

# Sawston Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan



**15 June 2023**

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# 1.Introduction

Conservation Areas are defined as ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

Sawston Conservation Area was originally designated on 26 March 1974. The boundary was reviewed and extended on 11 November 1993, and again on 12 September 2007. A conservation area appraisal was published with the latest extension in 2007 and forms the basis of this document.

The document sets out the special architectural and historic interest of Sawston Conservation Area and aims to fulfil the District Council’s duty to ‘draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement’ of its conservation areas as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

This document covers all the aspects set out by Historic England on conservation area appraisals and management plans, including an analysis of the special character of the conservation area and recommended actions for the management of the area in order to preserve and enhance its character.

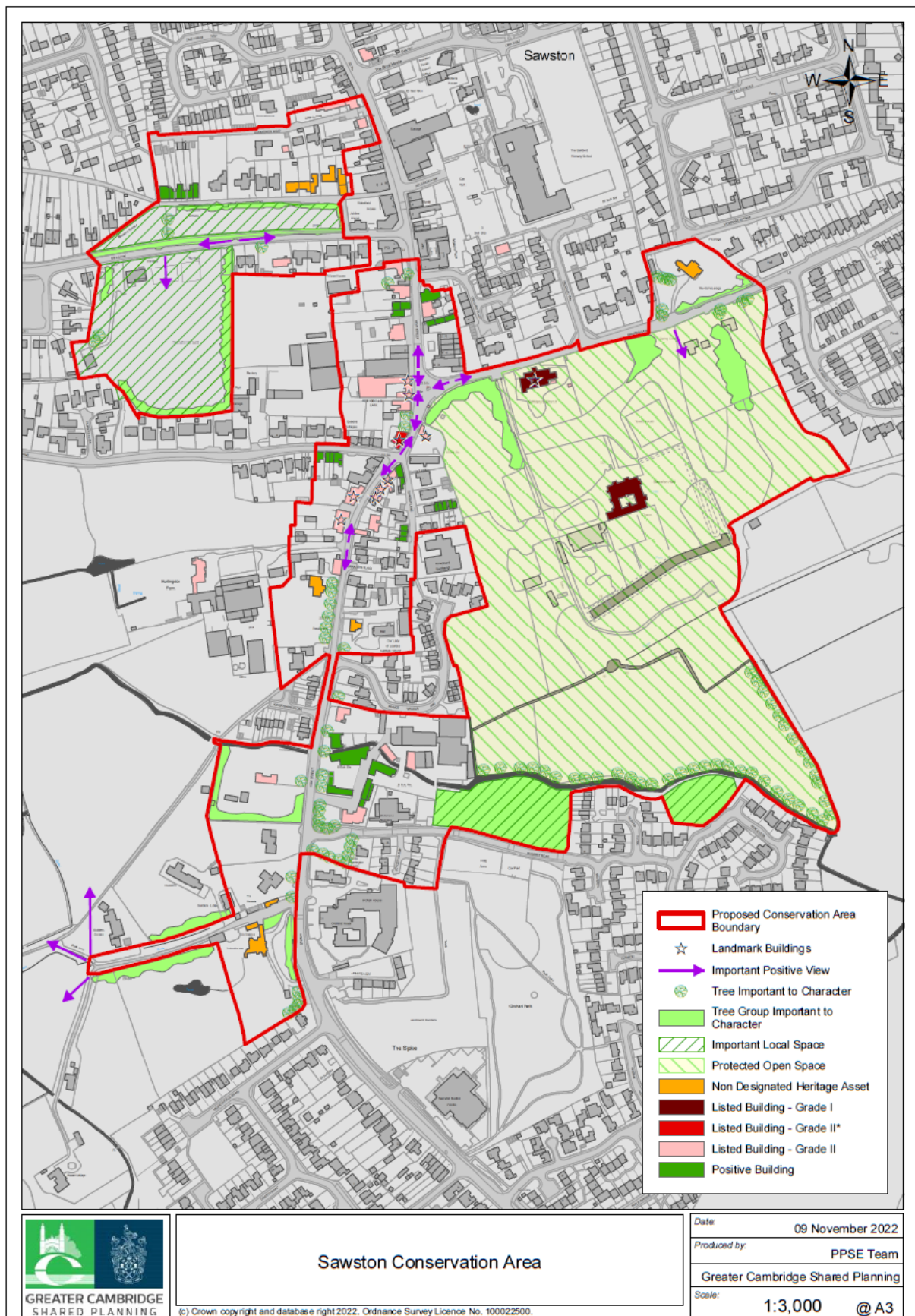
## 2. Statement of Community Involvement

Prior to the drafting of this document a village walkabout and photo survey were undertaken in May 2020 by volunteers from Cambridge Past, Present and Future. The resulting recommendations and photographs have informed the draft document, with images credited as appropriate.

Following survey work, a draft conservation area appraisal was published on the Joint Planning Service website and media channels from 22 February to 22 March 2023. Notification of this was sent by email to the parish council and the elected members representing Linton on SCDC. All these parties were invited to respond to the draft through an online survey.

After careful consideration of the responses and a report to the planning portfolio holder, it was decided to finalise and adopt the appraisal without any changes.

Below: Sawston Conservation Area Map



## 3. History and development

### 3.1 Location and setting

- 3.1.1 Sawston lies some seven miles south of Cambridge, along a road that until recently formed the main north-south route from Cambridge and London via Saffron Walden. A bypass was built to the west of the village in 1968, relieving the village of through traffic. Local traffic remains substantial, in part because of the size of the village (it is the largest settlement in South Cambridgeshire and was identified as a Rural Growth Centre in the 1980 Approved Structure Plan), and in part because it has thriving shops, schools, a village college, organised sports, farms and industrial estates that attract visitors and locals from a wide catchment area.



Above: 1969 aerial image (South Cambs DC)

- 3.1.2 The growth of the village is restricted to the west by seasonal flooding in the low-lying land bordering the Cam (or Granta) and to the east by the large landholdings of Sawston Hall. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century the village has therefore developed mainly to the north and south of its medieval core.
- 3.1.3 The conservation area lies between these two areas of 20th-century development. The main focus of the conservation area is the junction between the sinuous High Street and the streets and lanes that run across it from east to west (Church Lane, Mill Lane and Common Lane). Historically these east-west routes are older than the north to south High Street, and they originally led to various fords across the river, which forms the western boundary of the parish.



## 3.2 Historic development

- 3.2.1 Sawston lies on one of the routes of the Icknield, one of England's oldest long-distance trackways, having Iron Age (if not earlier) origins and linking East Anglia to other trade routes such as the Ridgeway in Wessex. Rather than consisting of a single track, the Icknield Way divided into a series of parallel east to west routes which crossed the River Cam at various points between Sawston and Great Chesterford. The Iron Age fort at Borough Hill, in the east of Sawston parish, lies close to one of these crossing points, and Roman enclosures following a similar alignment testify to continuity of use into the Roman period.
- 3.2.2 These early tracks help to explain Sawston's early medieval settlement pattern, with centres of settlement and activity along Church Lane and Common Lane. The Domesday survey records Sawston as Salsitone, or 'Salse's Farm' – perhaps a reference to the manor that was known from the 11th to the 14th centuries as Pyratts, after the Pirot family who were the post-Conquest owners of the estate, located somewhere in the vicinity of the church and Sawston Hall. Part of this manor was split off to form Dale or Deal

Manor in the 12th century, with a moated manor whose site survives at Deal Farm, in the north of the parish. A third moated manor site, with pre-Conquest origins, survives at Huntingdon's Farm, south of Common Lane; like Pyratts, this has pre-Conquest origins. The resulting polyfocal arrangement is described by landscape historian Christopher Taylor as 'perhaps one of the most physically complicated medieval villages in Cambridgeshire' (Taylor, C 2006. 'Landscape History, Observation and Explanation: the missing houses in Cambridgeshire villages', in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, Vol 95, ed Alison Taylor).

- 3.2.3 Taylor also suggests that the area of settlement around the church and Pyratts Manor was deliberately cleared and the population relocated to a new settlement south of the small green where the war memorial now stands, in the flat-iron shaped block bounded by the High Street, Shingay Lane and Burnands Place. This clearance seems to have occurred in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century as part of a policy of aggrandisement of the manor and church complex by the Pirot family, a trend for removing and relocating settlements from the church and manor vicinity that Taylor has traced elsewhere in South Cambridgeshire (namely at Little Shelford, Whittlesford, Harston, Pampisford, Knapwell, Swaffham Bulbeck and Balsham).
- 3.2.4 This new focus of settlement expanded southwards as the north-south route through the village up to Cambridge became more important than the older east-west routes. By 1279, the village had 125 households – perhaps 625 people – and the primacy of the High Street / Cambridge Road was confirmed when the Pirot family, as lords of the manor, laid out a new planned extension to the village in the 13th century on former open fields on the north-eastern side of the High Street, north of today's war memorial.
- 3.2.5 The Huddleston family, who inherited the Pirot family estates by marriage, lived at Pyratts Manor House which, in the fifteenth century, was described as a hall with 32 other rooms, a gatehouse, dovecote and many outbuildings. On 6 July 1553, Mary Tudor was given shelter at the Manor by John Huddlestone (died 1557) in her flight from Norfolk to London at the death of Edward VI. Fleeing in disguise the next morning, she saw the house in flames, set alight by supporters of the Duke of Northumberland, who wanted to put Lady Jane Grey on the throne. When Queen Mary succeeded to the throne later that year, she knighted Huddlestone and granted him the right to take stone from Cambridge Castle for rebuilding Sawston Hall, which also incorporates remains of the older buildings.
- 3.2.6 Water courses along the River Cam in the west of the parish have been used for driving mill machinery since pre-Conquest times and Spicer's paper factory (which lies outside the conservation area) occupies the site of a Saxon flour mill. Because of the high lime content, the local water attracted the establishment of a tannery in the 17th century, located on a prominent site in

the south of the conservation area, once known as the Old Yard Tannery, later the Hutchings and Harding's leather factory. This is recorded as being in use as a tannery in 1649, but leatherworking is thought to have been established here at the end of the previous century.

- 3.2.7 Parchment making was introduced to the site in the early 19th century and was established by the time that Thomas Evans bought the tanyard in 1844. His son and successor, Thomas Sutton Evans, greatly expanded the business from 1850, so that he was employing 250 people at the site by 1871. T S Evans also established the on-site brewery whose water tank survives at the site, demanding that his employees take part of their pay in beer. A quarrelsome and difficult man, he was prone to sacking employees on a whim, and this led to the creation of the Eastern Counties Leather Co Ltd, a rival tannery established in 1879 to provide employment for workers dismissed by T H Evans, located at the New Yard, Langford Arch, in the neighbouring parish of Pampisford.



*Above left:* High Street in early C20 (Image from [www.sawstonhistory.org.uk](http://www.sawstonhistory.org.uk))

*Above right:* Sawston Hall, C19 image (Historic England)

- 3.2.8 Another major employer was Edward Towgood (died 1889), employing 400 people at his paper mill on the western edge of the parish (acquired by H G Spicer in 1917, when it became Spicer's, the name by which it is known today). Towgood paid to have the National School built in 1866, which survives in Mill Lane.
- 3.2.9 Together, these factory enterprises gave Sawston an industrial character different from most villages in the area, and this was deliberately encouraged after World War II when the County Council designated Sawston as the site of a light industrial estate in an attempt to keep Cambridge itself free from industrial development.
- 3.2.10 The greater part of the historic core of the village is located within the conservation area, around the High Street / Church Street crossroads. More recent development in the village took place to the south, at 'the Spike', which

was built from 1853 as a settlement for workers in T S Evans's tannery. The workers who were housed here resented living 'in banishment' so far from the village centre and nicknamed the new hamlet 'the Spike' after Spike Island, in Cork Harbour in Ireland, which was used as a penal colony from 1847 to 1883. What started as a nickname has since passed into official usage (Dicken M and Lambart A (eds), 2006; Sawston as Seen).

3.2.11 The first Village College to be established in the county was built on the higher drier ground (to 28m) of the High Street / New Road / Sawston Road crossroads in the north of the village in 1930. This became a new focus of development, and by the 1950s, the triangular plot to the south of the College, down to Mill Lane was developed. Estate development continued during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s to the east and south of the village, and Sawston was identified as a Rural Growth Centre in the Approved Structure Plan of 1980, being confirmed as such by the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan of 2004.

*Below: First edition OS map 1885*



## 4. Character

### 4.1 Summary description

- 4.1.1 The Sawston Conservation Area comprises properties which date from the medieval period to Victorian times. They chart the village's transformation over time from a rural community to a small but thriving industrial centre. They range from dwellings dating back to the late C15 to late C19 warehouses and small factory buildings which have been repurposed.
- 4.1.2 The area around the War Memorial, which was the former village green, provides a strong focus for the Conservation Area. Buildings of note here that help to define the space include: St. Mary's Church, two fine examples of early timber-framed buildings, a small row of domestic cottages and a striking Dutch-style factory façade dating from 1900. The entrance gates to Sawston Hall also provide a reminder of the village's historical connections to the Reformation.
- 4.1.3 The Conservation Area follows the line of the High Street which runs north-south. The busy shopping centre lies north of the War Memorial while the dwellings to the south are more domestically in character. Over the years a wide range of materials and forms have developed; traditional styles have been for the most part respected. However, the commercial centre contains many examples of post-war developments which have paid too little attention to form and context. Former gardens in this area have often been turned into car parks which are generally utilitarian and frequently detract from the historic context.
- 4.1.4 The majority of buildings are fairly modest in scale and rarely rise above two storeys. Many older buildings have been successfully repurposed to meet more contemporary needs as domestic dwellings, shops and offices.
- 4.1.5 Groups of trees, especially in the vicinity of the War Memorial but elsewhere as well, make a significant contribution to the quality of the conservation area.
- 4.1.6 Heavy traffic flows along the High Street, which provides the main entry points to the car parks associated with the commercial centre. This affects the character and enjoyment of the conservation area, with traffic-calming measures only partially successful in lessening the impact.
- 4.1.7 Sawston has in the past been designated as an area where light industrial activities might be located alongside more housing. The relationship between these uses, and the extent to which they are separated is a key consideration in the future management of the village and conservation area.



*Above: High Street views north and south showing the attractive curve of the street and prevalence of render and clay tile on historic properties. 90 High Street (left, the former Queen's Head pub, listed Grade II\*) and 95 High Street (Ward's House, listed Grade II) stand like gatehouses either side of the narrowest part of the High Street. View looking north towards the War Memorial, Feb 2022 / May 2020.*

## 4.2 Key characteristics

- A linear village grouped along the High Street which runs north-south. The Conservation Area essentially follows the line of the High Street with a branch to the west at its northern end along Mill Lane and to the east from the war memorial along Church Lane.
- A historic core centred round the war memorial which marks the location of the original village green.
- Church Lane is enriched by the entrance gates to Sawston Hall and a little further along by St. Mary's Church and graveyard.
- The High Street immediately south of the war memorial is defined by two handsome timber-framed properties on either side. These give way to smaller (originally timber-framed) cottages with front doors immediately abutting the highway and two former 17th century pubs.
- Several substantial houses to the south with large gardens and/or backed by extensive areas of open pasture and parkland which can be glimpsed from the main thoroughfare.
- Some lanes with a distinctly rural character leading off the High Street.
- Substantial areas of mature trees and woodland at the perimeter of the conservation area.
- Numerous reminders of the various phases of the village's historical development, both in terms of building types and building ages.
- Buildings are mainly fairly modest in scale providing a palette of materials including timber-framed, brick, thatch, tile and slate.
- A significant number of former factory buildings (mostly now repurposed) which echo village's industrial past. The former Hutchings and Harding leather factory is in need of a new use and is in a deteriorating condition.
- A variety of historic and more modern boundary walls throughout the conservation area, defining spaces and adding texture to property edges.



Above: The War Memorial (on the site of the former village green) provides a focal point for the Conservation Area. No. 84 (left, Grade II) dates from the 17C whilst the Dutch-style gable of no.82 (c. 1900) provides a reminder of Sawston's industrial past. May 2020 (CPPF)

Above: View along Church Lane showing St Mary's Church (listed Grade I), Feb 2022.

## 4.3 Architectural characteristics

- 4.3.1 Most of the domestic properties in the conservation area are of a relatively modest scale embellished by traditional details. Some of these properties occupy prominent locations and can be considered local landmarks. More substantial properties are interspersed throughout the conservation area. These include substantial family homes, former farms and pubs as well as a number of buildings which serve as reminders of Sawston's industrial heritage. The predominant architectural and material characteristics of the conservation area that contribute positively to its character are set out in the table below.
- 4.3.2 Two of the most historic buildings in the Conservation Area are St. Mary's Church and Sawston Hall. The Hall's extensive boundary at the eastern side of the conservation area are a constant reminder of its presence but despite

the property's historical significance and its location at the centre of its grounds, there are very few views of the house and its private gardens.

- 4.3.3 There are several examples of more recent C20 developments dotted throughout the conservation area and at its perimeter, many of them dating from the post-WW2 period and the 1960s onwards. Many of these properties have been constructed using non-traditional materials including brick types, plastic windows and non-traditional embellishments of one kind or another including commercial properties (shops and offices) and domestic dwellings. Only rarely are these sympathetic to their immediate context and many detract from the conservation area's character. The more successful examples are those that reference the form, scale and materials that are characteristic of the conservation area (see table below).

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Scale and form</b> | <p>One, one and a half, two and two and a half storeys.<br/> Domestic scale, steeply pitched roofs.<br/> A few more flamboyant examples (Dutch gable, neo-Tudor, Arts and Crafts)<br/> Render (mostly neutral colours with some more brightly coloured examples)<br/> Timber-framed, rendered or exposed with render infill<br/> Brick – buff, gault, soft red<br/> Decorative timber framing with render infill to Arts and Crafts examples.</p> |
| <b>Walls</b>          | <p>Brick, part brick/part render<br/> Painted brick<br/> Rendered clunch<br/> Rendered timber frame<br/> Timber-clad<br/> Flint</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Roofs</b>          | <p>Thatch<br/> Plain clay tile<br/> Natural slate<br/> Glass panes (conservatory)<br/> Weatherboarding (mainly to single storey and outbuildings)<br/> Corrugated iron (to church hall only)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Windows</b>        | <p>Timber casement with small panes and glazing bars.<br/> Timber vertical sliding sash windows; also a few horizontal sliding 'Yorkshire' sashes<br/> Timber framed display windows to shops and other commercial units.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                            | Leaded windows in timber frames                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Doors</b>               | Timber panelled<br>Flat hoods over doors, some with decorative brackets<br>Decorative architraves/doorcases                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Boundary treatments</b> | Many high brick walls, some with flint, clunch or chalk.<br>Examples of rendered walls.<br>Occasional low brick walls with railings<br>Metal railings and gates (older and more modern)<br>Simple wooden fencing – picket or post and rail<br>Mature hedges to domestic gardens<br>Mature-tree lined boundaries |
| <b>Other</b>               | Decorative timber barge boarding<br>Decorative brickwork<br>Modest dormer windows to roofs<br>Prominent chimneys providing reminders of industrial heritage.                                                                                                                                                    |

## 4.4 Spatial characteristics

- 4.4.1 The conservation area can be viewed as three areas, each of which have their own characteristics. The High Street north of the War Memorial, the main shopping centre for the district, has a distinctly urban feel. Here, the listed buildings that have been preserved over the years tend to be dotted around between a variety of commercial premises (shops, offices and showrooms). Gardens to the rear of many properties have been converted into car parks, not always sympathetically. Modern buildings have been erected for a variety of commercial purposes not always with reference to the heritage context while many older dwellings have been converted to commercial use. The pedestrian environment is dominated by the busy road.
- 4.4.2 The area in the immediate vicinity of the War Memorial, by contrast, still retains some of the character of the village's focal point. Church Lane, framed by large beech trees, leads off to the east. The openness of the space allows for numerous local views. It also has a strongly historic feel with reminders of many of the institutions that have structured the village's economy present, including the Church, the gates to Sawston Hall, and the former printing works (no. 82) occupying prominent positions. There is also a former late C15 pub (no. 90) with a jettied first floor, and Ward's House (no. 95), a fine example of a timber-framed domestic dwelling, in the vicinity. The village scene is completed by a 19C water pump whilst a couple of nearby lanes have retained traditional cast-iron name plates.
- 4.4.3 The High Street south of the War Memorial has more of the feel of a typical linear Cambridgeshire village. Most developments along the road and are one plot deep. Nearer the centre, modest village cottages (some of them listed) abut the pavement. These quickly give way to a wider, more expansive area where significant properties (also listed) tend to be set further back from the thoroughfare. There are a number of entrance drives which, in earlier times, will have served as access points to farms and farm buildings. This is an area where larger properties are often protected from the highway by high walls. Even in this area, however, there is a strong reminder of Sawston's industrial past in the form of the Old Tannery; the buildings in this complex closest to the road are redolent of farm buildings with a backdrop of more substantial structures associated with the production of leather.

## 4.5 Key views and landmarks

- 4.5.1 A number of key views have been identified in the conservation area. These views are all identified on the accompanying conservation area map (page 4).
- 4.5.2 There is an urban feel to the area around Sawston's shopping area where some noteworthy historic buildings sit alongside modern commercial properties of variable architectural quality. Moving south these give way to the area surrounding the war memorial and the relatively open feel of Church Lane. Domestic dwellings south of the war memorial are initially quite tightly packed with properties mostly opening directly onto the pavement. Further south, dwellings occupy more generous plots and side lanes provide some opportunities for views across gardens, fields and pastures.
- 4.5.3 There is a marked contrast between the busy commercial feel of the properties fronting the High Street on the northern side of the war memorial and the more historic character of the High Street south of the war memorial.
- 4.5.4 Heavy and ever-present traffic in both directions along the High Street, which still serves as the village's main thoroughfare, restricts opportunities to appreciate the historic nature of many of the buildings in the conservation area.
- 4.5.5 A range of landmark buildings have been identified. These are shown on the Conservation Area map on page 4.



Above: View along Church Lane showing St Mary's Church (listed Grade I), Feb 2022.



Above: lanes leading from the High Street have a semi-rural, village character. Feb 2022.

## 4.6 Landscape and open spaces

- 4.6.1 As with many Cambridgeshire settlements the land around Sawston is relatively flat. The High Street is located where the chalk soils to the east meet the gravels to the west associated with the River Cam; there is a five-metre fall in height from the village centre to the banks of the river.
- 4.6.2 There are very few areas of open green space within the formal confines of the Conservation Area. However, there are two obvious exceptions to this generalisation: the Baulks to the northwest and the Wildlife Reserve to the southeast.
- 4.6.3 The Baulks was probably constructed as a flood defence for the village. For much of its life Sawston has been prone to severe flooding from the streams which criss-cross it; sadly, these are now dry for most of the year. The Baulks is large expanse of grass and has something of the feel of a recreation ground; it is mostly surrounded by bands of mature trees which provide a sense of enclosure and seclusion. It also offers a semi-rural view for the terraced houses on tree-lined Mill Lane.
- 4.6.4 To the south the Wildlife Reserve off Tannery Road is a more recent development. It serves both as a space for wildlife and an accessible green space for the neighbouring housing. The brook, whose course the Wildlife Reserve follows, is now sadly dry for much of the year.
- 4.6.5 The grounds of Sawston Hall are the third contributor to the wooded landscape. Given their size, they influence the character of a substantial part of the eastern side of the conservation area. However, they are privately owned and consequently are not routinely available to the public. Sawston Hall Meadow is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the Hall's gardens have been recognised as being of 'Special Historic Interest'. The mature and tranquil graveyards of St. Mary's church also add to this context, affording glimpsed views of the hall and grounds.
- 4.6.6 Mature trees make a strong contribution to the character of the conservation area. The large clumps which feature on Church Lane from the War Memorial to beyond the church graveyard have area-defining qualities as do those which surround The Baulks. Elsewhere mature trees frequently help to soften the urban edges of the district.
- 4.6.7 Views of open countryside are restricted from most parts of the conservation area. However, on the western side there are a number of footpaths into the neighbouring fields and Catley's Walk at the southern end, with its views across neighbouring farmland, marks an important entry point into the rural landscape.

4.6.8 Sawston is in the greater Cambridge Green Belt and has been part of the Area of Restraint South of Cambridge. It has also been identified as lying in the East Anglian Chalk Landscape Character Area.



*Above left:* Part of St. Mary's Churchyard which borders the extensive grounds of Sawston Hall

*Above right:* View along the Baulks. The Baulks introduce a large green space into the northern part of the Conservation Area



*Above left:* The Wildlife Reserve on Tannery Road which provides green space for the southern end of the Conservation Area.

*Above right:* Looking out of the Conservation Area, a view of the open fields and hedgerows at the end of Catley's Walk.

## 4.7 Archaeology

- 4.7.1 Sawston originally developed around the intersection of two important trade routes; these are the Icknield Way (running east-west) and the road to Cambridge to the north. The importance of this road grew over time with Cambridge's burgeoning economy; today's High Street follows the same trajectory.
- 4.7.2 Notwithstanding its rich historical past, archaeological pickings have been fairly infrequent and mostly discovered in the village's environs rather than the conservation area itself. Evidence has, for example, been found on the site of the Old Vicarage for the manufacture of Neolithic flint tools. Outside the conservation area excavations have thrown up evidence suggestive of activities and settlements of greater significance including: round barrows dating from the Bronze Age, an Iron Age fort, some fragments of Roman pottery, a 6C Saxon grave and the sites of two mediaeval moated manor houses.

## **5. Management, enhancement, and new development**

### **5.1 General advice to protect and enhance the character of the conservation area**

- 5.1.1 Guidance to promote enhancement of the conservation area is provided in the Council's District Design Guide SPD and in the Development in Conservation Areas SPD. These two documents were adopted by the Council to support previously adopted Development Plan Documents that have now been superseded by the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018. The two documents are still material considerations when making planning decisions, with the weight in decision making to be determined on a case by case basis having regard to consistency with national planning guidance and the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018. Bearing in mind this proviso, new development should have due regard to the two SPD documents, which are available on the Council's website.
- 5.1.2 Sustaining the character of the conservation area into the future will depend on proper management of the existing heritage assets, on care in the design of new development, including alterations and additions to existing buildings, and on taking opportunities for enhancement.

### **5.2 New development**

- 5.2.1 Beyond domestic extensions, proposals for new development in the conservation area is likely to be either for the subdivision of existing large plots, or for the replacement of existing houses by new ones. Any such new development should:
- adhere to the scale of existing development, which is generally a maximum of two storeys.
  - adhere to the prevailing layout characteristics of densely arranged properties near the high street and more dispersed housing further south.
  - contribute to the green qualities of the conservation area, by retaining existing trees and green boundaries and planting new large trees.
  - Replicate the characteristic street frontages of the conservation area, by incorporating walls of brick or other relevant materials.
  - Ensure micro-generation technologies such as solar panels are installed in visually discreet locations.

- 5.2.2 Detailed design and materials selection in new development should take the opportunity to enhance the character of the area. There is no clear template for new development in terms of materials or massing, but the scale, proportions, positioning, orientation, boundary treatments and landscaping of the existing historic buildings (listed structures and those identified as positive in the conservation area map) provide pointers which will help to avoid harm. Restrained material palettes for new buildings and the use of high-quality materials and high-level craft in their application will also help to enhance the character of the conservation area.
- 5.2.3 The former Hutchings and Harding site is a local historical and architectural landmark which has fallen into disrepair in recent years. Tragically, the largest drying shed, which was grade II\* listed, has recently been demolished with consent due to its perilous condition, while other historic and listed buildings on the site are considered at risk. Development proposals for the site will be expected to address the following guidelines:
- Listed buildings, and those buildings identified by the council as being non-designated heritage assets or positive contributors to the conservation area, should be retained and sensitively converted.
  - New development should respect the scale, form, industrial character and materiality of the historic site.
  - Landscaping should reflect the industrial character of the site. Historic boundary treatments around and within the site will be retained, with new additions sensitively incorporated.



*Above:* The important grouping of historic, deteriorating, industrial buildings of the Hutchins and Harding site. The prominence of local stock brick continues into the boundary walls, which are typical of the area. Feb 2022.

## 5.3 Trees

- 5.3.1 Long-term management of trees is essential to the character of the conservation area. Such management needs to both ensure the continued welfare of the existing trees and plan for enhancement and replenishment.
- 5.3.2 The replacement of existing forest-scale trees by smaller species should be resisted, and appropriate new planting of larger tree species and hedges in new development, on existing plots, and on highway land should be encouraged.

## 5.4 Enhancement

- 5.4.1 The table below sets out key issues and opportunities for enhancement in the conservation area.

| Opportunities for enhancement | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Management proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Traditional features          | Buildings in the conservation area are generally well maintained and there has been little erosion of character through changes to building details and development within the curtilage of properties. This is partly due to the listed status of many buildings. | The loss of historic features that can cause incremental damage to the character of the area and will be resisted. The reinstatement of previously lost features will be encouraged, with specialist advice and guidance provided. |
| Highway engineering           | Motor traffic through Sawston is generally local, due to the bypass which provides for the majority of car travel. The narrow winding roads form chicanes that reduce the                                                                                          | The amount of modern highway signage and street furniture should be maintained at its current minimal level in the interests of preserving the special character of the                                                            |

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                       | speed of motorists without the need for speed humps or intrusive camera apparatus. There are examples of modern poor quality street furniture, such as street lights and guard rails, in places.                                                                                            | Conservation Area. Attractive street lighting should be preserved. New street furniture and lighting should be high quality and sympathetic in design.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Boundary treatments   | Boundary treatments, especially on the street frontage, are especially important to the conservation area. Of particular note in Sawston are long stretches of high boundary wall, built of local materials such as stock brick.                                                            | Resist planning applications for inappropriate boundary treatments such as close-boarded fences or unduly ornate railings, or the removal of existing positive boundaries. The regular repair and maintenance and repair of walls should be encouraged with the use of traditional materials and methods. Also, new walls should use these materials, be at a suitable height. |
| Trees and open spaces | Large and mature trees and groups of trees make a major contribution to the character and amenity of the conservation area. The trees are located in both public and private spaces. Open spaces provide amenity, biodiversity and local views.                                             | Ensure conservation area controls over tree works are used to protect existing tall trees, and encourage succession planting. The impact of development on views and open spaces will be considered in order to protect the character of the area.                                                                                                                             |
| Windows               | There has been limited replacement of older windows in the conservation area, and few instances of such change significantly harming the character of the area. Nonetheless, the traditional, and in some cases intricate glazing patterns are a positive feature of the conservation area. | Promote guidance on traditional windows, outlining their positive contribution to the character of a conservation area. When planning permission is required, the loss of traditional windows should be resisted, and the use of suitable modern windows supported where appropriate. Historic England guidance is extensive.                                                  |

|                            |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Extensions and alterations | Many buildings in the conservation area have been extended and altered, often to the rear where space allows. This is expected to continue. | Alterations to buildings in the conservation area, whether those buildings are identified as making a positive contribution or not, should respond carefully both to the original character of the existing building and that of the conservation area as a whole. Alterations which eliminate or ameliorate recent poor design, or restore elements of original character to buildings should be encouraged. |
| Signage and lighting       | The shop signage on older properties on the High Street is generally traditional with small shop windows divide by mullions and transoms.   | The general use of traditional, non-illuminated and hand painted signs, and traditional shop frontage features such as stall risers, enhances the character of the area and must be maintained. The use of large plate glass windows and assertive signage and lighting will be resisted.                                                                                                                     |

## **6. Heritage assets and positive structures**

### **6.1 Designated heritage assets**

- 6.1.1 There are over 30 listed buildings within the Sawston Conservation Area boundary. These include the most historic and highly graded buildings such as the church and hall, as well as industrial buildings such as those at the former tannery, and more modest domestic houses near the historic high street.
- 6.1.2 The grounds of Sawston Hall are designated at grade II as a registered park and garden. Around half the designated open space is within the conservation area but also extends into the green belt to the east of the village.
- 6.1.3 Each designated heritage asset is identified on the Conservation Area map, and full details of their listing can be found on the Historic England website at [www.historicengland.org.uk/listing](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing).

### **6.2 Non-designated heritage assets**

- 6.2.1 A number of buildings or structures in the conservation area have also been identified which, although not nationally listed or designated, are of local importance. This could be due to their architectural and/ or historic interest, their landmark status, communal function, association to locally important individuals or families or a combination of these.
- 6.2.2 These properties have been identified on the conservation area maps for information purposes and to ensure that they are given due regard in any related planning applications. It is also recommended that they be formally assessed as non-designated heritage assets by the council; and considered for inclusion on any subsequent Local Heritage List.

### **6.3 Positive buildings and structures**

- 6.3.1 In addition to the above, there are a number of buildings or structures which are not nationally designated and are unlikely to meet the criteria for consideration as a non-designated heritage asset, but nonetheless do

contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation areas.

- 6.3.2 These buildings or structures make a valuable contribution and should be viewed as key elements of the overall character and significance of the relevant conservation area. Alterations to, or the loss of, these assets can have a lasting impact on the special character of the area in which they lie. These structures have been identified as positive buildings on the conservation area map on page 4.

## **7. Proposed boundary changes**

- 7.1 The conservation area boundary has been amended twice since the original designation in 1974: once in 1993 and again in 2007. Based on the current assessment, it is felt that the existing boundary includes the areas of the village with sufficient historic and architectural value, and therefore there are no proposals to amend the boundary at this time.
- 7.2 Buildings of local significance identified outside the conservation area boundary will be referred to the Cambridgeshire local heritage listing project.

## 8. References

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