
Warboys
Conservation Area Character Statement



September 2006

Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Warboys Conservation Area Character Statement



Huntingdonshire District Council
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Huntingdon,
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Warboys Conservation Area Character Statement

1.0 Introduction

1.1 **H**untingdonshire now has sixty-three designated Conservation Areas. They are designated on the basis that they are "areas of special architectural interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance." Designation is not an end in itself, but the start of a process to preserve or enhance the character of each conservation area, in accordance with the statutory duty of the local planning authority.

1.2 The Character Statements are material considerations for use in the development control process. They provide guidance for formulating policies for preservation and enhancement, and assist in determining planning applications in the conservation area.



The oldest remaining building in the village is the grade I listed church, St Mary Magdalene, the chancel arch of which is dated to the 12th century, and the tower to the 13th century. The building to the left is the grade II listed manor house.*

2.0 Development of the Village

2.1 Warboys is located seven miles north of Huntingdon and St Ives and four miles south of Ramsey. It has a population of about 3,800 people and local facilities include shops, library, primary school, garage, pubs and churches.

2.2 It was founded on a clay ridge, above the level of the Fens that lie to the north and east. In the Domesday Book the village had the name 'Wardebusc', probably meaning 'look-out wood'.

2.3 Historically, the village was linear in plan, with the main road running north past the church. Economic growth brought about an expansion of the village. Draining of the Fens, the coming of the railway (Ramsey to Somersham line, now disused) and the development of the local brick industry in the C19 fuelled its eastward expansion.

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3.0 The character of Warboys Conservation Area

A Street by Street Analysis



Looking down Church Road from the clock tower

3.1 Church Road

3.1.1 The Conservation Area extends along Church Road from the cemetery to the clock tower. Looking down from the clock tower, the church spire rises above the trees. The church area is characterised by the distinctive architecture of the church, the Manor House, the Moat House and 51 Church Street, standing in widely spaced locations well away from the road.

3.1.2 It has a loosely developed character, both in terms of the area adjacent to St Mary Magdalene church, and the open spaces around where the playing field meets the road.

3.1.3 From the playing field on Church Road, the view out of the conservation area is one of flat agricultural land.

3.2 Clock Tower Area

3.2.1 Three roads converge on the clock tower, and the eye is drawn toward it.

3.2.2 An important structure in view from this area includes the former Barclays Bank with its red brick walls and hipped tiled roofs. Looking towards the start of Ramsey Road, a recent development creates a strong frontage around the High Street and Ramsey Road corner.



The clock tower with the recent development behind

3.3 Ramsey Road

3.3.1 Some views along Ramsey Road also look out to flat agricultural land to the north of the village centre. Beyond the trees outside Chestnuts, the views open out with occasional agricultural buildings scattered across flat, cultivated land.

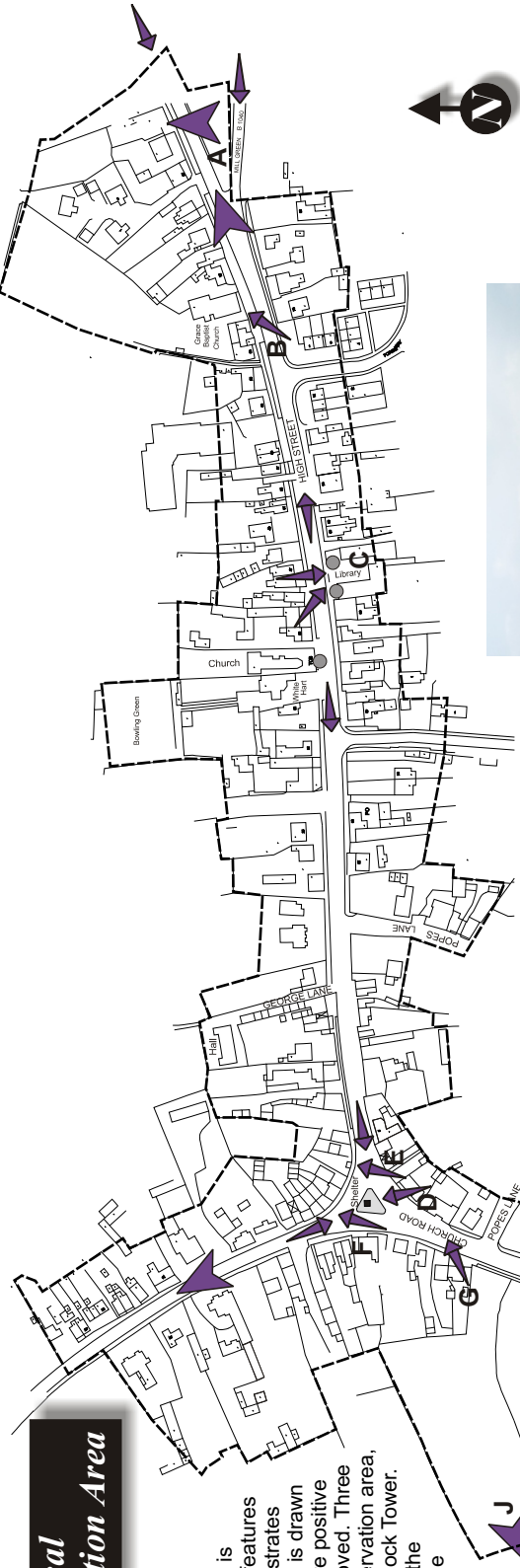


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Important views & focal points in the Conservation Area

Map 1

The character of the conservation area is defined by the way in which individual features fit into their surroundings. This map illustrates the ways that the eye of the pedestrian is drawn as they walk around the area. There are positive features, and some that could be improved. Three main focal points exist within the conservation area, the church, the Weir and the Jubilee Clock Tower. The three main roads running through the village converge on the clock tower. The Weir closes the view at the opposite end of the High Street.



Views	Legend
	A The Weir, village sign and lamp
	B Grace Baptist Chapel
	C Library and public space : bottle banks and toilets
	D Clock Tower
	E Barclays Bank and the bus shelter
	F Prominent modern building
	G Pelican Hall
	H Church and spire
	I Church Road
	J Open country
	Narrow focus view
	Wide view
	View in need of improvement

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3.4 High Street

3.4.1 Development in the High Street is quite dense compared to the more loosely developed Church Road and Ramsey Road, and the more spread-out Weir area.

3.4.2 Buildings are quite regular and formal in style. Most stand close to the pavement with little or no front garden. Close to the clock tower, the fronts of many buildings rise directly from the pavement edge.



Local shop on the pavement edge at the start of the High Street, by the clock tower. Modern signs and replacement glazing have somewhat disrupted the appearance of this building

3.4.3 Larger houses are differentiated from the shops and terraces by their position. They tend to stand back from the road, with gardens to the front and rear.

3.4.4 Particular groups of buildings contrast with the general pattern, for example, the Methodist Chapel and the White Hart public house with its thatched mansard roof. There is a telephone kiosk of modern design outside the pub that rather disrupts the view.

3.4.5 On the other side of the road, the view of the library and neighbouring public space could be improved. The modern entrance to the library is out of

keeping with the rest of the building. The recycling is no doubt to be welcomed, but the thin evergreen screen does little to improve the view of the bins from the street.

Lighting and street furniture of a more imaginative design would help improve the appearance of this area



More could be done to conceal the recycling bins

Purely utilitarian design for entrance undermines the quality of the approach to this building

The library area could benefit from some improvements

3.5 The Weir

3.5.1 The Weir is a valuable amenity and a central part of the history of Warboys. It is an attractive feature, alive with vegetation and reflecting the sky.

3.5.2 Looking up the High Street towards the Weir, the village sign, the flagpole and an ornamental lamp stand out in the open space as a positive focus.



The backdrop to the Weir is an imposing but rather stark modern house

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3.5 The Weir Continued

3.5.3 The street fronting on to the north of the Weir is included in the conservation area while the south side is not. The north side has an unspoiled frontage of neat villas. Unfortunately, not many have retained their white painted timber fenestration and their architectural quality has been diminished as a result. One of the houses has a fanlight with a brick-like design. Another has a well preserved shop front. On the south side an historic shop front still exists but has lost most of its character due to replacement glazing.

Examples of some of Warboys' listed buildings:



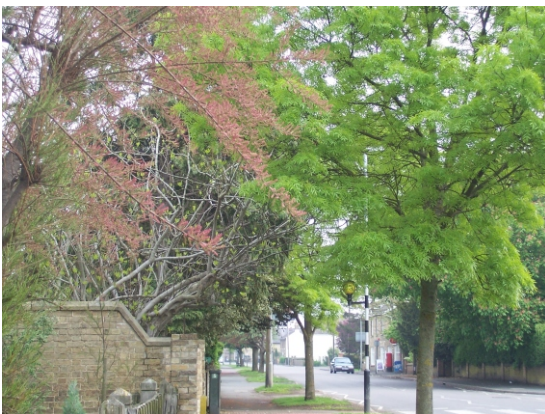
The White Hart, High Street

3.6 General Features

3.6.1 The paving in the conservation area is tarmac and on the north side of the High Street, there are small trees evenly spaced on the grass verge along most of its length with occasional wooden benches. There are adequate road signs, but not too many so that they do not detract from the character of the conservation area.



Town Farm, Ramsey Road



Trees are well placed along the High Street



69 High Street

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Outbuildings, open spaces and trees





Map 2

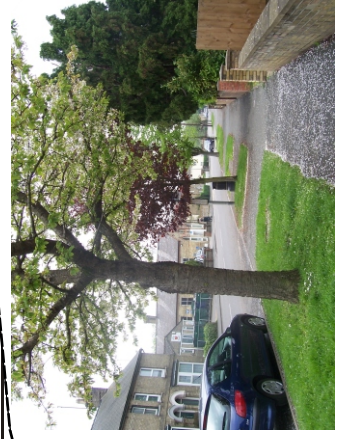


Outbuilding in High Street



Legend

-  Visible outbuildings of particular merit (Including some outside the conservation area)
-  Trees and Green frontage of particular importance
-  Green areas of particular importance
-  Conservation Area Boundary



A view of the tree lined High Street



An example of the more informal type of building, in this case on the High Street. One of these outbuildings has had a more formal facade added.

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Outbuildings, Open Spaces and Trees

3.7 Outbuildings

3.7.1 Old outbuildings are an important feature of the village, hinting at the agricultural and industrial past and contrasting with the formal buildings that face onto the street. They are visible through entrances and up the lanes that run between the long, narrow plots. There are interesting examples behind Nos 31 and 33 High Street, behind the car sales garage in Ramsey Road, and just outside the edges of the conservation area next to 90 High Street and beyond 25 Ramsey Road.

3.7.2 Outbuildings are informal in design, usually one storey, long and low with warped ridges, but in a few cases they are of two storeys.

3.7.3 Outbuildings present a mix of whatever materials would have been easily available. There are varying shades of cream, pink and soft red shades of local brick and tarred weatherboard.

3.7.4 Roofs are often of "Cambridgeshire mix" pantiles, the soft creams and pinks of which have sadly been disappearing from the local landscape over recent years.

3.8 Open Spaces and Trees

3.8.1 Warboys has lost many of its trees in the last fifty years through housing development and Dutch elm disease.

3.8.2 The densely developed feel of the conservation area is alleviated by the grass verges at the tip of the Weir and the corners of George Way, the trees in Ramsey Road and Church Road, and the young

trees planted along the roadside in the High Street.

3.8.3 The gardens of the larger villas are also important green spaces. In some of these gardens, ornamental trees have been planted, signals of the wealth of the previous owners. Examples are the garden of 50 High Street, and the monkey-puzzle tree at Providence House near the clock tower. Care should be taken to preserve the green curtilages of the larger houses. Subdivision of these plots would not be appropriate.



This range of outbuildings were formerly the old bakehouse. They have now been converted to offices, but maintain their linear feel.

Warboys Conservation Area Character Statement

The Listed Buildings of Warboys

Map 3



28 Church Road, grade I*
Listed Building



Hughley
48 High Street



The Chestnuts
22 High Street







Dove Cote
Chestnuts, Ramsey Road



5 High Street

Legend

-  Grade I Listed Building
-  Grade II* Listed Building
-  Grade II Listed Building
-  Conservation Area Boundary

Warboys Conservation Area Character Statement

4.0 The Built Environment

- 4.1 The designation of Warboys Conservation Area was approved on 20th May 1991 and it covers the heart of the village.
- 4.2 The special characteristics of Warboys' built environment include the spectacular buildings by the church, the Victorian formality of the High Street, the delicately detailed original doors and windows, jumbled outbuildings, decorative walls, hedges and ironwork.
- 4.3 There are twenty-four buildings and two milestones in the parish of Warboys' which are listed by the Secretary of State for Culture Media & Sport as being worthy of statutory protection. Most of them are within the conservation area.

- There are a number of buildings of local historic interest in the village which are not listed but are worthy of preservation because of their importance within the local scene. These include the Grace Baptist Chapel, the Methodist Church, the Old School, the library, Barclays Bank and Pelican Hall.
- 4.4

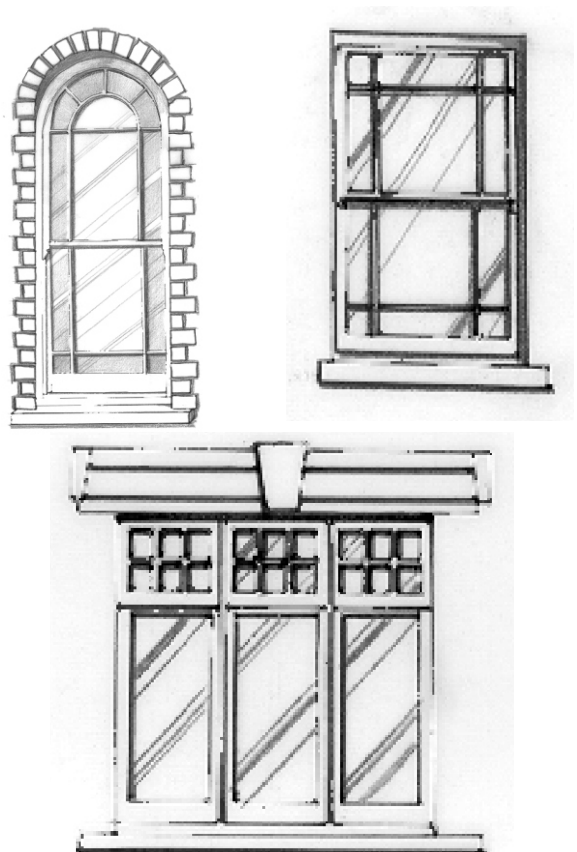


Listed milestone opposite St Mary's Green, Ramsey Road

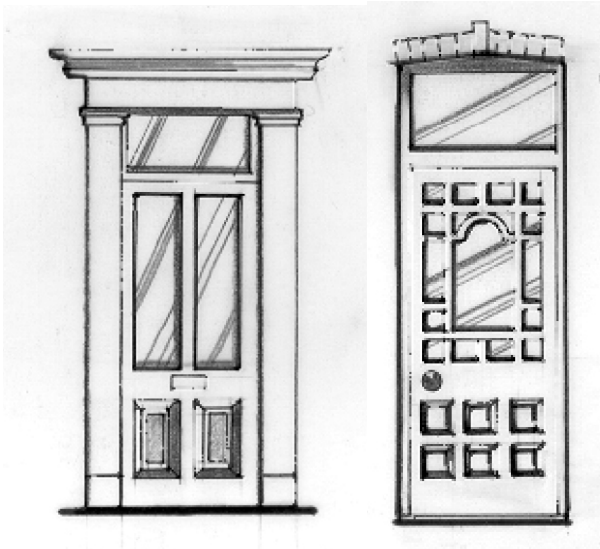
5.0 Design

- 5.1 The buildings that front the street are often square or rectangular and double fronted or in other ways symmetrical in design.
- 5.2 Detail gives these villas and terraces elegance. The apparent bulk of the buildings is relieved by beautifully proportioned sash windows and elegant doors and door surrounds in painted softwood, for example 87 High Street. The houses all have relatively large windows in proportion to the surface area of the frontage. Vertical oblong window and doorway shape emphasises the vertical height of the building. Above windows, the simple but elegant detail is maintained by flat arches of brick or stone with an emphasised keystone.

The eyes of a building : some local designs for windows.



Warboys Conservation Area Character Statement

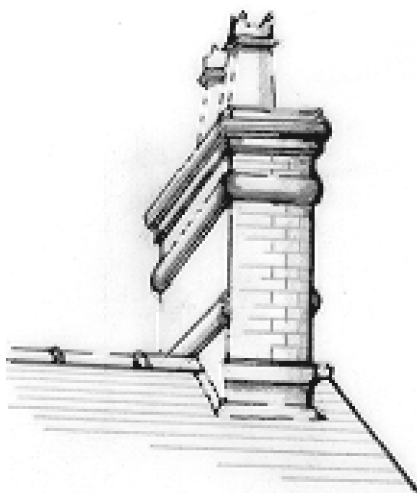


Two typical door designs

6.0 Building Materials

- 6.1 'Warboys White' bricks, (creamy pale yellow gault brick), are the main facing material of the village. Bricks of even tone but not of entirely uniform colour or texture were chosen for the fronts of the buildings.
- 6.2 Roofs are mostly of slate with some examples of peg-tiles, especially on the older buildings. Just a couple of examples of thatch survive from the pre-industrial age, including the water reed roof of the White Hart.

- 5.3 Porches are internal, meaning that doors are set back from the facade, rather than stuck on the front of the building.
- 5.4 Brickwork is Flemish Bond (header-stretcher-header-stretcher), plus at least one example of English Bond (row of headers, row of stretchers). This type of brickwork does not emphasise the horizontal lines of the building unlike modern stretcher-bond brickwork.
- 5.5 Decorative details are limited and simple. Some houses have a dentil course beneath the eaves. There are also a few houses with detail in rubbed red brick or terracotta, but these are the exception rather than the rule.
- 5.6 Rooflines are generally plain without dormers.
- 5.7 Chimneys of matching brick rise above the roofline, usually one at either end of the ridge, maintaining a symmetrical appearance. The stacks have a similar type of detailing throughout the village.



A building typical of Warboys in form and details, built in the style of the detached villas, but in this case a pair of houses without the usual green frontage. The replacement windows of the property on the right-hand side alters the character of the building and detracts from the conservation area.

7.0 Boundary Treatments

- 7.1 Boundaries have been carefully designed. At Chestnuts on Ramsey Road, the Moat House opposite the church and 51 Church Street, trees are used to carefully conceal buildings from public gaze. However most boundaries allow the building to remain visible, their main purpose being to define territories. They also reinforce the street scene. There are a number of brick walls with a variety of decorative detailing to the capstones and piers. There are some interesting decorative ironwork features, such as the listed gate piers at Chestnuts.

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Some boundary walls are suffering from the damaging effect of poor repair with hard cement, the addition of which can lead to damage to the softer bricks.



Decorative ironwork is used in the village to add an air of importance to boundaries and gateways. These gates at The Chestnuts, Ramsey Road, are listed in their own right.



The Moat House in Church Road has a combination of trees, ironwork and brick piers to define its boundary.

8.0 Negative Aspects

- 8.1 Despite Warboys' many quality buildings within its conservation area, there has been an influx of replacement windows which does harm the character of the property and therefore that of the conservation area.



This particular property has two different styles of replacement window, one to each floor.



These two properties have been dealt with in very different ways which alters their character and loses the original balance and harmony between the buildings.

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9.0 Summary

9.1 The fabric of Warboys' Conservation Area is not uniform and it is important that its varied texture is preserved for the future. Its defining features are :

- The contrast between the quite densely developed High Street, the open Weir area, the loosely woven development of Ramsey Road and Church Road and the rural area south of the church
- The proportion and design of the buildings facing the street and the delicate detailing of the fenestration
- The outbuildings tucked behind the frontage
- The gardens and trees shielding and complementing the houses
- Uniformity of building materials - usually buff brick and slate

9.2 Every building, space and tree makes a contribution to the character of the area. When the addition of a new development is considered, attention should be given to the mass of the proposed building, the amount of green space appropriate to it, and to the use of materials and detailing appropriate to the type of building. Features not present in the local vocabulary such as dormer windows and panel fences are not appropriate.

9.3 By recognising the historic development of the village, the conservation area can be protected and enhanced for the future.



View across the weir



*Front door to
26 High Street*



The Moat House Church Road

Warboys

Conservation Area Management Plan



September 2006

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Warboys

Conservation Area Management Plan

This Management Plan has been produced to identify a series of projects for the enhancement of the Warboys Conservation Area.

Management Plans are required by the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI 219) as a measure of a Council's performance, and are also recommended by English Heritage in *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas 2006*.

It is intended that the items included in the document will form the basis for discussion with the local community, during the consultation period and beyond, to deliver lasting improvements to the Conservation Area.

All of the items noted are subject to resource and grant limitations but, in partnership with the local community, it is hoped to develop this programme over the next five years.



WARBOYS CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

ISSUE / NEGATIVE FACTOR	ENHANCEMENT PROPOSAL
<p>Changes to Conservation Area Boundaries</p> <p>The Warboys Conservation Area was designated on 20th May 1991. The boundaries have not changed since their original designation. In line with section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the District Council is currently undertaking a review of the conservation areas within the District.</p> <p>Following the review, it may become necessary to omit existing areas or to include new areas within the boundary, in line with English Heritage's most recent guidance 'Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas' 2006.</p> <p>Upon reassessment it may become clear that some areas identified by the current boundary no longer contribute to the character of the village, or it may be that some areas were omitted when the boundary was originally drawn. This is testament to the fact that conservation areas are a constantly evolving dynamic entity.</p>	<p>Rolling Programme of Review</p> <p>The Council is required to carry out, under a rolling 5 year programme, a review and preparation of Character Statements and Management Plans for all conservation areas within their remit.</p> <p>The existing conservation area boundary will be reviewed within 5 years to accord with the current English Heritage advice and to meet the BVPI targets. The Character Statement and Management Plan will be updated accordingly.</p>



WARBOYS CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

ISSUE / NEGATIVE FACTOR

ENHANCEMENT PROPOSAL

Loss of Original Features and Details

Some of the properties in the Warboys Conservation Area have undergone well intended but inappropriate alterations which affect their character. The effect of this is particularly detrimental as many of the buildings form part of a group such as a pair of semi-detached houses.

The Upkeep and Restoration of Original Features

Due to the irreplaceable value of original features and details, it is essential that the owners and occupiers of properties are provided with guidance and advice on the repair, restoration and upkeep of these features and details. If a listed building has been altered without Listed Building Consent enforcement action should be taken to reinstate the lost features and details.



Many of the Victorian properties in Warboys have front doors that are recessed. This detail is being eroded with the door being brought forward to form a porch. In the properties above this has happened to the building on the right. Both dwellings have got inappropriate replacement windows and doors.



WARBOYS CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

ISSUE / NEGATIVE FACTOR

ENHANCEMENT PROPOSAL

Boundary Walls and Front Gardens

The demolition of, unsympathetic alteration and lack of maintenance to boundary walls to residential and commercial properties can give the roadside an incongruous or disjointed appearance giving an overall negative impact on views along streets. In Warboys the front gardens have mainly been retained, with very few being turned over to vehicle parking. The boundary materials are mainly dwarf brick walls, some of which have railings, and hedges.



The Chestnuts, Ramsey Road, has a well defined boundary with the roadside

Boundary Walls and Front Gardens

The majority of the properties in the Warboys conservation area do not have enough space between the building and the roadside to effect much change to the front garden. The majority of the boundaries are also intact. Planning and listed building controls should be used to prevent or undo unauthorised demolition and alterations to boundaries.

Lighting and street furniture of a more imaginative design would help to improve the appearance of this area



More could be done to conceal the recycling bins

Purely utilitarian design for this entrance undermines the quality of the approach to this building



WARBOYS CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

ISSUE / NEGATIVE FACTOR

ENHANCEMENT PROPOSAL

Inappropriate New Development

Much of the character of the Warboys Conservation Area is derived from the integrity of the mainly Victorian townscape, the villas and the semi-detached houses. It is critical that any development in the conservation area complements the qualities of its context. Recent development off of Ramsey Road has addressed the style of the area very well.

Highway Design and Street Furniture

The street lights are mainly concrete apart from at the clock tower and weir where reproduction Victorian style lamps have been used. There are a few benches along the High Street on the grass verges.



Concrete lamp post in Church Road

Highway Vegetation

The trees on the north side of the High Street are very important to the character of the conservation area. They are well spaced along the majority of the street, and sit on the grass verge between the road and the pavement.

Design Guidance for New Build and Extensions

Potential developers should be directed to Huntingdonshire District Council's Design Guide which shows good and bad design principles for new build and extensions. They should also use the Warboys Conservation Area Character Statement as a reference tool as well as the Landscape and Townscape Assessment.

Highway Design and Street Furniture

Should the street lights begin to need replacing, a more appropriate style should be agreed that is more in keeping with the conservation area

The level of road signage is currently acceptable, however this must be monitored to ensure that it does not become unsightly as it has in other areas

Highway Vegetation

There should be a maintenance plan for the trees to ensure that they are replaced should they die or be felled.



WARBOYS CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

ISSUE / NEGATIVE FACTOR

ENHANCEMENT PROPOSAL

Inappropriate Shop Fronts and Signage

There are a few shops that still survive in Warboys which is very important for the life of the village. The shop fronts are mainly modern in loud garish colours which add little to the character of the conservation area.



Nos 2 - 4 High Street is an example of modern shop fronts in Warboys

Vacant and Underused Buildings

There are two notable underused and vacant buildings in the conservation area, nos 64 and 66 High Street. Both of these are listed buildings with an agreed redevelopment at the rear of 64. Apart from these, there is a high level of occupation within the conservation area which enhances the character.



Nos 66 and 64 High Street are detrimental to the character of the conservation area in their current state

Design Guidance for Shop Fronts and Signage

The Huntingdonshire District Council's guide to Shopfronts should be used when considering any application for changes within the conservation area

Any unauthorised signage should be reported to the District Council's planning enforcement team for its removal

It may be possible to issue a Discontinuance Notice under the Advertising Regulations to have unsightly shop signage removed

Encouraging Re-Use and Investment

The Council needs to use its statutory powers to ensure that the buildings are fully repaired. This could involve serving a Repairs Notice or Urgent Works Notice on the owners.