

HOLT CONSERVATION AREA



Character appraisal and management proposals



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Holt Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan
PART 1 CHARACTER APPRAISAL



1 Summary

1.1 Key characteristics

This Character Appraisal concludes that the following are the key characteristics of the Holt Conservation Area:

- For much of the town's history, agricultural markets were the main source of income. Their importance is reflected by the rebuilding of the town around the market place after the fire of 1708.
- Most of the buildings within the Conservation Area date from the Georgian and early Victorian periods, they have a similar character and scale, and use a common range of building materials.
- The historic core of the town is rectangular in plan, bordered by Market Place, Bull Street, White Lion Street and Shirehall Plain. The High Street extends away to the west from this, encouraging more linear development.
- The main thoroughfare through Holt is Market Place and High Street, which comprise the main commercial centre.
- The Conservation Area is enclosed on the northern, southern and western sides by 20th century development.
- Range of small independent shops.
- A medium sized supermarket and car park situated on the south side of the town centre.
- There is a sharp division between the streets and open fields on the east and west sides.

1.2 Key issues

Based on the prevalent characteristics identified in the following appraisal, a number of issues have been identified and are listed below. These form the basis for the management proposals in the second part of this document.

- Need to review the Conservation Area boundary.
- Some poor modern shop fronts and signage lowering the quality of the streetscape.
- Widespread on-street parking
- Indifferent quality and myriad of street surfaces and street furniture.
- Neglected alleyways and uncoordinated street lighting.
- Permitted development resulting in the loss of architectural detail.
- Permitted but detrimental alterations and extensions
- Need to improve the quality of design for new developments.
- Need to adopt a list of Buildings of Local Interest.
- Need to ensure quality of 'visitor' experience.

2 Introduction

Part 1 of this document identifies the unique qualities of the Holt Conservation Area which make it special and distinctive and which should be conserved and enhanced.

Part 2 Management Proposals identifies future actions and enhancements in the Holt Conservation Area.

2.1 The Holt Conservation Area

The centre of Holt was designated a Conservation Area in December 1974. It covers the historic centre of Holt, and includes primarily early-mid Victorian housing to the north and green spaces bordering the town on the east and west sides.

The first appraisal of the Conservation Area was carried out for the NNDC in 1999, by Peter Tollhurst. He concluded that the Conservation Area included the best of Holt's townscape, and needed very little alteration. The report highlighted the generally disappointing quality of some recent retail developments. It also made recommendations for the improvement of street surfaces and street furniture.

As part of a national government-led reappraisal of Conservation Areas, the following report was commissioned in March 2008. The survey was carried out between April-June 2008.

2.2 The purpose of a conservation area appraisal

Conservation Areas are designated under the provision of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. A conservation area is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these Conservation Areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development within a Conservation Area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

In response to these statutory requirements, this appraisal document defines and records the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. The appraisals conform to English Heritage guidance as set out in Guidance on conservation area appraisals (February 2006) and Guidance on the management of conservation areas (February 2006). Additional government guidance regarding the management of historic buildings and conservation areas is set out within Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG 15). Government advice on archaeology is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology (PPG16).

This document therefore seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the Conservation Area and identify the issues which threaten its significance and unique character (part 1: Character Appraisal).
- Provide guidelines to prevent erosion of character and achieve enhancement (part 2: Management Proposals).



2.3 The planning policy context

This appraisal provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the Holt Conservation Area can be assessed. It should be read in conjunction with the wider development plan policy framework produced by North Norfolk District Council. The framework is set out in a number of documents:

- North Norfolk Local Development Framework: Core Strategy (adopted 2008)
- North Norfolk Local Development Framework: Site Specific Proposals (timetabled for adoption December 2010)
- North Norfolk Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2008)
- North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment, Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2009)

Also relevant are national policy guidance as follows:

- Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment
- Heritage White Paper, March 2007. 'Heritage Protection for the 21st Century'

3 Location and Setting

3.1 Location and context

Holt is a former market town sited three miles (five kilometres) from the coast. It is at the western end of the Cromer Ridge, a glacial moraine of sandy soil. The town is well served by roads linking it to surrounding villages and to the larger settlements of Fakenham, Cromer and Norwich.



Figure 1 : Countryside immediately to the West of Holt

Holt enjoys a particularly attractive rural setting. To the north, the Ridge slopes down towards the coastal villages at the edge of the saltmarsh; Cley next the Sea, Kelling and Salthouse. On the west side is the picturesque Glaven Valley.

The town has long associations with Gresham's School. Originally within the town, the school has relocated to the outskirts on the east side.

The south side of Holt is separated from the centre by the A148 road. This allows traffic to bypass the centre of the town, but also separates it from the woods to the south and an important local amenity, Holt Country Park.

During the twentieth century, Holt's role as a market town diminished, and the market closed in 1960. The town is now a minor service centre for its residents and the surrounding villages. Holt's economy is bolstered by the substantial numbers of tourists which it attracts each summer.

3.2 General character and plan form

The original village was centred round the parish church. After the fire of 1708, the focus for rebuilding became the Market Place. The new centre was a rectangular area created by Market Place, Bull Street, White Lion Street and Shirehall Plain; there was also some linear development, following the High Street away to the west. The majority of houses in the Conservation Area are Georgian or early Victorian.

During the early to mid-Victorian periods, development was primarily linear, following the line of roads leading to the centre, particularly New Street and Albert Street. Twentieth century housing has occupied the spaces left by the Victorians, infilling the areas between the roads, and expanding into the fields to the south and south-east. This has resulted in the town having a rectilinear "L" shaped plan.

For most its history the growth of Holt was gradual, and its historic architecture was retained and re-used, rather than being threatened by any large scale development. As a consequence, the general character of the centre remains very much that of a late-Georgian market town with two and occasionally three-storey buildings with brick or rendered fronts and pantiled roofs. Holt's Victorian housing tended to continue the understated styles and materials of the Georgian period, so that apart from the occasional building, such as the Gothic Revival school at the east end of the Market Place, and the Methodist Chapel at the west end, the visual transition from Georgian to Victorian architecture is gradual and harmonious.

One of the most significant changes to the centre has been the construction of a large Budgens store and car park on the south side of High St/Market Place. This is a visual intrusion into what is otherwise a small-scale and relatively homogeneous



town centre. There has also been some new smaller-scale retail development, where courtyards have been created or re-used, lined with small shops. While this sort of development is preferable to the 20th century shopping arcades which blight many towns, they lack the picturesque element which makes Holt's older streetscapes so appealing.

3.3 Landscape setting

Some early visitors paid more attention to Holt's setting than to the town itself. Visiting the town in 1821, William Cobbett observed "From Holt you look to the distance of seven or eight miles, over a very fine valley".

The town is at the western end of the Cromer Ridge, a glacial moraine of sandy soil which runs parallel to the sea. The region is recognised today as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There is a good deal of woodland around Holt, particularly on the south side. This includes areas of older woodland and more recent plantations of pine trees, which make use of areas of poor acidic soil. The plantations on the east side are broken up by Gresham's School and Kelling Hospital; both have large grounds. Next to the Hospital, the A148 by-pass curves round to the south, following the line of a former railway, while the original main road continues on into the town. Near to the old road is the railway terminus, managed by the North Norfolk Railway.

There are smaller areas of woodland to the north, where the Ridge slopes down towards the coastal villages of Cley-next-the-Sea, Kelling and Salthouse.

The most important area of landscape is the Glaven Valley. In addition to being an extremely attractive area, it is an area of Special Scientific Interest, with good habitats for plants and wildlife, including endangered species such as the otter.

4 Historic Development and Archaeology

4.1 The origins and historic development of the area

The name Holt is thought to derive from the Anglo-Saxon word for 'wood', probably a reference to the woodland which surrounded the original settlement.

The settlement is included in the Domesday survey of 1086, when its manor had 5 acres of meadow, five mills and a port, assumed to have been Cley. A market is also mentioned, although it was not until 1309 that Edward I officially granted Holt a market.

A grammar school was established to the east of Holt around 1550 by Sir John Gresham. He converted a manor house to a school and endowed it with lands to cover the education of 50 free scholars.

The original settlement was centred round the church; much of this was destroyed on May Day in 1708, when a fire spread through the town. The large scale rebuilding that followed was supported by public donations, encouraged by a royal brief.

The new centre for the rebuilding was the market place, which was reduced in size when new houses were built on the north side between the present Bull Street and Market Place. It is possible these houses occupy the sites of former market stalls.



Figure 2 : Detail of the title map of Holt, showing the town at the beginning of the Victorian period (courtesy Norfolk Record Office)

Holt's recent history has been that of a moderately prosperous market town, dependent on weekly agricultural markets for much of its income; old documents refer to the town as "Holt Market". No great changes of fortune are recorded. A Norfolk guide of 1829 describes it as an "irregular and ill built town, though considerably improved of late years", noting also, "Holt fairs are no longer genteelly attended" –although it is not clear if this reflects the changing tastes of the gentry or a decline in the quality of the fair. William Cobbett, visiting around 1821 had been more positive, encountering "...a little old fashioned substantially built market town".

The town grew steadily at the beginning of the 19th century. In 1801, there were 1004 inhabitants; by 1845 there were 1604. An 1845 guide noted "many neat houses have been built in the town and suburbs during the last fifteen years, and the surrounding country much improved by plantations. The streets are well paved and lighted with gas from the works erected in 1841...". A Wesleyan chapel was erected in 1837, and a school opened in 1845. Businesses within the town catered for the agricultural community, such as a cooper, a horse-breaker, a rope and twine maker, as



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well as three blacksmiths, one of whom was also a farrier. There were also shops serving more everyday needs, such as butchers and bakers. Holt had no less than eight public houses, which probably derived much of their trade from the weekly market. Many of the houses on the north side of the town date from the early Victorian expansion.

The gradual process of civic improvement continued during the mid-nineteenth century. A waterworks and police station were opened in 1855, and a former Baptist Chapel was converted to a Corn Hall in 1857. A substantial Methodist Free Church was built at the west end of Church Street in 1863. White's Directory for 1863 records "the Market Place and High Street contain many spacious and well-stocked shops".

Despite the growing number of amenities in the town, there may have been limited opportunities for employment. The number of inhabitants fell after 1851, and there was only a modest increase in numbers by 1871. In his "History of Holt", the Rev. Lewis Radford attributed this to townspeople leaving for the colonies.

The town's prosperity (then as now) must have been helped by the presence of Gresham's School. Perhaps it encouraged the two booksellers and printers trading in the town in 1845. One resident in 1864 was "Montague Eugene, foreign master at the Grammar School".

In October 1884, the Eastern and Midlands railway opened a terminus at Holt. This did not result in any great expansion of the town, but it was still beneficial. Holt's traders had long been dependent on sea-going boats from Cley or Blakeney and local carters to transport goods to and from the market. Now, cattle trucks could deliver stock, and produce including milk could be sent to the London market. In addition, the railways made it easier for pupils to arrive for

Gresham's school and patients for the Kelling Sanatorium. Both institutions prospered; by 1900 Gresham's was the largest educational charity in England.



Figure 3 A detail of the first Ordnance Survey map from the 1880s shows the early-mid Victorian growth on the north side of the town.

Holt market continued to dominate commercial life in the town for the first part of the twentieth century, particularly the cattle market, but by 1960 it had declined in importance and was closed. As a result, the second half of the 20th century saw Holt change from being a market town to one increasingly dependent upon visitors and holiday makers. The attractive town centre and the presence of Gresham's School have attracted affluent visitors, and a number of shops have opened to cater for their needs. The quality of the environment was further improved when a bypass was opened in the 1990s, reducing the amount of through traffic.

Budgen's opened a supermarket to the south of the High Street in 1985, and together with a large car park, this considerably changed the character of the area. The demand for more shops has led to the creation of "yards" adjacent to the main streets, with small shops and cafés, such as Apple Yard and Chapel Yard.

While the centre of the Holt appears prosperous, some of the outlying streets in the Conservation Area show signs of neglect; a reminder that the town has

underlying social problems, and that a considerable number of families are on low incomes.

4.2 The archaeological significance and potential of the area

Neolithic flint axe heads provide the earliest record of human activity in the area. In addition to a small range of artefacts, the evidence from the Bronze Age includes several barrows, including a round barrow in Holt Country Park, and ring ditches. There is no record of any Iron Age activity in the area and only a small number of finds are dateable to the Roman period. Peacock Lane, on the east side of the town is said to be on the course of a Roman Road.

Roman coins have been found on the north side of the Parish, and a Saxon cemetery has also been discovered nearby, along with mediaeval and later artefacts.

The town's oldest surviving building is the parish church. Although this was gutted by fire at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, the piscina, internal arcades and the chancel are 14th century, while the font is believed to be 13th century.

Within the town, there are traces of a number of post mediaeval buildings (covered in a section 6.4). The oldest town houses to survive are a row of cottages of c.1550 on the west side of Chapel Yard. There is doubtless more evidence of early structures within the present buildings of the town, so whenever alterations are proposed to Holt's historic buildings, the opportunity should be taken to record any early features which may be revealed.



5 Spatial Analysis

5.1 Character and interrelationship of spaces within the area

The Market Place was historically one of the most significant spaces within the town. For much of its existence Holt's economy was dependent upon its market, and this became the focal point for rebuilding after the town's disastrous fire. Today it is reduced in size, as houses were built (possibly on the site of former market stalls) on the north side, forming part of the present Fish Hill. The east end of the Market Place is now the site of the town's war memorial. Market Place is an open space where the visitor can stand back to appreciate the small-scale Georgian and vernacular character of the main street. Just as Market Place begins the main thoroughfare through the town at the west end, Obelisk Plain closes it at the west end. Like Market Place, Obelisk Plain has no specialised role, but its importance as one of the gateways to the town centre is marked by two historic features, the cast iron fountain/street lamp "Blind Sam", and a milestone believed to be a 17th century gatepost from Melton Constable Hall.



Figure 4 : Market Place from the south-east

There is a small open area where Market Place and High Street meet; it serves no particular purpose but is a pleasant space which punctuates, or adds variety to the main street of the town. To the north of this

is the open area of Shirehall Plain, with "Byfords" (Nos 1-3), a particularly attractive row of houses on the west side. Unfortunately, the main role of this space, which is the meeting point for several roads, seems to be car parking. Star Plain within Fish Hill is also little more than a parking area.

Apart from car parks, most of the open spaces within the town are courtyards surrounded by shops, such as Chapel Yard and Lees Yard. The only spaces which might serve as informal meeting places in which to rest and socialise are the churchyard, or the "Methodist Memorial Garden" on Albert Street. While these are peaceful and attractive areas, they are also set well away from the commercial heart of Holt. Only the inadequate open space in front of Barclays Bank on the High Street, with the town sign and a pair of benches, is well positioned to serve as a central meeting point. Over the years, Holt lost its original market place which was the site of The Feathers garden and its most recent market place became Budgen's car park. The town is now left without a definitive public space. The town does now have a Community Centre on Kerridge Way, to the east of Budgens, the centre was built by public fund raising in the 1970's.

On the east and west sides of the town are green open spaces which have a primarily recreational use. The grass playing fields on the east side are private, belonging to Gresham's school. Their main contribution to the town is to provide an open and attractive setting for those entering the town from this side.

To the west, there are areas of less carefully managed landscape, including a field to the west of Valley Lane and a large private garden alongside. Little Hills, or Horn Pits, on the east side of the Letheringsett Hill road is a small woodland area included within the Conservation Area. It is open to the public,

and part of it is given over to recreational uses, with a cleared area including seats at the north end, and footpaths running through the trees. Like the open spaces to the east, it creates an attractive entranceway to the town.

5.2 Key views and vistas

The main views in Holt are to be found along the entrance roads. On Cromer Road and Holt Road, there are panoramic views across the well-tended Gresham School playing fields. This area would have little of great interest, however, if it were not for the town's church which is slightly raised up and surrounded by trees in the middle distance. The playing fields are surrounded by a recent housing estate and school outbuildings.

The view looking away from the town to the south is less positive. Station Road and Norwich Road both connect with the A148 by-pass, with views across the by-pass to a modern housing estate, and in the case of Norwich Road, a scruffy roundabout and some indifferently maintained buildings.

Within the centre, the streets are densely lined with houses, and give little opportunity for wide views. The entrance ways to the centre, from the Cromer Road and facing Fish Hill, and from Station Road approaching the Market Place, are brief openings from which to assess the charms of the town, as is Obelisk Plain to the west. The best views are from the area of the war memorial on Market Place, and Obelisk Plain. In both cases, the road narrows as it extends away from the viewer, giving the opportunity to appreciate the many attractive modestly-sized buildings which line the town's main road.



Figure 5 : View at the west end of the High Street

There are few strong views looking away from the centre. Only at the west end of the High Street, where the houses on either side frame Thomas Jekyll's dramatic church and Hill House in their leafy setting, this is a view which contributes significantly to the townscape. Running alongside these buildings, Letheringsett Road provides an enclosed leafy view, particularly for those entering the town from the north.



6 Character Analysis

6.1 Activity, prevailing or former uses within the area

For most of its history, Holt has been a small provincial market town. It provided a local centre for the sale of agricultural produce and a convenient location for craftsmen serving the farming community, as well as a range of shops.

The market changed location at some point, moving from Market Place to an area behind The Feathers. There is little trace of the former market today, but it is remembered in street names such as Fish Hill and Bull Street, and there said to be some iron tethering rings for cattle in a wall behind the Feathers Hotel (not seen). It has been suggested that the group of houses on the south side of Fish Hill occupy the sites of former market stalls, and that this accounts for their irregular arrangement.

Loyne's Yard at the west end of the High Street is remembered for having a blacksmith's shop, and there is some wrought ironwork on the end wall. Another former forge at the entrance to Chapel Yard was demolished to create a wider access road. A courtyard behind the former Carpenter's Arms pub is thought to have been home to the town's carpenters; other trades are more difficult to locate. Butchers, bakers, even clock makers were represented in the town, and as the industrial revolution gathered pace in the nineteenth century, the number of shops and the range of manufactured products for sale would have increased. The Baker family, still trading in the town today, started as ironmongers in 1782. Most of the early shop fronts have been replaced, and few survive from before the close of the Victorian period. One tradesman is remembered by Lee's Yard, which owes its name to Alfred Lee, who owned a warehouse here. The

town's corn exchange was once on the site of the Shire Hall, which was rebuilt in the 18th century, serving as a council chamber and a magistrate's court. In 1857 the corn exchange was set up at a former chapel, Oddfellow's Hall in Albert Street. As the town's economy grew, particularly after the arrival of the railway in 1884, banks would have been attracted to the town.

Townsperson and visitors from the surrounding area might well have made use of the local inns. The larger inns would have offered accommodation, particularly for those travelling by coach. A coach between London and Dereham once stopped in the town three times each week. The Feathers is an outstanding example of a traditional inn which has also been home to an excise office. Petty sessions were held here, and it even had a post office for a time. Until recent times there were still 10 public houses in the town; some, such as The Star on Fish Hill, and The Carpenter's Arms on Norwich Road, have now been converted to shops and accommodation.

There are a surprising number of nonconformist chapels or churches within the town. The first Presbyterian minister was licensed in Holt in 1672, and Quakers are listed in the parish register from 1700. Some chapels such as Oddfellows Hall and Lion House in the High Street have obscure origins; the first is thought to have started life as a Calvinist Chapel, and the second may have had a brief use as a Wesleyan Chapel around 1850. More substantial examples are St John's Hall on New Street, and the Methodist Church opposite Obelisk Plain.



Figure 6 : St John Hall, New Street

Another recurrent theme in Holt's history is education, thanks to the early presence of Gresham's School. The Old School House is built on the site of the original Gresham's school; today it serves as a preparatory school. In the 19th century, the town had several schools with connections to the local church, followed by a Board School established on New Street in 1851 (now a dilapidated garage). A larger school was built in 1910 on the Norwich Road.

Today, Holt is no longer a market town. It does still serve as a service centre for the surrounding villages, the town's shops are increasingly catering for affluent visitors, drawn here by the presence of Gresham's School, or as tourists during the summer months. Shopping has become the prevailing activity in Holt. A large Budgen's supermarket has opened to the south of the centre, and a number of smaller courtyard developments around the periphery of the town centre, with more specialised shops and cafés.

6.2 Character areas, the qualities of the buildings and their contribution to the area

Four distinct character areas can be clearly defined within the Conservation Area. Please see Appendix 1 (Map 1) for the location of each character area.

1. Traditional/historic townscape

This covers the traditional close-knit housing along the streets within the town centre, and the roads to the north including New Street, Albert Street and Mill Street. Most of the houses are in short terraces and front directly onto the street.

2. More dispersed housing with more green/open space

Houses on the approach roads, e.g. Cromer Road, Station Road and Norwich Road have been identified as a Character Area. The more recent housing developments, such as The Fairstead and The Beeches have also been included.

3. Modern retail developments

This covers the courtyards developed at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries. Older yards such as within Fish Hill are described in Character Area 1.

4. Open/greenfield areas

The school playing fields are included here, the town church and churchyard and the green areas on the west side.

6.2.1 Character Area 1: Traditional/historic townscape

Market Place

Market Place and its continuation, High Street, form the main road through Holt. The Market Place is triangular in shape. It tapers and slopes gradually up towards the High Street to the west. On the east side, the Old School, now Gresham's Pre- preparatory School, faces the Market Place. The east end also has the town's war memorial, with a tall block-shaped base. It is set on a cobbled traffic island, accompanied by



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planters and a flagpole. Traffic is consistently heavy through the town on all weekdays. At weekends and during the tourist season, traffic levels increase further. There are parking spaces along most of the south side of the street (usually filled), and a small number of spaces on the north side.

Most of the houses on the north and south sides are two storeys high, arranged in short terraces. The houses have a common 18th century character, usually with shops in the ground floor. Side roads and lanes lead off from Market Place, but as most are narrow they do not break up the feeling of enclosure created by the terraced housing. The main exception is on the north-east side, where there is a wide opening to a yard in Fish Hill.

The majority of house fronts are rendered and painted; a few have exposed brickwork. The roofs tend to be of red or grey-glazed pantiles. There has been a considerable loss of chimneys.

The oldest shop front are probably mid to late Victorian, any earlier shop fronts have been replaced. Apart from one or two incomplete inter-war shop fronts, recent shop fronts are unexceptional in design. In some cases, the new shop fronts, with their large plate glass windows and brightly coloured fascia boards create poor contrast with the more traditional and weathered upper floors.

A yard on the north side of Fish Hill has been included with Market Place, together with some of the smaller side alleys and courtyards.

East side

Filling the east side of Market Place is the Old School. Built in 1858, this was the main school building before Gresham's moved to Cromer Road. It is an imposing presence, and an immediate focal point due to its size and the strong red colour of the brickwork.

The main body of the building is terminated by two forward facing gables. The windows are wide, with mullion and transom frames. The yard in front of the school is enclosed by a tall hedge above a white brick and flint boundary wall.



Figure 7 : Gresham's Old School

The pavement in front is of good quality paving slabs. In the centre is the Millennium bus shelter, in red brick with a plain tiled roof and clock tower. There is also a less appealing modern telephone box, a design which as Bill Bryson observed, resembles a shower cubicle. On the south corner with Station Road is a cast iron signpost – a welcome survival, although at present without any signs.

North Side



Figure 8 : Fish Hill seen from Market Place

The north side of Market Place begins with the houses of Fish Hill. The first house facing the street has a characterful shape thanks to a number of alterations and rebuilding over the years. At its east end is a single storey lean-to with a snack bar. More obtrusive and out-of-character is the main shop front, with a crude box-like bay and a bright red fascia board advertising a mobile phone company. The smaller side window of "Hart's Flowers" (No 31) to the

south is more in character, set flush with the wall surface –such simple shop windows were once common in the town. However, the shop deserves a more tasteful fascia board than the present example, with its dayglo-pink rectangles.

Hart’s Flowers has its main shop windows on the west side. While there are replacement windows and a modern door, the shop front still has a generally traditional appearance.

The house to the west of the alley (No 31), must be the most unsympathetic conversion of a historic building in the town. Only the pantiled roof remains above the harsh new façade. The rectilinear shop front, together with its projecting metallic fascia and “modernistic” first floor windows typify the worst of mid-20th century design. Number 27 “Feeney newsagent’s” to the west, is constructed of chalk bricks covered in roughcast render. The newsagent’s shop has some very traditional shallow bay windows. Their appearance would be much improved if the crude wooden frames for the folding canopies were removed. The pavement surface here is poor, a mixture of grey and red brickweave, paving slabs and cracked concrete.

After this house there is a wide entranceway to a yard in Fish Hill. The houses visible through the opening are particularly attractive.

Fish Hill yard (adjoining Market Place)

A wide opening joins this yard to Market Place. There are small lanes paved with red brickweave leading off from the yard to the north, east and west. At its north-east corner the yard connects with Star Plain (described with Bull Street). The yard has a tarmac surface with a single yellow line and no pavements; some of the tarmac is in poor repair.



Figure 9 : Shops within a courtyard on Fish Hill

Entering the yard, the side of “Kebab Delight” (No 25) has a scatter of modern windows and an unidentified structure enclosed by a tall fence. There is a narrow passage behind the building, connecting with a road to the east.

At the south-west corner, “Art-e-fax” (No 1) has a well-restored facade with a fine shop front. It is part of a good group with the second hand bookshop alongside. The bookshop (No 3&5) has attractive signs and a traditional awning advertising the shop’s wares. Only the lurid bright red canopy of the Hatfield Hines gallery diminishes the charms of the group.

The pair of shops to the east are less attractive, with inappropriate shop fronts and first floor replacement windows. “Gazelle” (No 7) has a wide fascia board which looks as though it was intended for a larger shop.

At the north east corner is a narrow passage leading to Star Plain and to Bull Street. The passage has a cracked concrete surface and concrete bollards.

On the east side of the yard, number four “Glo Glo” hair stylists has a reasonable double-fronted shop front and good first floor sashes, but also a characterless commercially produced fascia board clipped onto the front. Number two “Cobwebs” shop next door has more appropriate signage,



but some unsympathetic windows on the first floor. A narrow red brickweave passage leads down the side of “Cobwebs” to White Lion Street. At right angles to this, there is another passage leading to Market Place.

Most of the north side of the yard is taken up by the back of the unfortunate Alliance and Leicester building. It has a pair of modern first floor windows and the town council’s notice board. Next to this is the roughcast-rendered and green painted rear elevation of “Feeney newsagents”.

Market Place, north side, continued

“Kebab Delight” on the east side of the entranceway, is a traditional building whose character has been lost by the careless replacement of features. The first floor windows are poor modern replacements, and the shop front is (at best), a functional design, with a luridly coloured fascia board and canopy.

A lane runs down the west side of “Kebab Delight”, past the brick and rendered rear elevations of houses and an unattractive single storey “Ladbrokes” (No 23A) betting shop with brightly coloured advertisements. The tarmac surface of the lane is pitted.

The travel agent’s which follows the lane is a plain brick building. It is enlivened by a Victorian double-fronted shop, which is tastefully painted in blue and white. With such a good front, it is difficult to understand how the poor sign above the entablature was allowed, particularly as the building is listed. There is some rot at the bases of the window sills, which should be remedied before it spreads further.

Next to this is a three-storey white brick house with two modern shop fronts, both belonging to “Siddalls” (No 17). The shop fronts are out of character with the building, in particular the larger ‘space age’ front with its angled glass window. On the west side

there is a former bank. This narrow Victorian building has a charming partly half-timbered front. It is now a solicitor’s office, and the firm’s brass name plate is a fine addition to the facade. The red-brickweave forecourt with a bench and a plastic planter are a poor surround for such an attractive building.

On the west side is a narrow lane which initially runs to the north, then angles to the west. Down the west side of the lane there are some unremarkable recent shop windows and doors. The lane is home to a number of wheelie bins. An old cast iron bollard is a more attractive feature, set to one side of the adjacent shop, “Gun Hill” (No 9).

“Gun Hill” is a rendered house which has a pair of shop fronts (now converted to one) with mid-Victorian features, including fluted half-columns with Ionic capitals. The shop doors appear modern, but fit in reasonably well. The remaining flat roofed dormers at the front and on the east side are also original features.



Figure 10 : HSBC Bank, High Street

Next is the HSBC Bank (No 9), a later 20th century building. While it continues the profile of the house to the west, and there are three first floor sashes, there is little else to commend it. No lintels or brick window arches break up the brightly coloured brickwork, and for some reason the bank front is set back within a rectangular recess.

There are four shops within the pair of houses that bring Market Place to a close these are all new additions. They have largely intact Victorian shop fronts with pilasters and part-glazed doors, which are complemented by good signage and paintwork. The sign for Lane's jewellers stands out, with its raised gilded lettering. On the corner, the barometer built into the pediment above Brown & Co's shop is a pleasing touch. It is a reminder that Holt was once a rural market town, and that severe weather could be devastating to crops and the local economy. The clock above the shop is also an interesting feature, although it was not working during the two months that this survey was carried out.

Market Place (south side)

The Market Place starts on the south side with the Railway Tavern, a well-presented 18th century inn with moulded stucco architraves around the windows and door. The detached house next door has similar proportions, but has lost most of its character. There are four uninteresting shop fronts, poor replacement first floor windows and ungainly tall dormers.

There is an alley on the west side of this building, leading to a gravel yard. The yard has a mixture of old brick and cobble buildings, modern sheds and garages.



Figure 11 : Market Place, The Railway Tavern and adjoining.

After the alley is a pink coloured terrace with the Bircham Gallery and part of Baker's and Lerner's department store (Nos 16-22). The

Gallery has a good shallow bay window and a pedimented doorway. Baker's and Lerner's is a rare survival of an inter-war shop front, with polished stone stall risers and a fascia with gilded lettering. Sadly, part of one shop window has been replaced by a new timber window and a door. Baker's and Lerner's shop front continues across the next two red brick houses; the first is of two storeys, the next of three. The projecting shopfront has ornamental brick pilasters and windows with well-designed glazing bars. Some of the brickwork has been painted in the shop's livery of dark blue and white.

Set back from the main buildings of Baker's and Lerner's, is **Custance Court**, with a wrought iron arch over the entrance. To the rear is a single-storey clothing department, but its materials and design do not match the quality of the surrounding buildings. The shop windows look as though they are sections taken from a u-PVC conservatory.

To the west of Custance Court, Baker's and Lerner's shop front continues. This part of the shop is recent, but designed to blend in with the earlier buildings, with very acceptable shop fronts. The only element which jars is the pink hue of the brickwork, but this will doubtless tone down in time. **Baker's Yard** follows, an open area extending to the south, with side entrances to various departments of the store, and a small parking area. The entranceway is of red brickweave, but most of the yard is of concrete. The Yard has a satisfying mix of the old and the new, incorporating several traditional buildings and boundary walls in brick and flint. There is a lively atmosphere, as the yard is filled by the bustle of customers and staff.

Next is the Feathers Inn (No 6); its Georgian façade has wide ground floor sashes and timber doorcases. The colour scheme and signage are flawless. The roofline of the Feathers is continued by the last house on the north side of Market Place number two,



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this has a bleak appearance, with a characterless “Spar” shopfront at the west end. The house seems to have lost its doorcase, and the rectangular fanlight above the door is filled by louvres. However the original sash windows remain and add character to the building. A passage between this building and the nearby Lloyd’s bank leads to Budgen’s car park and the **Feathers Yard** (described in Character Area 3). A red tarmac path leads the eye along the passage, past the serried planters at the side of the Feathers and a fine old house (now the Salvation Army shop) until the brick and flint end wall of a modern bank checks the view.

It is unfortunate that the Feathers, one of Holt’s best buildings, has some uninspiring street furniture positioned in front. There is an indifferently designed streetlamp with a disc shaped light and a pelican crossing with some cheap looking railings on either side.

High Street



Figure 12 : The junction of Market Place and High Street, south side.

The High Street continues the line of Market Place, running east-west and ending at the junction with Norwich Road/Letheringsett Hill. The houses have a similar character to those of Market Place, and on the south side there is no clear division between the two streets. On the north side the entrance to Shire Hall Plain separates Market Place from the High Street.

An open space is created where the High Street meets Shirehall Plain and Market Place, with the buildings at the end of Fish Hill projecting out on the east side. High Street narrows at its centre, and widens again towards the west end, where it becomes Obelisk Plain. A large gothic revival chapel closes the view at the west end of High Street, just as Gresham’s School checks the view at the east end of Market Place. About half way along on the north side, New Street begins.

South side

The first building, Lloyds Bank (No 1), is recognisably a Georgian town house, but modern ground floor windows and doors have eroded its character. Perhaps worst of all, the replacement pantiled roof is devoid of chimneys, producing a most unsatisfying profile. A flat roofed extension on the west side appears old, with some traditional windows. A cash machine within this extension gives the impression of having been rammed carelessly into a ground floor window.

Following Lloyds is a low yellow brick Georgian house with two shop fronts which seem to have been added in the Victorian period. Their fascia boards almost touch the sills of the first floor windows. The shops are a visually awkward addition, although they have some good details. The Break Charity shop (No 7) has a complete 19th or early 20th century front.

The Manor House (No 13) which follows is of similar period, a prominent building in red brick and flint with a fine stone doorcase flanked by Doric pilasters. Once again, two shop fronts have replaced the ground floor windows. Although the shop fronts are modern, they are well detailed with attractive margin lights around the windows.

Manor Mews, which runs up the west side of this house, is little more than an alley with a mix of old and new brick and flint houses. There is a clothing shop on the east side and an “antique emporium” to the west. The antique shop is an interesting adaptation of an outbuilding. It has a wide dormer in the roof, well-finished windows and a part-glazed door.

Benbow’s Fruiterers (No 17), on the west side of Manor Mews, is, by contrast, a poor conversion of a traditional house. The three first floor replacement windows are nearly square in shape with little detail. Worst of all is the shop, particularly the wide overhanging flat hood, which casts the whole front into gloom. Only the colourful display of fruit and flowers along the street lightens the visual load.



Figure 13 Benbow’s Fruiterers

The King’s Head (No 19) next door is as pleasing as The Feathers mentioned earlier. While its combination of pink walls and grey-green woodwork is unusual, the front has much to delight the eye. There are large early sashes set close to the outer wall, a timber doorcase, and a shallow two storey bow window. The pub sign is particularly attractive, held aloft on an elaborate wrought iron bracket.

The entrance to Appleyard, a recent shopping development, is on the north side. At the rear of the passageway one of the new brick and cobble buildings can be glimpsed (Appleyard is described in Character Area 3). Next to the entrance (No 21) is a pleasant medium-sized town house in contrasting shades of red brick. Regrettably, this has been subjected to the corporate blue colouring of Boots the Chemists, whose shop occupies part of the ground floor. The understated shop front is marred by a printed fascia board declaring it “your local pharmacy”. An additional, and surely unnecessary, printed sign has been placed between the windows to the west, with an additional hanging sign above. The cement covering the window arches has been painted blue to match the signs.

Attached on the west side is a single storey shop, whose modest front is enclosed by pilasters and a grandly proportioned hood with triglyphs and a modillion cornice. There is another entrance to Appleyard on the west side.

Baker’s and Larner’s Home Furnishing Centre follows; a plain red brick house with a parapet. The ground floor has a good traditional-style shop front, although its all-glass doors are rather out of place.

A gravel-surfaced passageway on the west side is used as a parking area; it has a poor single storey outbuilding at the rear.

Next to the passageway is what looks to be a former High Victorian chapel (No 33) with a red and white brick “constructional polychrome” front. The sash windows on the first floor are presumably a later, and slightly incongruous, introduction. Nicholson’s shop front on the ground floor is very good; its windows have ornate colonettes and spandrels. Low steps and wrought iron railings lead up to a part-glazed door. Two brick pillars with ball finials and a statue of



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a reclining lion are set around the small front courtyard, well reflecting the slightly eccentric character of the building.

To the west is High Silver, an early house with a high-walled courtyard on the east side. The front of High Silver faces the yard, with a substantial doorcase and a timber bay window. The end elevation facing the street is of less interest, with a symmetrical pair of sashes on the ground and first floors and unappealing signs for the businesses of Smith & Pinching and the Halifax (No 35).

Roundways, the town house adjoining High Silver on the west side, marks the end of the High Street. It has a symmetrical arrangement of sashes on two floors, with a simple timber doorcase; the only inappropriate feature is the part-glazed door with round headed lights. There is a single storey lean-to on the west side, with a hipped pantiled roof. This has an unusually large sash window and an entrance -possibly it was once a separate building.

North side

At the east end of the High Street, there is a traditional red brick building where the office of Abbott's estate agents occupies most of the ground floor. The office is a plain 20th century design flanked by "sixties"-style tiled pilasters. On the south side there is a small café, "The Beanery", with a more traditional front. The café makes use of a triangular forecourt for its seating. While this is a good use of the space, the forecourt is cluttered with a rope barrier, a lamppost, a litter bin and several plastic planters.

The houses to the east follow the side road round into **Shirehall Plain**. Their curved walls are visually pleasing, and they have good shop fronts (Keys & Sowerby's-described in the section on Shirehall Plain). The adjoining three-storey white brick Georgian house to the west has two shop

fronts in the ground floor. Both are reasonable designs, and serve to show what can be achieved (or lost) by colouring and signage. The smaller shop to the west, "A.J. Youngs" (No 10) is understated, in a Regency shade of grey-green. Consoles either side of the window display examples of the company's pottery. The larger double-fronted shop to the east, "Threshers" has a similar front, but it is a garish red colour, topped by a wide and unpleasant printed fascia.

The next house with Starling's shop (Nos 12-14) is an unappealing later 20th century red brick building, and the shop has a lurid orange plastic fascia board.

Running down the side of Starlings is a narrow lane which leads to a gravel car park at the rear of "Byfords" (Nos 1-5) on Shirehall Plain. The rear of Byfords is less historic than the front, with a modern brick and cobble façade, and very plain casement windows and doors. At the north end of the yard are brick and cobble cottages, both old and new, with Weston Square just beyond. All the cottages have modern inappropriate windows.

Barclays Bank (No 16) which follows the lane is a low point on the High Street. It is built of a modern yellow brick, with a severe-looking front with minimally-detailed windows. It marks a low point in 20th century commercial design. In front of the bank is an open area which is home to the town sign (on a curious brick plinth), a pair of seats and three plastic planters.



Figure 14 : Barclays Bank and forecourt with town sign.

Next is **New Street**, giving a view into the middle distance.

On the west side of New Street is a three-storey house with two shops. Although the painting of brickwork is not good conservation practise, it must be admitted that in some cases, as here, the effect can enhance the street. A dark grey-green has been used for the brickwork, and white for the window architraves and brick quoins. The larger of the two shops, "Morston Country Sports" (No 18) has an uninteresting wide printed fascia; the signage of the smaller shop to the west is more encouraging. Here, the barber's shop "the tonsorial artist" (No 20) has adopted a slightly tongue-in-cheek 'period' approach, with well-designed signs and a striped barber's pole.

Adjoining this is a smaller house with less appealing painted brickwork. This has a good, probably late Victorian, shop front "A Cut Ahead" (No 22), and a very inferior smaller shop front for the launderette next door.

Next is a lane leading to **Lion House Court**, with a wrought iron arch over the entrance. The courtyard has a mix of much-altered old and new brick and flint buildings. They vary between one and two storeys in height. The

yard is enclosed by the sides and rear elevations of buildings along the High Street and New Street. On the east and west sides of the yard are Baker's and Lerner's furnishing departments, with large plate glass windows. The yard is surfaced in red pavers with a small tree and a stone lion as focal points. At the north end, the courtyard narrows to meet a lane which connects with New Street.

The two-storey house on the west side of the lane is either recent, or a heavily reworked older house. It has two unremarkable modern shop fronts.

To the west of this is an eccentric single storey house, "Richard Scott Antiques" (No 30). It evidently started as a modest brick and cobble building, and has acquired a large pedimented façade. The effect is delightful, although it lacks the classical dignity its creator presumably intended. A side passage to the west leads to a **yard with Studio House** and former doctor's surgery.



Figure 15 : Richard Scott, Antiques

This gravel-surfaced yard has a variety of old and new brick and cobble houses on both sides; regrettably a number of the older houses have inappropriate replacement windows. Between these in the centre of the yard is a small circular flower bed.

The doctor's surgery at the north-west corner is a single storey building with a brick and cobble front, but less appropriate cream-coloured brickwork has been used at the sides. At the rear of the yard there are some recently completed houses which are separated from the yard by high wrought iron gates.

After the side passage is "Webb's County Jewellers" (No 34); its shop front has two unusual recessed curved-sided ground floor oriel bays. Next door is a smaller and more straightforward front; the script on its fascia is remarkably low key, and seems to be in part illegible – it is not entirely clear what the owner's name is.

This is followed by a long mustard-yellow terrace. At its east end there is a good doorcase and what may be an early canted bay, while at the west end is the regrettable front of "King's and Barnham's" (No 40). The shop front has large and featureless glass windows and a projecting box-like fascia.

There is a passage to the west to **Lloynes Yard**; this has a wrought iron arch bearing the hotel's initials. Within the yard is a terrace of much-altered older houses on the west side, then Owl Cottage. The Cottage has a datestone of 1803, although a number of flat-roofed extensions and replacement windows have much reduced its historic character. Bay Tree House is a modern red brick building on the east side, with a curved brick boundary wall. To the south of the hotel is a fenced off parking area and car port.

Beyond the yard is a terrace of five houses, whose roof lines step down towards the Letheringsett Road. There has been some alteration of the windows, but they remain an attractive group. One house has a stone door hood supported on consoles. The house at the east end has a well-stocked front garden, brimming over with flowers.

The west end of the High Street is called **Obelisk Plain**, after an 18th century milestone. Today, a traffic island is home to this elaborate milestone, and also to "Blind Sam", a former water fountain and gas light (the base of this seems in poor repair). Gathered around these fine pieces are planters, tourist information signage, a bench and a modern street lamp. Much of the open space to the north and east of the island is given over to car parking. With some reduction of street furniture and car parking (and better surfacing) this would be a considerably more attractive spot.



Figure 16 : Obelisk Plain with "Blind Sam" and an 18th century milestone.

On the west side of Obelisk Plain is Thomas Jekyll's imposing gothic revival chapel, and Hill House. These are described as part of Letheringsett Hill, in Character Area 2.

Norwich Road, eastside

The west side of Norwich Road, and the south end of the east side is described in Character Area 2.

The houses on the south side of Obelisk Plain curve round to the Norwich Road. On the corner at the end of the High Street is the appropriately-named Roundways. Gates on the south side of Roundways lead to a gravel-surfaced private courtyard. At the rear of the courtyard is a brick and cobble house, with new windows including a pair of large metal French windows.

To the east are two brick and cobble cottages. The first is a single storey high with a pink-painted front and modern

dormers; the second is two storeys, with modern casement windows. Next is a larger two-storey house with a symmetrical front with a central doorcase. There are sash windows on the ground and first floors. The front is unfortunately covered by a roughcast render, and the windows and door are poorly maintained.

After this, a passage leads to Carpenter's Cottages, a well kept terrace of brick and cobble houses set at 90o to the road. There is a gravel drive in front of the terrace. Facing Carpenter's Cottages on the north side of the drive are several more brick and cobble buildings, and a poorly maintained brick house behind a high wall. Beyond the fence and vegetation at the end of the drive can be glimpsed Budgen's car park.

The former Carpenter's Arms pub which follows is a fine 18th century building. It has a rendered front, two doorways with simple panelled reveals and wide multiple-paned sashes. There is also an attractive painted hanging sign. The only negative feature is a scruffy area of hard standing to the south, with bins and accumulated rubbish.



Figure 17 : Yetmans

The former pub is followed by Kerridge Way, leading to Budgen's car park. The large Budgens store can be seen in the distance. Behind the former Carpenters Arms is a modern brick and cobble house.

Bull Street

A Fish Hill courtyard on the south side is included in this section.



Figure 18 : The entrance to Bull Street from White Lion Street.

Bull Street runs east-west between White Lion Street and Shirehall Plain. Bull Street has some fine Georgian and early Victorian houses which give the street its main character, but due to the width of the street, it is not always possible to stand back far enough to admire them. Most houses are two storeys, with the occasional three storey building, such as Hanworth House. While Bull Street tends to have a considerable number of parked cars, there is usually limited traffic here. As a consequence, despite the lack of pavements, this is usually a safe place to walk. The street widens out where it meets Shirehall Plain; after this the road continues as Albert Street.

North side

On the north-east corner an inter-war post office building marks the end of the Cromer Road. **Norman Cockaday Court** is being completed to the north of the Post Office, and can be reached by a narrow road on the west side (described in Character Area 2).

After the side road is a house with a very attractive shop front, "Old Town", which combines cream painted brickwork with dark brown windows and a door with a fine doorcase. The stylish signage makes good use of gold lettering.



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Next is a pair of Georgian red brick houses; the first has a central door with a fanlight, the second has a pair of modern shopfronts. “The Sausage Shop” is an unremarkable 20th century design; the smaller shop, “Spencer’s Plaice” is better, with traditional-style pilasters at the sides. A narrow side alley follows, which contains the inevitable group of parked cars, as well as a backdrop of brick and flint walls.

Hanworth House follows, a three-storey Georgian town house bearing the date 1744 in its side gable. It has an excellent front, with brick quoins, a timber doorcase and cut and rubbed brick arches. A lane on the west side leads to a parking area, and a cream and black-painted building used as the “New Wine Church” – a much altered, but possibly old house. Down the west side of this lane is a row of traditional houses; the northernmost example is of brick and cobbles, the two to the south are rendered, with several designs of replacement windows. The house facing onto the road has an unfortunate drab-coloured and stained concrete render with two small and awkwardly placed ground floor windows. It also has a modern oddly-coloured pantiled roof and velux roof lights.

The alley on the west side leads to the **Old Bull Yard**. This has a gravel-surfaced parking area enclosed by modern brick and cobble houses and what seems to be a former stable or agricultural building. The appearance of the alley is marred by two rendered and painted houses at the beginning of the lane on the east side, with small non-traditional windows and metal garage doors.

A large brick and cobble house follows the Yard, where two shop windows have been inserted. The original house entrance has become a shop door. The conversion is rather crude, with a strongly coloured modern brick. On the west side is “Nature’s Haven” a recent brick lean-to with a

utilitarian-looking shop front. The alley to the west of this leads to a gravel parking area; there are brick and cobble buildings either side of this, but much of the view is filled by the end gable of a modern house in a crimson red brick.

After the alley there is a pair of what are probably mid-Victorian houses with modern projecting shop windows which have pitched tiled roofs. The first house is in red brick, and the shop windows resemble a pair of overlarge porches. On the second house, which has a brick and cobble front, the extensions appear to re-use an older front with rendered quoins. This is a more successful conversion, although the buff coloured paint on the ground floor creates an unfortunate visual separation from the brick and cobble wall above. **Bull Close** is on the north side. This yard has a mix of old and new brick and flint houses, including on the east side, one of the better examples of a modern brick and cobble terrace to be found in Holt. A red brick terrace at the rear of the yard is less successful, but may gain in appeal as it weathers over time.

The rendered house occupied by Hayes & Storr which follows the Close is very attractive. At the east end is an extension with an old, possibly mid-Victorian shop front which retains part of its original blind. While the lettering on the first floor is moulded, it evokes memories of painted signs once to be found on the upper floors of houses in Holt.

A winding lane to **Lee’s Yard** is on the west side of the house. The beginning of the lane is lined with brick and cobble houses. Some have reasonable modern additions including a wine bar with gothic style windows. As the lane approaches the car parking area of “Picturecraft” Gallery there are houses with less sympathetic additions, such as u-PVC windows.



Figure 19 : Houses to the west of the entrance to Lee's Yard.

On the west corner of the lane is a charming small grocery shop. During the day it is surrounded by a picturesque array of produce. The first floor has inappropriate u-PVC top opening casements.

Next door, “krusty loaf” and “La Maison” have modern shop fronts, but with some traditional elements. “krusty loaf” is the weaker design of the two, and has a bland commercially printed fascia board. The following house has an attractive, probably Victorian brick and cobble front; its two part-glazed doors are modern, but not unsympathetic to the whole.

After the entrance to a private yard, through which can be glimpsed brick and cobble walls and outbuildings, is a fine house with green painted render. This has an unusual space between the tops of the first floor windows and the eaves; perhaps at some point the roof has been raised in height. The slightly quirky arrangement of windows adds to its appeal, and it makes a fine end to the north side of Bull St.

South side

Returning to the east end of Bull Street, the south side starts with the houses of Fish Hill. The initial building, once The Star pub, has

an interesting range of windows, and its brick and cobble walls bear evidence of earlier window openings. However, a covering of grimy and stained white paint has reduced the building to an eyesore. At the rear is the curious combination of “modernist” projecting shop windows, Victorian half-timberwork, and a tiled porch.



Figure 20 : Star Plain

The shop faces **Star Plain**, a small yard used as a car park and bordered on three sides by shops. The yard is rectangular, completely open to Bull Street on the north side and with an access road onto White Lion St to the east. It has a worn grey tarmac surface, and battered road markings. The surrounding shops have unremarkable fronts and in most cases, inappropriate first floor windows. The quality of the shops is further reduced by printed fascia boards. The most curious shop of the group is “Pointens Estate Agents” where a large front is attached to what was probably a rather small outbuilding. Only the front of the red-brick solicitor’s office on the north-west corner, with its low brick and cobble wall, has any real appeal.

By the side of “GloGlo” hairdressers, there is an opening leading to a smaller yard, and to Market Place. Between Pointens and the solicitor’s office, a narrow lane extends way to the east. Part way up the lane is an unattractive flat-roofed building, some more appealing brick and cobble walls and a small collection of wheelie bins. An attempt has been made to make a feature of the lane by surfacing it with red concrete pavers.



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Returning to Bull Street, the red brick solicitor's office has its less attractive side to the street, with a mixture of modern stock wooden windows, a rectangular ground floor oriel bay and a scruffy forecourt.

The adjoining house, "Praze Cottage", has some features of interest, particularly its round-headed doorway flanked by windows, a feature mirrored on the first floor by a Venetian window. Unfortunately, the ground floor windows and door have crude joinery, and a bodged repair to the first floor window and the absence of one wooden shutter bear witness to their neglect. Next to this is a much altered brick and cobble cottage, with an unsympathetic and brightly coloured "NFU Mutual" sign above the ground floor.

Another brick and cobble house extends round the corner into a narrow road leading up to Market Place. This has "The Rendezvous" café (No 18), with cream coloured cobbles and a black dado. While it has an odd assortment of windows, the fresh paintwork and unpretentious painted sign make this building an asset to the street.

On the opposite corner is Millsopp's Estate Agents (No14). The house has cream painted brickwork, and well coloured if unremarkable shop windows and a glazed door; regrettably there is the usual characterless mass-produced fascia board. Adjoining this is a pink painted brick house the Old Paul Pry Inn, with two shop windows of reasonable quality; one projects forward with a tiled roof. The first floor sash windows are heavily detailed; a second glance confirms they are u-PVC replacements. The next building is a fine three storey red brick town house, with good sash windows and overhanging eaves with paired eaves brackets. Unfortunately this is slightly diminished by the incongruous twentieth-century butcher's shopfront and advertising.



Figure 21 : Early house with a 20th century shop front, Bull St.

"Fandango" (No 4-6), the following shop, has a reasonable shop front. By contrast, the first floor seems denuded, with little detail. Plain rendered walls have sash windows set near to the wall surface.

After this, there is a funnel-shaped passage tapering towards Market Place, with three cast iron bollards in front. There are some good buildings either side, in brick, render or brick and cobble with reasonable shopfronts. The worst aspects of the passageway are the tarmac surface which is patched and untidy, and the selection of temporary and permanent street furniture. This includes a wooden bench, planters, several A-boards and a wheelie-bin.

The south side of the street then curves round to become the east side of Shirehall Plain.

Shirehall Plain

Shirehall Plain is a triangular space with access roads on the south, north-east and north-west sides. A well-restored building, “Byfords” occupies most of the east side. A central island of pavement has been “nibbled away” to create parking spaces. What remains of the pavement has become a repository for road signs, a modern phone box, a sign explaining the history of the area, and A-boards for the surrounding businesses. A scatter of planters has been mixed in. While pedestrians make occasional attempts to colonise the Plain, (and one bench is provided for them) it is dominated by cars, both parked and moving.



Figure 22 : Shirehall Plain looking west

Entering the Plain from the north, the view is filled by the fine brick and cobble terrace on the west side, and the adjoining twentieth century red brick shaped gable to the north. Every detail, from the sugar-bag green paintwork to the dark stained shop windows is well executed, reflecting modern ideas of good taste, if not Georgian ones. The only awkward feature is the printed signboards for “Byfords” café and guest house which spread along most of the terrace. Further along, the “Francois Bouttier Studio” fascia boards are more in keeping. Leading to Albert Street, three red brick Victorian houses maintain the standard, with restored or traditional-style shop fronts. Although converted to a private house, the former

inter-war shop front at the north end of the row is particularly good. A small house sandwiched at the centre has the Holt Fish Bar; an inoffensive, but not particularly noteworthy facade.

Shire Cottage, with the office of Stephen Davies Surveyors, is on the opposite side of the road and adjoins the Shire Hall. This house shows how even a modest Victorian building can be outstanding with proper maintenance and a good colour scheme. The boundary hedges and gates are a nice touch, but the paved area down one side with cylindrical planters is less successful.



Figure 23 : Stephen Davies, Surveyors, a well presented house

The former Shire Hall is less striking. The end gable facing east has some features of interest, but the south elevation facing the plain is devalued by a characterless “Nationwide” building society shop.

The buildings on the east side of the Plain are unremarkable. The first three storey house to the north has lost its chimneys and original windows. It has a near-featureless appearance, which could be relieved by good shop fronts; unfortunately the two shop windows of Holt Shoes are weak designs. The next houses are lower, with half dormers. At some point they acquired a roughcast render and replacement windows. The shop fronts and signage are recent and



of little visual interest. The three storey “Regatta Fine art” (No 2B) next door stands out mainly due to its height and pyramidal roof. On the ground floor, the shop window and door, large fascia board and small notice board are disconnected elements, failing to achieve a coherent shop front. The antique centre to the south is more traditional, with a fine wooden doorcase and a window directly above. The colouring and signage are very much in keeping with the understated facade, and reflect something of the quality of the buildings on the opposite side.

Facing the antique centre at the north entrance to Shirehall Plain are two houses of similar height, “Sowerby’s” (No 2) and Keys Estate Agents (No 4). Both have simple but pleasant shop fronts. A nice touch is the Victorian-style canvas blind above the shop window of Sowerby’s.

Albert St

Albert Street begins to the rear of the former Shire Hall. It continues the line of Bull Street. Mill Street branches off to the north then curves round to the south, where it meets the west end of Albert street. Albert Street was once the main road to Cley, before New Street was laid out at the beginning of the Victorian era.



Figure 24 : Chapel at the corner of Chapel Yard and Albert St.

North side

On the north side is a passageway to **Franklyn's Yard**. This is a rough lane which leads to the car park adjoining Chapel Yard. Initially there are run down brick and cobble houses, followed by garages, fencing and a modern house to the rear. The Yard is at best unremarkable, and its appearance is not helped by the scruffy surface of tarmac, pebbles and rubble.

To the west of the passage is a small green-painted detached house. It has an unfortunate roughcast render, but a good shop which may incorporate parts of an earlier front, “Doric Arts” (No 4). Next is a white house with the shop “Osokozi” (No 6). It has an unaltered house front with sash windows.

There is a short space between this and a former brick and flint cobble Victorian chapel, which has modern shop fronts facing Albert Street and the entrance to Chapel Yard. The front facing the street is an awkward conversion of the front, with the original elongated windows partly filled by brick, and the entrance replaced by a shop window. “William H. Brown” has a shop window facing Albert Street, and another at the side, facing the approach to Chapel Yard, together with a florist’s. The conversion of the side is more successful than the front, spoilt only by the characterless printed fascia boards.

There is a wide opening leading both to **Chapel Yard** and an adjacent car park (both described in Character Area 3). On the west side of the opening is the “Pachama” clothing shop, with a good modern copy of an early to mid-Victorian shop front. The shop is within the end gable of one of three brick and cobble cottages with cream painted walls. There are shops within each of the ground floors, but apart from a “pastiche” shallow bow at the west end, they do not disturb the original domestic

arrangement of windows. The pair of semi-detached red brick houses next door has been converted into one. It now has an inter-war front door, and a curious diamond shaped panel within a window recess on the first floor. Next door to this is a charming small brick and cobble cottage with painted front, the rear of “Wood & Things Too” in Chapel Yard. The next houses are higher, a pair of semi-detached two storey houses with white painted rendered fronts.

Albert’s Fish Bar (No 22) which follows is a less authentic Georgian house, although its replacement shop front and windows have an unaffected and appealing ‘fifties’ ambience. Its plastic signs are entirely in character. Next to this a small brick and cobble cottage and then Mill Street leads away to the west.

Set between Albert Street and Mill Street, there is “Rose Croft” a large brick and cobble house with a triangular front garden. Parked cars line the south side of Mill Street.



Figure 25 : Rose Croft house between Albert St& Mill St.

Albert Street continues after this junction. On the north side after Rose Croft and its modern outbuilding (also in brick and flint) there is a pair of attractive listed brick and cobble cottages set back from the road. They have pleasant gardens, which deserve a better surround than the present walls of concrete blocks.

After this is a terrace of four white brick mid-late Victorian houses, where the front gardens have not fared so well. The first two gardens have been opened up for off-road parking; the third does at least have a boundary wall and fencing, but the garden has been covered by gravel. The end house has acquired a large ground floor extension which wraps around the side of the building and includes a recessed porch. What was once an unpretentious Victorian terraced house now resembles something from a 1960s housing estate. The two houses at the east end do at least retain their original windows, and one has a fine door with coloured glass.

South side

Albert Street commences with the former Shire Hall on this side; its rear wall is stepped out, narrowing the road. It has little detail apart from a pair of sash windows and an ugly ventilation panel on the ground floor. Next door is the red brick and cobble rear elevation of Steven Davies office; less interesting than the front, but still well maintained. The end gable has a pleasant colour scheme with green and cream windows.

Next is an entranceway to Shirehall Plain. On the west side is a house with a red brick front and a former inter-war period shop front. Its end gable is of brick and cobbles. There is a large rendered area replacing a former entrance next to this, then a well patinated high brick and cobble wall. This curves round to the west, leading to a small courtyard with housing.

Weston Square.

The entrance to Weston Square starts well with a gravel lane, flanked by brick and cobble walls and houses. The lane opens out and turns to the west; most of the Square is filled by parked cars. On the west side is a late Victorian terrace (1882) of brick



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and cobble houses. While it is picturesque, it has a variety of unsuitable new windows and doors. There is a less regular group of brick and cobble houses on the east side; once again, their historic appeal has been reduced by inappropriate (and in the case of the white u-PVC windows, also obtrusive) windows and doors. At the south end a narrow lane leads to the High Street.



Figure 26 : Weston Square

After Weston Square, Albert Street continues with a semi-detached pair of brick and cobble houses, mid or late Victorian, but blending in well with the earlier housing. There are two small shops with signage within the otherwise unaltered ground floors.

To the west is the “Methodist Memorial Garden”, a former Methodist cemetery. It is surrounded by high brick and cobble walls, and entered by two wrought iron gates. This is a pleasant small garden in which to sit and relax, and the surrounding weatherworn houses add to its charms. Here you can see gravestones which have been positioned on the side walls. The rear wall of former chapel is in the background, a looming presence in brick and cobbles.

Next to the former chapel is a row of brick and flint cottages, equipped with a charmless carport and an obtrusive modern door and window added to the end gable. A large signboard and A-board proclaim this

to be the offices of “Norfolk Country Cottages”. The side elevation of the terrace facing **Cross Street** is, thankfully, better.



Figure 27 : Blue Stone Row

After Cross Street is “The Bluestones” a particularly agreeable early Victorian white brick and flint terrace with fine flintwork on the front elevations. There is a variety of front doors, but the unified character is maintained by the use of white for the windows and doors –save for one door recently painted lime green.

Separated by a gravel driveway, which provides a fine view of some brick and cobble outbuildings, is a shorter terrace, where two houses of white brick are flanked by houses of red brick and cobbles. Three of the cottages have brick and cobble garden walls; the fourth garden wall has unfortunately been rebuilt using concrete blocks. The overall effect of the terrace is picturesque, and the two white brick houses have simple but attractive timber door cases.



Figure 28 : Oddfellows Hall

After this terrace is an un-named narrow road leading to New Street (described below). It is partly filled by parked cars. On the south-west corner is a mature hedge and a small garden partly given over to parking. Set behind this is the decorative red and white brick 'constructional polychrome' end gable of Oddfellows' Hall. The side elevation runs along the south side of Albert St, and the three-storey centre section is an antique centre. Part of the boundary wall in front has been lost, and there is now a scruffy off-road parking area. The building has, in addition to the sign for the antique centre, an old sign for a grocer, and during opening hours, seats and other objects are grouped around the entrance. The overall effect is untidy but visually interesting.

An open area follows. What seems to be a former garden is now given over to long grass, sheds and disused greenhouses. In the background can be seen the backs of the terraced houses along New Street. On the corner is a disused house, with a red brick end gable and a grimy rendered front with poor replacement windows. The Conservation Area ends here.

Mill Street

Mill Street branches off from the west end of Albert Street and initially runs due north. It then right-angles to the west and connects with the end of Albert Street and the end-point of New Street. A recent housing development on the north side, Mill Court, is excluded from the Conservation Area.

On the east side is the Old Drill Hall, with its rendered gable end facing the road. There are good features here, such as a first floor Venetian window, but the front is blighted by a combination of a grimy roughcast render, modern glazed doors and a pair of gas/electricity inspection covers. The house next door may originally have been two properties, and one ground floor window may replace a door. The front has a cream painted render and u-PVC top opening casements, which do little for its period character. After this there is a terrace of four brick and cobble houses. They are an attractive group, although the end house has u-PVC windows and a matching u-PVC door. This terrace is at the end of the Conservation Area on the east side. Just beyond the boundary is an unremarkable terrace of modern brick and brick/cobble traditional-style houses, additional new houses further to the east, and a more inviting lane leading north to allotments and agricultural buildings.

The west side of Mill Street starts with Rose Croft. Behind this are the rear yards of two terraces on Albert St, with a mixture of interesting brick and cobble outbuildings and less appealing modern red brick extensions. At the north-west corner is a brick and cobble house with brown u-PVC windows, marking the point where the road turns to the west.

Two pairs of semi-detached houses on the north side of Mill Street are included in the Conservation area, together with part of a modern red brick terrace behind. One pair



of houses is recent, the other is older, perhaps 19th century; both have brick and cobble fronts. Both pairs also have u-PVC windows and doors, which give an unappealing late 20th century character. It is assumed that the Conservation Area has been extended to cover this area due to an old brick and flint boundary wall around part of the allotments, although this hardly justifies including this part of Mill Road. The most picturesque feature is the scatter of timber sheds at the edge of the allotments, although such ephemeral buildings are unlikely to justify Conservation Area status.

Cross Street

Cross Street is a short road which runs between New Street and Albert Street. The main feature is the large former chapel, St John's Hall, with its side elevation and boundary wall, both in white brick and flint pebbles on the south-west corner. Next to this, and filling the remainder of the south side, is a well maintained terrace of brick and cobble cottages. It appears that there were originally four cottages, which have been converted to make two larger houses and two doorways blocked off.



Figure 29 : Looking up Cross St from New St.

The north side of the street is less coherent. On the north-west corner is the well-presented end gable of a rendered house facing New Street. Next to this is Well Cottage, a much altered older house with

rendered and white painted walls. This has good quality modern casement windows, combined with less appropriate features, such as a modern tiled hood over the modern door. There is a flimsy-looking boundary wall with wrought iron railings, set next to a more substantial agricultural-style gate. What seems to have been a small single storey outbuilding to the east has been converted to a travel agent's, with a new door and shop window. At the north-east corner is a brick and cobble garden wall and the end of the Bluestones terrace on Albert Street.

Un-named road running between Oddfellows' Hall (Albert St) and former School (New St)

On the south-west corner is a former school which has been converted into a garage. From the side, its original character is more evident than at the front. There is a rendered end gable with two single storey brick flat-roofed extensions. After a small yard there is the flint and brick end gable of a house facing Albert St. On the north side there are two houses with their brick and cobble end gables to the street. Between the two buildings is a gated opening to a courtyard, then a monopitch two-storey rear extension belonging to the house to the north. Beyond the opening can be seen a number of modern red brick houses or extensions, including a u-PVC conservatory. Most of the north side is filled by plain cobbled walls, relieved only by two windows and a bricked-up doorway on the rear extension. There is a gravel courtyard between the second house and Oddfellows' Hall. This reveals the front of the second house, very well presented with good quality mullion and transom windows and a part-glazed door. To the rear of the yard are some single-storey brick and flint outbuildings, at least one has been converted for residential use.

Bull Alley running across Fish Hill between Bull St and Market Place

This short narrow road starts on the west side of “Kebab Delight” on Market Place. The buildings are generally unremarkable, and the focal point within the street is the unattractive Ladbroke’s shop in the centre on the east side.

At the southwest end are the end gables of two houses; the first is the rendered side of a travel agent’s, the second belongs to a red brick house immediately behind. After this is a single-storey “Ladbroke’s” shop. This appears to be a refronted outbuilding. There is a large plate glass window to one side and a recessed corner entrance. The entrance is sheltered by a projecting roof which has a sheet of metal filling the gable. The front has a projecting plastic sign, and the shop window is filled by advertising placards.

Down the north side of Ladbroke’s is a narrow red brickweave paved lane running west. On the north-east corner with Bull street is a painted house with Millsopp’s estate agents.



Figure 30 : Looking north up the un-named road from Market Place.

To the east, behind “Kebab Delight” is a very plain-looking pair of semi-detached houses with rendered walls and brick dressings. Both houses have dark-coloured casement windows and part-glazed doors. To the north, a narrow red brickweave lane leads to Star Plain. On the corner with Bull St is painted brick front of the Rendezvous. The Rendezvous café has good quality casement windows either side of the glazed door, and pair of sashes on the first floor.

The road surface is of tarmac with a single yellow line.

Cromer Road

The entranceway to the town with its less concentrated housing and the Gresham’s School fields is included in Character Area 2.

Closely grouped housing, typical of the town centre, starts on the north side just before the junction with Peacock Lane. First is a pair of semi-detached brick and cobble houses with white painted walls; these have poor replacement windows and doors. Next is a pair of larger houses, one with a shop, “The Last Picture Show”. One house has a good timber doorcase. All the windows have been replaced by top opening casements and the shop has large ‘pseudo-Georgian’ bow windows.

After the turning into Peacock Lane there is a single storey block with two shops, “Studio 7” and “Take 5 Collectables”. It is odd that half the building has a rough render, but the other half is smooth. Both shops have reasonable fronts; the fascia board of “Studio 7” is angled and projects out. After this a pink two-storey building has a primarily inter-war character, with a hipped pantiled roof and roughcast render. This has the “Sunny Chinese Take-away” shop. There is little architectural interest, and there are u-PVC windows on the first floor.



Next to this is the Post Office; a more characterful inter-war building. It is a single storey high, of red-brick with shaped end gables and a pleasing symmetrical façade. Sash windows flank the main entrance with its moulded architrave.

On the south side of the Cromer Road, the school playing field is followed by a group of three pleasant red-brick Victorian houses with bay windows; all are set back from the road behind low brick walls. The house at the west end has a modern extension, and much of its garden is given over to off-road parking. To the west is a high well-built brick and cobble wall, surrounding a large and recent neo-Georgian house and outbuildings. This has a rather self-conscious character, which may reduce as the brickwork weathers. Next to this is the car park of the former White Lion pub, now used by residents and local businesses. It has a low brick boundary wall topped by some flimsy-looking railings. The White Lion is listed, and the main building is impressive at the corner with White Lion Street. However, the outbuildings down the side of the car park have been altered so much, presumably during the conversion to residential use, that there is little of interest left.

Peacock Lane

Peacock Lane leads off to the north from Cromer Road, just before the road turns the corner into White Lion Street. Peacock Lane has no pavements. It is a quiet thoroughfare detached from the busy centre of Holt, and in character more like a village street.

On the east corner is a Regency style house with a pink-painted front, and the shop “The Last Picture Show”. The rear wall, probably as the result of a Victorian rebuild, is of mottled “Fletton” bricks. Just to the north there is a terrace of five Victorian houses, the first with its gable end facing the road. One house has brick and flint walls, the

remainder have painted brick or rendered fronts. Only the last house in the row is well presented, with its original windows, a good door and a brick boundary wall with a gate. The other houses have inappropriate replacement windows (mostly u-PVC) and modern boundary treatments.

After a pair of double doors leading to a yard, there is an ungainly and much altered single storey house with painted and rendered walls, a monopitch roof extension and a modern door with tiled hood. It has a rather insubstantial-looking brick wall in front.

Next is a short cul-de-sac, Caston Close. This is a new development consisting of two pairs of unremarkable semidetached houses with flint facings. The Conservation Area includes the Close and three similar recent houses of brick and brick with flint facings, immediately to the north.

Further to the north, outside the Conservation Area, there is an estate of modern houses, a recreation ground, “King George’s Field”, and a new block of flats, “Regal Court”.



Figure 31 : Victorian houses on the east side of Peacock Lane

On the west side of Peacock Lane, only the first pair of semidetached Victorian houses and a narrow road leading to Norman **Cockaday Court** are included in the

Conservation Area. The semidetached houses have had their windows, (including the bays) and doors replaced in u-PVC. All have modern timber boundary fences. There is a more attractive terrace of four houses to the north of the lane which is outside the Conservation Area.

The narrow road leads past the back of the Post Office, which has an unpretentious modern brick building, and some recent bungalows. At the end of the lane, Norman Cockaday Court is a largely unremarkable new housing estate, still being completed at the time of the survey (described in Character Area 2).

There is only one older house in Peacock Lane which has retained its traditional appearance. The other old houses have been unsympathetically modernised. As the new houses are not of a particularly high quality, there seems little to justify Peacock Lane being retained within the Conservation Area.

White Lion Street and the east side of Fish Hill

Entering White Lion Street from Cromer Road, Fish Hill is on the west side of the road. It is an immediate focal point, set between Bull Street and the open area of Market Place.



Figure 32 : The east side of Fish Hill

The buildings of Fish Hill are divided into small groups by a series of narrow lanes. At the north-east corner, the first group has a picturesque arrangement of gable ends.

Most of the group's charm is lost, however, due to grubby white-painted walls and an open area in front filled by parked cars, a wheelie bin and an A-board advertising a local shop. The terraced group of houses just to the south is equally disappointing. The main shop front is that of Sue Ryder Care, with large and poorly detailed windows. Above the shop, the brilliant white walls, printed fascia board and black-painted windows attempt to create a 'modern' look which is at odds with what remains of the building's vernacular character. The nearby shop front of Edward Jones seems to be a product of the same era, minimalist and severe, and out of character with the weathered red-brick and cobbles above.

As the viewer moves towards Market Place, a roadway between the two groups of buildings on Fish Hill comes into view. In the centre is a tree, isolated on a red brickweave traffic island. Gathered around it, in what seems a most pedestrian unfriendly environment, is a bench, a pair of unsteady-looking planters and the Town Council's noticeboard. Behind this is Star Plain, an open space with parked cars and the flat roofed façade of Pointen's Estate Agents serving as a backdrop. A rectangular glass window in the side of an antique shop to the north is a further example of the uncomfortable marriage of the old and the new.

It is fortunate that the east side of White Lion Street is generally far better. At the north end, the former White Lion pub still has its projecting metal sign. The old pub front has been replaced by three well-designed shop windows and two part-glazed doors. Next to this is a terrace of three houses with four shop fronts. The barber's shop front at the north end is the weakest of the group, with a heavily detailed 'olde-worlde' window and door. The other shops have more understated fronts with some traditional features. The rendered first floors have a



bland appearance, which is reinforced by the roofs which have lost any chimneys to break up the monotony.

Between this terrace and the next house is a passage to a rear yard which serves mainly as a parking area. On the north side of the yard, the rear extension of one house has some Georgian-style features, but it is much altered. This is now a dentist's surgery, and a tarmac path leads to it across the grey-coloured gravel yard. There are garages at the rear of the yard, which are visible from the street. On the south side is an attractively weathered-brick and coble wall.

To the south of the passageway is a 1950s-60s period single-storey shop "Cool Cuts" with a large overhanging flat roof. It is completely out of place. Luckily, the adjoining houses are outstanding and draw away the viewer's attention. Nelson House, with John B. Shrive, estate agent, and Jannaway House which houses Gladstone's cookbooks and the Owl Tearooms have shop fronts which although not old, complement the 18th century buildings. The buildings are helped by their strong and well thought out colour schemes, which give a very positive character to the street.



Figure 33 : Attractive houses on the east side of White Lion Street

The east side of the street has some good paving. A row of iron bollards at the edge of the pavement marks the better buildings out, and helps give a feeling of separation from the nearby traffic.

Church Street

The Owl Tearooms extend around the corner into Church Street, and the side elevation of this house is as good as the front. The asymmetrical arrangement of windows includes a fine Venetian window on the ground floor.

The next building on the north side of Church Street is equally good, apart from an oddly-coloured tiled roof. It is separated from the Owl Tearooms by a pair of wooden gates and a side passage. The rendered front has a shop which appears to be based on an 18th or early 19th

century model, with a shallow bay. Great care has been taken to make the shop signs fit in with the period style, save for the advertisement on the gable end for the "Extra Hands" care agency, which one suspects has not received the required Listed Building consent.



Figure 34 : The north side of Church Street

An early 20th century red-brick hall follows this. It suffers from the addition of u-PVC windows and a bleak-looking car park which is in full view of passers-by.

The library is next, housed in a former stables of white brick with fine pebble facings. It deserves better treatment than it has had in recent years, with poor modern side doors and a flat-roofed entrance. The 'penny pinching' new additions include a

gravel-surfaced yard in front of the library, where an uninviting path of grey paving slabs leads to the entrance and to a single wooden bench.

The inoffensive-looking post-war toilet block to the east has been closed. It is gradually disappearing from view behind a screen of conifers and a fine high brick and pebble boundary wall. Just before the churchyard, there is a narrow lane to the north. This passes a white brick outbuilding with pebble facings then ends at a large fence surrounding a modern house and a new Rectory. From what can be seen of these houses, they are unremarkable.

Most of the south side of Church Street is dominated by the tall buildings of Gresham's School. These range from a red-brick High Victorian block with serried windows at the west end, to a utilitarian-looking probably post-war block in grayish-red-brick. Connecting the two is a tall inter-war(?) red and buff brick building. In contrast with the modestly sized and well coloured houses on the south side, the side elevations of these buildings appear dominating and grim.

Only at its east end does the street escape from the somber effect of the school buildings. Church Street ends with the town's church and churchyard and an entrance to Gresham's School. Both are light and open areas, with a good number of trees (described in Character Area 3).

New Street

New Street is an unusually straight and wide side road, laid out in the early 19th century. At its south end it connects with the High Street. Half way down, after the junction with Mill Street, the street continues as Cley Road, leading towards the coast. The best houses on New Street date from the early 19th century. While they were probably built at the beginning of the Victorian period, in style they still reflect the fashions of the later

Georgian era. There are more recent buildings which are generally of a lower quality. A small number of the houses are listed. There has been considerable loss of traditional features, particularly timber windows.



Figure 35 : The entrance to New Street from the High Street.

New Street has two small estates on the west side, Town Close and The Fairstead; both are described in Character Area 2.

East side

At its north end, where New Street leads away from the High Street, there is a late 20th century bank in an unpleasant orange-buff brick, with badly proportioned windows. The rear of the bank is no more attractive than the front, with a scruffy tarmac car park. The car park is partly enclosed by a plain red-brick wall, which does at least block out part of the view.

The wall connects with a terrace of three late Victorian red-brick artisans houses. Only one of the three houses has its original windows, the others have had theirs replaced by less suitable designs in u-PVC. No 8 has its original door; no. 6 has painted brickwork. Adjoining the terrace is a larger house with light green-painted brickwork and a recessed doorway with steps. Its window openings are squat. They may have been reduced in height, perhaps at the same



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time as the windows were replaced in u-PVC. The end quarter of this house has an extra storey and a separate hipped pantiled roof; this adds interest, although this part also has poor windows and green-painted brickwork.

Between this house and the next is a worn gravel drive leading to some back yards. These serve mainly as parking areas.

The following pair of houses raises the standard. The first house is painted cream and has its original windows, although the front door is modern. The other house, no 14, is very good, a red-brick fronted grade II-listed Regency-style house with a centrally placed door and spoked fanlight. Its white painted windows and door harmonise well with the brickwork. The only feature which jars is an extension built onto the south side with large garage doors. While some attempt has been made to make the extension fit in by introducing a traditional sash window on the first floor, it destroys the symmetry of the original front.

Set back on the corner with Cross Street is a fine Methodist chapel, built in 1838 with some later restoration. The chapel is in white brick and flint pebbles, and has a matching boundary wall. Its large front yard is surfaced with gravel and paving slabs.

After Cross Street is a terrace of three listed early 19th century houses. While it is unfortunate that two of them have had their brickwork painted and one has lost its original windows, they still make a pleasant group.

Next, a pair of gates leads to yet another gravel-surfaced parking area. This is followed by another fine listed Georgian house, where the symmetry lost on no 14 can still be seen. There is a central door with timber doorcase and cut and rubbed brick

arches above the windows- the sort of feature all too easily obscured when house fronts are painted.

The next building can only be considered a disgrace. A once-fine Victorian school building of 1851 has been indifferently refronted to become a garage. It has also been surrounded by the worst of 20th century flat-roofed extensions, and then badly neglected. Only the slate roof, with its courses of round tipped slates and the glass and metal roof lantern, remains to show this was once an interesting building. At the back of a patched and scruffy forecourt a notice unsurprisingly points out this is a "dangerous building".

After a lane which leads to Albert Street, an early Victorian house projects out, its flint and brick end gable contrasting with the red-brick front- a feature also to be seen on nearby houses. A satellite dish on the rear elevation and Velux roof lights detract from its otherwise attractive appearance. Next is a recent terrace of three houses, which fail to fit into, or reflect, their surroundings. The window openings are nearly square, there are three large archways on the ground floor, and three dormers with sloping roofs. Only the red-brickwork provides any common ground between the new terrace and the older houses on either side. Beyond this is a terrace of four Victorian houses. Originally each house was near-identical in appearance. Now each has an external porch of a different and outlandish design. The result is amusing, but not sympathetic to the underlying terrace. As a result, it is easy to overlook the last two houses at the edge of the Conservation Area, despite the end house retaining its original features.



Figure 36 : Houses at the end of the Conservation Area on the east side.

West side

This starts at the south end with a group of strongly coloured houses, which draw the eye away from the poor bank on the opposite side. The corner building with “Morston Country Sports” has dark green brickwork and white joinery with round-headed shop windows. Next is a pair of brick and cobble houses, with cream-painted flintwork. The first shop, “Posh Pets” has the awkward combination of cream painted flint walls and brick dressings painted in a dark pink. Both houses have replacement top-opening casement windows. On the north side is a modern house of red-brick with a band of flint, “Doodle Pots”, which has turquoise and cream woodwork.

The large Victorian red-brick house which follows is more restrained in colour, with a rendered ground floor. An alley between this house and “Doodle Pots” leads to the rear, where there are a number of outbuildings. From the alley it is possible to inspect the rear of the larger house, which has been converted to flats. There are a number of unsympathetic replacement windows here, together with a modern balcony. The front elevation has u-PVC casement windows, which are particularly obtrusive as they have been set too close to the front of the wall,

losing the play of light and shadow which adds visual interest to later 19th century facades.

After a short brick wall, there is the side entrance to one of Bakers and Larners’ shops. This has a good wrought iron arch over the entrance, although the shops in the background are unremarkable.

The next pair of houses has more architectural and visual interest. The first is a large early Victorian brick and cobble house, with an interesting arrangement of side lights flanking the door. A high brick and cobble wall connects this to a brick fronted house with a flint and brick end gable. It has four brick pilasters in shallow relief on the front, with simple moulded capitals below the eaves. Between the pilasters are flat and round headed windows, and two doors with wooden doorcases and rectangular fanlights. It is surprising that while the first building is listed, the second is not.

Attached on the north side is a terrace of six listed early Victorian houses. The end house facing the street is of red-brick with sash windows. The front of the terrace faces a short gravel drive set at 90o to New Street. The terrace is a strong design, which partly compensates for the variety of new windows and doors which have been inserted. The most unusual feature is the door openings, which have exaggerated ogee-shaped arches. Several of the houses have gardens with simple agricultural-style metal fencing. On the opposite side of the gravel drive is Queen Adelaide Court. This consists of two short terraces of single storey outbuildings set around a gravel yard. They have been converted to residential use with dark-coloured casement windows and doors.

At the end of the drive is a modern cream-painted bungalow, which due to its bright colouring distracts the viewer from the better buildings on either side.



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After the gravel drive is the former Queen Adelaide pub. This is a large three-storey white brick house, with a single storey extension on the north side; it has a mixture of original and replacement windows and a modern door. The ground floor brickwork is painted white.

To the north, a brick wall adjoins the Queen Adelaide, with a modern brick and cobble bungalow behind. Its bright red pantiled roof makes it stand out from the muted colouring of the surrounding houses. This is followed by a large early Victorian house with fine pebble facings, cut and rubbed brickwork and a simple doorcase. To the north of this, and surrounded by a garden is a former inter-war telephone exchange, now converted to a guest house. Much of its original character is lost due to modern additions. These include a modern wall with brick pillars and wrought iron railings. After the former exchange is a modern brick two-storey house with cobble facings. Despite the use of cobbles to try to make it blend in with the surrounding older buildings, it has a steep pitched grayish-red roof of triple Roman tiles, white barge boards, and utilitarian-looking modern windows. The house occupies the corner site with **Town Close**, a recent estate where near-identical houses also try to “fit in” by including the occasional panel of flint facing (described in Character Area 2).

After Town Close there are two large, probably mid-Victorian, brick and cobble houses. The first has been enlarged to the detriment of its historic character. It has oversized windows on the first floor and flat-roofed extensions at the front. The second house presents a much more appealing face to the street. Its casement windows and part glazed door may be modern replacements, but they are well chosen, and painted a tasteful muted green.

This is the first house in a terrace which

extends away to the east, and the remaining houses have a less harmonious assortment of replacement windows and doors.

After this terrace, the west side of the street opens out. Here is The Fairstead, a housing development built just after the First World War. Like Town Close, the houses mix flint with their brickwork to give a local flavour, but the houses of The Fairstead are considerably more successful, in a late Arts and Crafts style (The Fairstead is described in Character Area 2). Running down the south side of the Fairstead is an unkempt footpath leading round the edge of Town Close, passing by a much altered, probably Victorian brick and cobble house, and ending up at Horn Pits.

The Fairstead marks the northern edge of the Conservation Area. Further along Cley Road can be seen modern bungalows within large gardens.

Station Road

Station Road is at the south-east end of the Conservation Area. It joins Market Place and White Lion Street at its north end. Once, Station Road led to the railway station; today it finishes at the Holt by-pass.

The south end of the Station Road together with the school playing fields is described in Character Area 2.

The side of Gresham’s Old School runs down the east side of the road. Unlike the north elevation, which overshadows Church Street, this side of the school has a jaunty feel. Interest is provided by the tall chimneys, a crowstepped porch and mullion and transom windows. The white woodwork, dark green gutters and drainpipes create a pleasant contrast with the weathered red of the brickwork.

Turning to the west side, the street starts after the Railway Hotel public house. Following a passageway leading to the pub

yard, there is a pair of Georgian houses, given a common character by their buff-painted fronts. The first house “Mews Cottage” is of brick, with a small former shop window. Its side elevation facing the Railway Hotel yard has u-PVC windows. The adjoining house is rendered, with two mullion and transom framed shop windows and a doorcase between. The dark colour of the woodwork contrasts well with the buff render.

Next there is a paved alley leading to an off-road parking area and a modern brick and cobble house. This is a reasonable imitation of the local vernacular buildings, but noticeably lacks chimneys to break up the roof line.

The next house, the “Holt Holistic Centre” is probably 18th century, but with a new and awkward arrangement of windows. Those at the side are top opening, mainly u-PVC casements. The front windows are a better multiple-paned design in wood, but they are too large and lack the agreeable proportions of traditional windows. On the south side an alley provides an attractive view of the brick and cobble end gables of this and a neighbouring house, and a pleasantly patinated wall to the rear.



Figure 37 : Brick and cobble houses with ‘gothic’ windows, Station Road.

A terrace of four narrow brick and cobble houses follows. These are vernacular in style, but fitted with Victorian gothic-pattern windows and batten-construction doors. Overall, their appearance is very attractive, although one of the houses has a rendered front, and two have inappropriate replacement windows.

6.2.2 Character Area 2. More dispersed housing with green/open spaces

Cromer Road

This is the main approach to Holt from the coast. The road passes the main buildings of Gresham’s School to the south, and to the north there is a mixture of detached and semidetached houses ranging from Victorian to late 20th century. The Cromer Road has a suburban feel; the houses have front gardens and the school buildings are adjacent to playing fields. Along part of the south side there is no pavement.

The Conservation Area begins on the south side, with a large grass playing field, bordered by school buildings and the town’s church. On the north side it begins after a prominent and luridly coloured garage, which briefly fills the view for those entering the town.



Figure 38 : The entrance to Holt from Cromer Road



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The disparate mix of houses following the garage are detached and set behind hedges or low walls. The first house is probably late Victorian, with half-timberwork; it is followed by an attractive red brick Georgian house (Grade II listed), then by four houses with brick and cobble fronts. The first is probably Victorian, the next inter-war, the last two are recent and noticeably inferior in design to their neighbours. Next is a flat-roofed mid-20th century building painted white; an unremarkable design whose appearance is further diminished by u-PVC windows and the lack of a boundary wall.

Station Road

The southern end of Station Road is included in Character Area 2, together with the school grounds to the east.

The side of Gresham's Old School runs down the east side of the road (described in Character Area 1). Following this, there is a brick and cobble boundary wall, which starts off about two metres high, then reduces in height to give a view across the school playing fields. The occasional tree set just behind the wall adds to a rural ambiance. While the quality of the buildings in the background varies, with the benefit of distance they merge to form a pleasant backdrop.

The initial houses on the west side are close together, facing directly onto the road, described in Character Area 1. The more open character of this side of the road begins with The Lawns Hotel, a plain and awkwardly proportioned 18th or early 19th century brick building with what is probably a later two-storey castellated porch. It is set back within a small garden behind a low boundary wall. On the south side, a high weathered brick wall with plants spilling over from a garden adds charm.

Behind The Lawns is a tarmac-surfaced car park. It is bordered by brick and cobble walls, timber fences and a hedge. Beyond it can be seen the backs of recent houses, and much extended or added-to older houses. The rear of the Lawns Hotel and its garden is to the south. The rear has a cluttered appearance, due to the addition of new (u-PVC) windows, ducting, timber fencing, a fire escape and a large conservatory. A gravel lane leads off to a scattered group of inter-war houses to the west. This area is a mix of houses, bungalows and garages and well tended gardens, secluded and private, very separate from the town centre.

The south side of the road then opens out further, with a large white brick Georgian house, "The Beeches" set well back from the road. The grounds in front of the house have been partly sacrificed for a tarmac car park; the front now resembles a series of traffic islands. A narrow road leads down the side of the house to another parking area and a recent housing development (described below) at the rear.

The Conservation Area finishes on the west side just beyond the Beeches with a large red-brick Victorian house within a pleasant walled garden. Beyond this the road has less appeal, with a single-storey funeral director's office, and a new estate along Kerridge Way. Station Road divides into two at the south end, before it joins the Holt by-pass. On the traffic island between the two halves of the road there are some mature trees, which help shield Station Road from a view of the bypass and modern housing beyond.

The Beeches sheltered housing development

The grounds on the west side of The Beeches, a large 18th century house on Station road, have been developed as sheltered housing. Set around three sides

of a lawn and amongst coniferous and deciduous trees, the one and two storey buildings are an awkward combination of traditional elements, such as pantiles and flint facings, and commonplace modern house designs. A terrace on the south side bears a passing resemblance to a barn (see accompanying photo), but this impression is reduced by the large roof lights and what seem to be mass-produced standard windows and doors. Most of the houses are bungalows in red or white brick, occasionally with panels of flint facing. There are small open areas of planting around the houses and narrow golden gravel paths linking the houses.



Figure 39 : General view of The Beeches.

Norman Cockaday Court

This small estate is on the north side of Bull Street, and can also be reached from Peacock Lane. While it was still being completed at the time of this survey, enough was visible to offer some comment. The development consists of single and two-storey houses, arranged in short terraces or detached. Most of the houses are in red brick, a few have flint facings. The roofs are of pantiles, and occasional houses have dark grey tiles. Interest has been added to the new streetscape by varying the height, size and detail of the houses; a number of traditional features such as tile-coped gables and half dormers have been used. Where this attention to detail falls down is in the use of uninspired 'stock' windows and doors. The windows tend to be squat, lacking the proportions of traditional windows. One curious feature is that the house doors are raised well above ground level; -perhaps steps will be provided later? A few of the houses have paved

paths, but in general, there are no pavements. The general provision of pavements might have created a more attractive and friendlier environment for residents.



Figure 40 : Detail of Norman Cockaday Court

Town Close

Town Close is to the south of The Fairstead, also on the west side of Cley Road. It connects with the open ground of Little Hills to the east. The estate mixes detached, semidetached and terraced houses around a U-shaped cul-de-sac. Each house is set back from the road, with a small open area of lawn or garden.



Figure 41 : Houses of Town Close

The houses are all of red brick, some have panels of flint cobbles. Most houses have dark painted barge boards within the gable, groups of white casement windows and roofs of triple Roman tiles. The large roofs extend down so that the eaves are level with



the tops of the ground floor windows. Each house has a narrow chimney stack with one or two chimney pots.

Despite the occasional panel of flint, the houses do not reflect local architectural traditions. The large roofs have greyish-red tiles and white barge boards which emphasise their non-traditional shape. All this might have been acceptable if the houses were outstanding modern designs, but they are not, they appear somewhat bland, and mass produced. Their grouping and the lack of any boundaries around the front gardens are typical of innumerable housing estates from the second half of the twentieth century.

The Fairstead

The Fairstead estate is on the west side of New Street, at the northern edge of the Conservation Area. It is an outstanding example of inter-war planning and also of late Arts and Crafts houses, where local features and materials have been skillfully integrated with then-modern house designs.



Figure 42 : General view of The Fairstead

The layout of the Fairstead reflects the ideas of the Garden City movement, with well spaced semi-detached houses in a near-rural setting. The eight houses are of brick with flint facings, with some decorative courses of red brick including diaper patterns across the flint. Most of the houses have prominent front-facing gables; two on the north side have half-hipped gables. All the houses are strong designs, and retain much of their character despite the unfortunate addition of u-PVC windows. A golden gravel lane runs down the centre of the estate, with the generous front gardens

radiating out from this. Some of the houses have low boundary hedges which complement the houses and gardens perfectly. Only one house on the south side departs from the harmony. Here, a garden of bare earth and rough grass is without any fence or hedge, and has just a single wall of concrete blocks separating it from its neighbour. The garden includes a number of apparently discarded or forgotten items. A lawn on the east side is roped off for some reason.

Norwich Road

The east side of Norwich Road, up to Kerridge Way, is included as part of Character Area 1.

West side

Thomas Jekyll's High Victorian Methodist Church of 1862 is a focal point at the beginning of the Norwich Road. Sadly, the surface of the churchyard is now gravel. Much of the churchyard is filled by parked cars, which are clearly visible over the low brick and flint wall; there are some more welcome conifers.

To the south is a small estate of modern houses in red brick, some with flint facings. Each of these otherwise unremarkable houses has an incongruous Georgian-style pillared portico. Not only are the houses on this estate a poor attempt to recreate a "Georgian" style, they also hide the attractive view of the countryside and Spout Hills to the west.

Along this part of the Road there are some chestnut and sycamore trees.

After this estate is a genuine traditional brick and cobble house, which unfortunately has replacement u-PVC windows and a matching door; it is partly hidden by roadside trees.

Following this, and set back from the road behind an area of grass and flint garden wall, is the end brick and cobble house of the **Valley Lane** development (described below).

The town's infant school fills the south side of Valley Lane, and fronts the Norwich Road. Most of the school is in a characteristic Queen Anne Revival/board school style, with red brick and buff terracotta facings. While it remains a substantial and attractive building, it has acquired extensions which obscure and devalue its character, as do the replacement u-PVC windows.

The low brick boundary wall of the school borders the Holt ring road. Beside the wall is a scruffy blue painted underpass, then a small roundabout. While there is some greenery and a few trees to soften the view, beyond the roundabout is the backdrop of a recent estate of closely built houses.

East side, south

41-3 Norwich road follows Kerridge Way. This is a most impressive 18th century house, which has been very sensitively restored. The house is set back from the road, with a high brick and cobble wall at the side and some good decorative wrought iron railings at the front. The grounds are less remarkable than the house (although perhaps work has not yet finished here), with a gravel parking area and some rough grass, although there is a substantial tree at each end. To the rear, or east side of the house is a noteworthy terrace of brick and cobble outbuildings, one of the few visual delights to be found in Budgen's car park. It is very surprising this terrace is not listed together with the house.

After the garden, there is a tall and heavily weathered brick wall along the side of the road, (Grade II listed), with mature trees

behind. About half way along towards the end of the Road, this changes to an equally pleasant brick and cobble wall.

Valley Lane

Valley Lane is a short road with a mix of modern and much altered older houses. It leads from the Norwich road to the edge of the open countryside to the west.

The majority of houses, both old and new, are of brick and cobbles. In the centre on the north side is a large barn converted to residential use. This is a heavy-handed conversion, with new windows in the main doorway and gable end, so that its original workmanlike character is lost. The older houses along this road have been much altered, with inappropriate replacement windows and in two cases, rendered fronts, so that they generally resemble the more recent houses set alongside. There are some good brick and cobble boundary walls along the street.



Figure 43 : Converted barn on Valley Lane

Towards the west end of the road is an unusual single storey Victorian building (perhaps once part of the school) with an external porch. Unfortunately, this has a rendered front and u-PVC windows, considerably reducing its interest.

Much of the south side of the road is given over to car parking, the remainder is filled by the boundary wall of the primary school and its playing fields. At the side of the playing fields is a new school building in what seems to be a Scandinavian style, with a large overhanging pitched roof and part-glazed end gable.

Letheringsett Hill

Letheringsett Hill runs north-west from the junction with the High Street. The road slopes down as it leaves the centre, and the buildings on both sides are set on raised ground.

East side

The cottages facing Obelisk Plain are followed by the tall brick and cobble walls of a terrace which faces away from the road (described more fully in the following section, 2-18 Letheringsett Hill). Set high up on the walls are a variety of u-PVC windows on two floors. To the north, the rough ground of Little Hills begins (described in Character Area 4), an overgrown area with shrubs and trees. Little Hills rises up towards the town centre, and the upper floors and roofs of modern and inter war houses are visible above the tree tops.

On the west side, Letheringsett Hill begins with Hill House, a fine 18th century red brick building which lies to one side of the Methodist Church. It is set behind a brick and flint wall which encloses the large grounds. This boundary wall increases in height and curves round to the west, where mature trees lean over the top. A path leads down the side of the wall to Spout Hills, and there is a pleasant view looking out across the fields.

Hill Cottages follows, set back behind a wide gravel car park, and separated from the road by a hedge. This group of houses may have started out as a farm with outbuildings, along

with a terrace built next to the town's gasworks. Hill Cottages is now completely residential, and has some more recent houses. The main buildings are two storeys, consisting of a farm house(?) and a terrace set at an angle to it. Some single storey buildings are set around these, forming two small internal courtyards.



Figure 44 : Hill Cottages

Further west, by the gate to Spout Hills is a modern rendered bungalow. Little can be seen of this behind its screen of trees and a boundary wall.

To the north of the main group of buildings is a modern three-storey red brick and cobble house in a vaguely Arts & Crafts style. Due to its height, along with the bright red brickwork and the dark-painted windows and doors, it stands out from the surrounding vernacular buildings. There is a terrace of older two-storey houses on the east side which runs down to the road. The roofs of the terrace step down towards the road. There are gardens at the rear of the terrace; these fall outside the Conservation Area.

The traditional houses of Hill Cottages are interestingly arranged and have some good details. Unfortunately, many of the windows and some of the doors have been replaced in u-PVC, and these do not relate well to the weather-worn brick and cobble walls.

After Little Hills, the road leaves the Conservation Area. On the south side is a parking area and entrance to Spout Hills; to the north are open fields. At the close of the

Conservation Area on the north side, Little Hills is followed by St John's Cottage. This is an attractive and well presented brick and cobble house almost concealed behind a well tended garden.

2-18 Letheringsett Hill (Road to the east of Little Hills).

This narrow private road passes between the last houses on the north side of Obelisk Plain and the first houses on Letheringsett Hill. It has a worn gravel surface with some grass verges. The houses along the road are Victorian and 20th century, set in well-maintained gardens which give the area a strong rural feel. The houses have little architectural or historical interest.

Entering the road from Obelisk Plain, there are some brick and flint outbuildings. These are followed on the east side by a rendered and pink-painted single-storey house, 'Old Rose Cottage' once part of a garage. This has a garden partly given over to gravel, and a low patinated boundary wall. The house has latticework casement windows which are unfortunately in u-PVC.



Figure 45 : 2-18 Letheringsett Hill, looking back towards Obelisk Plain

On the west side are the front elevations of the houses running along the side of the Letheringsett Hill road. The fronts are in flint, red brick and render. Each house has a small fenced yard. The Victorian character of these houses has been reduced by inappropriate replacement windows.

The road widens out after these houses. It is then bordered on both sides by high timber fences and mature gardens. On the west side there is a two-storey probably inter-war red brick house. It has a garden with a high fence, over which can be seen the tops of shrubs and small trees. After this house there are bungalows on both sides of the road, set in large gardens or surrounded by gravel. At the end of the road is a hedge and tree-lined drive leading to Birchwood House, an inter-war building hidden from view by trees.

6.2.3 Character Area 3: Modern retail developments

The recent Yards are a product of Holt's transition from a market town economy to one which is becoming more responsive to tourism. Holt's traditional town centre developed over two centuries. It is a mix of commercial and residential properties, with buildings of different styles and historic periods. By contrast, the yards have little or no residential component, and many of the buildings are new. There is some local feeling that the yards offer little to the townspeople, being aimed primarily at the more affluent visitor.

Appleyard

Appleyard fills the area at the rear of the High Street on the south side, extending up to the edge of Budgen's car park. In an attempt to give a "period" flavour, red brick and red brick and cobble has been used throughout the Yard, together with red clay pantiled roofs. All the paths are of red clay pavers. This uniformity of materials becomes monotonous, undermining the attempt to create an interesting streetscape by the use of different designs and varying the roof heights. The Yard relates poorly to the traditional centre. Only two narrow lanes lead to it from the High Street; it is more accessible from Budgen's car park on the south side.



Figure 46 : Detail of Appleyard

There are two entrances to Appleyard from the High Street. One is a passage on the west side of the King's Head, the other, further west, is between John A. Hunt Optometrist and Baker's & Larner's Home Furnishing Centre.

The passageway at the side of the King's Head leads between the red brick gable ends of houses facing Market Place. The house to the west has an almost featureless red brick two-storey extension at the rear. On the opposite side is the rear yard and garden of the King's Head. The back of the pub is pleasingly weatherworn with an irregular roofline. There is a conservatory at the rear, and a row of single storey outbuildings on the east side. At the edge of the pub garden there are a number of small trees; on the lawn at the centre are barbecue-style tables with benches. The garden has a wooden picket-style fence around it. During the day, this is largely covered by blackboards advertising meals.

To the south of the pub garden, the new development begins. There is a single storey building on the east side with round headed windows and a matching door. This connects with a two-storey building which crosses the Yard from east to west. It has a slight resemblance to a barn or traditional warehouse; there are shops in the ground floor.

From here, the visitor can go south or west. Turning south, the visitor passes under an archway (bearing the sign "Appleyard shops & cafe"), heading towards Budgen's car park. Here there are some single storey and some two storey shops and a café on either side of an open-ended courtyard. The tables, chairs and umbrellas of the café fill the north-east corner. On both sides the roofs extend forward to create a covered walkway in front of the shop windows. There is a central island with a low brick and cobble wall, which has a tree surrounded by flowers. To the south, the courtyard faces Budgens car park, separated by a row of iron bollards.

If one turns west instead of south, there is a wrought iron arch with the lettering "Appleyard". This path leads alongside the two storey building at the centre of the Yard. To the north there are single storey shops and another path which connects with the High Street. To the south, there is a passageway through the two-storey building leading to "The Secret Garden & Appleyard Café". This proves to be an enclosed courtyard, with single storey buildings on three sides. A low and attractively weathered old wall runs east-west, subdividing the yard. On the north side of the wall is a substantial tree and a small but attractive garden, together with seating and a conservatory for the neighbouring café. On the opposite side of the wall is a rough area, not yet planted out. There are shops within the surrounding buildings on the south and west sides, some still await occupants. On the east side is an old red brick wall. This small courtyard is the most attractive part of Appleyard, with some good planting, and a pleasing mix of old and new brickwork. The yard is more spacious than the area to the north, and it is also screened from the less-than-remarkable views of the car park to the south.

Feathers Yard

While Feathers Yard occupies the same general location as Appleyard, set between the main commercial street and Budgen's car park, it has a more varied character. The entrance from the High Street is between Lloyd's TSB and a Spar shop. This is a useful path connecting the town centre and Budgen's, and in frequent use by pedestrians. Feathers Yard has more variety of shops than some of the other yards, with a fishmonger's, a butcher's and even a charity shop.

On the west side is the courtyard of the Feathers Hotel. This is framed on three sides by buildings. The rear of the house facing Market Place has a white painted render, and little of interest. The pale-yellow front of the Feathers Hotel, with its green painted timberwork is far more attractive, with a varied roofline and fine sash windows. This interest continues on the south side, where there is a cream-painted building with a large bay window, home to the Salvation Army shop. With such good surroundings, the yard is a disappointment. It has a surface of red coloured tarmac, with a scatter of barbecue-style tables and patio heaters. These are supplemented by a number of planters, including some odd rectangular troughs full of tall grasses which mark the edge of the hotel yard.



Figure 47 : Feathers Yard, looking towards Budgen's car park

Beyond the hotel yard, the Salvation Army shop has an unremarkable modern front within a brick and cobble facade. After this is a single storey brick and cobble building with green painted casement windows. This is the side of "The Stables" which now has a "ladies fashion shop" with a partly timbered front. A gravel drive runs past the shop entrance, to a car park on the south side of The Feathers. The rear of The Feathers facing the car park is an interesting assymetrical composition, save for its large and obtrusive conservatory. To the east of the car park, beyond a brick and cobble wall, are the roofs of Baker's and Lerner's.

The last part of the Yard, just before Budgen's store, has a completely different character. On the east side, after an electricity sub-station surrounded by a high timber fence, is a red brick building with a pair of west-facing wings. The two wings are built too close together with overhanging roofs and shop windows facing inwards. As a result, the shopping area is in permanent shadow. This claustrophobic design uses a modern and unattractive red brick, with poorly detailed windows; with its tall fence and gates, it resembles a barracks rather than part of a shopping centre.

On the opposite side of the path is a similarly spartan-looking building, although here the design is more open, arranged around a small courtyard. The general layout is probably inspired by farm buildings, and appropriately it has a butcher as well as a garden centre. Unfortunately, once again a harsh modern red brick is used, and the detailing is limited to a shallow dentil course below the eaves of one wing. The plain dark brown windows and the grayish-red brickweave courtyard add to a dreary feel.



Figure 48 : Unattractive shops on the east side of Feathers Yard

The area between these shops and the entrance to Budgen’s is included in the Conservation Area, although it is difficult to see why. The modern bank located here is completely unremarkable –the only positive feature is a large chestnut tree.

On the west side of the Feathers Yard is a smaller courtyard, **Old Stable Yard**. This is a rectangular space with gravel surface. The initial rear elevation on the north side (Lloyds TSB) is scruffy with modern extensions. Beyond this is a single storey shop, the “Norfolk Fish Company” and a single-storey extension at the rear of the Break charity shop on Market Street. Both buildings have large canted side windows and hipped pantiled roofs, producing an interesting and picturesque group.

On the west side of the yard is a red brick building with the Holt Chiropractic Centre, with a traditional-style shop front. Next to this is a smaller brick and cobble house with the office of “Countryside Cottages”; this has a single storey modern extension on the south side. Unfortunately, both houses have inappropriate replacement windows. At the south end of the courtyard is a gravel parking area, surrounded by weathered brick walls.

Chapel Yard



Figure 49 : General view of Chapel Yard

Chapel Yard is a triangular space on the north side of Albert Street. It re-uses two early brick and cobble terraces and a Victorian chapel. There are two new buildings at the north end. The weathered brick and flint walls and red pantiled roofs give a strong traditional character to the Yard. On the east side is a large car park.

Entering Chapel Yard from Albert Street, there is a former chapel on the east side, in brick and flint. It has two good Victorian-style shop fronts. On the west side of the entrance is the end gable of a terrace facing Albert Street. The shop “Pachama” has a copy of a mid-late Victorian front, with pilasters and multiple paned windows. The Yard opens out immediately after the entranceway.

There are two shops within the terrace along the west side of the yard. Baron Art and The Hut (now closed down) have reasonable “traditional style” fronts with pilasters and part glazed doors. There is a larger house at the north end, where a single storey outbuilding has the shop entrance to “Wood n Things Too”. A small area to one side with garden ornaments is enclosed by trellis. Behind this is a good shop window with fine glazing bars; regrettably there are poorly detailed casement windows above. There are the backs of other brick and cobble houses to the north, although these do not form a part of the Yard.

There is a similarly good short brick and flint terrace on the east side. This is one of the oldest surviving buildings in Holt, and there are traces of rebuilding and earlier window and door openings. All the houses in the

terrace are narrow; each has a part-glazed door and casement windows. While each house contains a shop, the fronts respect the original residential character of the terrace. The shop signs are generally attractive and well placed. A modern building adjoins this terrace on the north side. Its roof extends down and is supported on timber posts, forming a covered walkway in front of the shop windows. The setting back of the plate glass shop windows behind the walkway ensures that they do not become a dominant visual element. A similar building in the centre of the Yard is less successful, mainly due to the metal framing around the shop windows and the poor fascia board of Bennett's electrical.

Between the new shops, a passage at the north-east corner leads to another building of similar design, surrounded by red brickweave paving.

The sides of the yard have paths of paving slabs, while the centre is mainly of gravel, with areas of cement, tarmac and a path of red brickweave. Set around the yard are a number of wooden planters and a single tree surrounded by a circle of "village green" style seating.

Chapel Yard car park



Figure 50 : Chapel Yard car park, looking east

On the east side of Chapel Yard is a large car park. This is a rectangular tarmac space with its entrance at the south-west corner. On the south side is a modern toilet block. The southern half of the car park is bordered by a mix of old and new houses, most with brick and cobble walls. There is a passageway to Lees Yard on the east side,

with a wrought iron arch above. The car park widens out to the north, where most of the housing is modern. The most attractive features of the car park are a weathered brick and cobble wall on the east side, and a small number of trees and a tall hedge to the north. There is little of visual interest, and the area is a bleak and utilitarian open space.

Lee's Yard

Lee's Yard is on the northern edge of the Holt Conservation Area, it is a rectangular open space enclosed on all sides by buildings. A narrow road links it to Bull Street on the south side, and there is a path to the Yard from the nearby car park.

To the south there are two groups of much-altered brick and cobble houses on either side of a winding road from Bull Street. While the houses are picturesquely and irregularly grouped, the majority have very obvious replacement windows.



Figure 51 : General view of Lee's Yard

Lyle's Court, a two-storey red and cream Fletton brick terrace is on the west side, possibly originally a warehouse. It is connected to the houses to the south by a single storey flat roofed brick and cobble extension. The ground floors of the terrace have shops with narrow mullioned windows and part-glazed doors. There has been some rebuilding work, and the recent brickwork is a lighter colour than the original red brick. An interesting feature is the tethering rings (possibly for horses); each bears a set of initials and a date, e.g.

“W.C.L. 1896”. The first floors are residential, with modern side and top opening casements. The new windows and doors are unremarkable; the window frames in particular are too wide, and the doors lack visual interest, apart from a minimally detailed panel at the base. As a consequence, what could have been a very attractive conversion (as can be seen at Chapel Yard) appears second rate.

Facing this terrace across the Yard is a recent large red brick house, containing some of the “Picturecraft” offices. The proportions of this building are curious; it looks as though a traditional house has been stretched and over enlarged. The ground floor shop windows are unremarkable, while the frames of the first floor windows are wide and heavily detailed.

At the rear of the courtyard, (the north side) is the Picturecraft Gallery, a single storey brick building with modern entrance doors, window recesses filled with trellis and a low pitched roof. Similar single storey buildings are attached on the east side. One has a roofed oriel bay supported on timber brackets –a heavy-handed attempt at a traditional feature. On the east side, largely hidden from view, is a gravel car park, surrounded by modern houses.

Most of the Yard has a gravel surface. There are some brickweave paths at the sides. Where the tarmac road from Bull Street meets the yard there are metal bollards and gates, a few trees and a Victorian-style lamp post. Beyond this, a concrete path leads to the Picturecraft Gallery, with garden plots, an additional lamp and small trees at one side.

Lee’s Yard is let down by a number of factors; uninspired building design (including inappropriate windows in older buildings), a confused collection of street furniture and poor surfacing.

6.2.4 Character Area 4: Open areas/green spaces

Gresham’s School playing fields

On the east side of Holt there is a sharp transition from the houses of the town centre to open land, thanks to the recreation grounds of Gresham’s School. These lie in the wedge shaped space between Cromer Road and Station Road. St Andrew’s Church and its churchyard cut into the centre of the space, and the church is a particularly fine focal point.



Figure 52 : Gresham’s School playing fields and Holt Church

The smaller playing field to the north of the church abuts Cromer Road. It is separated from the road by an embankment and a low hedge. There are no structures within the field, which is of well-mown grass. On the east side are some school buildings, to the west beyond a boundary hedge are a small number of houses, well spaced and set within their own gardens. The churchyard in the distance has a low brick and cobble wall; there are some large beech trees beside the churchyard. In the far distance, between the school buildings and the church can be seen the modern houses of St Andrew’s Close.

To the south of the church there is a larger playing field. This lies behind the Old School House, extending down the side of Station Road as far as the Holt by-pass. Initially it has a brick and cobble boundary wall, but about half way along Station Road the wall changes to a beech hedge of similar height. The hedge continues round the perimeter

of the field, separating it from the by-pass and the new developments around St Andrews Close.

For the most part the field is grass. There are some outbuildings to the rear of the Old School House and a timber pavilion in the middle distance. By the inner face of the Station Road boundary wall and a hedge to the south are some evenly spaced large beech trees. There are also isolated trees on the north side of the field.

St Andrew's Church and churchyard

The churchyard is an elongated rectangle which projects into the Gresham's School playing fields, with a low brick and cobble boundary wall. The churchyard is a particularly picturesque open space, and its appeal is strengthened by its trees and wild flowers. It contributes little to the appearance of the town centre, as it is sited on the periphery to the east. The church is of rubblework construction, with stone dressings. Most of the exterior is attractively weathered. On the south side there is more recent stonework, a part of the Victorian restoration.



Figure 53 : Gresham's School playing fields seen from Station Road

The entrance to the churchyard is at the west end, where there is a pair of ornamental cast-iron gates. A wide path of good-quality brick pavers runs from the Church Street gateway to the porch, and also to the north, where there is a footpath to the Cromer Road, which runs down one side of the playing fields. Immediately after the entrance there are small areas of gravel to allow cars to park or turn around, with

timber railings separating the gravel from the grass. There is a pair of benches, one either side of the path.

All the gravestones are aligned north-south; most are set in neat well spaced rows. The churchyard is being managed partly for the benefit of wildlife, and there are rough areas of long grass and plants along the inner face of the boundary wall and on one side of the path. On the east side of the church, the whole of the churchyard had been left uncut at the time of the visit, and there was long grass and cow parsley, together with 4-5 young trees.



Figure 54 : St Andrew's Church

The north side of the boundary wall is covered by ivy, so that it resembles a hedge. To the north-east there is a row of large trees just outside the churchyard wall.

The churchyard is surrounded on three sides by the playing fields of Gresham's school, and across the well-mown grass can be seen cricket nets and tennis courts. To the north there is a modern rectory and another recent house largely hidden behind a concrete block wall and a hedge. Both are unremarkable designs. Behind these can be seen the houses along the Cromer Road. To the east are some of the buildings of Gresham's School, and beyond the



playing fields on the south side, a hedge and then the recent houses of St Andrew's Close.

Little Hills/Spout Hills

This is a triangular area of open land to the east of Letheringsett Hill road, which is thought to have been the site of a quarry. The trees and vegetation slope up towards a modern housing estate, Town Close. Along the side of the road, the land appears little managed, with a high number of sycamore trees and dense undergrowth. At the north end by Town Close there is a small clearing with mown grass and some seating. Several footpaths cut through the vegetation. Little Hills is an important part of the Letheringsett Hills entranceway to the town, and greenery encloses the road on both sides.

Field and adjacent garden of Hill House, to the west of the Norwich Road.

At the south end of Valley View, a single field is included in the Conservation Area. While this may be important for the setting of the nearby houses, it appears otherwise unremarkable. The field is private, and at the time of the visit was filled by rough grass and wild plants, with hedgerows and small trees on three sides. To the north is the walled garden of Hill House.

Hill House garden is surrounded by an old and attractive high brick and cobble wall. It is difficult to see much of the garden, but it is evident that the west end is largely overgrown with a good number of mature trees.

6.3 Key unlisted buildings

Holt contains a significant number of historic buildings that are unlisted, but make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. These buildings should be included in local listing; the dates given are only approximate.

10 Albert Street(at the entrance to Shirehall Plain). A red brick two storey house. The ground floor has a former shop front with new sash windows. The shop front is flanked by brown glazed tiles; probably inter-war. There are two sash windows on the first floor and a window recess. The roof is of pantiles with corbelled brick eaves. Probably early 19th century.

Post Office, Corner of Cromer Road& Bull Street. Single storey building in red brick with shaped end gables. The entrance has a stone(?) architrave with two sash windows either side. Brick coping on gable ends. Some alterations to windows.

Probably designed by the Architect's Department, Ministry of Works. Inter-war period.

8 houses at The Fairstead estate, New Street. All semi-detached of red brick with flint facings and red pantile roofs. Roofs are both hipped and gabled. Built in a late Arts & Crafts style. The layout of the estate is also of interest. c. 1921.

Public Library, Church Lane. White brick with pebble facings, and a low Italianate slate roof. Diocletian windows on the first floor. Two doorways have round-headed fanlights. Poor modern doors on the side elevation and flat-roofed 20th century library entrance. Former stables of Wansbeck House, built for John Banks, a surgeon. Also good flint and white brick boundary wall. Probably c.1800.

30 High Street(Richard Scott Antiques) Single storey building with large pedimented and rendered front. Side elevation of brick and cobbles. Front has a central part glazed door with windows either side. Narrow hood and rectangular light above entrance. Probably 18th or early 19th century.

15 Market Place. Former purpose-built bank with red brick and stone facings on ground floor, half timberwork above with plain tiled roof. Entrance is offset to one side within internal lobby; on the west side the bank window has stone mullions and transoms in “Ipswich window” style. First floor has central gable with mullion and transom windows and narrow sashes either side. The design shows the influence of London architect Richard Norman Shaw’s work, particularly New Zealand Chambers. Late Victorian or Edwardian.

7-11 Albert Street. Terrace including the corner shop by Lee’s Yard, “krusty loaf” and “La Maison”. The terrace joins a nationally listed brick and cobble building on the west side.

Three terraced two storey houses. All have grey glazed pantile roofs with some red pantile repairs.

7: White painted brick front. Modern double fronted shop “La Maison” in ground floor. Two first floor sash windows. Blocked window opening at east end.

9: Probably originally two houses. White painted brickwork. Sash window and part-glazed door on west side, modern single-fronted shop “krusty loaf” to east. Two sash windows on first floor with blocked central window recess.

11: Rendered pink painted front with brick and cobble gable end. Modern window and door on west side. On southeast corner is a shop with splayed entrance, possibly inter-war period. Hipped end to roof. All house windows u-PVC top opening casements. 18th-early 19th century.

13 New Street. Three storey red brick house with rendered ground floor. A large central timber doorcase incorporating a rectangular fanlight with tracery. A second smaller doorcase is at the north end. The ground

floor has sash windows set in rendered panels. It is believed that the ground floor has been restored, replacing a shop and cinema .

The front has four shallow brick pilasters on the façade with simple plaster capitals below the eaves. There are sash windows on the first and second floors, including three round-headed windows on the first floor. Cut and rubbed brick arches above the windows. Brick and cobble gable ends. Chimney stacks reduced in height. Triple Roman tiles on roof. Early 19th century.

Old Stables at 41-3 Norwich Road. Terrace of brick and cobble houses, between one and two storeys high. The flint walls contain a substantial amount of brick inserted as part of the “rubble work” construction. Converted to residential use. Important for group value with nationally listed house. 18th century?

6.4 Local details

Early, or pre-1708 fire buildings

Holt was greatly affected by the fire of 1708. The fire damaged or destroyed most of the houses in the town, and during the rebuilding, the focus of the town changed from the church to the market place. A few houses were spared, such as 1, 3 & 5 Shirehall Plain, and a terrace of cottages in Chapel Yard, thought to date from around 1550. Elsewhere, walls survived, which were integrated into the new buildings. On the south side of the Market Place, some houses were rebuilt on their original footprint, including the Feathers Inn and Baker’s shop, where the gable walls of 1631 survived the fire.

The walls which survive from these early houses are of flint cobbles with locally made red brick dressings. What appears to be an early area of flint at the Entrance to Baker’s Yard has well-coursed cobbles, all of a



similar size. At 1,3 & 5 Shirehall Plain, the flint cobbles alternate with red brick to create a chequer-pattern.



Figure 55 1,3 & 5 Shirehall Plain

Renovation work at the 1,3 & 5 Shirehall Plain uncovered two small windows with shaped brick dressings; one has a simple brick-outlined pediment above. This shows that while the original building was mainly influenced by regional building traditions, the builder or owner had an appreciation of classical motifs. If the 17th century date suggested for this house is correct, it would probably originally have had casement windows, as sash windows were not widespread before around 1720.



Figure 56 Early brick and cobble walls at the entrance to Baker's Yard

18th-early 19th century

While there may be small variations in detail due to changing fashions, most of the houses built in Holt following the fire, up to the early Victorian period, use similar materials and show similar classical influences.

The Feathers Inn must have been one of the first houses to be rebuilt after the fire, completed by 1709. The doorcases show the influence of 'polite' classical styles, and it is possible that sash windows were used from the outset. While much of the construction is hidden by render and a new brick gable, it is likely that it is still built of local brick and flint. The Feathers represents a fusion of new architectural features with traditional, or 'vernacular' building practises.

21-23 High Street is thought to have been built about the same time, using panels of over-fired blue-black bricks to contrast with the red brick, and what may be a rendered timber doorcase.

The spread of classically-influenced architectural styles and motifs to provincial towns such as Holt would have been encouraged by the new houses being built in centres such as Norwich, and perhaps also through local builders working on country houses for the gentry. The eighteenth century also saw the publication of numerous pattern-books. These would have been available to provincial builders, giving designs for house fronts and architectural details.



Figure 57 The Feathers Hotel

The difficulties of building a formal, classically-fronted house in Holt must have been considerable, however, even if the money and skills were available to do so. After the fire, the owners of land would not have wished to lose their plots, so rebuilding often took place on the footprints of earlier, often small buildings. In addition, a sense of economy encouraged the incorporation of any walls which had survived the fire, and the continued use of flint cobbles in construction. Some older houses were enlarged and refronted, such as High Silver on Obelisk Plain, or had new features added, such as the sash windows introduced into the terrace on the west side of Shire Hall Plain.

In general, the new houses have a simple traditional outline, and where space permits, a symmetrical arrangement of the sash windows and door derived from polite architecture. The utilitarian nature of vernacular architecture had tended to produce houses with little external decoration; the new styles often resulted in a similarly plain exterior. The new polite town houses made the entrance a focal point, with an aedicular door surround or even portico, and sash windows. These features also became a simple way of adding style to an otherwise traditional house design.



Figure 58 Pebbles on Bluestone Row.
The gable end on the left has coarse flint cobbles, the front has finer flint pebbles.

Brick and cobbles continued to be a common material for house walls, although if there was the money the house might have a brick front, with brick and cobbles relegated to the sides and rear. The flintwork in Holt from the later 18th to mid 19th centuries is usually uncoursed, often with brick headers amongst the cobbles. Where flint cobbles are used for house fronts, they may be selected for their small size and carefully laid, but end gables show less careful construction – a feature particularly noticeable on early 19th century houses, such as at Bluestone Row.

The brick incorporated amongst the cobbles of gable ends is often misshapen, or badly fired; the better brick is reserved for window and door dressings and quoins. One (perhaps early 19th century) house on Weston Square has brick used as though it were flint cobbles, in a rubblework construction technique. Here, the brick is roughly coursed, without any attempt at a brick bond.



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Figure 59 Brick used as part of a rubblework end gable in Weston Square

There are more larger and more formally designed houses where the main material is brick, such as Hanworth House in Bull Street, the Manor House and 21-23 High Street. Here there is a symmetrical arrangement of windows and the width of the building allows for a centrally placed door with a doorcase. Brick might also be used for decoration, Three-storey Hanworth House, dated 1744, has cut and rubbed brick window arches with keystones, raised brick quoins and a brick door surround.

The top floor windows of Hanworth House are smaller than those on the ground and first floors, but this could as easily be for a practical rather than fashionable reason, the bedroom windows needing less light. Even here, there are some more provincial details. At the base of the side gable is an area of brick and flint, perhaps a re-used wall, and the eaves have simple brick corbels below the eaves.



Figure 60 Hanworth House. The gable end bears the date 1744

The brick used for Holt's Georgian and early Victorian houses can be red or white. The early brick shows some variation in colour, and can be slightly lower in height than the late Georgian and Victorian brick. There are blackened or vitrified patches on the red brick at the side of the Railway Tavern, and the white brick on 5 Market Place is actually a yellowish grey with areas of pink. In all cases, the brickwork from this period uses Flemish bond.

Nearly all roofs are of pantiles; a few end walls contain the outlines of steeper gables, which may show they were originally thatched. The usual red clay pantiles are supplemented by black glazed pantiles, and tiles with a matte grey glaze. Doubtless the glazed tiles were seen as more tasteful than the unglazed product. One 18th century house, 17 Norwich Road has a slate roof, which may be original. Slate was a fashionable material at this period, but it would probably have had to be delivered to Norfolk by sea-going boat at this period, which would have added to the cost, hence the scarcity.

Most roofs have gabled ends, but where a house is not in a terrace or freestanding, the ends may be hipped. Dormers are not common in the town.

There is more variation with the treatment of the eaves. At its simplest, the house may have projecting courses of brick, sometimes arranged as corbels or creating a dentil pattern. Occasionally there is a modillion cornice, or more frequently timber eaves brackets, which may have a carved outline. A few houses have a projecting cornice in front of the eaves, either of timber and/or render, or even a parapet, the best example of which is at 25-7 High Street.

While classical architecture remains the dominant influence in Holt until the mid 19th century, there are isolated examples of picturesque or exotic styles. A former (late 18th century?) stables, now the library, has a low pitch Italianate roof, round-headed windows and flint facings. The use of flint shows an appreciation of the charms of the local vernacular architecture, but the use of carefully selected small flint pebbles, rather than the usual cobbles, means that this is immediately recognisable as a “sophisticated” design, rather than merely the vernacular work of a local builder. By contrast with the above, 12-18 Station Road appears to have started life as a row of traditional brick and cobble houses, but at some time after construction, the original windows were replaced by cast iron windows with ‘gothick’ tracery, another picturesque style of the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Some house facades are rendered, a popular practice in the Regency period. House fronts with what were considered unfashionable materials (e.g. brick and cobble) might be rendered, and even scribed and painted to imitate stone construction. With the exception of the Railway Tavern

with its moulded architraves, which may be part of a mid-late Victorian front, there is little modelling of the stucco work.

Mid-late Victorian

There is relatively little building work from the mid to late Victorian periods, and it tends to be isolated and prestigious buildings, such as chapels or the Old School. With the exception of the strong classical front in white brick on St John’s Hall in New Street, most of the chapels have constructional polychrome fronts, a gothic revival fashion where a contrasting colour of brick is used for decoration. The new building for Gresham’s School (1858) is probably the town’s first recorded architect-designed building, using an Elizabethan style which was popular for country houses at the time. It is also noteworthy for the unusual brick bond, where three courses of alternating header and stretcher bricks (e.g. Flemish bond) are followed by a course of brick headers.

There are few late Victorian or Edwardian intrusions into the townscape. The best building from the time is the former bank in Market Place, which has a stone-faced ground floor, imitation half timberwork on the first floor and a plain-tiled roof. It shows the influence of Queen Anne Revival work, and similar bank buildings can be found in Cromer and Sheringham. The only other example of imitation half-timberwork in Holt has been added to an older building, the former Star pub on Fish Hill. There are mid-late Victorian terraced houses at the beginning of New Street, and a few better detailed houses on the west side of Shirehall Plain. They lack the moulded ornamental brickwork which enlivens other Norfolk market towns; interest is generally provided by details such as stone lintels. Brick and cobble buildings from this period, such as most of the houses at Weston Square (1882) are unremarkable, with coarse flint cobble fronts.



Figure 61 A former late Victorian bank in Market Place

Inter-war

There is a small but important legacy of buildings from the inter-war period in Holt. The fine post office at the beginning of Bull Street appears to draw its inspiration from early brick buildings, with its shaped gable ends, and uses a most appropriate narrow vernacular revival style brick. The Fairstead, a development of eight semi-detached houses from around 1921 is a remarkable well-laid out estate reflecting the ideas of the garden city movement, where the brick and cobble houses are built in a confident late Arts and Crafts style.

Shop Fronts

There do not seem to be any records of the appearance of early shops. Photographs from the second half of the nineteenth century show most of Holt's shopfronts with flat pilasters each side of a large glazed window, undetailed stall risers and a part glazed shop door set near flush with the front. Running the full width of the shop, sometimes flanked by consoles, is a projecting entablature and cornice.

Sometimes shops had a shallow bay window, of the type that still survives on the Bircham Gallery.



Figure 62 Oblique view of the shop front of Gun Hill. The prominent columns have Ionic capitals.

The earliest purpose-built shop fronts to survive are probably Gun Hill and Lane's jewellers on Market Place. Both have moulded half-columns either side of the windows and door, a practice known from the 1830s, although Holt's could be mid-Victorian, as such fashions would have taken a time to reach provincial market towns. In both cases, the original windows could have had smaller glass panes, which could have been replaced in the later Victorian era. Later shop fronts include Virgin Holidays and the Break Charity shop in the High Street, These could be late Victorian or Edwardian, although this style persisted until at least the inter-war period in Norfolk, so they may be later. Polished stone stall risers were a feature of inter-war shops, and the stall riser of Lane's jewellers was probably added at this time. The best inter-war shop is Baker's & Lerner's

Groceries and Provisions shop. This has a stone stall riser, metal surrounds and a gilded glass sign. It is extremely unfortunate that part of one window has been lost.

6.5 The public realm

The descriptions of street surfaces, lighting and street furniture have been included as part of Section 2.7 of the Management Proposals, which is concerned with the enhancement of the public realm and green spaces.

6.6 The contribution made by greenery and green spaces and ecology and biodiversity value

On the east side of the town are the recreation grounds of Gresham's School. They are heavily managed with well mown grass, so their biodiversity value is very limited, apart from the trees and hedges along the perimeter. As the grounds of a private school, they have little amenity value for the town, but make a strong positive contribution to the appearance of this entranceway to the town. The town's churchyard is set almost centrally within the recreation grounds, and while this is primarily a burial ground, it also has some amenity value, as a peaceful place to sit. The churchyard is being managed as a wildlife conservation area, and there are a significant number of plants around the edges of the churchyard and at the east end, where there are also some small trees. While its biodiversity value will always be limited by its small size, the presence of a variety of plants in the churchyard doubtless encourages insect and bird life.

At the centre of the town, the Methodist Garden is a heavily managed area, with a variety of garden shrubs and a lawn. This is a more convenient area than the churchyard to sit and rest, although it is still set away from the commercial centre of Holt. Its

biodiversity value is probably similar to that of a small town garden, supporting a limited range of wildlife.

The most important wildlife habitat near to the centre of Holt is outside the Conservation Area. Spout Hills is a 14 acre site with a variety of habitats. There is a natural spring and pond creating an important wetland environment, noted for its wildlife. The area is being managed for conservation purposes, although it is also an important amenity for townspeople. A private field adjoining this area on the south side (next to Valley View) is included in the Conservation Area. As this field is at present unworked, with grass and wild plants, this has the potential to be an important wildlife area. The walled garden of Hill House to the north also adjoins Spout Hills. This has a significant number of mature trees, and at its west end, appears little managed. It is likely to be an important area for wildlife, particularly as it is a private area, probably little disturbed by walkers, dogs, etc.



Figure 63 : View of Spout Hills

Little Hills, also known as Horn Pits, does fall within the Conservation Area. This small area of woodland is situated between the Letheringsett Hill road and a recent housing estate, Town Close. As a consequence, its role seems primarily recreational, with a clearing of grass at the north end and a number of footpaths. Away from the clearing,



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Little Hills gives the impression of being neglected, rather than managed, and there is a good deal of undergrowth and young sycamores mixing with native plants.

There are relatively few gardens within the town centre; they are usually small and often set within the new courtyard retail developments, together with the occasional tree. The contribution of trees and gardens to the appearance of the town centre is slight, particularly within the historic centre. Perhaps as a consequence, small open areas tend to have a variety of planters.

6.7 The extent of loss, intrusion or damage (negative factors)

When looking at negative factors in Holt's townscape, the Conservation Area falls into two parts. The town centre has retained its character relatively well, thanks in part to many of the buildings being listed. The second part, the side and back streets, has been less fortunate.

Town Centre (High St, Market Place, Shirehall Plain & Bull St).

While listing has served to help protect Holt's character, by the time most buildings were listed, many of the older shop fronts had already been altered. Within the centre there are few old shopfronts, and many of the 20th century replacements are of indifferent or poor design, and fail to respect the historic and picturesque character of the town. Even where a good shopfront survives, the fascia board is likely to be garishly coloured, or a printed characterless design clipped over the entablature. As most of the ground floors of the houses in the High Street and Market Place have shops, these create a strong impression on the visitor.

Where houses within the centre are not listed, windows have often been replaced, frequently with u-PVC. This hard edged material contrasts badly with the weathered

fronts of older buildings. In addition, some sashes have been replaced with top-opening casements or similar non-traditional designs. It is also noticeable how many houses have lost their chimneys, reducing the visual interest of the profile of the roof.

There are a small number of poor 20th century buildings in the town, such as "Cool Cuts" on White Horse St, and Barclays Bank on High Street.

The general appearance of the centre is not helped by a variety of pavement surfaces. These are covered in more detail in section 6.5.

Holt was laid out well before the coming of the motor car, and the town has had to find ways to respond to the demands of the motorist. Today, some areas seem to be more devoted to the car, or at least the parked car, than the pedestrian. For example, Obelisk Plain and Shirehall Plain could be pleasant areas to rest and watch the world go by; instead whatever raised traffic island or refuge that exists seems to have been eaten away to create car parking spaces. It is understood that there has been at least one serious accident where a pedestrian was badly injured by a reversing car in Shirehall Plain. There must always be some compromise between the motorist and pedestrian in town centres, but it should be possible to create some pedestrian priority areas (covered in Section 8 Recommendations/Conclusion).

Courtyards, Side Streets and Back Streets

It is very noticeable that when leaving the main streets and entering one of the many smaller yards, and also entering the roads leading away from the centre, that the number of replacement windows and doors increases, together with uninspired

extensions and alterations. While this may not directly affect the town's character for visitors, it does devalue the town's heritage.

There can be a similar threat to the town's character where new "infill" housing is introduced. Particularly away from the centre, there seems to be a drop in design quality, and apart from an occasional panel of flint, little attempt to respect the town's character –although this should not be taken as an endorsement of "pastiche" Georgian houses, such as along the Norwich Road.

Away from the centre, there is also less interest in maintenance, with a number of fine houses reduced to a shabby condition. There is also the question of colour, and the painting of brickwork. In the centre, there are some good examples of coloured fronts, but in general, most buildings have not been enhanced by painted brickwork. In the past there has also been some application of roughcast render or pebbledash to historic house fronts; in all cases this detracts from their historic character.



Figure 64 Doorcase of a listed building in need of maintenance on the Norwich Road.

At present, there are low numbers of satellite dishes on front elevations, but their use seems likely to increase, together with solar panels.

(See also Section 2.2 in the Management Proposals).

6.8 General condition

The majority of buildings in the Conservation Area appear to be in good condition. There are a small number of houses in need of general maintenance, such as at the east end of Fish Hill opposite White Lion Street, Praze Cottage on Bull Street and 5 Norwich Road. A small number of shop fronts in the town centre show early signs of rot. These include "Secondhand & Antiquarian Books" on Fish Hill and "Harvey World Travel" on Market Place.

There are more general concerns over the use of inappropriate materials, such as cement used for repointing brickwork, the painting of brickwork and replacement u-PVC windows and doors. Some original features such as boundary walls and chimneys have also been lost. These issues are covered in more detail in part 2, Management Proposals.

6.9 Problems, pressures and the capacity for change

The second half of the twentieth century saw the last stage of Holt's transition from a market town to a service centre for the surrounding villages and a visitor attraction. Today, Holt's economy seems increasingly dependent on the large numbers of visitors to the town, particularly in the summer months. This has led to an increase in the number of shops, in particular the courtyard developments on the north and south sides of the town. These new developments do not fit within Holt's traditional street pattern, and are sited away from the main streets. The traditional retail centre of the town has



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been further affected by the opening of a large Budgen's store, which has the advantage of a car park nearby.

Holt has grown substantially during the 20th century, with new estates surrounding the centre. As part of the Local Development Framework, a substantial number of new houses are proposed for the town. This will result in increased traffic and probably also a demand for more parking space, particularly for summer visitors. Ways need to be found to anticipate the increased traffic and visitor numbers, without devaluing the historic built environment or the high quality landscape that surrounds the town. There is a proposal to site a car park to the west of the Thornage Road some distance from Spout Hills. It is seen as vital that the town has additional parking to accommodate visitors, enable local people to access their own properties, and reduce congestion in the town.

7 Summary of Issues - SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- High quality townscape in the centre. This has a common scale and palette of materials, and a strong Georgian-early Victorian character.
- Traditional street plan with interconnected alleys and yards giving interest and character.
- Moderate levels of traffic.
- Good entranceways to town, particularly Letheringsett Hill and Cromer Road.
- High quality landscape around the town: Spout Hills, the Glaven Valley and Holt Country Park.
- Gresham's School providing regular visitors to the town.
- Range of independent specialist shops.
- Proximity of North Norfolk Railway terminus on the edge of Holt.

Weaknesses

- Poor quality design for shop fronts and fascia boards detracting from the appeal of the centre.
- Erosion of architectural character as part of permitted developments, e.g. poor replacement of features, alterations and lack of maintenance, particularly in side streets leading away from the centre.
- Indifferent quality of street surfaces and furniture.
- Too many parked cars, particularly in high quality areas such as Shirehall Plain.
- Poor design for modern housing.

Opportunities

- Holt Vision and Master Plan
- Community involvement in visual awareness project
- Develop long-term strategy for improving shopfronts and related signage.
- Identify and develop spaces as pedestrian priority areas.
- Scheme to improve street surfaces and street furniture.
- Leaflets and exhibitions to promote good design for new buildings and the correct maintenance/repair of older properties.

Threats

- Decline in the quality of the centre through further poor quality shop design and signage.
- Further erosion of architectural character through permitted development.
- Loss or devaluing of traditional street pattern and character through poor quality design for new housing or retail developments.
- Over-use of green spaces around the town, threatening their appearance and ecology.
- Traffic levels

Holt Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan
PART 2 MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS



1 Executive Summary

Part 2, Management Proposals, identifies future actions and proposed enhancements in the Holt Conservation Area.

The key to successful implementation of the Management Proposals will be effective partnership with community stake holders and with other bodies such as the County Council and statutory undertakers. The role of interest groups such as the Holt Society and Chamber of Trade will also be vital.

The Management Proposals and their justification are summarised as follows:-

1. The revision of the boundary to Holt Conservation Area.

This will ensure that the quality of the Conservation Area will be maintained and not undermined. A more robust and justified boundary will provide a more sound basis for decision-making.

2. The introduction of Article 4 Directions.

In particularly sensitive parts of the Conservation Area permitted development rights have had an adverse impact on the character and setting of the Conservation Area. Prior to the confirmation of any Direction statutory consultation will be undertaken with residents affected and the views of the Town Council and the other stake holders sought.

3. A list of historic buildings of local architectural or historic interest has been compiled.

Many buildings in Holt are of special interest but not recognised nationally in the statutory listings. Identification on a local list will provide an added recognition of the value of a building or structure and become a material consideration when an application for development is made which affects that property.

4. The maintenance of high design standards for new development.

It is important that new development responds positively to the character of Holt. The District Council will seek the highest standards of design for both new-build and alterations or extensions to existing properties in accordance with the policies contained in the North Norfolk Design Guide.

5. The enhancement of the Public Realm.

Holt possess some interesting public spaces and there is substantial potential for their enhancement, which will both lead to the up grade of the environment and the provision of opportunities for business development and enterprise. Specifically the highways, street furniture, lighting and green spaces are in need of attention.



6. The Council will work together with other bodies, agencies and landowners in order to achieve the successful implementation of all the Management Proposals.

Without full and comprehensive engagement with the local community and business the policies and proposals contained in the document will not be achieved. Furthermore effective partnerships between all levels of local government are necessary to ensure that a cohesive and integrated approach is taken to management of the public realm and public assets in the Conservation Area.

2 Management Recommendations

2.1 Review of Conservation Area boundary

A number of recent housing developments have been included in the Conservation Area. Some were included from the outset; others, such as Norman Cockaday Court, are recent additions to the Area. A good example of 20th century housing development which demonstrates sufficient quality of layout and design to merit Conservation Area status is The Fairstead, on Cley Road.

There are several groups of mixed period houses (usually later Victorian, inter-war and late 20th century) where it is doubtful whether the overall standard of housing is sufficient to merit Conservation Area status. These are Valley Lane, the area to the south of Market Place (between the Beeches and Budgen's store), 2-18 Letheringsett Hill, Peacock Lane/Caston Close and the housing on the north side of Mill Street. While they include some earlier, usually Victorian houses, they have often been so altered that much of their original character is lost. It is suggested that some early houses at the south end of 2-18 Letheringsett Hill be retained as they are adjacent to the historic centre.

The following four areas have been removed from the Conservation Area:-

- Town Close estate and part of 2-18 Letheringsett Hill
- 20 Valley Lane, south end
- Norman Cockaday Court
- Supermarket, Kerridge Way

There are no additions to the Conservation Area, which currently includes the best of Holt's architecture and townscape.

2.2 Alterations to unlisted buildings and Article 4 Directions

The alterations to unlisted buildings in the yards and side streets of Holt have been covered in the Character Appraisal, Section 6.7. There has been widespread replacement of traditional windows, and to a lesser extent new doors, usually in u-PVC. The other changes to unlisted buildings include the painting or rendering of brickwork, the removal of chimneys and the use of non-traditional roofing materials (e.g. concrete roof tiles). There is also a recent trend to remove boundary walls to create off-road parking spaces, a practice which can much reduce the homogenous character and overall appeal of terraces and streetscapes.

Where houses are not in commercial use or multiple occupation, such alterations can normally be carried out without planning permission from the Council. Development of this kind is termed "permitted development" and falls into various classes which are listed in the Town and Country Planning (GDPO) Order 1995. Powers exist for the Council known as Article 4 Directions which withdraw some of these permitted development rights in the interests of preserving and enhancing the character of the Conservation Area.

The main threat is undoubtedly the replacement of windows and doors, as outlined above. While it is late in the day to try to reverse this trend, the quality of Holt's historic architecture justifies the attempt.

It is proposed that Article 4 Directions be used for the main streets of the town, including roads linked to the centre such as New Street and the Norwich Road. A number of courtyards have groups of buildings of sufficient interest to justify Article 4 Directions, such as Carpenter's Cottages and Weston Square.



The Directions should cover:

- Replacement windows and doors
- Removal of, or replacement of, boundary treatments, both hedges and walls.
- Painting or rendering of brickwork
- Introduction of new roofing materials
- Removal of chimneys and other original architectural features
- Satellite dishes and solar panels on the front elevation

2.3 Buildings of Local Interest

Holt contains a number of historic buildings that are unlisted, but which make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. This is either due to their age, materials, relation to surrounding historic buildings, architectural detailing, ‘townscape’ value or to a combination of these factors. PPG15 (paragraph 6.16) makes 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; however they will not enjoy the full protection of statutory listing.

In 1983 a resurvey of the nationally listed buildings in Holt was carried out, as a result of which, the number of listed buildings increased to 119. Most of the buildings along High Street, Market Place, Bull Street, Albert Street and Shirehall Plain are now listed, together with about a third of the houses in New Street. As a consequence many of the unlisted buildings which would have merited local listing already have statutory protection.

The following buildings have been included on the Council's local list:

- 7 Albert Street
- 9 Albert Street
- 10 Albert Street

- 11 Albert Street
- 1 Cromer Road (Post Office)
- 8 houses of The Fairstead
- Church Lane (public library)
- 30 High Street
- 15 Market Place
- 13 New Street
- 41-3 Norwich Road (Old Stables)

Also see Section 6.3 of the foregoing Character Appraisal for more details.

2.4 Development Pressures and Quality of New Development

During the inter-war period, Holt acquired several good new buildings, such as the Post Office on the corner of Bull Street, and a small estate, The Fairstead. These examples are all well-designed buildings, recognisably of their time, which incorporate locally distinctive features in an imaginative and harmonious fashion. The Fairstead estate also shows a well-considered layout, reflecting the “Garden City” ideas of the day.



Figure 65 : Houses on the Fairstead estate

Considerably more houses have been built in the Conservation Area during the later 20th and the beginning of the 21st century.

While there has been some attempt to create a “community” feel with the sheltered housing at The Beeches, the layout of other new estates such as Norman Cockaday Court seems cramped and more geared towards providing parking spaces and access for cars than a pleasant environment for pedestrians.

By contrast with the inter-war houses cited above, most modern houses seem uninspired “stock” designs which could be found on any housing estate anywhere within the British Isles. A few have a token panel of flint cobbles to give local flavour. Within this genre, a short terrace at Bull Court works reasonably well (shown at right) thanks to the well-selected flint cobbles and detailing of the windows.



Figure 66 : Modern brick and cobble house in Bull Court

In most cases, however, the cobbles on modern fronts are too large and the materials and detailing for doors and windows is poor.

The inherent building styles and types characteristic of Holt are a strength and should be reflected in new development. The scale and siting of new development should be considered with particular care, as should the architectural quality and detail. It is proposed that all new

development conforms to the advice in this appraisal, as well as to the adopted North Norfolk Design Guide.

2.5 Public Realm and Green Spaces

Parking and road surfaces

Most of the pavements in High Street and Market Place are of concrete paving slabs with inserts of red brickweave. This surface is beginning to appear dated and worn. On the east side of Market Place, in front of the Old School the path is just composed of paving slabs; this is also used on the south side of Bull Street. This would be a good model for resurfacing the pavements along the main streets. Some of the narrow alleys within Fish Hill have red brickweave surfaces; possibly a surface such as fine golden gravel would make these lanes lighter-looking and more inviting. There is what appears to be an early form of pavement along parts of Bull Street and Albert Street. A small number of houses have areas of flint cobbles in front, which may predate the metalling of these roads. Most of the cobbled areas are partly covered by tarmac.

Holt probably had granite kerbs in the later 19th century. A small number survive at the east and west ends of High Street/Market Place and on Shire Hall Plain. The rest of the town has modern concrete kerbs, which lack the robustness and appeal of stone. If there is to be a scheme for repaving the town, consideration should also be given to reintroducing stone kerbs.

Two yards within Fish Hill, including Star Plain, have grey tarmac surfaces with worn road markings. While it is likely that these yards will remain parking areas, a new surface such as golden gravel might improve them, and also create a visual separation between the yards and the adjoining roads.



Holt Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

Within the centre, Obelisk Plain and Shirehall Plain have good surroundings, and the potential to become better public spaces. If the car parking areas were relocated, spaces that at present are little more than traffic islands could be enhanced with new and more attractive surfaces, better seating, less signage and possibly some permanent planting.

There are also small forecourts in front of buildings with seats and planters, such as in front of Barclays Bank on the High Street, by Butcher Andrews offices and “The Beanery” in Market Place. At present, these have drab paving or red brickweave surfaces, not dissimilar to the surrounding pavement. Better surfaces and improved street furniture could be introduced here.

Street furniture

The town is provided with a small number of benches. Some are of reasonable quality, while others, such as on the traffic island leading into Fish Hill from White Lion Street, are little more than a few slats on a concrete frame.



Figure 67 : Seat and planters at the east side of Fish Hill

New benches, perhaps with a motif reflecting the town’s character or history, would benefit the streetscape.

Most of the open spaces in the town have, in addition to a bench, one or more planters. There are several designs. One rectangular fiberglass design imitates a lead container; this is effective until the material is broken, as can be seen by the war memorial.



Figure 68 : Open space in front of Barclays Bank on the High Street

In some cases, little thought seems to be given to the positioning of these planters, such as in front of Barclays Bank on the High Street, where they have been wedged between benches. It is possible that Holt has too many planters, and that a more

pleasing effect might be achieved by having a smaller number, more carefully placed. In some cases, it might be possible to introduce permanent areas of planting or even a small tree –the area in front of Barclays might be well suited to one or two small trees.

The appearance of Holt’s streets and open spaces would also be improved by some re-assessment and rationalisation of signage. As the illustration of Shirehall Plain at right shows, there is a black metal signpost indicating local amenities, and a large brown sign pointing to an art gallery –the two could easily be combined.

It might also be possible to remove some of the traffic signs.



Figure 69 : Signs in Shirehall Plain

Lighting

The street lights along the Norwich Road and Cromer Road are large ‘highways-style’ lights. These have plain metal posts with brackets holding rectangular or oval lamps. Along most of the remaining streets, there are similar but smaller lights with cylindrical metal posts and rectangular lamps. Where the streets are narrow, such as along Bull Street, the lamps are fixed to the sides of buildings. Sometimes a large bracket is used, and the result looks ridiculous (as at right); the houses are also blighted by junction boxes and more obscure mechanisms.



Figure 70 : Lamp attached to the side of a building in Bull Street

Some new lights have been put on the south side of High Street and Market Place; unfortunately these are little better than the conventional lights on the opposite side of the road. They have tubular grey-painted poles which seem to have been designed to hold road signs, and conical disc-shaped lights more suited for a municipal car park than a historic street. This type of light has also found its way into the Feathers Yard.

There has been a more considered response within other new courtyards. Lee’s Yard and Apple Yard include Victorian-style lamp posts. The lanterns on the lights in Apple Yard have distinctive conical caps.

While some variety of light is acceptable within the new Yards, which are visually separate from the main streets, there is a need for a single good-quality design for the main streets. Any lamp should also look acceptable when it is attached to the side of one of the town’s historic buildings.

Green Spaces

Holt’s main green spaces are located at the east and west ends of the centre. The recreation grounds at the east end are well maintained for use by Gresham’s School;



they are not in use by the general public. The churchyard serves as a public space as well as a burial ground, and the grounds are being managed to help promote wildlife. Within the town, Methodist Gardens is kept as a formal garden and a quiet area for townspeople, with a lawn and some wooden benches. All these areas have an attractive appearance, and need little, if any, change.

2.6 Future Management

The Council will work with other agencies, residents and land owners to ensure the successful implementation of these Management Proposals.

It is proposed that a maintenance regime be established in conjunction with Norfolk County Council Highways, other statutory undertakers and the Council's own Property Services team, to make sure that street surfaces are properly repaired and cleaned, that street furniture is kept in good order and that street lighting which conforms with the character of Holt is chosen.

3 Monitoring and Review

As recommended by English Heritage, this document should be reviewed every five years from the date of its formal adoption. It will need to be assessed in line with the Local Development Framework and changing national government policy. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the Conservation Area including a full photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action.
- An assessment of the recommendations of the document and whether they have been acted upon.
- The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed.
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and itemising necessary action.
- Publicity and advertising.

This review should be carried out by the local community under the guidance of a heritage consultant or North Norfolk District Council. This would enable the local community to become more involved with the process and raise awareness of the issues in particular the problems associated with enforcement.

The success of this document will be dependent on its adoption by local residents, regular monitoring and an effective enforcement strategy to ensure that recommendations are achieved.



4 HELM as resource

Further extensive guidance on the local management of the historic environment can be found on the online resource Historic Environment Local Management at www.helm.org.uk.

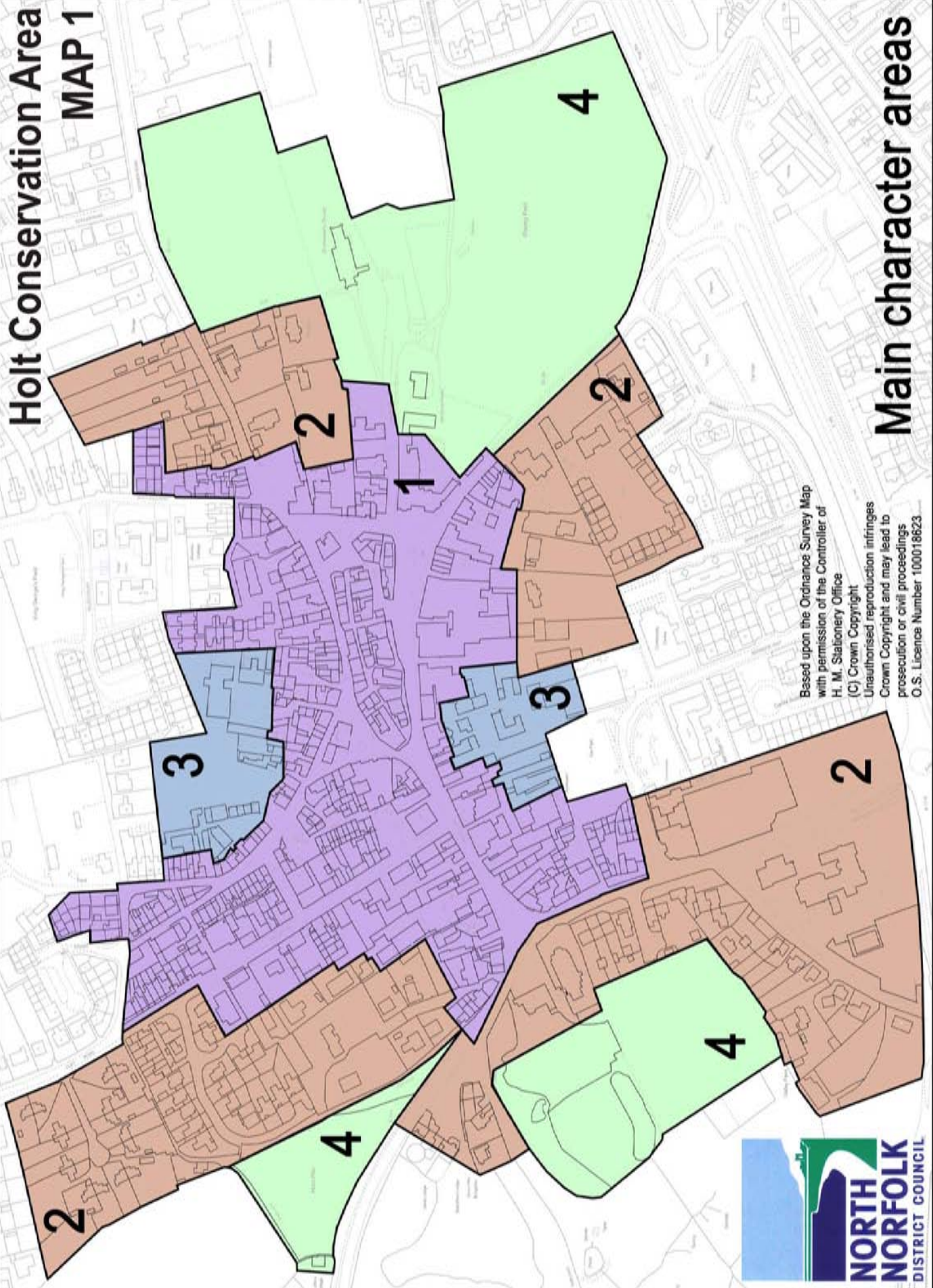
APPENDICES





Appendix 1: Conservation Area Maps

Holt Conservation Area MAP 1



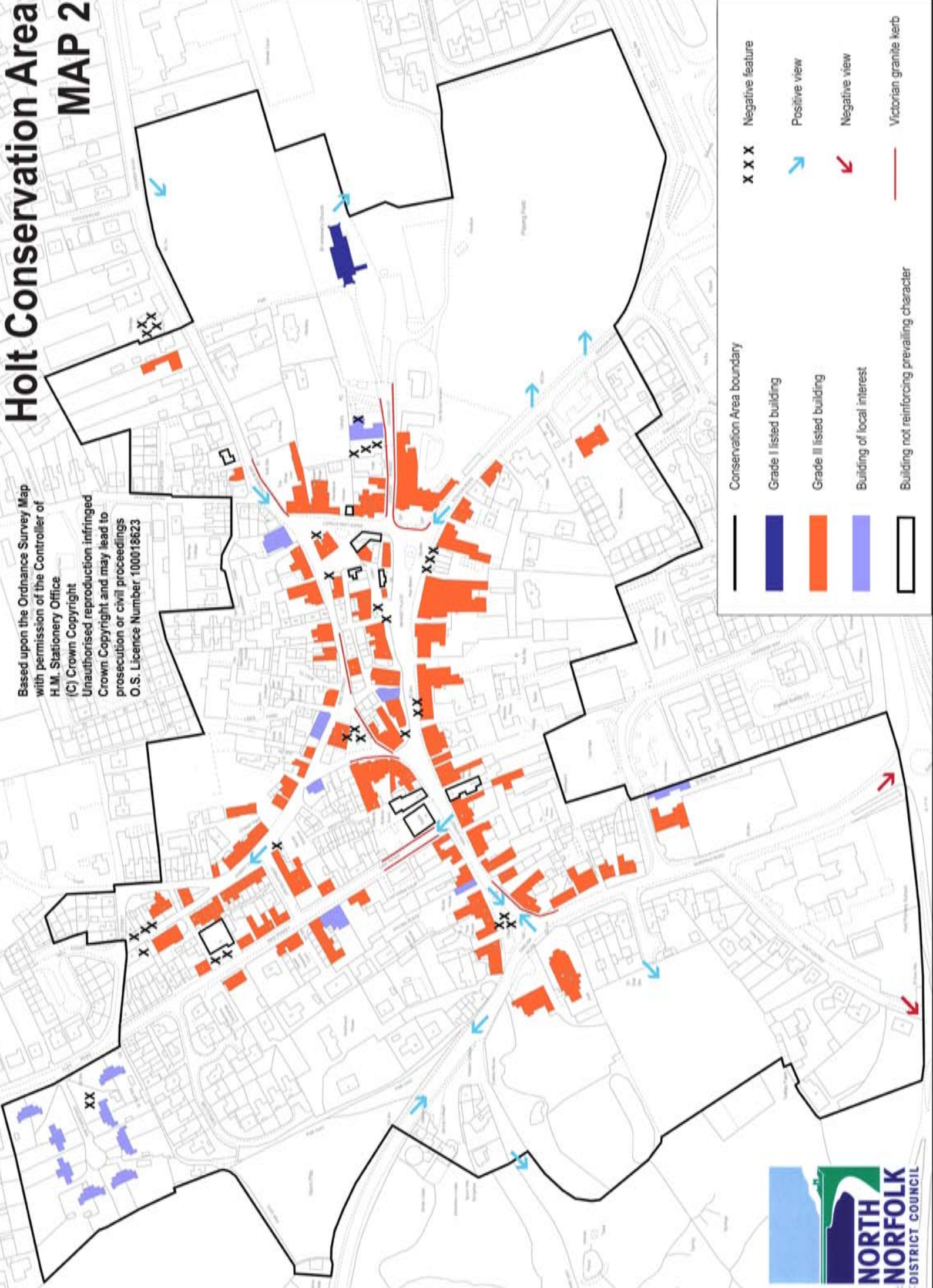
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Main character areas



Holt Conservation Area MAP 2

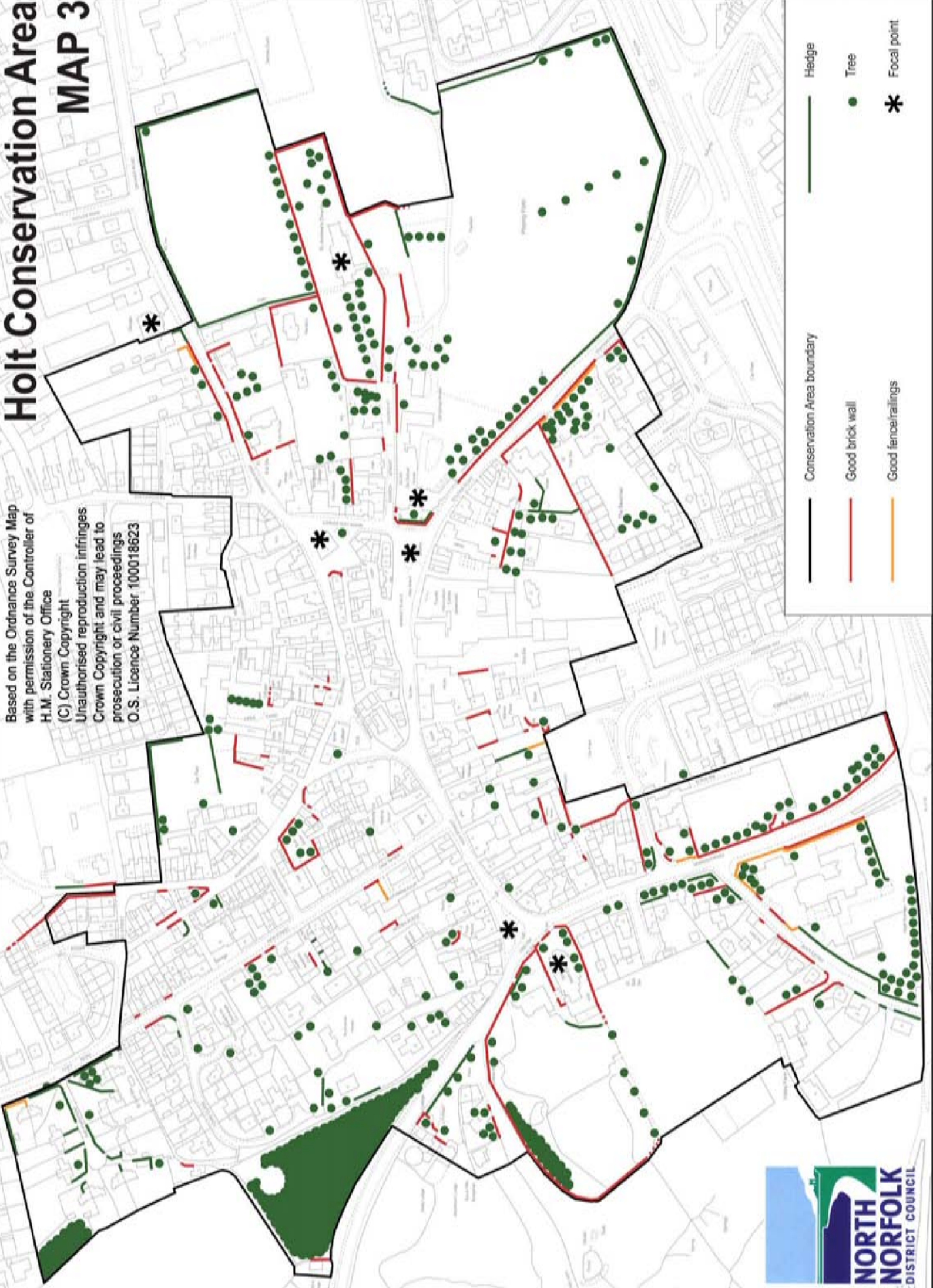
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—	Conservation Area boundary	X X X	Negative feature
■ (Blue)	Grade II listed building	→ (Blue)	Positive view
■ (Orange)	Grade III listed building	→ (Red)	Negative view
■ (Purple)	Building of local interest	— (Red)	Victorian granite kerb
□ (White)	Building not reinforcing prevailing character		

Holt Conservation Area MAP 3

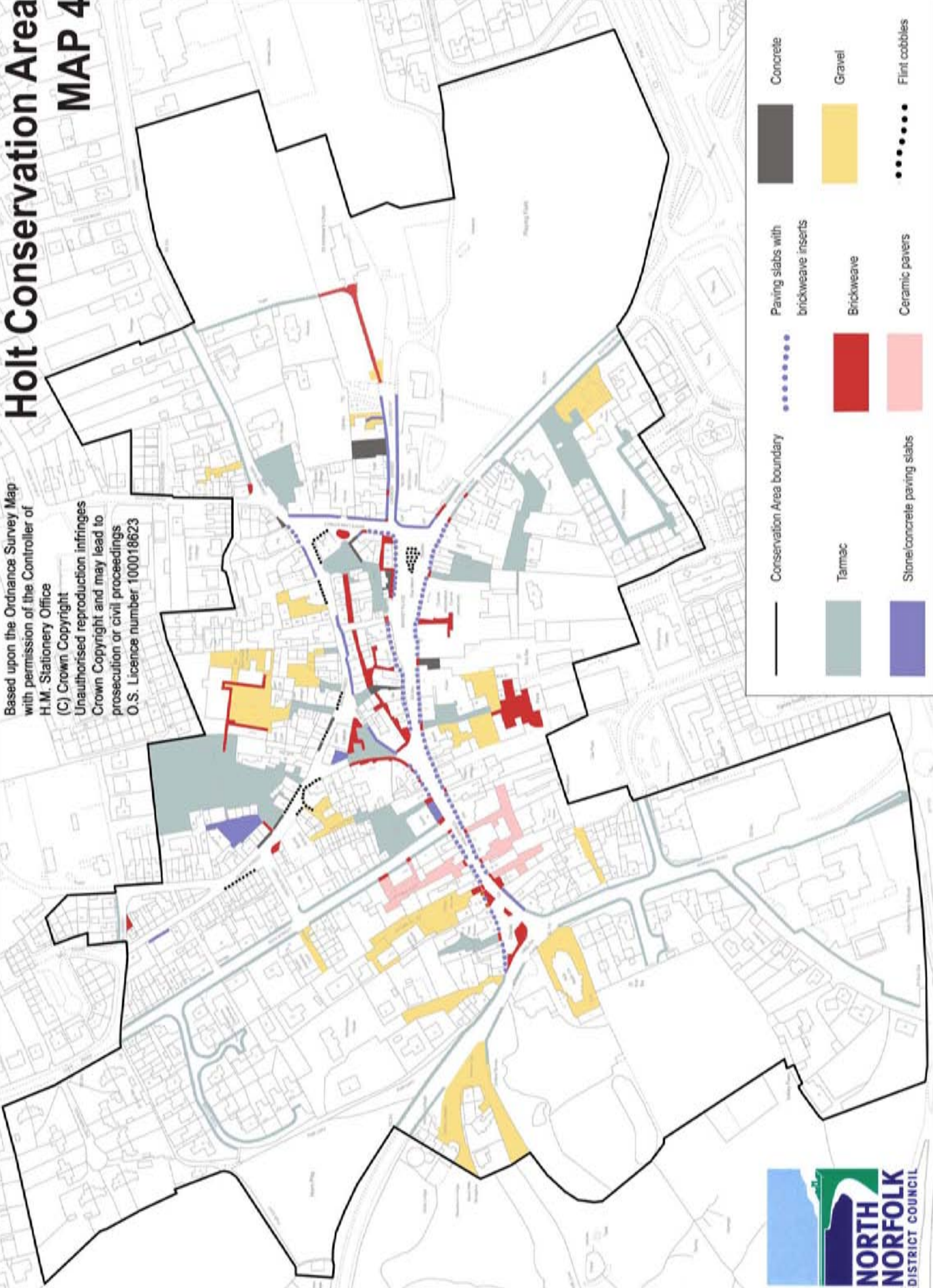
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- Hedge
- Tree
- * Focal point
- Conservation Area boundary
- Good brick wall
- Good fence/railings

Holt Conservation Area MAP 4

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- Concrete
- Gravel
- Flint cobbles
- Paving slabs with brickweave inserts
- Brickweave
- Ceramic pavers
- Conservation Area boundary
- Tarmac
- Stone/concrete paving slabs

Holt Conservation Area MAP 5

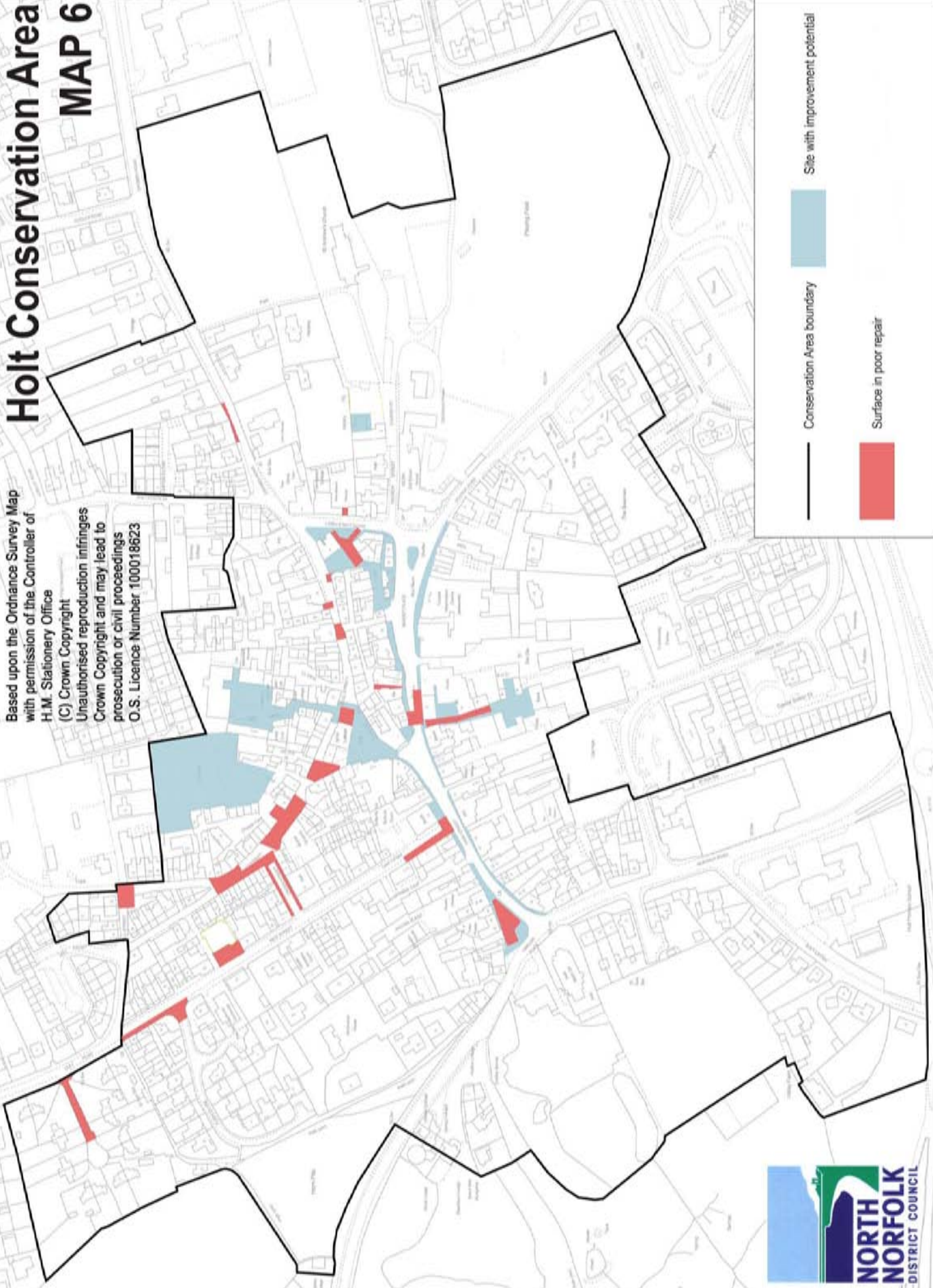


- Conservation Area
- Removed from Conservation Area
- Open space
- NOT TO SCALE

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Holt Conservation Area MAP 6

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— Conservation Area boundary

■ Surface in poor repair

■ Site with improvement potential



Appendix 2: Sustainability

Environmental Sustainability is an issue which is growing in importance in relation to the built environment. Buildings have a significant impact on the environment, from their construction throughout their useful life to their eventual demolition. A large proportion of energy is used to heat and power buildings, which contributes to emissions of greenhouse gases, and the construction sector is globally one of the largest users of energy and producers of waste.

In many ways sustainability, as with conservation, is best achieved by early planning. Careful consideration of the materials to be used and the design of new development can greatly reduce impact on the environment. For example, maximising passive solar gain or providing shelter from prevailing winds can reduce heating needs thus using less energy. Choice of materials can also help reduce energy requirements, for instance high levels of insulation can ensure that buildings require less energy to heat, but also prevent excess heating in summer.

There are many measures to improve sustainability which also meet objectives relating to conservation. An example of this is the use of traditional materials and construction methods. These can result in high levels of sustainability, by using renewable resources like timber or low-embodied-energy materials such as lime, instead of synthetic materials such as plastic and concrete. The same is true for the re-use of buildings which both conserves traditional architecture as well as reducing the need for new-build structures. The use of locally sourced materials is another example, which helps to reinforce local distinctiveness, but also requires less fuel to transport materials over long distances.

Sticking to simple principles like using high quality materials can meet requirements for both sustainability and conservation, as they are more durable; require replacing less often, are more energy efficient and often more aesthetically pleasing.

For more detailed information on the issues relating to sustainability and the built environment consult the North Norfolk Design Guide.

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Websites:

helm.org.uk

norfolkcoast.co.uk

norfolkwildlifetrust.co.uk

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Appendix 4: Contact Details

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The Conservation and Design webpages offer links to all main heritage and conservation bodies for advice, guidance and information.

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