

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document 2022

Huntingdonshire District Council | Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Supplementary
Planning Document 2022

Chapter 13 - Somersham

13 Somersham Key Service Centre

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- 13.1** Somersham is located in the eastern part of Huntingdonshire approximately four miles north east of St Ives at the edge of the Fens.

Landscape Setting

- 13.2** Somersham is situated within the Fen Margin Landscape Character Area. Its mosaic of flooded gravel extraction workings, orchards, arable and pastoral agricultural land is typical of this character area. The arable farmland to the western side of the village is more elevated, rising north from St Ives Road. This landscape forms part of the setting to the village when approached or viewed from the west although much of the main built up area is screened by hedges, allotments, woodland and the mature trees in the grounds of the Rectory.
- 13.3** The landscape of the water meadows to the south of the village is of high visual quality and the pattern of ditches, hedgebanks, willow trees and small pastoral fields combine to create a tranquil rural landscape. To the south of the village is Ponds Closes a scheduled monument on the site of the former Bishop of Ely's Palace and Somersham Park which includes a large farm complex. Development along the northern edge of the water meadows has shaped the landscape particularly when viewed from the Pathfinder long distance walk which approaches the village from the south. The landscape to the east of the village consists of gravel and sand extraction and the Somersham Local Nature Reserve.

Edges and Visual Prominence

- 13.4** Somersham's low lying position means that it is not visually prominent in long distance views from the north, south or east. Ribbon development and existing vegetation also obscure views of the village as it is approached from both Colne and Chatteris. From the north, the edge of the village is partially obscured by an old railway embankment with the woodlands and lake associated with the Somersham Local Nature Reserve forming the immediate landscape setting to the eastern side. This provides the village with a soft eastern edge and a transitional point to the surrounding countryside as well as recreational and leisure opportunities for residents.
- 13.5** The southern edge of the village is only openly visible from the Pathfinder long distance footpath, and the village is viewed most clearly from the higher ground to the west, particularly from the approach on the B1086. From here, the farmland on the western side of the village forms its landscape setting and the church tower provides a notable landmark in views from this direction.

Townscape Character

- 13.6** Somersham has a long history and its name is probably derived from a Roman 'Summer Camp' nearby. The Manor was already in existence in AD 991 when it was given to the Bishops of Ely who used it as a palace until 1600. Due to its landscape setting, the village is relatively well contained visually.
- 13.7** Somersham has eleven character areas (Figure 13.1 and can be viewed on the [interactive map](#)). One of these, the Historic Core of the village is located along two principal streets, High Street and Church Street which form a cross at the centre of the village. The site of the Bishops Palace is located to the southern edge of the village closely related to the church of St John the Baptist.
- 13.8** The High Street, which forms the east-west arms of the cross, is lined by buildings to both sides and the junction with Church Street, formerly the site of the medieval market place, is marked by a small pavilion and clock tower. Over the last 60 years, the village has expanded considerably as a result of modern residential development mostly to the north and some to the south of the original settlement which has more than doubled its size. There have also been several infill and redevelopment opportunities predominately along the High Street and Chatteris Road. Some ribbon development has extended eastwards

along Chatteris Road with Colnefields forming an isolated cluster of homes well screened from public viewing points. The West Newlands Industrial Estate on the western edge of the village provides some further employment opportunities along St Ives Road.

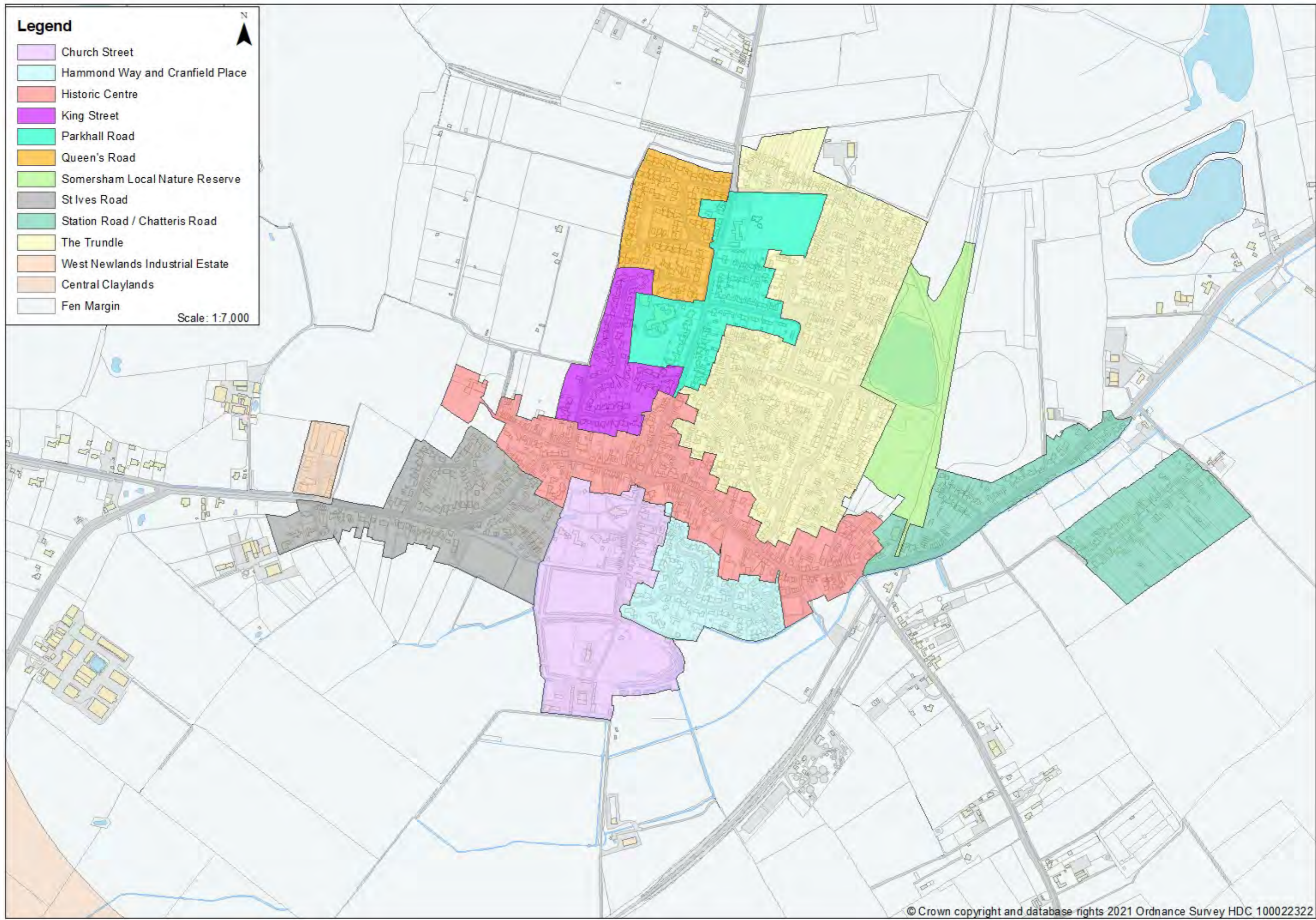


Figure 13.1 Somersham Character Areas

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Key Features

Historic route	High Street and Church Street
Historic gateway	High Street
Landmarks	The Cross, St John the Baptist's Church
Memorable areas	Somersham Local Nature Reserve, allotment grounds, Church Street, the Crossing
Key views	Views south of the village and Somersham Local Nature Reserve



The High Street has consists of a variety of buildings of differing style, patterns and form with some wagon archways linking back to the historic backland uses of the historic centre



St John the Baptist Church is a key local and historic landmark



Middle 20th century residential development expanded the village northwards considerably



Somersham Local Nature Reserve includes part of a disused railway line and provides an attractive and green eastern edge to the village

Somersham Character Area 1: The Historic Centre



59-65 High Street demonstrating a continuous built form and variety of scale of development within the Historic Centre



The Cross

- 13.9** The Historic Centre provides Somersham with a strong village character with a mix of house types, shops, services and facilities including Whitehall School, salons, hairdressers, shops, food shops, workshops, warehouses, a petrol filling station, a bowls club, a public house and takeaways. The village morphology of Somersham is based on the cruciform shape of the High Street, Church Street and Parkhall Road. The roads meet at the Cross, this is an important open space in the village. The main building material is gault brick (with slate roofs), but there are some red brick buildings too with plain clay tile roofs. Building types within the character area vary greatly with types 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 2D, 2E, 3D, 3E and 3F present as well as some industrial buildings and outbuildings (building type 5A) and a non-conformist Chapel (building type 6B).
- 13.10** The High Street extends northwards along Rectory Lane and some way along Parkhall Road. Development within the High Street, Parkhall Road and the north side of Rectory Lane is closely built up with the area around the Cross being especially dense. The High Street is characterised by back of pavement building, mostly in gault brick under slate roofs set in long and rectangular plots. There is limited foliage along the High Street due to the pattern of development.
- 13.11** Key features of Somersham's built heritage are the number of coach arches or wagon ways that are still in existence to give access to backland and outbuildings. Most of the arches that are still in use are along the High Street to the east of the Cross. These single storey buildings are important to the character of the Historic Centre and are an indication of the historical development of the village which relates to its agricultural past. The majority of the architecture along the High Street consists of Victorian villas and terraces, an exception is the Old Tithe Barn and Low Barn, a grade II listed timber framed double aisled barn with weather boarded frontage and plain tile roof built in 1600. There are also several surviving outbuildings, some have been converted while others are in need of renovation.



Old Tithe Barn and Low Barn

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13.12 Continuing east the road opens up at the Cross where the High Street meets Parkhall Road and Church Street. The openness of this area is important to the character the village as the shelter encourages people to stay a while and enjoy the space. The area around the Cross accommodates a high proportion of Somersham's listed buildings, the most notable group being the Rose and Crown Public House, and nos. 101, 103 and 105 High Street.



Rose and Crown PH

13.13 Moving away from the Cross, the area is characterised by the contrast between large properties, some of which are set back from the road, with smaller, gault brick, semi-detached and terraced housing. For example no. 44 High Street sits in substantial grounds and its landscaped frontage contributes significantly to the street scene and forms a natural barrier between the property and the adjacent Centurian Hall.

13.14 Towards the far eastern end of the High Street the area changes again. The building line is less regular, with properties on the north side of the High Street being on raised plots. There have been some modern redevelopment and infill developments namely Willow Rise and Somersham Court. The redevelopment of the warehouse at the former gas works as Somersham Court has improved the character of this part of the Historic Centre and the entry into the village from the east and has provided even further architectural variation (building type 3F).



Willow Rise

13.15 North of the High Street is Rectory Lane which consists of several Victorian terraces (for example Sheppard's Terrace) and later additions including bungalows and 21st century infill development. The properties along here are located away from the main thoroughfare when entering Somersham from the west. There is an intimate feel to this part of the character area due to the lack of set back from the road between properties and limited front gardens. At the far western edge is the grade II listed Somersham House and Bramston. These were formerly one building known as the Rectory, a large early 19th century house in established grounds, constructed from gault brick under a slate roof with a well landscaped frontage which screens the house from the street. Rectory Lane extends westwards into the countryside with greater vegetation and hedgerows, as a result it is an area of transition between the village and the surrounding countryside. Chapel Field Lane leads from Rectory Lane out towards the small holdings and allotments on the outskirts of the village. The trees and hedgerows in this area give a strongly defined edge between the looser urban feel and the countryside beyond.

13.16 Parkhall Road forms the northern arm of the crossroads at the centre of the village. The road extends northwards into the Fen landscape but the part of the road included within the historic centre is up to Grange Road. The road has a mixture of buildings from different eras along it including Victorian semis representing building type 2B and some modern infill developments. This has resulted in a more noticeable modern feel to this part of the character area especially as northwards extensive 20th century housing development has taken place. Therefore this is a transitional point in the village. There are also two listed buildings (both grade II): nos. 21 and 23 are early 18th century red brick houses with a plain tiled and cement tiled roofs formerly Manor Hall (rebuilt in circa 1720 and subsequently subdivided); the other is the Wesleyan Chapel, which is on the west side of the road and constructed from gault brick with a slate roof.



Victorian house with archway on the High Street

13.17 The Historic Centre has retained many aspects of its original Victorian features and supports many village service and facilities, therefore its conservation is a key priority. Development should focus on small scale proposals that seek to conserve and enhance the townscape where possible.

Development proposals should:

- Conserve or where appropriate enhance the significance of the heritage assets including any contribution made to significance by their settings.
- Enrich the character of the area by reinforcing and acknowledging its historic character.
- Conserve and reflect the the historic centre through the control of shopfront design and building renovations.
- Support initiatives to reuse derelict or run down looking outbuildings and structures to enhance the street scene and the setting of any heritage assets.
- Reflect the existing materials and colour palette of predominately gault and slate roofs and red brick and plain clay tiles.
- Support initiatives for the retention of existing or creation of additional services and community facilities.
- Promote high standards of design and architectural detailing to enhance the historic character of the area and conservation area.
- Promote opportunities for the introduction and maintenance of tree and hedge planting where it contributes to the street scene and where they form important screens to the wider surrounding countryside.

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Somersham Character Area 2: Church Street



St John the Baptist's Church



Pond Closes Scheduled Monument

13.18 South of the High Street and the Cross is Church Street and Pinfold Lane. This is a small but characterful area which closely relates to the Historic Centre with several important local services and facilities but has taken on a different feel as it transitions between the busy High Street and the countryside to the south. Church Street starts at the Cross and continues southwards to Somersham Park and Ponds Closes the site of the former Bishop's Palace (a scheduled monument). Views are restricted due to dense tree and vegetation growth. At the end of Church Street the village opens up to the surrounding countryside with views across the Fen Margin. Building types are varied with types 2A, 2B, 3D, 3E, 3F, 6A and 7A present.



Modern infill

13.19 The linear form of development along Church Street is further characterised by frontage development on the east side and by the row of terraced properties on the west side after Pinfold Lane. Nos. 21 and 23 are mid 19th century grade II listed buildings of gault brick under slate roofs. They have a central arch, which reinforces the typical feature found in the adjoining Historic Centre character area. Pinfold Lane consists of a semi-detached pair of properties which reflect the terraced form of the wider area, however, further along, there are several large detached modern properties in spacious grounds set back from the Lane with extensive planting.

13.20 St John the Baptist's Church is a key landmark, its spire is visible across the village. It is grade I listed and dates back to the 13th century. Built of rubble with Barnack limestone dressings, the north and south porches were added in the 14th and 15th centuries with a restoration of the Church completed in 1883. The surrounding graveyard creates an open feel with a boundary wall enclosing the space. Next to the Church is the grade II 18th century former school and school house which is constructed from red brick and now used as a private residence and business.

13.21 As well as the Church, the character area has a local library and surgery. Both have some surrounding car parking which breaks up the street scene and the regular building line of Victorian semis and terraced housing. Both services are located in modern buildings or buildings that have been extended to accommodate their use but reflect the wider style of the village and gault bricks common to the area.



Library

- 13.22** There has been some modern infill development which has been sensitively integrated and reflects the materiality and form of surrounding properties. Most of these are located further south along Church Street where there was less historic development and greater scope for development. Several of these more modern properties are very well screened from view and can be accessed from a track off from Church Street.
- 13.23** Somersham Park, accessed from the southernmost end of Church Street, was once a derelict farmhouse that has now been restored. It is an example of an early 19th century farmhouse on a double pile plan. The well landscaped Palace Yard, combined with the Pond Closes, gives rise to an informal parkland setting. This is in direct contrast to the built up streets that form the centre of the historic centre. To the south of Palace Yard is Park Farm, with good views through to the open countryside beyond the village. Park Farm is an assemblage of old and new farm buildings linked to Church Street by a single access road through Palace Yard. A footpath beside Pond Closes is located just north of the Bishop's Palace with views through Park Farm to the countryside beyond.
- 13.24** This is a characterful area whose character transitions from one being more reflective of the adjoining Historic Centre to a more rural setting as it moves southwards. There may be opportunities for small scale infill development and extensions and alterations to existing properties, however the character and heritage of the area are key aspects to consider.

Development proposals should:

- Conserve or where appropriate enhance the significance of the heritage assets including any contribution made to significance by their settings.
- Enrich the character of the area by reinforcing and acknowledging its historic character.
- Ensure that new development responds positively to the specific opportunities available within the area.
- Ensure extensions and alterations to existing properties are of an appropriate size and scale to the original dwelling and do not detract from the surrounding area.
- Be sympathetic to the materials and colour palette in the immediate vicinity, particularly gault and red brick.
- Reduce the visual dominance of cars through increased planting and improved boundary treatments to existing car parks.
- Protect the existing areas of open space and tree planting which contribute to the character of the area.
- Support initiatives for the creation of additional services and community facilities possibly through conversion or redevelopment.
- Maintain and enhance where possible opportunities for public rights of way.

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Somersham Character Area 3: Hammond Way and Cranfield Place



Hammond Way



Cranfield Place

13.25 This is a small character area located to the east of Church Street consisting of several streets of residential properties. Hammond Way is the central street which separates from Church Street and connects through via Cranfield Place to the High Street. Whiston Close and Crane Close are smaller residential streets that diverge from Hammond Way. These were built throughout the 1980s and 1990s and reflect typical housebuilding trends of the time (building type 3E). The southern boundary of the character area is an established hedge which forms a key screen from residential development to the open countryside to the south. This forms an strong natural edge to this side of the village.

13.26 Properties along Hammond Close, Whiston Close and Crane Close are fairly large detached properties set in rectangular/ square plots. There are variations in design and architectural detailing creating a varied street scene. Properties are predominantly two storeys but there are some single storey properties. A key design feature of these properties is mock Tudor panelling. Also, properties have generous front gardens and a high proportion of double garages and double on plot car parking spaces. This creates a more open feel and with many trees and shrubs providing a soft aspect to the street frontages.



Hammond Way

13.27 Cranfield Place has a visibly different design and feel with buff brick and more homogenous design to properties with a mixture of canopies, bay windows and some double bay windows. Properties are two storeys and detached. The set back from the road is shallower creating a more compact feel to this part of the character area. Land to the front and side of properties is either grassed or gravelled which has reduced the occurrence of planting.

13.28 This is an established residential area, development proposals are limited to minor alterations or extensions to existing properties.

Development proposals should:

- Retain and enhance where possible tree and hedge planting along Hammond Way and Cranfield Place, particularly to the south of the area where it borders the countryside.
- Ensure extensions and alterations to existing properties are of an appropriate size and scale to the original dwelling and do not detract from the surrounding area.
- Be sympathetic to surrounding existing materials and colour palette.
- Promote high standards of design and architectural detailing.
- Support provision of renewable energy where visually appropriate.

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Somersham Character Area 4: St Ives Road



Bungalows along St Ives Road



Mock Tudor design within the Pasture

13.29 This is a linear character area focused around St Ives Road which runs from the countryside into the village forming the High Street. It is mostly residential properties although there is also a car dealership. Properties are mixed in age dating from the early 20th century onwards and predominantly detached (although there is small cluster of terraced houses) set in rectangular plots with some set back from the road creating a little separation. Properties are architecturally varied with a mixture of single storey and two storey properties which range from building types 3B, 3D, 3E and 3F.

13.30 The oldest properties are immediately along St Ives Road and West End. West End is an older cluster of homes built in the 1920s/1930s accessed from St Ives Road and which along its rear boundary borders Pinfold Lane separated by a drain and vegetation. These properties demonstrate building type 3B. They are semi-detached pairs with a central chimney stack arranged regularly in long rectangular plots with modest front gardens. Materials include white render and dark roof tiles. Window and door placements are symmetrical and have a small circular window to the first floor. There has been some infill development utilising spare land such 15a West End which is a large detached property constructed from buff brick and contrasts the general style found along the road. To the west is Somersham Football Club and associated pavilion building, the site is allocated for housing development subject to the successful relocation of the sports facility.



West End

13.31 Another example of in depth development off from St Ives Road is the Pasture built in the 1990s (building type 3E). Properties are large detached with a consistent character although there are variations in the materials and style used to add diversity. Materials range from red, buff and grey brick, dark roof tiles, some pan tiles to the front elevations and Mock Tudor detailing. Some properties have dormer windows, others porches and canopies. There is on plot parking with most properties having double garages to the side and boundary walls especially where properties are located on a bend in the road layout.

13.32 The area is likely to evolve further with the [Huntingdonshire Local Plan](#) allocating several sites within this character area (SM2, SM3 and SM4) for development. These are predominantly for residential use but also a care facility. These will add further diversity in design integrating 21st century design principles amongst this already mixed area. These are not included in the current character area but once details on what may be delivered are approved and completed will likely result in a boundary amendment. There must be careful consideration on how these larger additions integrate with the neighbouring residential properties, provide safe access and their relationship with nearby heritage assets and the wider countryside.

13.33 The Local Plan has identified areas of larger development, however, there are also opportunities for some infill development and extensions and alterations to existing properties.

Development proposals should:

- Consider how small scale infill development opportunities can positively balance their surroundings and be sensitively integrated.
- Ensure safe and appropriate access from St Ives Road.
- Be sympathetic to the materials and colour palette in the immediate vicinity.
- Ensure that new development responds positively to the specific opportunities available within the area.
- Ensure extensions and alterations to existing properties are of an appropriate size and scale to the original dwelling and do not detract from the surrounding area.
- Be high quality and consider impacts on the wider landscape setting and nearby heritage assets as appropriate.
- Encourage tree and hedgerow planting particularly as landscape buffers to developments that border with the open countryside.
- Support proposals where they encourage active modes of transport and improve opportunities for walking and cycling through footpaths and cycleways to the main village.
- Support provision of renewable energy where visually appropriate.

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Somersham Character Area 5: West Newlands Industrial Estate



There is a generally spacious setting with planting throughout the industrial estate



Unit within the West Newlands Industrial Estate constructed from a mixture of buff brick and cladding

- 13.34** This is a small character area located to the west of the village along St Ives Road. West Newlands Industrial Estate is an Established Employment Area within the [Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036](#) and provides the village and surrounding communities with local employment opportunities. It also adjoins land to the west allocated for a mixed use development of residential and care home uses (SM1). While adjoining the St Ives Road character area, West Newlands has been split into its own small character area because of the difference in land use and building types present.
- 13.35** The industrial estate was built in the early 1980s. Subsequent extensions and change of uses have been made to several units over time. Buildings fall within type 5B and are a mixture of styles, either single or two stories, used as offices, workshops and for storage. Materials include buff brick, metal cladding, corrugated steel to roofs and white painted bricks and render. There are small pockets of car parking associated with each unit separated by either vegetation or fencing. There is a continuous line of hedges and vegetation running along its western, northern and eastern boundaries which provide a landscape buffer to the wider open countryside and adjacent residential properties. The planting continues along the frontage of the site with a break for access from St Ives Road. Within the estate there is a central pond with planting around it creating an attractive central feature.
- 13.36** There is some capacity for new units, extensions, change of use to other appropriate land uses or the renovation of units, however, such development must carefully consider access and landscape impacts.

Development proposals should:

- Reinforce the use of the area as an employment location for Somersham and the surrounding area.
- Reflect the materials and colour palette of the area including buff brick, metal cladding, corrugated steel to roofs and white painted bricks and render.
- Be sensitively designed to limit visual impacts on the surrounding countryside and consider any potential impacts on the surrounding road network.
- Incorporate renewable energy options where they are appropriate and electric vehicle charging points.
- Support proposals where they encourage active modes of transport and improve opportunities for walking and cycling through footpaths and cycleways to the main village.
- Encourage and retain tree and hedge planting within the industrial estate and along its boundaries.

Somersham Character Area 6: Parkhall Road



Somersham Victory Hall



Coronation Avenue

13.37 This character area is based around Parkhall Road and consists of a mixture of residential properties and community services such as Somersham Primary School, Somersham Victory Hall, tennis courts, skatepark, recreational ground and sports field. Housing is mixed with additions and in depth development added over time. Building types are therefore mixed ranging from 2B, 3B, 3D, 3E, 3F and 7C.

13.38 Along Parkhall Road properties are mixed with many obscured from view via hedges and tree planting. Low boundary walls are also common which also help to distinguish public and private space as well as provide residents with some screening from the traffic along Parkhall Road. They are mixed in style, design and age but most were built by the 1970s with some alterations over time. There are some interwar style housing with double bay windows and open archway porches, bungalows, and Edwardian properties which provide a link to the influences of the Historic Centre.



Earlier property along Parkhall Road

13.39 Properties within Coronation Avenue and Norwood Road date to the 1950s with homes built in semi-detached pairs arranged in symmetrical rectangular plots. Their design consists of a mixture of roughcast-rendered and painted cream or pastel coloured brickwork or concrete precast panels. They have substantial front gardens with some boundary fences or hedges to the public footway.

13.40 The northern part of the character area consist of Somersham Victory Hall, the Norwood Building and Scouts Hut as well as Norwood Playing Field, skatepark, tennis courts and pavilions. The building works on the Victory Hall started in 1986/87 and completed in 1991, it serves as a venue hire for events and as such is an important social and community hub for the village.

13.41 Development opportunities are limited to extensions and alterations to existing properties.

Development proposals should:

- Ensure extensions and alterations to existing properties are of an appropriate size and scale to the original dwelling and do not detract from the surrounding area.
- Be sympathetic to surrounding existing materials and colour palette.
- Promote high standards of design and architectural detailing.
- Protect the existing areas of open space and tree planting which contribute to the character of the area.
- Support initiatives for the creation of additional services and community facilities possibly through conversion or redevelopment.
- Incorporate renewable energy options where they are visually appropriate.

Somersham Character Area 7: The Trundle



The Trundle



Premier Express on the corner of Shortland Terraces

13.42 This is a large residential character area consisting of a mixture of housing types built throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s with some modern infill (building types 3D, 3E and 3F). It is located to the east of Parkhall Road and adjoins the Historic Centre to the south, Somersham Nature Reserve to the east and the Fen Margin Landscape Character Area to the north. While not all homes were built at the same time, properties demonstrate variations in design and materials but all share a consistent character.

13.43 The principal roads are the Trundle, Grange Road and Feoffees Road. Throughout the area, there are pockets of soft landscape and open space with tree planting which break up development and creates a more open and peaceful character complementing the residential and community uses. Norwood Road has the largest central green space with properties set around it. Additionally, the eastern edge of the area runs alongside the Somersham Nature Reserve with some streets having pedestrian access to it.

13.44 The Trundle is a main road running through this area linking through to Norwood Road and several other residential streets such as Robert Avenue, Ibbott Crescent, Harvey Drive and Loftsteads. Properties are mostly two storeys and semi-detached set rectangular plots, although there are pockets of single storey properties throughout some with large windows and dormer windows (for example Norwood Road, Feoffes Road and The Trundle). Garages are typically to the side with flat roofs creating space for on plot parking and also the opportunity for first floor extensions. The dominant materials and colour palette are buff brick, grey brick, some red brick, grey tiles, white render weatherboarding. A striking property is no.6 Shorthand Terrace which is three storeys with a steeply pitched roof to the main building and to a side extension creating a distinctive feature. The ground floor is used as a local shop. Another notable building is Windsor Court an 'L' shaped building painted white with red/brown window frames and panels. It consists of retirement housing built in 1970.



Windsor Court

13.45 Windsor Gardens located off Foeffes Road is a later addition to the character area built in the late 1980s/early 1990s. Properties include short terraces, semi-detached and detached houses with shallow pitched roofs constructed from sand coloured brick and dark roof tiles. There are also several blocks of which accommodate four maisonettes each making it a higher density area. The blocks consist of two rectangular buildings connected by a central entry way. There are a handful of bungalows as well adding greater diversity to types of the properties available here. There are large areas of green space too.



Windsor Gardens maisonettes

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13.46 This is a large area with opportunities for extensions and alterations to existing properties and the potential for some infill development.

Development proposals should:

- Ensure extensions and alterations to existing properties are of an appropriate size and scale to the original dwelling and do not detract from the surrounding area.
- Be sympathetic to the materials and colour palette in the immediate vicinity but which predominately consist of buff brick, grey brick, some red brick, grey tiles, white render weatherboarding.
- Ensure that new development responds positively to the specific opportunities available within the area.
- Support provision of renewable energy where visually appropriate.
- Consider how small scale infill or redevelopment opportunities can add diversity in design and positively balance their surroundings.
- Protect the existing trees where these contribute to the character of the street scene and consider ways of increasing vegetation cover where space and service restrictions permit.
- Support initiatives for the creation of additional services and community facilities within the residential area possibly through conversion or redevelopment.
- Promote opportunities for enhancement of amenity green spaces to provide increased opportunities for recreation and nature conservation and to help provide distinctive local landmarks.
- Maintain and enhance where possible opportunities for public rights of way and access points to nearby Somersham Nature Reserve.

Somersham Character Area 8: Queens Road



Queens Road chalet bungalows



Queens Road chalet bungalows with mature trees and greenspace

- 13.47** This is a small rectangular character area located in the north western corner of the village to the west of Parkhall Road. It consists of bungalow and chalet bungalow development dating from the 1960s and 1970s which reflect building type 3D. Rear gardens and hedges provide a clear boundary to the area where a public right of way runs along the western and northern edges of the character area with access from Bishops Way providing a link to the countryside.
- 13.48** It includes Queens Road, Manor Close, Bishops Close, Squire Close and Butts Close. The majority of the properties have steeply pitched roofs, a central chimney and large windows and are made from buff brick and dark roof tiles. Most have single garages with flat roofs located on the side elevation or garages that are integral to the property.
- 13.49** Properties have on-plot parking with reasonable set backs from the road resulting in increased vegetation and planting as well as some front gardens being paved for vehicle parking. On the corners of these streets and in front of many homes are substantial pockets of open space with trees planted throughout creating a green and pleasant feel to this lower density residential area and extenuating the spaciousness of development.
- 13.50** Development opportunities are limited to extensions and alterations to existing properties.

Development proposals should:

- Ensure extensions and alterations to existing properties are of an appropriate size and scale to the original dwelling and do not detract from the surrounding area.
- Be sympathetic to surrounding existing materials and colour palette of buff brick and dark roof tiles.
- Ensure that new development responds positively to the specific opportunities available within the area.
- Support provision of renewable energy where visually appropriate.
- Promote opportunities for enhancement of amenity green spaces to provide increased opportunities for recreation and nature conservation and to help provide distinctive local landmarks.
- Reinforce and encourage tree and hedgerow planting particularly as landscape buffers between properties and the countryside.
- Maintain and enhance where possible opportunities for public rights of way.

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Somersham Character Area 9: King Street



Style of housing found along King Street and White Hall Close. This is an example from White Hall Close



Meridian Close

- 13.51** This is a roughly 'L' shaped character area located to the west of Parkhall Road north of the Historic Centre and south of the Queens Road character area and are located to the south and west of Somersham Primary School. The principal road is King Street but the area also includes some smaller residential streets such as White Hall Close and Meridian Close. The properties located here are some of the later editions to the village built from the 1980s through to 2000s.
- 13.52** Properties are predominantly two storeys but there are some single storey ones with a mixture of gabled roof, steep gabled roofs and hipped roofs. They are typically detached, set in fairly large plots with pockets of green space creating an open feel with tree planting. Some trees within Meridian Close are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Materials include buff and red brick, red pantiles and rendered façades. There have been extensions and alterations to properties over time.
- 13.53** There is a public access route to the allotments and outwards into the open countryside. A key right of way leads from King Street along the back of these properties leading into the allotments but also continues north and connects to Parkhall Road at the northern most extent of the built edge of the village.
- 13.54** Development opportunities are limited to extensions and alterations to existing properties.

Development proposals should:

- Ensure extensions and alterations to existing properties are of an appropriate size and scale to the original dwelling and do not detract from the surrounding area.
- Be sympathetic to surrounding existing materials and colour palette of red and buff brick, red pantiles, white rendering.
- Promote high standards of design and architectural detailing.
- Protect the existing trees where these contribute to the character of the street scene and consider ways of increasing vegetation cover where space and service restrictions permit.
- Maintain and enhance where possible opportunities for public rights of way and access points to the allotment grounds and countryside.
- Support provision of renewable energy where visually appropriate.

Somersham Character Area 10: Somersham Local Nature Reserve



Lake within the Somersham Nature Reserve with a tree belt screening the impact of residential development in the background



Disused railway path to Somersham Nature Reserve

- 13.55** The line of the Great Northern and Great Eastern Joint Railway formed a strong edge to the eastern side of the village where the built form stopped apart from isolated clusters of properties such as Banks Avenue and Colnefields. The character area adjoins the far eastern edge of the Historic Centre and extends northwards into the Fen landscape along the boundary of the Trundle character area.
- 13.56** The site of the dismantled railway line is now a County Wildlife Site, known as Somersham Local Nature Reserve. It forms a soft edge to the village and has a mixture of natural features including a lake, wooded areas and open landscape. This mix has created an attractive area for leisure activities including walking and fishing. The site is also used for the grazing of horses and there are ponds with views across to the village. The substantial tree planting is focused along the edge of residential development and reduces the potential impact of such development on the open countryside. It also provides a scenic and biodiversity rich habitat for wildlife.
- 13.57** There are several pedestrian accesses to the Local Nature Reserve, including from Station Approach to the south; and Robert Avenue, Feoffees Road and Ibbott Crescent to the west.
- 13.58** The different character of this area enhances that of the Historic Centre and the designated Conservation Area as a whole by being a welcome contrast to the built up section of the village and is an indicator of the village's agricultural past. Therefore, the conservation of the Local Nature Reserve and its importance in the village and its residents as a source of enjoyment and leisure are key priorities.

Development proposals should:

- Promote opportunities for the enhancement of the Local Nature Reserve to provide increased opportunities for wildlife and nature conservation.
- Consider new pedestrian access points that link the Local Nature Reserve more effectively with the surrounding residential estates.
- Protect the existing wooded areas and mature trees and support replacement planting.
- Maintain the integrity of the tree screen around the Local Nature Reserve's boundaries.
- Consider opportunities to enhance the footpath network within the Local Nature Reserve.

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Somersham Character Area 11: Station Road/ Chatteris Road



Station Approach modern infill terraced development



Bank Avenue

- 13.59** This is another predominately linear character area which is consistent with Character Area 4 St Ives Road. Together they frame the village on the western and eastern sides with predominantly residential development fading out into the countryside creating transitional points upon arrival and exit of the village.
- 13.60** This is a mixed area with many properties built in the 1920s with some infill development over time; as a result building types range from 3B, 3D, 3E and 3F. Properties have a strong connection to the surrounding countryside with some bordering Somersham Nature Reserve. Along the rear boundary of properties located on the northern side of Chatteris Road there is a dense tree line which shields them from the wider countryside and creates a green and natural feel. For properties located on the southern side of Chatteris Road, Cranbrook Drain runs along their rear gardens meaning plots are of irregular size.
- 13.61** Bank Avenue is a small cluster of properties built in the 1920s and provides some in depth development. Properties have white render with red brick detailing on the corner of properties and dark roof tiles. Properties are semi-detached set within regular plots and with limited fencing or hedges creating an open feel and little distinction between public and private space. Some properties along Chatteris Road also reflect this style. Some small scale infill has taken place, most notably 10a Bank Avenue which is has a slightly larger footprint and is a detached property, mirroring this, a further detached infill property has been approved between nos. 8 and 9 Bank Avenue.
- 13.62** Colnefields is an isolated cluster of properties with two points of access from Chatteris Road. Properties were mainly built in the 1920s and 1930s and consist of a mixture of two storey and single storey properties which have been altered and extended over time. They are obscured from view from Chatteris Road.
- 13.63** Redevelopment of the eastern end of Station Approach to a mix of 15 houses and flats arranged within terraced units with gated access to a rear car parking area for residents was approved in 2006. They reflect building type 3F. They are elevated due to the configuration of the historic highway arising from the former railway and station yard which connects to Chatteris Road (B1050). Their terraced design creates a continuous built frontage which follows a slight bend in the road. To the west of these and between Somersham Telephone Exchange, two further modern properties have been constructed continuing the building line from the historic centre outwards.



Colnefields

- 13.64** Further development is allocated within the [Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036](#) under site allocation SM5 (North of the Bank) in this vicinity. The allocation seeks lower density design with landscaping towards the north and west of the site reflecting the transition to open countryside and proximity to the Local Nature Reserve respectively. It also identifies the development should provide a comprehensive package of community benefits including enhancements to the local rights of way network, access to the Local Nature Reserve to the north-west and cycleway improvements. The site adjoins a bus depot to which a robust landscape screen should be provided.
- 13.65** This is a varied character area with scope to alter and extend existing properties with some remaining opportunities for infill development. Larger development proposals must consider how safe access can be achieved from Chatteris Road and how landscape and countryside impacts can be reduced and mitigated.

Development proposals should:

- Consider how small scale infill development opportunities can positively balance their surroundings and be sensitively integrated.
- Ensure extensions and alterations to existing properties are of an appropriate size and scale to the original dwelling and do not detract from the surrounding area.
- Be sympathetic to the materials and colour palette in the immediate vicinity.
- Ensure that new development responds positively to the specific opportunities available within the area.
- Ensure safe and appropriate access from Chatteris Road and Station Approach.
- Protect the existing trees where these contribute to the character of the street scene and consider ways of increasing vegetation cover where space and service restrictions permit.
- Retain and encourage further tree and hedgerow planting particularly as landscape buffers to developments that border with the open countryside and Somersham Nature Reserve.
- Maintain and enhance where possible opportunities for public rights of way and access points to nearby Somersham Nature Reserve.
- Support proposals where they encourage active modes of transport and improve opportunities for walking and cycling through footpaths and cycleways to the main village.