the length of the historic town and is focussed mainly along Main Street. The building plots along the north and south sides of Main Street have changed very little over the years and there has been minimal infill development.



- 6.2 The Conservation Area boundary has two short arms at either end taking in the historic area of Townsend to the west and to the east it follows the turn in Main Street to include The Lawns and the area of public open space at the junction of Lawn Lane.
- 6.3 Development in the Conservation Area has been limited however the areas to the north and south of Main Street have been intensively developed over the years, particularly to the south in the areas historically covered by orchards.

7 History

7.1 Prehistory

The areas around Little Downham have been settled for an extended period of time, with the earliest evidence suggesting settlement as far back as 8,000 BC.

The raised landmass, above the surrounding fenland meant it was an obvious choice for settlement, above the wetland areas.

7.2 Roman

There seems to be little evidence of Roman settlement in Little Downham. Some evidence of field systems and pottery have been discovered, however their location is now unknown. The nearest Roman settlements were located at Ely and Cambridge. There is some evidence of Roman activity in the nearby settlement of Littleport however, no permanent settlement evidence has been found.

7.3 Medieval

The Saxon period saw the beginning of permanent settlement in this area by the Saxons and Angles. Much of the surrounding fenland was regularly flooded during this period therefore making areas of settlement such as Little Downham and Ely somewhat isolated with travel supplied by boat.

After the Norman Conquest the Manor of Little Downham was acquired for the monastery of Ely and the land given to the Bishop of Ely. In 1109 the Bishop built a summer palace in Little Downham and this became one of the main Episcopal Palaces for the next 500 years. In the 13th century the lands were extended to include a newly created deer park of 200 acres.

The 13th century saw the prosperity of the village increase dramatically and by 1251 there was a newly built windmill and two fisheries located in the settlement. St Leonards Church was also built and the population increased steadily during this time.

7.4 Post Medieval

The Bishops Palace remained in use until the mid-17th century when it was disposed of and the lands/assets were divided between several

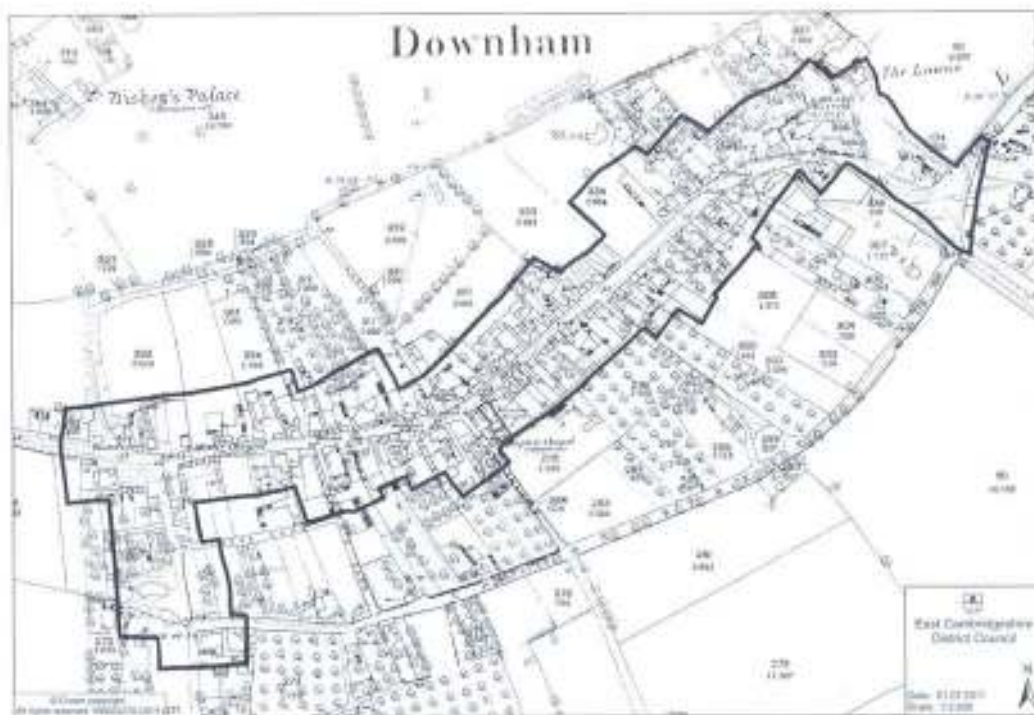
landowners. The Manor decreased in use and its importance faltered through time resulting in it falling into disrepair.

During the 18th century land values in the area decreased and the Enclosure Act 1801 resulted in much of the common lands being purchased by the Church Commissioners. It was during the 18th century that the first village school was opened and the school building now functions as the village hall.

7.5 Modern

Very little of the character and settlement pattern has changed in the village during the 19th and 20th centuries. The main street has retained many of its historic buildings with minimum modern infill to the street frontage.

During more recent times much of the land to the north and south of the village has been developed. This has resulted in the loss of many historic orchards and burgess plots to the south in particular.



8 Archaeology

- 8.1 Cambridge County Council holds a database where all the archaeological finds have been recorded. This is therefore a summary of the evidence amassed to date.
- 8.2 There is evidence of settlement in this area dating back to 8,000BC. Several Mesolithic and Neolithic flint scatters and spot finds have been discovered throughout the village. There is also evidence of activity from both the Iron and Bronze Ages. This would suggest Little Downham was a good location for fen edge living.

- 8.3 A few archaeological Roman finds appear in the Cambridgeshire Sites and Monuments Record. However, these are unusual and are not associated with evidence of settlement.
- 8.4 Saxon remains have also been found in the village, including several inhumations at various locations. The survival of such remains suggests that the area could still be a rich archaeological resource. A few medieval finds have also been recorded, such as a jug handle and several Ely 'boy bishop' tokens.

9 Location and Landscape Setting

- 9.1 The village stands on a ridge consisting of sand and gravel, sitting on a top layer of gault. There is a fringe of land surrounding the area where the clay is uncovered, before the peaty fenland begins.
- 9.2 The surrounding Fens developed in the wash area as a result of rising sea levels at the end of the last ice age. This resulted in the flooding of former forested areas and large amounts of marine clay being deposited. The combination of rotting vegetation from the former forests and slow moving water in the rivers and streams that drained the area over several thousand years resulted in the formation of peat.
- 9.3 The Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines, 1991 identify local character areas in the District, with the fenlands noted as a distinct category in its own right. These guidelines define the fens as a "landscape of contrasts and variety...The open landscape provides distant views". The settlement of Little Downham sits on one of several 'island' type landmasses within the open fen setting.

10 Street Analysis

Within the Conservation Area there are several streets of varied character and this section examines each in turn, identifying what defines its special character and significance.

10.1 Townsend

- 10.1.1 Townsend is a small street with a group of properties to the south of High Street, at the western edge of the village. This area includes a variety of different property styles and ages. A historic area in the village, many of the buildings are present on the 1883 OS map of the area. There have been several additions and alterations to the street over the years; the most obvious is the creation of a crescent to the front of Nos.7-11.
- 10.1.2 From studying the historic map evidence it would appear that the area of Townsend contains some of the oldest surviving buildings in the village. Nos. 1, 1a, 4, 5 and 6 are a small group set immediately to the south of High Street and these all appear on the historic maps.

10.1.3 No. 12 Townsend is another property that looks to appear in the historic records and it's footprint looks to have changed very little. Several of the other properties located in the crescent are modern infill development but these are relatively neutral in their impact on the Conservation Area.

10.1.4 To the eastern side, No.15 Townsend is a grade II listed building that does not look like much from the outside. Several unsympathetic alterations were carried out in the 1950s and are concealing a timber-framed building believed to date from the 18th century that sits on a medieval burgess plot. This property is in the process of undergoing extensive restoration.

10.1.5 Historically the area behind No.15 was open land with trees, several properties have been constructed in this location (Nos.17-19 Cross Lane, 13a Townsend and 98-100 Cannon Street)



10.2 Main Street

10.2.1 Main Street is forms the spine and is the primary thoroughfare through the settlement. Lined on both sides with properties there is mix of residential, commercial and community use found here.



10.2.2 Many of the properties that survive along Main Street appear in some form on the 1883 OS map. Several are actually much older than they first appear (18th century) with earlier structures hidden behind later alterations and frontages. Disappointingly, most of original burgess plots have been lost and the land developed.

10.2.3 The scale of development along Main Street is of 1.5-2 storey properties, built close together to form a strong building line along the street and most of the properties are situated on the back edge of the footpath.

- 10.2.4 The eastern edge of the Conservation Area is both of historic and architectural significance, with the Parish Church, Village Hall and several other notable buildings. This area is the main entrance way into the village and St Leonards Church forms a significant landmark within the village.
- 10.2.5 The western edge of the village is where the development 'opens up' with several properties set back off the highway and a small area of public open space at the junction with Townsend. Just past the boundary of the Conservation Area the village comes to an abrupt end.
- 10.2.6 At this end of the conservation area there are several properties that have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. For example, the Pound Public House (grade II listed) and the old Methodist Chapel, which is now a private residential unit.
- 10.2.7 No.97 Main Street is an early 18th century cottage, on the south side of the street. It is 1.5 storeys, constructed of gault brick and a thatched roof with a small garden space to the front. This property has a positive impact on the Conservation Area and the thatch is an interesting feature that creates a visual break in the streetscape.
- 10.2.8 To the other side of the village, The Lawns, Bury House and The Old Rectory (8 Main St) are all significant historic buildings that contribute to the character of this area. These properties are all listed and have been altered very little, adding to their architectural interest. A new rectory has been built between the Old Rectory and the Village Hall.
- 10.2.9 The road into the village creates a rural feel at this end of the village. The area to the northeast being relatively open with a large expanse of grassed open space on one side and a few small-scale bungalows, set back from the road on the opposite side.



10.2.10 The church, set in its churchyard, surrounded by mature trees and planting also helps to reinforce the rural character of this part of the village. A pleasant entranceway, this area contrasts with the denser, urban development along Main Street.

10.3 Other Minor Streets

10.3.1 Several other streets are partially contained within the Conservation Area. These streets run at right angles to Main Street and provide access to the land behind. Where these streets are included within the conservation area boundary, it is likely due to the fact the boundary was drawn along the back edge of the original burgess plots.

10.3.2 Several of these streets may be historic in nature and could be original passageways running away from Main Street. There are several, particularly on the south side, that look to be historic in terms of location and width however it is not easy to tell from map evidence to when any may date.

11 Spatial Analysis

11.1 Key Views

11.1.1 Key views within the Conservation Area are generally located along the Main Street. One of the key views into the conservation area is along Church Way towards St Leonard's Church.

11.1.2 Another key view is from the junction of Townsend and Main Street up towards the old Bishop's Palace. Although the palace buildings are not visible from this location, this was an important route within the village.



11.2 Open Spaces & Focal Points

11.2.1 There are few open spaces within the Conservation Area; the most obvious are located at either end.

11.2.2 To the east there is a small triangular area of grass on the right as you come into the village. This grassed area form the junction with Church Way and Lawn Lane. It is also the location of the village sign and several large, mature trees.



11.2.3 To the west of the Conservation Area there is a similar area of land, although much smaller in size at the junction of Main Street and Townsend. This again is in the middle of a 'Y' junction and currently features a bench, a litterbin and a planter. Immediately opposite is a second small area of grass, on which is an old water pump.

11.2.4 The main focal point in the village is St Leonard's Church and Churchyard. The church dates back to the 13th century and is Grade I listed, set within a large churchyard with many mature trees and landscaping this is an important feature in the conservation area.



11.3 Landscaping and Trees

11.3.1 Little Downham features the first designated Local Nature Reserve in East Cambridgeshire, adjacent to Bishop's Walk. To the north of this area is the Community Orchard. Although these areas are not located within the conservation area, they give an idea of the importance of landscaping and nature within the village.

11.3.2 There is very little landscaping along Main Street, with the majority of buildings being set on the back edge of the pavement. Private amenity space is located to the rear of the plots and is therefore not highly visible in the conservation area. Although mature trees to the rear of properties can be seen clearly from the main roads.

11.3.3 The approach into the village along Church Lane is unique in its character within the village. A country road, with buildings stepped far back and an open feel to the street. Trees line one side and this creates an avenue style entrance into the village.

11.3.4 Also around the school area remains several large, mature trees fronting Main Street, This not only provides screening for the school grounds but also creates a pleasant frontage to the street.

11.3.5 Typically in a village centre location the majority of landscaping is hard in nature, the use of tarmac and slabs appearing the most. The quality of these surfaces varies throughout the conservation area with some being of higher quality than others.

12 Building Materials and styles

12.1 The predominant building style is of 2 storey residential properties, constructed of mainly gault brick with a mixture of slate and tiles (both peg and pan). Several of the properties along Main Street have been rendered or painted, mostly in cream/off white colours.



12.2 Throughout the Conservation Area there is evidence of unsympathetic alterations, such as concrete roof tiles and plastic windows and doors. These do little to enhance the character or appearance of the area and

care should be taken to avoid widespread degradation of historic features.

- 12.3 There are several commercial units found within the Conservation Area, mostly along Main Street. These units play a vital role in providing facilities and services for the community however some are having a negative visual impact on the conservation area.



- 12.4 The cumulative impact of poor quality signage, illumination and frontages detract from the character of the area. The Council now has a Shop Front Design Guide SPD and will encourage improvement when the opportunity becomes available.
- 12.5 Where boundary treatments are visible there is a mixture of brick, timber and natural materials, however the vast majority of properties sit directly on the back edge of the footpath.

13 Buildings of Townscape Merit

13.1 Listed Buildings

13.1.1 There are currently several listed buildings within the current boundary of the Conservation Area:

- The Lawns – Grade II
- St Leonards Church – Grade I
- Old Rectory, 8 Main Street – Grade II
- Village Hall, Main Street – Grade II
- Alpha Cottage, 64 Main Street – Grade II
- 68 Main Street – Grade II
- The Plough, 106 Main Street – Grade II
- 15 Townsend – Grade II
- 97 Main Street – Grade II
- 41/43 Main Street – Grade II
- 27 Main Street – Grade II
- 17 Main Street – Grade II
- Bury House, 11 Main Street – Grade II



13.1.2 These listed buildings vary in status and appearance and have varying impacts on the character of the conservation area. Generally most of the buildings are in relatively good condition and some occupy visually prominent locations within the town. A few of the buildings are in need of repairs and restoration and this should be forthcoming in the foreseeable future.

13.1.3 All but one of the listed buildings are grade II listed with the St Leonard's Church being grade I. This church is one a few buildings in the District have such a high designation. The high number of listed buildings in such a small settlement is unusual and this reflects the historic significance of the town and its importance in the wider landscape.

13.2 Buildings of Local Interest

There are also several unlisted buildings within the Conservation Area that have a positive impact on its character and appearance. Although not afforded statutory designation these buildings are still worthy of note and should be preserved where possible.

- The Chapel, Main Street
- Crown House, 92 Main Street
- Baptist Sunday School Building, Main Street



14 Boundary Assessment

14.1 No significant changes are proposed to the boundary of the Conservation Area appraisal. It is felt that the boundary in its current form incorporates the most historically significant area of the village.

14.2 It is only intended to amend the current Conservation Area boundary to follow the correct land boundaries. It currently passes through the middle of properties and gardens, which can be confusing for owners. By amending the boundary to follow boundaries on the ground it will make things simpler for owners and assist in the determination of applications affecting the Conservation Area.

15 Enhancement Opportunities

The following list outlines what are considered to be the current pressures on settlements within the District. The list may not be exhaustive and some items may be more relevant than others in Little Downham. (They are not listed in any order of importance):

- Loss of traditional style timber framed windows and alterations to window openings;
- Loss of boundary walls and hedges to provide on site parking;
- Loss of traditional outbuildings;
- Conversion of buildings to new uses;
- Introduction of roof lights;
- Use of non traditional materials;
- New development which does not respect the scale form or character of the existing village;
- Introduction of front porches;
- Need to find new uses for existing buildings to facilitate their reuse;
- Installation of satellite dishes to front elevations;
- Blocking up of chimneys leading to loss of pots and possible removal of stacks;
- Changing the front doors with style inappropriate to the property;

- Street furniture and signage clutter

It may be appropriate to look at removing permitted development rights within the Conservation Area through the use of an Article 4 Direction. This would give more powers for the Council to control changes such as the loss of windows and doors.

16 Acknowledgements

The historical and archaeological background has been compiled using the following sources:

1. The Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record
Cambridgeshire County Council
Box ELH 1108
Shire Hall
Cambridge, CB3 0AP
Email: arch.her@cambridge.gov.uk
2. A History of the County of Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely Volume IV
3. The Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Cambridgeshire Volume 2 (North east Cambridgeshire) RCHME pages 16-47
4. The Buildings of England: Cambridgeshire
Nicholaus Pevsner. Yale University Press, 2nd edition 1970
5. Ordnance Survey Maps
6. The Fen Past Screening Bureau has an archive relating to fenland life
Box RES 1013
Shire Hall
Cambridge, CB3 0AP
Email: fenpast@cambridge.gov.uk

APPENDIX A

MAPS

APPENDIX B

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

Cambridgeshire Structure Plan (adopted October 2003)

- P1/2** Protection of sites of archaeological, historic or architectural value
P7/6 Local Authorities will protect and enhance the distinctiveness of the historic built environment.

East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy (adopted October 2009)

This section summarises the main Core Strategy policies that are relevant to the conservation areas.

Policy EN 2

Design

All development will be designed to a high quality, reinforcing local distinctiveness. Design which fails to have regard to local context and does not preserve or enhance the character, appearance and quality of an area will not be acceptable.

New development proposals, extensions and alterations to existing buildings and structures will be expected to:

- a. Have regard to the East Cambridgeshire Design Guide;
- b. Incorporate the sustainable construction principles contained in Policy EN3;
- c. Make efficient use of land while respecting the density, character, landscape and biodiversity of the surrounding area;
- d. Be developed in a comprehensive way, avoiding piecemeal development;
- e. Retain existing important landscaping and natural and historic features and include landscape enhancement schemes that are compatible with the Council's Landscape Guidelines for recreation and biodiversity;
- f. Ensure that the scale, massing and materials of buildings relate sympathetically to the surrounding area;
- g. Provide structure by making use of existing views, vistas and landmarks and creating new ones;
- h. Create safe environments addressing crime prevention and community safety;
- i. Make a clear distinction between public and private spaces, and enhance the public realm;
- j. Ensure that places and buildings are accessible to all, including the elderly and those with impaired mobility;
- k. Provide enclosure to street and spaces through the grouping, positioning and height of buildings and landscape features, and road layouts;
- l. Incorporate the highway and access principles contained in Policy S6;
- m. Ensure that car parking is discrete and accessible and provided in accordance with Policy S7;
- n. Provide adequate waste and recycling storage/collection areas;
- o. Where appropriate, contain a variety and mix of uses, buildings and landscaping;

- p. Ensure there is no significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers, and that occupiers of new dwellings are provided with acceptable residential amenity;
- q. Ensure that there is no detrimental effect on the appreciation of Ely as an historic cathedral city in the quality of the approaches and the quality of views of the cathedral distant and close to.

The Council may require the submission of development briefs for certain proposals, and will notify developers of this requirement at an early stage in the conception of proposals.

EN2 - Design

- Well-designed, safe and attractive new development that respects its surroundings can help to raise the quality of the built environment and have a significant impact on everyday life. Good design is a key element in sustainable development and it is a strongly held aspiration of the Council to raise the standard of design in all proposals to assist vitality, and create a 'sense of place' in communities and neighbourhoods.
- The Government requires Design and Access Statements to be submitted with most planning applications. These Statements are intended to demonstrate how a proposal is functional, attractive and accessible to all. Comprehensive guidance on the format and content of a Statement is provided on the Council's website. Further information on design can be found in 'Building for Life' published by CABI, which includes advice on character, public space, design and construction, and the surrounding environment and community. Also helpful in street design is the Government publication 'Manual for Streets' which gives advice on the creation of high quality residential streets. The Council encourages developers to incorporate these principals in their proposals. Developers are also encouraged to go beyond minimum access standards contained in Building Regulations to provide higher standards of accessibility for all within public spaces and individual buildings.
- Development must be of the appropriate scale, design and materials for its location and conform to the design principals set out in the policy below. All new buildings and spaces must enhance and respect their surroundings and contribute towards local identity, whilst securing and maintaining a high level of general amenity for residents and workers in the district. The particular importance of design in areas of historic conservation is detailed in Policy EN5.
- The importance of new developments complementing and relating to their surroundings, whilst being safe and accessible to all, is established in the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy. The objectives also seek to mitigate the impacts of climate change, and the environmental performance of new buildings is addressed in Policy EN3 'Sustainable East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy construction and

energy efficiency'. Good design can reduce energy consumption and improve sustainability and the Council will actively promote development incorporating new technology and contemporary design where it provides appropriate visual context or contrast in respect of its surroundings.

- Crime, and the fear of crime, is amongst the top concerns of local communities, and these concerns are reflected in the strategic objectives of this plan. Design can make a significant contribution towards reducing the scope for crime, and create more pleasant and reassuring environments in which to live and work. In addition to appropriate design of buildings, open spaces must be safe and believed to be safe so that their full enjoyment for play, walking, sport and general amenity can be fully utilised and appreciated. Increasing natural surveillance, layout of roads and paths, planting, positioning and use of open space, and secure standards of doors and windows are areas for particular consideration. In town centers covered by CCTV systems developers will be required to consider these facilities in their design and/or contribute to the siting/re-siting of cameras where appropriate. National guidance to assist in designing out crime is contained in 'Secured by Design', and developers are advised to contact Cambridgeshire Constabulary for further advice.
- Good design can help to ensure that the best use is made of land, as required by Government guidance in PPS3. The piecemeal incremental development of an area with no regard to an overall plan or concept development of a large site can result in an unsatisfactory form of development by preventing proper consideration of how various elements, such as landscaping, open space and footpaths, fit together, thus preventing a holistic approach to design. Piecemeal development schemes that would prevent adjacent land or other nearby sites from coming forward – for example, by impeding future access, will also be resisted. However, phased development will be supported where it is related to a comprehensive scheme/master plan which addresses overall infrastructure provision, access and internal circulation by pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles, landscaping, open space and play space provision, and affordable housing.
- Good connectivity and movement between spaces requires a high standard of design. The Council is committed to reducing dependence on the car, minimising the impact of car parking, and improving accessibility for pedestrians, people with impaired mobility, cyclists, horse riders and public transport. All development proposals will be required to incorporate safe, attractive and convenient road design, access and parking arrangements and pedestrian routes as detailed in Policies S7 and S8. The advice of the County Highways Authority will be sought in relation to these issues. Development schemes should aim to protect and enhance existing links and look for opportunities to improve and expand them.

- For large and more complex schemes the Council will require a more detailed development brief to be submitted in advance of an application, and shared with the local community. Such information will show how the design has evolved and how design-related considerations have been addressed. It will also provide an opportunity for engagement of the local community at an early stage, and enable the Council to check that key issues have been addressed, thus helping to speed up the planning application process. It is not appropriate to be precise about when a development brief may be required, as much depends on the nature of the site and the proposal. Developers will need to discuss the issue with the Council at an early stage in proceedings.
- It is proposed to produce an East Cambridgeshire Design Guide to be adopted as SPD. This will contain more detailed guidance on how design should compliment local architectural traditions, and how sustainable construction techniques can be incorporated within the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy context of the quality and character of the existing built heritage. Other detailed local context information can be found in Conservation Area Appraisals, the Ely Environmental Capacity Study, the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines and Parish Plans, and these should be taken into account. Reviews of these documents will occur during the lifetime of the LDF and the most up to date material should be referred to.
- Guidance on the appropriate design of shop fronts and advertisements will be set out in the Shop fronts and Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document. Further general design guidance can be found in Government guidance document 'By Design', the companion to PPS1.

Policy EN 5

Historic conservation

Development proposals, within, or affecting a Conservation Area should:

- Be of a particularly high standard of design and materials that will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area;
- Retain attractive traditional features such as original doors, windows and boundary walls;
- Only involve the demolition of buildings where:
 - They are of little or no importance to the architectural, historic or visual character or appearance of the area; or
 - They are structurally unsound (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect) and beyond reasonable repair, and measures to sustain an existing use or find an alternative use have been explored and failed; and in all cases
 - Detailed proposals for reconstruction or redevelopment have received planning permission.

Proposals to extend alter or change the use of a Listed Building, or which affect the setting of a Listed Building will only be permitted where they would:

- Preserve the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses; and
- Support the long-term preservation of the building.

Proposals to demolish all or part of a Listed Building will only be permitted in very exceptional cases where:

- The building is structurally unsound (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect) and beyond all reasonable repair; and
- All possible measures to sustain an existing use or find an alternative use have been explored and failed, and preservation in charitable or community ownership is not possible or sustainable; or
- Where redevelopment would bring wider public benefits; and
- Preservation in a charitable or community ownership is not possible or suitable; and
- Detailed proposals for reconstruction or redevelopment have received planning permission.

The Council will take action to enforce repair of Listed Buildings where appropriate.

EN5 - Historic conservation

- East Cambridgeshire contains a great wealth and variety of buildings and areas that are of special importance to the character and appearance of towns and villages, the most famous being Ely Cathedral. Just as the landscape changes from open fen in the north to more undulating areas of chalk and clay hills in the south, the character of buildings and settlements also change, reflecting the considerable diversity of the area. Certain proposals affecting Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings are subject to specific consent procedures, and PPG15 sets out the detailed considerations that must be followed in these applications. The Core Strategy aims to ensure that the built heritage is conserved and enhanced by sympathetic preservation and high quality design.

Conservation Areas

- The Council has designated 29 Conservation Areas in the district. These are listed in Appendix 5 and the boundaries are shown on the accompanying Proposals Map. These areas have been designated due to their particular architectural or historic interest, taking account of the overall quality of the area, mix and style of buildings, quality of open spaces, and other features which contribute to the overall character. The Council is currently undertaking a programme of Conservation Area reviews, looking at their boundaries, character and general condition through the production of Conservation Area Appraisals. In addition to the review of existing Conservation Areas the programme also includes the designation of new Conservation Areas. The Conservation Area Appraisals for both the revised and new Conservation Areas will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents to the LDF.

- Designation emphasises the special care that must be taken over the design, layout and materials of development proposals to ensure the character and appearance of these areas is retained and enhanced. Traditional features and locally characteristic designs should be recognised and reflected in development proposals. However, new development does not always have to mimic the past, and high quality designed schemes which provide a successful visual contrast with their surroundings may also preserve and enhance character.
- Demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas will be resisted, except in very exceptional cases where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the building is structurally unsound or of little or no importance to the character and appearance of the area. In all circumstances, demolition will only be allowed if planning permission has already been obtained for the redevelopment of the site, to ensure the special character of the area is preserved or enhanced.
- Where necessary, the Council will use Urgent Works and Repairs Notices, Section 215 notices and Article 4 Directions to maintain and enhance the quality of Conservation Areas.

Listed Buildings

- Buildings are listed by English Heritage in national recognition of their special architectural or historic interest, and any works which affect the character of a Listed Building require Listed Building Consent. Within the district there are almost 930 Listed Buildings, about 100 of which are Grade I or Grade II*. The high ratio of Grade I and II* is due in part to Anglesey Abbey and the Ely Cathedral complex. The main aim of listing is to prevent alterations which are detrimental to the special character of the building or structure, including the interior. The Council is committed to identifying Listed Buildings at risk and encouraging their repair and reuse, and will take formal action to enforce repair, where appropriate. The East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy setting of a Listed Building is also important, and proposals which detract from the setting will be resisted. Similarly, where a Listed Building has landscape value, contributing to the wider setting of a settlement or the countryside, it will be necessary to demonstrate that development proposals do not adversely affect character or views.
- There is a strong presumption in favour of the preservation of Listed Buildings and demolition will be approved only in the most exceptional circumstances as set out in Policy EN5, after applicants have demonstrated that every effort has been made to keep the building. If demolition is permitted, the Council is likely to require an appropriate archive of the features and fabric that would be lost. Often the best way of preserving a Listed Building will be by securing an active, economically viable use, and sympathetic consideration will be given to proposals which help to secure the long term future of the building. Such proposals will only be acceptable where there is no detriment to the structure, character, appearance or setting of the building.

Locally Listed Buildings

- Government policy in PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' 2004 gives provision for local authorities to draw up lists of locally important buildings which make a valuable contribution to the local scene or local history, but which do not merit national listing. These will be given additional protection and their status will be a material consideration, but they will not enjoy the full protection of statutory listing. A local list will be developed by the Council in conjunction with local amenity groups.

Archaeological Sites and Monuments

- East Cambridgeshire has a rich and varied archaeological heritage. In the north of the district, settlement from the early pre-historic period focused on the dry land of the Isle of Ely and surrounding fen margins, although well preserved artefacts and organic remains may occur in the areas of fen. Extensive evidence of Roman activity survives throughout the district, and in addition to the historic City of Ely, numerous medieval villages and towns survive to the present day. The Council wishes to make every effort to safeguard this archaeological heritage, which is vulnerable to modern development and land use. Known sites of national importance are designated as 'Scheduled Ancient Monuments', and these are shown on the Proposals Map and listed in Appendix 5. Other sites of regional or local significance are listed in the County Historic Environment Record, maintained by Cambridgeshire County Council. As most archaeological remains are yet to be discovered it is crucial that sites of potential interest are appropriately assessed. Development adversely affecting a site of known or identified national importance will be resisted and the impact of development on all types of remains should be minimised. There will usually be a presumption in favour of in-situ preservation of remains, unless it can be shown that the recording of remains, assessment, analysis, report, publication and deposition of archive is more appropriate. Such recording should take place before development starts. The Council will be guided in these issues by Government advice contained in PPG16 'Archaeology and Planning' (1990), and advice from the Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Department.

Historic Parks and Gardens

- The District contains a number of areas of historic parkland and gardens that form an important part of the county's heritage and environment. The most significant sites are identified within English Heritage's 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest' and as advised by the County Council's Archaeology Team (and reflected in the list in the East Cambridgeshire District Local Plan). These sites are shown on the Proposals Map and are listed in Appendix 5. The registers have no statutory status but PPG15 states that the planning system should be used to protect the character, appearance, amenity value and setting of these sites.

APPENDIX C

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL GUIDANCE

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to prospective developers by clearly setting out the key issues, which will influence the Local Planning Authority's decision on any planning or other application, submitted in the area.
- 1.2 This guidance should be considered in the context of the relevant national legislation and policy documents, in particular:
 - Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment
 - Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990.
- 1.3 This guidance and the associated Conservation Area appraisal for the area should be read in conjunction with the supporting policies in the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy (adopted Oct 2009).
- 1.4 Conservation Area designations are not intended to preclude development in an area. Little Downham has developed over time and this guidance therefore attempts to ensure that the area continues to thrive, but without prejudicing the key features which define its character or appearance.
- 1.5 The underlying principle of this guidance is to ensure Little Downham Conservation Area continues to develop in a considered way, which will retain its essential character. Sustainability should, therefore, be at the heart of any development proposals, which should be durable, adaptable, and of high quality.

2 Submission of Applications

2.1 Outline planning applications

Outline applications for development within the Conservation Area will not be accepted unless they contain sufficient supporting information by which the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area can be judged.

2.2 Full planning applications for new buildings

These will need to include sufficient detail by which the full impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the area can be judged. This will need to include consideration of the issues raised in the Conservation Area Appraisal and a design and access statement, which clearly sets out how the proposal is felt to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area.

2.3.1 Listed Building Consent

This is required for any works, which affect the architectural or historic interest of the interior or exterior of any Listed Building, and any building constructed before 1 July 1948, which stands within its curtilage. Applications must include a statement, which demonstrates an understanding of the aspects of the building to be affected, describes why the work is needed, explains why any alternative options

were discounted and considers how the damage to any historic fabric will be minimized.

2.4 Conservation Area Consent

This is required for the demolition of any unlisted building within the Conservation Area with a cubic content of 115 meters or more. In order to justify the works, a statement will need to be provided which considers all the issues outlined below. Where a building is to be replaced by a new structure, consideration of how the building will contribute to the character and appearance of the area will need to be included in a Design and Access Statement to accompany any planning application.

3 Demolition of buildings

3.1 There will be a general presumption against demolition of Listed Buildings (including their outbuildings), Buildings of Local Interest and other significant buildings, which are identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

3.2.1 The demolition of such buildings will only be approved where it can be demonstrated that:

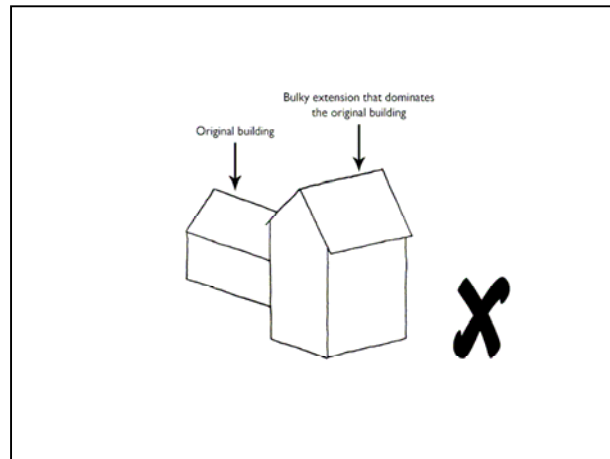
- The building is structurally unsound and repairs would involve the significant loss or alteration of the original structure and any elements of particular historic interest; or
- It cannot continue in its current use, and it is not capable of being converted to a suitable new use in its current form; and
- The building has been offered for sale on the open market at the market price for at least six months and that no reasonable offer has been received; and
- Any proposed replacement building will make an equal or greater contribution to the character and appearance of the area; and
- Demolition would not result in a long-term cleared site to the detriment of adjacent Listed Buildings or the Conservation Area.

3.3 The demolition of other buildings in the area will be approved provided that: -

- The building(s) is / are identified as making either a negative or insignificant contribution to the character or appearance of the area.
- Any replacement building or feature will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Any application for a replacement building must be accompanied by a design statement, which describes how the new building respects the 'Key Characteristics' of the area as defined in the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- To avoid unsightly gaps in the Conservation Area, a condition will be imposed on any grant of Conservation Area Consent, which prevents the demolition from taking place until a contract has been let for the redevelopment of the site.

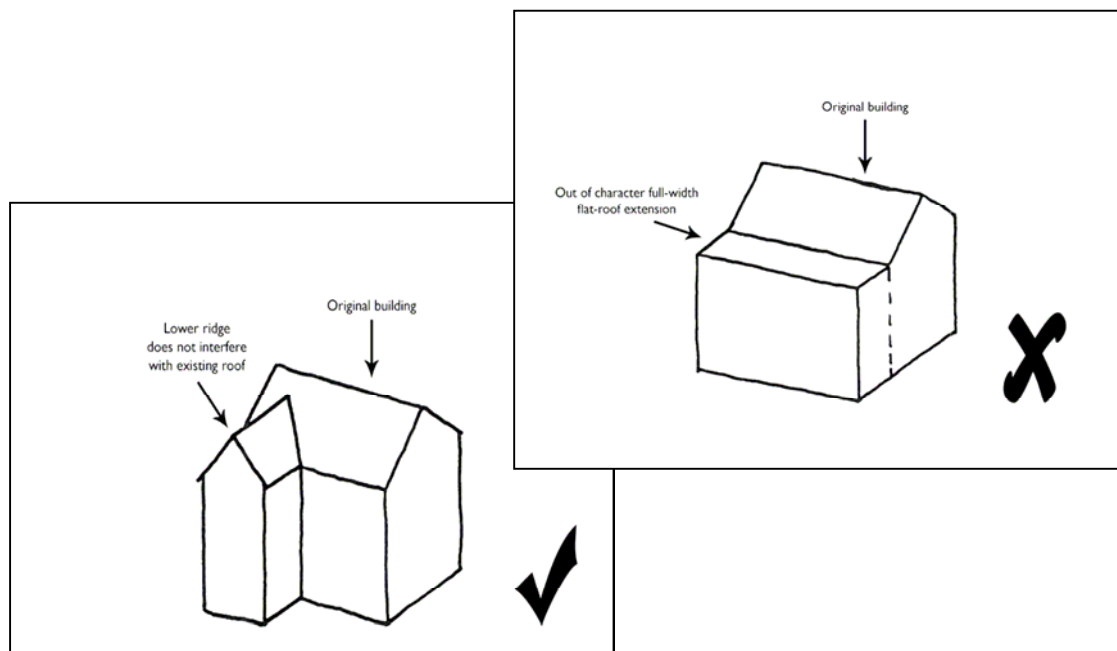
4 Extending Existing Buildings

- 4.1 Extensions should always relate well to the proportions, form, massing and character of the existing buildings.
- 4.2 In order to maintain the character of the original building, extensions should be subordinate and preferably of a high quality design, with good detailing and using materials that harmonise with the existing buildings.



- 4.2 Generally, however, taking inspiration from the architectural detailing of the existing house often achieves the most successful design. The scale of the extension should respect the existing building and should not be bulky, wrongly orientated or poorly detailed.

5 Rear Extensions

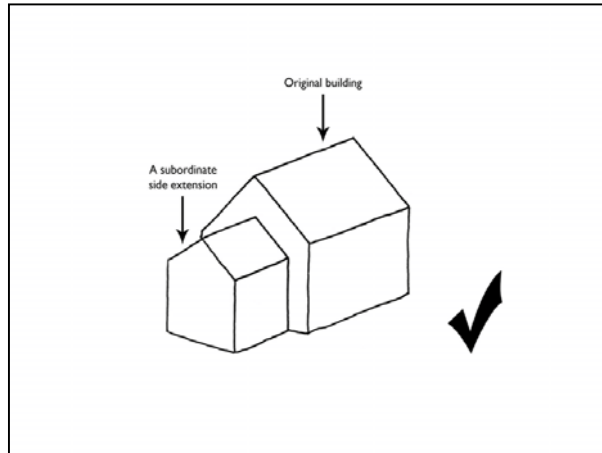


- 5.1 These are the most common type of extension as they usually offer the greatest degree of flexibility and privacy. Care is needed, however, to ensure that the effect upon neighbouring properties is kept to a

minimum, i.e. an extension should not dominate the neighbour's house or garden or affect their light quality. In order to achieve this, two storey extensions on common boundaries are unlikely to be approved.

- 5.2.1 The eaves level of a rear extension should be kept as low as possible and particular care should be taken to ensure the ridgeline of the new roof does not interfere with the existing roof; it should not be visible from the front of the building.

6 Side extensions



- 6.1 These are appropriate where there is sufficient space between the existing property and its neighbour to retain a reasonable separation between the buildings so that 'terracing' does not occur. This is important in parts of Little Downham, where properties are detached dwellings in individual plots.
- 6.2 In some cases, particularly when the house is of a symmetrical composition or it is one half of a semi-detached pair, side extensions should be avoided, unless the design of the extension will retain the symmetry. With semi-detached properties, neighbours should consider undertaking extensions together.
- 6.3 When side extensions are appropriate, they need to relate well to the front of the existing house, as they will often have a big impact on the appearance of the house and the street. The fenestration pattern is especially important with side extensions because the windows are often the dominant feature of buildings and it is therefore important that these are repeated in extensions.
- 6.4 The walls of the extension should be recessed slightly from those of the existing building so that the original form of the dwelling is still visible. This also helps to soften the junction between old and new, which, particularly if there is a change in materials, can look awkward if directly adjacent.

- 6.5 In the case of very modest buildings, a traditional lean-to extension may be more appropriate than trying to mimic the form of the main house.

7 Front extensions

- 7.1 These should generally be avoided as they will often be highly visible in the public realm and disrupt the most important elevation of a building. Porches may be acceptable in some cases, but are subject to the same guidelines as other extensions.

8 Roof extensions

- 8.1 These are a popular way of extending houses, but can pose considerable challenges in order to avoid damaging alterations to the character of the property. In areas such as Little Downham, they can be highly visible because of the arrangement of the houses and so their impact on the street must be carefully considered.
- 8.2 Roof extensions should relate well to the local roof form and should reflect or complement the character of the property and the area. Ridgelines and chimneystacks, in particular, are often a key part of a building's character and they should not be altered unless it can be demonstrated that this would create a positive feature. The potential for overlooking should also be addressed in the design.
- 8.3 The size and number of dormer windows should be kept to a minimum and they should generally not be placed on the front elevation (or the elevation most visible from the public realm) unless it is appropriate to the design. The style of windows should be influenced by the design, proportion and arrangement of existing windows in the building. Roof lights should be of the traditional 'Conservation' type, which lies flush with the roof slope and should also be kept off the front roof slope, particularly on formal buildings.

9 Materials (and colours)

- 9.1 Little Downham has a varied palette of materials illustrated in the conservation area appraisal. A mixture of Gault brick, red brick, slate, thatch and tiles can be found scattered throughout the village. This palette should be used as a guide for extensions and alterations.
- 9.2 The use of modern materials such as steel, concrete and structural glazing would need to be part of a very high quality design approach in order to provide a successful contrast with the traditional materials in the town.

10 Converting Existing Buildings

- 10.1 The conversion of redundant buildings of townscape value to residential use will be encouraged provided that: -
- It can be demonstrated that the current use of the building is no longer viable.

- The appearance of the building will be maintained without the need for disfiguring extensions or alterations.
- The amenity of adjoining residents will not be significantly affected.
- Adequate car and cycle parking and refuse storage can be provided and suitably screened from public view.
- Existing vehicle accesses are adequate, or appropriately sized accesses can be provided without affecting the overall townscape quality of the area, the setting of the building or involving the loss of any important tree or boundary.
- Any important 'lost', altered or dilapidated architectural details will be restored.

11 Single housing developments

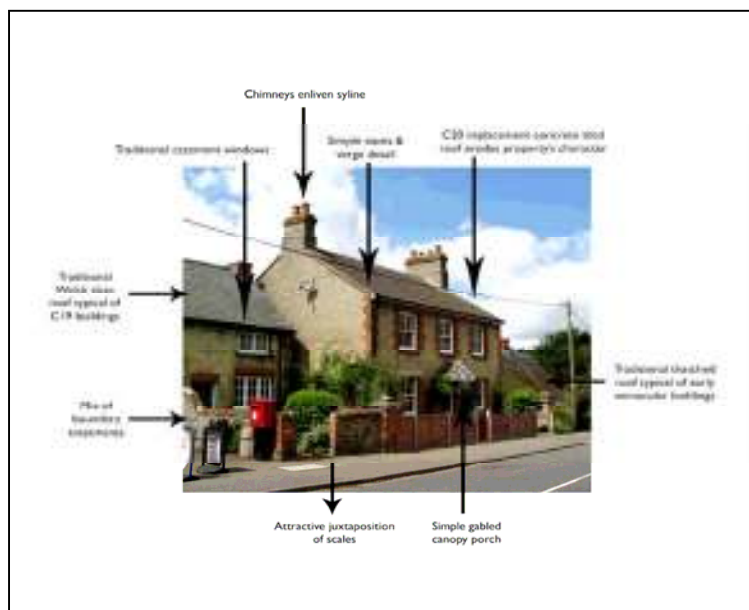
Context

- 11.2 The Little Downham Conservation Area Appraisal describes the town's historic and architectural significance; i.e. how the existing buildings relate to the street, the size and shape of plots, boundary treatments, building heights and line, materials, detailing, etc.

Building line / position on the plot

- 11.3 Little Downham Conservation Area has a semi-urban feel with many of the properties built along the back edge of the pavement. The building lines are linear and confirm to a traditional 'street pattern'.

Detailing



- 11.4 Architectural details should follow on from the design principles, which influenced the basic form of the building and should therefore reflect the style of the property. This should ensure that the building's elevation treatment fits in with the neighbouring properties.

Windows

- 11.5 These should generally have a vertical emphasis, be set within reveals and should not be of UPVC. Timber windows with a vertical emphasis, usually achieved by the subdivision of the window into symmetrical panes, have a much softer visual appearance and allow finer detailing. If maintained properly, they are also more durable than aluminium or UPVC windows.
- 11.6 The type of window should relate to the status of the building. There is a mixture of casement and sliding sash windows throughout the village and many properties have had UPVC fitted at some point in the past.

Dormers and roof lights

- 11.7 The number of roof lights should be kept to a minimum and should generally only be used on rear roof slopes. The proportion and arrangement of existing windows should also be taken into account. Roof lights should be of conservation standard, these should have a vertical emphasis and lie flush with the roof slope.

Doors

- 11.8 Doors should generally be of solid appearance and should not have fanlights set within the door itself. Traditional wooden doors are most appropriate and these should match the style and status of the property. Fanlights are generally only appropriate for higher status buildings.

Window / door heads and cills

- 11.9 These are a traditional feature in many buildings and are common framing for windows and doors. These not only provide visual support but also provide detailing and interest on building facades.
- 11.10 Soldier courses are a more modern design feature and may not always be appropriate, gauged brick arches or segmental heads are a more appropriate alternative.
- 11.10 Cills and detailing are found in a mix of materials including brick and stone. Any detailing should be considered on its own merit and dependant on its location.

Porches

- 11.11 Porches are not a traditional feature throughout East Cambridgeshire, and are more common in certain locations. The introduction of porches may not be appropriate within the conservation area.

Eaves, verges and chimneys

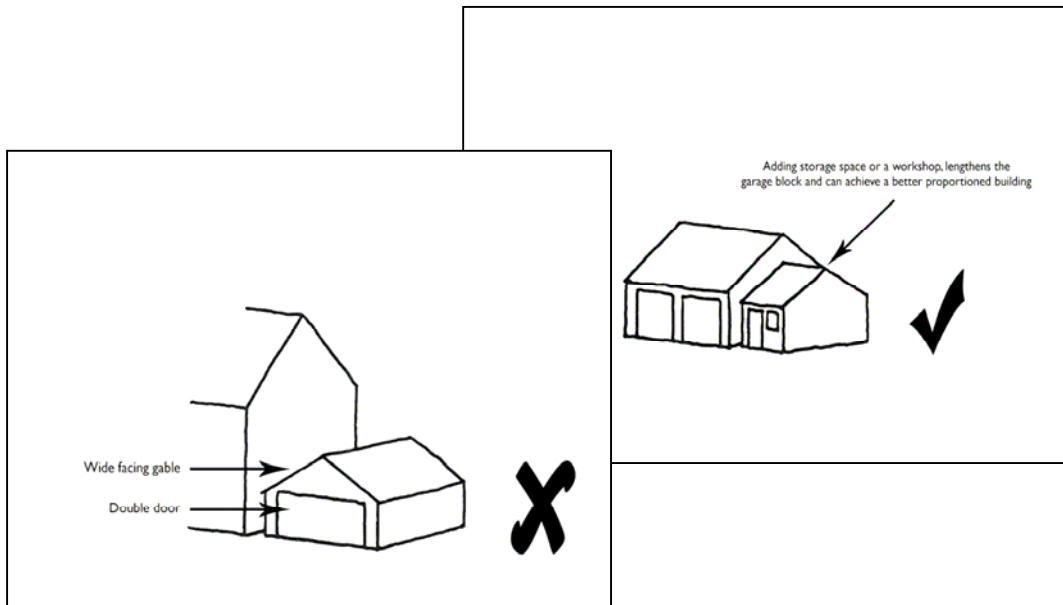
- 11.12 Traditional eaves and verges are simply detailed without soffits, fascias or bargeboards. Modern boxed eaves and deep fascias or bargeboards should be avoided on new buildings due to their heavy appearance.

- 11.13 Chimneys are a traditional feature of dwellings and are a common feature along the skyline. Chimneys can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of an area by creating a varied and interesting skyline and these should be retained wherever possible. Their use in the design of new buildings should be encouraged also.

12 Materials

- 12.1 Materials should be firmly rooted in the vernacular of the area and should not introduce alien details or materials from other areas, as this will harm local distinctiveness and character. Modern materials can be used successfully in some cases provided the design and construction is of high enough quality and respects the form and scale of Little Downham.
- 12.2 Whatever approach is used, a limited palette of materials will usually achieve the best result. Using locally sourced materials is often the most sustainable option too as it reduces the need for transport.

13 Outbuildings



- 13.1 Garages and other outbuildings such as offices and large sheds/summerhouses, should relate to the style of the main property, but should remain subordinate to it. They should also be subject to the same design principles as any other new building.
- 13.2 Double garages pose particular design problems because of their size and non-traditional plan form which means that they either have shallow pitched roofs or steeply pitched roofs. To minimise their townscape impact, they should be set back from the main building line and should have two single vertically boarded timber garage doors rather than one double garage door.

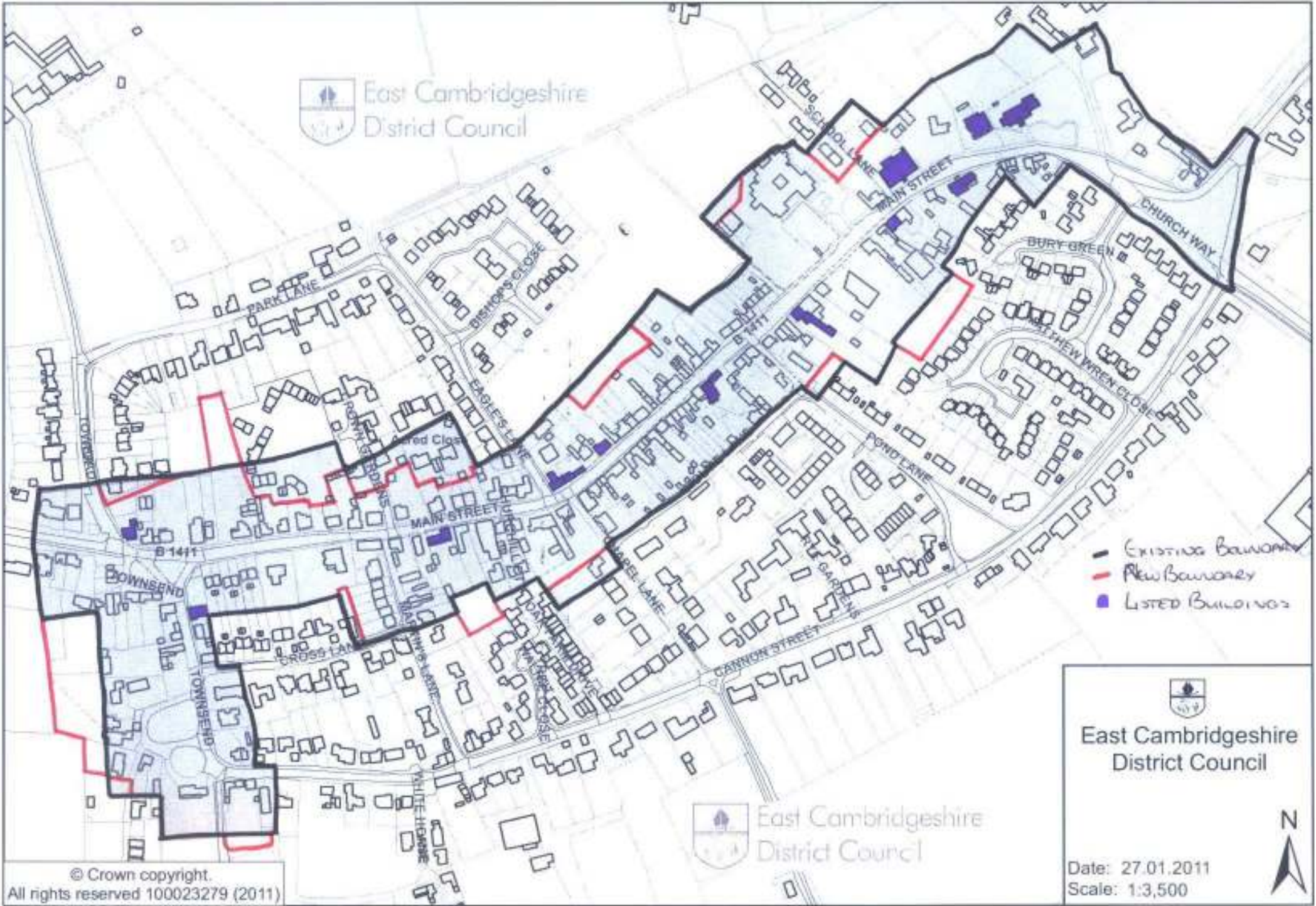
- 13.3 Providing tandem garages instead or combining double garages with other uses by extending the block sideways can help to achieve a better-proportioned building.
- 13.4 Boundary treatments should reflect those of neighbouring properties and the status of the building. A traditional boundary treatment is brick and these are commonly found throughout the conservation area. There are several areas where these boundary treatments are very prominent within the streetscape and these should be retained wherever possible.

14 Landscaping

- 14.1 Existing site features, in particular trees, hedges, grass verges and boundary walls, should be retained and incorporated in the external treatment of the new dwelling(s). These features add instant maturity to the development and are often important to the townscape. Where new planting is to be added, it should preferably be of indigenous species, which helps to maintain a link between the village and the surrounding countryside.
- 14.2 Large areas of hard landscaping using materials such as brick paviors can be inappropriate in a rural setting and should be avoided. Driveways should instead be surfaced with low-key informal materials such as shingle or bound gravel, especially where these cross grass verges.
- 14.3 The District Council will work with the Parish Council to encourage the Highway Authority and statutory undertakers to ensure verges are not removed or damaged.



East Cambridgeshire District Council



- Existing Boundaries
- New Boundaries
- Listed Buildings



East Cambridgeshire District Council



East Cambridgeshire District Council

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