

# Southwold Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan

January 2024



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## Gazetteer of Positive Buildings Within the Southwold Conservation Area

### Seaside Suburban Character Area

Blackmill Road (North Side)  
 Blackmill Road (South Side)  
 Eversley Road  
 Gardner Road - North  
 Godyll Road  
 High Street – North (East Side)  
 High Street – North (West Side)  
 Manor Park Road  
 Mill Lane –(North Side) Central and West  
 North Green  
 St Edmunds Court  
 Spinners Lane

Station Road (East Side)  
 Station Road (West Side)  
 Strickland Place  
 The Common  
 Woodleys Yard  
 Wymering Road  
 York Road

### Seaside Corporation (North Cliff) Character Area

Cautley Road  
 Chester Road (North Side)  
 Chester Road (South side)  
 Cumberland Road - North  
 Dunwich Road (North Side)  
 Dunwich Road (South Side)  
 Field Stile Road  
 Foster Close  
 Marlborough Road (East Side)  
 Marlborough Road (West Side)  
 North Parade  
 St Edmunds Road  
 Salisbury Road (North Side)  
 Salisbury Road (South Side)  
 Stradbroke Road - north (East Side)  
 Stradbroke Road - north (West Side)

### Old Town Character Area

Albert Place  
 Alpha Terrace  
 Bank Alley  
 Barnaby Green  
 Bartholomew Green  
 Buckenham Court  
 Child's Yard  
 Church Green  
 Church Street  
 Cornfield Mews  
 Cumberland Close  
 Cumberland Road – South  
 Drayman Square  
 East Cliff  
 East Green  
 East Street – (North Side)  
 East Street (South Side)  
 Fox's Yard  
 Gardner Road – South  
 High Street - South (East Side)

High Street – South (West Side)  
Hope Cottages  
Loftus Lane  
Lorne Road (North Side)  
Lorne Road (South Side)  
Market Place (East Side)  
Market Place (North Side)  
Market Place (South Side)  
Market Place (West Side)  
Park Lane (North Side)  
Pinkneys Lane (Northwest Side)  
Queen Street (East Side)  
Queen Street (West Side)  
St James Green (Even)  
St James Green (Odd)  
Smokehouse Yard  
Snowden’s Yard  
Stradbroke Road – South  
Tibby’s Triangle  
Tibby’s Way  
Trinity Close  
Trinity Street (East Side)  
Trinity Street (West Side)  
Victoria Street (East Side)  
Victoria Street (West Side)  
York Cliff  
Youngs Yard

#### **Town Farm Character Area**

Field Stile Road  
Hotson Road (North Side)  
Hotson Road (South Side)  
Marlborough Road  
North Parade  
North Road  
Pier Avenue (North Side)  
Pier Avenue (South Side)

#### **Blackshore Character Area**

Blackshore

#### **Seafront Character Area**

The Pier

#### **Marine Villas Character Area**

Constitution Hill  
East Street South (east of Pinkneys Lane)  
Ferry Road  
Gardner Road (southern Section)  
Gun Hill  
Park Lane (South Side)  
Pinkneys Lane (Southeast Side)  
Primrose Alley  
Queens Road  
Skilmans Hill  
South Green (East Side)  
South Green (North Side)  
South Green (West Side)



*The Town from The Pier*



## Introduction

The historic environment is all around us in the form of buildings, landscapes, archaeology, and historic areas; it is a precious and irreplaceable asset. Once gone it is lost forever.

Caring for the historic environment is a dynamic process which involves managing change - this does not mean keeping everything from the past, but it does mean making careful judgements about the value and significance of buildings and landscapes.

Critical to these decisions is an appreciation and understanding of an area's character, including its social and economic history and the way such factors have shaped its urban fabric. This should be the starting point for making decisions about both its management and future.

This Conservation Area Appraisal provides details and identifies features which contribute to and justify its status. The purpose of this conservation area appraisal includes:

- a definition of the special character of the Conservation Area through its special qualities: layout, uses, architecture, setting, open spaces and archaeology.
- an analysis of the area's history, development, and status; and
- a guide to managing future change: small scale affecting households and larger scale affecting new development.

The role of a conservation area is not to restrict change and development, but to recognise what is significant about an area, and to ensure that proposed change is not detrimental. By controlling proposals for demolition, and

having tighter control over design, material use and detailing, the intrinsic quality of a conservation area can be maintained.

The Southwold Conservation Area has been appraised, and this report prepared, in accordance with the published Historic England guidance document '*Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*' (Second Edition, 2019).

## 1.0 The Southwold Conservation Area

Southwold is a coastal settlement, located approximately thirteen miles south of Lowestoft and nine miles east of Halesworth. The A1095 is the primary road route from the A12, to the north and following roughly line of the River Blyth, climbing and turning before making the gradual ascent into the town.

The main route through the town is The High Street, which terminates at the triangular Market Place before the road splits; East Street continues southeast and ends at Centre Cliff while Queen Street weaves its way south, becoming Ferry Road which terminates at Blackshore harbour.



East Street looking east

Southwold can also be accessed by foot or ferry from the village of Walberswick and from the neighbouring settlement of Reydon to the northwest.

The boundary of the Southwold Conservation Area is defined by the beach and promenade to the east, the common and marshes to the west and the river Blyth to the south.

The commercial heart of the town is the High Street and Market Place, with further retail activity seen to East Street, Queen Street and around East Green. Within the heart of the town is the renowned Adnams Brewery which, with its public houses, hotels and shop and cafe outlet makes a significant contribution to the vibrancy of the town.

To the east and west of the High Street, the narrow lanes are primarily residential, occasionally opening out onto a green, and often containing houses of varying age and size.

Southwold contains a great range of buildings of varying age and status, and building density in the town is high, particularly in close proximity to the High Street. A particular feature of Southwold is the number of greens that provide a welcome break from closely grouped houses, as well as pleasing pockets of open amenity space.

The town possesses a high number of nationally listed buildings and landmark structures. The silhouette of the town, when seen on rising ground from the south, is varied and the forms of the lighthouse, St Edmunds Church and the brewery are particularly characteristic.

## 2.0 Planning Policy Framework

Conservation areas were introduced through the Civic Amenities Act in 1967 and there are now 52 in the East Suffolk Council area (2022). Conservation areas are "*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*".

The identification and protection of the historic environment is an important function of the planning system and is done through the designation of Conservation Areas in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Conservation Areas make an important contribution to the quality of life of local communities and visitors. The designation safeguards the physical historical features which sustain the sense of local distinctiveness and comprise an important aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages, and countryside.

As part of this commitment there is a need to ensure there are the means available to identify what is special in the historic environment, define their capacity for change, and inform planning decisions. Such changes can serve to address environmental quality in addition to achieving the aims of planning for sustainable development.

National planning advice on the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other assets of the historic environment is set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (Chapter 16 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*) of July 2021.

National planning advice relating to protecting and enhancing valued landscapes is also set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (Chapter 15 *Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment*) of July 2021

The Council will pay special attention to the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area and its landscape setting according to the policies for the historic environment set out in the adopted Waveney Local Plan 2019.

Because standard conservation area controls were found to give insufficient protection to certain significant elements of a building, further controls have been placed on some of East Suffolk's conservation areas.

Local authorities can increase controls within conservation areas through the application of Article 4 Directions. These make further restrictions on permitted development rights to residential properties. Once imposed in an

area, planning permission will be required to make any change of design or material to any part of the property facing a public thoroughfare (defined as a highway, waterway, or open space). This includes replacing windows; painting previously unpainted buildings or stripping paint from them; erection, alteration, or demolition of part or all of a wall, fence, gate or other enclosure or the construction of a porch. Also covered is the enlargement, improvement, or other alteration of a dwelling; any alteration to its roof; the provision of a building, enclosure, swimming pool, hard surface, etc., within the grounds, or 'curtilage', of the building.

Planning applications require plans and supporting information as outlined on the appropriate forms. Elevations of buildings which do not front a 'relevant location' (a highway, waterway or open space) are not affected and these will enjoy the normal 'permitted development' rights for a conservation area.

Copies of the East Suffolk district Article 4 directions are available from the planning department and on our website.

Please note that Article 4 Directions will not initially apply to the proposed extensions, where permitted development rights will remain. This may change however over the course of an upcoming review of the District's Article 4 Directions (2023-2026).

Article 4 Directions do not affect:

- Repairs or maintenance
- Painting and decorating, except of previously unpainted surfaces
- Alterations which took place before the Direction was in place
- Elevations not fronting a relevant location (see above).

There are designations relating to landscape, seascape, and townscape character that either

overlap with, or are adjacent, to the Conservation Area and its setting, including:

- Suffolk and Essex Coasts & Heaths National Landscape; and
- Suffolk Heritage Coast.

These designations are either statutory (National Landscape) or non-statutory (Heritage Coast) and are material considerations in planning decisions. The evidence base for the designations, and relevant management plans, further develop our understanding of Southwold, the Conservation Area and its setting; special significance and interest, exceptional scenic quality, landscape features of natural beauty and valuable landscapes are the basis for the designations, which have objectives in common with those of the Conservation Area designation.

The boundaries for these designations can be found at <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

Many heritage assets identified in this appraisal will be subject to planning controls other than the Conservation Area or those set out above at the local or national level, including:

- Listed or scheduled structures and buildings;
- Scheduled and non-scheduled archaeological sites;
- Registered Parks and Gardens; and
- Tree Preservation Orders.

The boundaries for these designations can be found at: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/geo-graphic-information-system/>

Much of the coast is designated for its importance as a habitat for birds and / or other species. Large areas of land south of the Blyth Estuary are designated as the *Minsmere-Walberswick Heath and Marshes* RAMSAR site, making it a wetland landscape of international importance. Other designations in the setting of the Conservation Area are:

- Minsmere-Walberswick Heaths and Marshes *Site of Special Scientific Interest* (SSSI), covering large areas to the south of Southwold to Minsmere and west to Blythburgh, designated for its conservation value relating to fauna, flora geological or physiological features.
- Some of the above designation is also designated a *Special Area of Conservation*, with the same name as the SSSI, designated to protect one or more special habitats, as listed in the Habitats Directive, 1992.
- A Special Protection Area (SPA) partly overlaps the SSSI, named *Minsmere-Walberswick SPA*, designated to protect rare and vulnerable birds, in accordance with the Birds Directive, 1979.



*Policy WLP8.37: Historic Environment*

The Council will work with partners, developers and the community to protect and enhance the District's historic environment.

Proposals for development should seek to conserve or enhance Heritage Assets and their settings.

All development proposals which have the potential to impact on Heritage Assets or their settings should be supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by an individual with relevant expertise. Preapplication consultation with the Council is encouraged to ensure the scope and detail of a Heritage Impact Assessment is sufficient. The level of detail of a Heritage Impact Assessment should be proportionate to the scheme proposed and the number and significance of heritage assets affected.

Proposals should take into account guidance included in the Built Heritage and Design Supplementary Planning Document.

*Policy WLP8.39: Conservation Areas*

Development within conservation areas will be assessed against the relevant Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans and should be of a particularly high standard of design and materials in order to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

Proposals which involve the demolition of non-listed buildings in a conservation area will only be permitted where:

- The building has no architectural, historic or visual significance; or
- The building is structurally unsound and beyond feasible and viable repair (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect); or
- All measures to sustain the existing use or find an alternative use/user have been exhausted.

In all cases, proposals for demolition should include comprehensive and detailed plans for redevelopment of the site.

Proposals for replacement doors, windows and porches in conservation areas where Article 4 Directions are in place must be of a suitable design and constructed in appropriate materials. Applications will be assessed with reference to the prominence of the location, the historic and architectural value of the building and the historic and architectural value of the feature to be replaced.

### 3.0 Conservation Area Boundary Map



## 4.0 Summary of Special Interest

- Southwold's Conservation Area includes the bulk of the town's historic core and all but one of its listed buildings.
- The Conservation Area is surrounded by unspoilt countryside of both considerable beauty and national importance.
- The Conservation Area includes the town's beaches and pier, which are one of the most popular tourist attractions in East Anglia.
- The town's numerous 'greens' are one of its most attractive features, providing amenity for residents and visitors, while framing its many fine historic buildings.
- The Old Town Character Area retains important and highly graded listed buildings including its grade one listed medieval parish church and grade II\* listed eighteenth century and earlier townhouses.
- The Old Town Character Area also retains numerous examples of nineteenth and early twentieth century shop and public house fascias of considerable character and significance.
- Within the southern part of the Conservation Area are numerous elegant early nineteenth century 'marine villas' which form a nationally significant group.
- The northern part of the Conservation Area retains unspoilt late nineteenth century suburban development dating from the town's early period as a seaside resort.
- Despite being a tourist centre the Conservation Area still contains thriving industries such as Adnams fine Victorian brewery, one of the town's most prominent landmarks.
- Within the Conservation Area are notable examples of pioneering public housing including some of the earliest surviving examples in England.

## 5.0 Assessing the Special Interest

### 5.0.1 Location and Context

Southwold is a coastal town located towards the north-east of the county of Suffolk, in the administrative area of East Suffolk Council. The town is approximately 18km south of Lowestoft and 10km south of Kessingland, both coastal settlements. Halesworth is the closest *larger* inland settlement, which is approximately 12.5km west of Southwold and served by a train line. Blythburgh is located approximately 5.6km to the west of Southwold.<sup>1</sup>

The village of Walberswick is approximately 2km south-west of Southwold; the River Blyth, Southwold Harbour and grazed marshland and grassland separate the two settlements. Reydon is located to the north-west of Southwold, located approximately 115m to the north of Mights Bridge at its closest point. Buss Creek and Easton Marshes separate the two settlements; the creek is crossed at a single highway on the town's northern flank, by the A1095 at Mights Bridge.

Southwold, with Reydon and Sole Bay, is located on a low sandy cliff that rises above the surrounding landscape; approximately 15m AOD at its highest point. The town's location comprises the coastal cliff-edge of the "*Sandlings*"; historically a large band of heathland that stretched from Southwold, southwards to Ipswich. To the south of Southwold is Southwold Harbour, at the mouth of the River Blyth. To the west, a spur of the River Blyth, known as Bus Creek, circumnavigates the town, in an open landscape setting. To the east of Southwold is the Suffolk coast and North Sea.

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<sup>1</sup> Settlement distances are approximate and measured centre-to-centre.

### 5.0.2 *The Conservation Area*

The Southwold Conservation Area encompasses most of the settlement, albeit excluding parts of the residential neighbourhood on Hotson Road, Pier Avenue and Marlborough Road. Land north of Blyth Road is also excluded from the designated area. The north side of Southwold Harbour and the town's beach and seafront is within the designation, covering the length of the settlement, though Southwold Caravan Site falls outside the designation boundary.

The north-west corner of the Conservation Area is marked by The Blyth Hotel, at the junction of Station Road and Pier Avenue. The hotel is a local landmark, a Positive Unlisted Building and comprises a positive 'gateway' to the town and Conservation Area from the north. This part of the designation includes North Green and several buildings on Station Road. The Town Farm Character Area includes a small cluster of buildings that stands separate from the wider Conservation Area on North Road.

The designation's northern boundary follows an irregular line east of The Blyth Hotel, through the 19th and 20th century residential suburbs, forming the Seaside Suburban and Town Farm Character Areas. The designation extends furthest north around its north-east corner, to include the pier and associated tourist facilities, taking in some of the marshland to the north of the town that has also, in part, been given over to 19th and 20th century leisure activities. The boundary extends to the first Town Marsh drain, at its most northerly points.

To the east, the Conservation Area boundary runs along the mean high-water line (as per the OS map) from the pier car park then, southwards, to the Southwold Harbour. The designation therefore includes the beach, beach huts and some coastal management works.

The Conservation Area's southern boundary forms a spur that includes the north side of Southwold Harbour, forming the Blackshore Character Area. Its southernmost extents follow the river's centre line, delineating the north and south banks of Southwold Harbour and separating the Southwold Conservation Area (north bank) from the Walberswick Conservation Area (south bank). The Conservation Area therefore includes the landing stages that are so important to Blackshore's character and functionality.

To the west, the Conservation Area boundary runs along the western flank of Ferry Road, Gardner Road and Godyll Road, following the settlement edge and dividing it from the open landscape of Southwold Common to the west. The areas of Southwold Common east of the highway are within the Conservation Area. North of York Road, the boundary follows the footpath to the east of Southwold Golf Club encompassing the buildings north of York Road but excluding the allotments west of Rope Walk.

The northern areas of Southwold and the Conservation Area are more residential in character, comprising terraced housing and villas of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with later infill developments; there is a clear street and building hierarchy and many houses have private gardens.

The centre of the Conservation Area is commercial in character and includes the town's retail core, focused on the High Street, East Street and Market Place. Dwellings are located immediately behind commercial streets as well as interspersed amongst commercial premises; the town's centre is therefore well populated. The centre of the Conservation Area also includes the town's most notable landmarks, including St Edmund the King and Martyr's Church and Southwold lighthouse. The Adnams Brewery is located north of the town centre, on Victoria Street and is one example of the town's mixed-use character. Despite Southwold's dense built form, the town centre retains a physical and

visual connection to the coast, via East Street and Queen Street. The town centre's setting is therefore varied, part seascape and part townscape.

Towards the southern end of the Conservation Area, between Mill Lane and Constitutional Hill, the Conservation Area comprises a dense mix of smaller terraced houses, cottages and villas on a regular road grid arrangement but with varied building aspects and occasional glimpsed views of the open landscape to the west and seascape to the east. East of Queen Street, the settlement begins to open out around open spaces on South Green, Constitution Hill and Gun Hill Cliff; substantial detached villas define the south apex of the settlement and geographic centre of the Conservation Area. Whilst the settlement retains a close relationship with the landscape to the west of the conservation area, at the more southerly end of east the designation it is its seascape setting to the that has a stronger influence.

The Conservation Area follows a short spur of residential development on the western flank of Ferry Road. The Ferry Road Car Park, which is outside the designation, marks the edge of the settlement, however, the Conservation Area continues southward and transitions to the distinctive coastal dune landscape, seascape, Blackshore and Southwold Harbour environments. The Conservation Area's setting at its southern most end is therefore highly varied, defined by the complex interplay of land, dune and water environments that appear natural but are strongly influenced by human intervention.

### 5.0.3 *The Conservation Area's Setting and its Contribution to Significance*

Southwold and the Conservation Area's wider setting comprises the seascape of the North Sea to the east. To the north, south and west the designation's setting comprises a complex pattern of historic settlements, agricultural land and structures, grazing marshes, heath and common, saltmarshes, intertidal flats and coastal dunes that combine to give the landscape its '*very scenic*'<sup>2</sup> and complex time-depth characteristics.

The scenic qualities of Southwold's wider setting are designated by the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB), where the landscape is recognised as being of national importance. The designation is a material consideration in planning decisions that recognises the country's 'finest countryside', aiming to 'conserve and enhance natural beauty'. Natural England defines natural beauty as 'not just about the look of the landscape but also the landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries.'

Settlements are noted in the AONB list of 'special qualities indicators'.<sup>3</sup> It states that cultural heritage 'contribute[s] to a sense of place'<sup>4</sup> and that vernacular building materials 'display a harmonious balance between natural and cultural elements in the landscape'<sup>5</sup> The use of flint in buildings is cited as one example.

The Suffolk Heritage Coast extends from the southern boundary of Kessingland to the northern boundary of Felixstowe. Unlike the AONB, it is not a designation but instead defines the best stretches of undeveloped coast in England. It aims to, inter alia, protect natural beauty and heritage features. Heritage Coasts are protected through planning (Paragraph 178 of the NPPF), which sets out that decisions and policies should be:

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<sup>2</sup> Alison Farmer Associates, *Touching the Tide Landscape Character Assessment*, Final Report (September 2012).

<sup>3</sup> LDA Design, '*Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, Natural Beauty & Special Qualities Indicators*', November 2016

<sup>4</sup> LDA Design, '*Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, Natural Beauty & Special Qualities Indicators*', November 2016

<sup>5</sup> LDA Design, '*Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, Natural Beauty & Special Qualities Indicators*', November 2016

*'consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a heritage coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special characteristics.'*

The Conservation Area's immediate setting is distinctively open in character, in comparison to the townscape of Southwold. It comprises the immediate seascape of the North Sea to the east and Town Marshes to the north; it includes the estuary and harbour to the south and west and agricultural and leisure uses adjacent to the town's western boundary. Generally, the setting has a complex inter-relationship of semi-natural and cultural landscapes, where there is a juxtaposition of elements, including:

- sea;
- coast;
- estuary;
- reed beds;
- heath;
- forest;
- agriculture;
- settlement fringe development, and
- settlements.

The settlement of Reydon is located beyond Buss Creek, and its proximity ensures some impact on Conservation Area's setting, being clearly visible from both footpaths across the Town Farm Marshes and Town Farm Character Area, such as the car park north of the pier. Pig farming, and associated shelters, have been established in the Conservation Area's setting to the north of the town, east of Reydon, to the detriment of its wider setting.

Notwithstanding the fringe developments of both Southwold and Reydon, the Buss Creek corridor maintains the settlements' physical separation and has a distinctive marshland character of its own. The Waveney DC Landscape Character Assessment (2008) writes *'gaps between settlements are important landscape features and help retain the identity of individual settlements'*.

Southwold's expansion into the marsh landscape has influenced its character and visual qualities, as well as affecting views in and out of the Conservation Area and the character of the Conservation Area itself. Adjacent to the Conservation Area's boundary there are some typical edge-of-settlement land uses producing transitional landscapes that are highly managed but open spaces, such as the private gardens and allotments north of Blyth Road and the Southwold Golf Club. The character of these land uses falls somewhere between the built environment and open landscape.

The settlement edges, which are often the Conservation Area boundary too, are the interface with the designation's immediate setting. To the east, the boundary is on the coast, so the setting is animated by wide panoramas of the sea and activity on it, as well as coastal protection works around the north-east and south-east corners of the designation; long and panoramic views along the coast to neighbouring developments and settlements are also important. It is possible for views to extend up to approximately 20km out to sea from the coast and, theoretically, development and activity in this 20km zone could have an impact on the setting of the Conservation Area.

There are strong physical and visual connections to the sea along the whole length of the town's eastern edge. The setting transitions from the modern, engineered, environments to the north to the open drained salt marshes between the dunes and Salt Creek to the south, with the sea ever dominant in views. Built form appears less permanent around the Conservation Area to the south, where land

uses such as the Southwold Caravan Site and those at Blackshore are sited, albeit many structures have been *in situ* for many years. Similarly, the engineering works associated with the drained marshes to the south appear more natural than those coastal defences to the north, but they have been actively managed for many generations. The Conservation Area's eastern edge is vulnerable in times of war due to its topography and geology, and this is physically marked in the designation's setting, the former rifle range earthwork and anti-tank cubes in the Town Farm Marshes to the north of the town, for example. They represent the evolution of defensive techniques and contribute to the town's legacy of defensive structures, just as the cannons on Gun Hill do. These structures physically mark the relationship between the town's open setting and its role as within the nation's strategic defence.

The immediate edge of the Conservation Area to the south is also one of water, however, proximity to Walberswick harbour and harbour activity gives it a very different character to that on the east. The mixed-use landscape provides a sense of openness to the north of the Blackshore Character Area and a clear sense of separation between the harbour and Southwold remains; albeit car parking, caravan park and the golf club has had some minor adverse effect on the sense of openness. The former salt creek around Havenbeach marshes forms part of the setting of the southern end of the Conservation Area, west of Ferry Road. Relict creeks, cut drainage channels and ponds are still visible and assist with understanding the town's agricultural and commercial past; founded in 1660, by Charter of King Charles I, the works became intrinsically linked with the town's fishing industry.

The settlement has a strong connection with its hinterland, with most boundary structures designed to take advantage of views into it, whether towards land or sea. To the north, there is an abrupt change from townscape to landscape on the Conservation Area's boundary and settlement edge. The prevailing aspect of dwellings is to face out of the settlement and front onto the landscape, to take advantage of views over the marshes; occasionally, dwellings back onto the landscape, such as Nos.7-40 on North Road, but this is less common. The rear boundaries of these dwellings are partly screened by vegetation, which further reduces openness and can inherently affect landscape character. The settlement edge of Southwold is not typically filtered by vegetation in views back to it from the landscape; this is one of the Conservation Area's defining characteristics. To the north-west, the designation edge is varied and transitions into the landscape more gently, with land uses such as the Southwold Golf Club and allotment gardens. To the west, however, the designation edge is, like the north, an abrupt change from townscape to landscape, with dwellings typically fronting onto the landscape and views from the setting back to the settlement edge unfiltered by vegetation, other than small elements in front gardens. The designated area to the west, south of York Road, is typically demarcated by highway, giving it a hard edge. Generally, Southwold has a very strong settlement edge and does not diffuse into the landscape.



*View south to the settlement edge from Town Farm Marshes.*

The Blyth Estuary has a substantial influence on Southwold's setting and its intrinsic openness as a landscape feature is important to the designation's setting. The estuary is the confluence of the Dunwich and Blyth rivers, which create the salt marshes and intertidal flats that comprise much of the Conservation Area's wider setting and there is therefore a symbiotic relationship between the estuary, landscape, and the Conservation Area.

A greater appreciation of Southwold's heritage values can be achieved by 'reading' the landscapes of Southwold's setting. This includes the relict 'open field' agricultural system that sustained the town from the medieval period into the early 20th century. The drainage ditches, though barely perceptible from ground level, around Buss Creek and the adjacent fields are integral to this agricultural use and continue to sustain the land. The topography of the town's setting, being closer to sea-level than the settlement itself, is the same reason it was vulnerable in wartime. The land was used to locate a series of anti-invasion structures during the Second World War by those implementing the Emergency Coastal Defence Battery Programme.<sup>6</sup> Some survive to evidence the town's vulnerability and have historic and communal value. These include the anti-tank cubes in the marshland and pillboxes at Mights Bridge to the north of the Conservation Area boundary and lends the landscape further historic value, as does the former rifle range earthwork further north.

The rivers also, in part, give rise to the need for the coastal defences that inherently impact upon the character of the Conservation Area and its setting. Land and river management practices have created both the form of the two rivers, the Blyth River being canalised in 1727, and the drained marshland that makes up much of Southwold's landscape setting to the south, west and north. As well as the 'layers' of sea defence, some of which are of historic interest, the marshes are maintained by both regular and irregular open ditches. Typically, straighter drains are post-medieval and earlier drains

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<sup>6</sup> Liddiard, R and Sims, D, *Guide to Second World War Archaeology in Suffolk, Guide 1: Lowestoft to Southwold*, (Aylesham, 2014).



more sinuous in form; these are heritage landscape features, and both can be found in the setting of the town; between Walberswick and Southwold, west of the Sandlings Long Distance Walk, sinuous drains are situated across Town Marshes. Whilst drainage ditches are not visually dominant at ground level, they have a marked effect on how the land is used and experienced, often making access challenging.

Southwold Harbour is located at the mouth of the estuary. In stark contrast to the rest of the Conservation Area and its setting, the harbour is associated with fishing and leisure boat activities, relocated from the beaches east of the town. The industries on the harbour's north bank are within the Conservation Area boundary, with those on the south bank in its setting. With the boundary of the Walberswick Conservation Area abutting the Southwold designation to the south, on the centre line of the estuary, there is an obvious reciprocity between the two conservation areas. To some extent, activities on the north bank are mirrored on the south bank at Walberswick, however, the Conservation Area's setting has a different character. There are fewer buildings and more open marshes to the south bank of the harbour, albeit there are still numerous landing stages ensuring both banks remain in active use. The village of Walberswick is notably closer to the harbour than the Southwold settlement edge and this falls with the setting of the Southwold Conservation Area, as do the scattered fishing huts and dwellings near the harbour. Embedded within the harbour is a palimpsest of engineering measures designed to make the estuary more economically useful, some of which will be of historic significance.

To the south and west of the Conservation Area, the wider landscape comprises reed beds, river and creek corridors, mud flats and dyke lined grazing marshes. These landscapes are dominated visually by the town's two water towers and the settlement edges of Southwold, Reydon Walberswick and, to a lesser extent, Blythburgh. Visual links between the settlements are strengthened by vertical elements in the landscape, including the church towers at Southwold, Walberswick and Blythburgh and masts at Southwold Harbour, as well as the grade II listed Blackshore windpump at Reydon Marshes and lighthouse at Southwold. To the south and west in particular, there is a sense of the semi-natural landscape and reduced human activity. These structures would likely have helped keep walkers safer in the past, being useful way finders in the landscape.

On all sides of the Conservation Area the landscape and seascape setting are dynamic, with sea, river and marshland management practices periodically intensifying and declining according to the needs of the settlement. Whilst some areas are being reclaimed by the sea, others are reclaimed from it: the growth of the Bulcamp Marshes, approximately 1.5km west of Southwold Golf Club, for example, have reverted to saltmarsh with intertidal flats forming isolated areas of grazed marshland. These processes make the town's landscape setting intricate and complex and often one of tension between land, water, and human intervention.

The setting of a Conservation Area comprises more than land use and views, it has an experiential quality. The dominant quality of the Conservation Area's setting is one of tranquillity and remoteness, stemming from its openness and limited built development. For the same reasons, for some, the landscape setting could be considered intimidating. The 'watery' landscape, and the land management practices it necessitates, have a marked effect on how people move through the Conservation Area's setting. The various water channels, whether rivers, creeks or drainage channels, limit the number of crossing points around the settlement and give greater significance to key access routes, including the old ferry crossing on the River Blyth, footpaths, Might's Bridge and the pier, that historically gave access to more distant destinations. These routes pass through the Conservation Area's setting on approach to the heritage asset, making it part of the experience of entering and leaving the

settlement. The landscape's challenging accessibility is characteristic and ensures vehicle access is low, which helps protect the sense of tranquillity and remoteness.

Whilst agricultural uses are ongoing, the expansion of tourism from the late 19th century to present day has given the designation's setting a contemporary significance, as many tourists are drawn to the town for its landscape, as much as its seascape, setting. The open agricultural and engineered landscape to the north, south and west assists with reading the town's evolution as a settlement dependent on fishing, salt, and agriculture to one dominated by a leisure and recreation economy, alongside commercial and industrial operations.

The qualities of the Conservation Area's setting can be summarised as:

- openness;
- natural elements, though many influenced by human activity;
- tranquillity and remoteness;
- hard settlement edges not, typically, filtered in views;
- the many views to and from the landscape and seascape;
- Intervisibility between settlements, reinforced by their vertical structures;
- tension between the land and water, resulting in landscapes with complex natural and human processes;
- modern and historic land and river management practices and sea defences that denote periods of sea reclamation and inundation; and
- historic and contemporary economic activity that are linked to the town's fortunes.

Few buildings outside the Conservation Area boundary have a notably detrimental or direct effect on the qualities of the designation, however, there are structures and land uses that could be considered to have adverse effect on the conservation area's setting and therefore its contribution to the designation's historic significance. These are typically areas of unremarkable townscape or transitional landscape associated with 20th development.

Whilst there has typically been managed development within the Conservation Area and settlement boundary its setting has changed to the north. Aerial images show that development at Reydon has encroached southwards since 1945, having had a notable effect on the sense of openness in views across the Town Marshes. The East Suffolk Council Waveney Local Plan (2019) does not cite Southwold as a location where physical coalescence is considered a threat (Policy WLP8.36 – Coalescence of Settlements), however, visually, expansion has put pressure on the marshland's landscape character. Bridge Road, Reydon, is clearly visible in views north from North Road and diminishes the sense of separation on this side of the town. The Local Plan currently places new housing allocations to the north-west of Reydon. Consequently, there is no imminent threat to the Conservation Area's setting from mass housing, however, potential harm remains from small-scale cumulative change.



*View west along Buss Creek from Town Farm Marshes, showing proximity of the Southwold and Reydon settlement edges.*



*View north towards 20<sup>th</sup> century development at Reydon on the horizon, in views north from the Rope Walk footpath, near York Road.*



*View westward from Town Farm Marshes, north of Southwold with the Southwold and Reydon settlements in view.*

Car parks and on-street-car-parking are known detractors from the special interest of the Conservation Area, typically resulting in a loss of openness, natural elements, and tranquillity to its setting as well as visual intrusion. The negative visual effects of car parking on the setting of the Conservation Area at both Walberswick and Southwold for the Southwold Harbour are notable, as is the effects of the Ferry Road Car Park on the Conservation Area at Ferry Road. There is a reciprocal effect of car parking at Blackshore on the setting of the Walberswick Conservation Area. To the west of the town, the Common Car Park and York Road Car Park have similar negative effects on the setting of the Conservation Area. Similarly, the caravan park on Ferry Road, absent in the 1945 aerial photograph, has a detrimental effect on the Conservation Area's positive qualities. The ancillary infrastructure of internal tracks, railings, signage and planting has added to the visual intrusion.



*View of York Road Car Park*

The character of Southwold Harbour is complex and has rarely been one of total tranquillity, however, there has been a marked intensification of uses in the Blackshore Character Area as well as at Walberswick, in the Conservation Area's setting during the 20th and 21st centuries. In the 1945 aerial images, there are relatively few huts and those extant are of modest scale. The size, volume and complexity of uses has since increased.

#### *5.0.4 Views*

Historic England's document, *GPA 3 'Setting of Heritage Assets', 2017*, establishes that in considering the contribution setting makes to the significance of heritage assets, and the ability to appreciate that significance visually, views will be a factor; albeit views can be valued for reasons other than their contribution to heritage significance - Landscape character and visual amenity are related, but separate, planning considerations.

There is no doubt that the Conservation Area's landscape setting is of national significance, being designated as an AONB and Heritage Coast, however, this is not appraised in this document. When assessing how views contribute to the setting and significance of the heritage asset, they should be views of, from, across, or including that asset.

Some views in the Conservation Area's setting are designed. The treed landscape in views to the west of the conservation area was designed by Humphry Repton to enclose the parkland of Henham Hall. Repton, who was typically averse to full enclosure of parklands, designed a view towards Southwold. The view was formed by a grove known as The Rookery, which was designed to take in long views of the harbour. Henham Park remains substantially intact and was designed in association with James Wyatt, who was designing the hall (now demolished); the view therefore extends directly from the hall to the Registered Park and Garden and on to the Southwold Conservation Area, creating a

relationship between the heritage assets. Such designed views provide an understanding of both historic landscape design techniques as well as the animating qualities of the harbour at that time.



*Designed view from eastern tree belt of Henham Park to Southwold: Repton. H, The Red Book for Henham, 1791*<sup>7</sup>

Interest in the coast as an artistic subject is apparent by the many 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century artworks it inspired. The document '*A Guide to Suffolk Coastal Art, 1770-1940*'<sup>9</sup> provides a good summary of images produced during that period and where they could assist with understanding how the coast and seascape has changed over time. As well as coastal change they can reveal something of the value attached to views and social activities of the time, as well as something of the wider socio-economic context - the limited scope for artists to travel in Europe during some of this period, for example. As subjects, the fishing industry, beach and long views towards Southwold Harbour are common themes, underlining the important visual and economic relationship between these parts of the heritage asset. In addition, views represented in some artworks can enhance the contribution the real views make to the significance of the heritage asset, through elevated cultural importance, for example. Some '*regard East Anglia as the cradle of landscape painting*'<sup>10</sup> from which a small artists' enclave at Walberswick emerged, placing some images of Southwold and its setting in the development story of British landscape art. Notable works that depict views from within, or within the setting of, the Conservation Area include:

- '*Wreck of the Princess Augusta on Southwold Beach*', JB Crome, 1838. The painting provides a view north. The church of St Edmund can be seen on the rising ground in the distance;
- a view back to Blackshore, across the estuary from Walberswick at Southwold Harbour is depicted in '*Walberswick Ferry*', by Alfred Heaton Cooper. A visual and physical connection that remains today;
- fishing boats, huts and dunes are shown in the view south along the beach in Edwin Hayes' oil painting, '*Southwold*';
- a longer view back to Southwold, from Southwold Harbour, is depicted in William Daniel's painting '*Southwold*', c.1823. Coastal development and the church tower of St Edmunds is visible;

<sup>7</sup> Williamson, Tom, *Suffolk's Gardens and Parks: Designed Landscapes from the Tudors to the Victorians*, Windgather Press, (Macclesfield 2000).

- a long view north, across Town Marshes, shows Southwold's church tower and coastal development, depicted in John Smyth's oil painting 'Southwold Beach looking towards the town';
- 'Below East Cliff' by Walter Crane, 1886, looks down on the beach from above, depicting fishing huts, boats, dunes and rustic timber fences;
- The need for defence against the sea is shown in Thomas Smythe's mid-19<sup>th</sup> century painting 'At Southwold';
- Henry Robertson's 'Leaving Southwold' shows ships leaving the harbour and the importance of long views out of the harbour;
- 'Girls Running, Walberswick Pier' (1884-94) and 'The Beach at Walberswick' (c.1889), by Philip Wilson Steer both give characteristic views of the coast and the seascape in a late 19<sup>th</sup> century context, illustrating the sense of fluidity and openness of the coast.
- Sir J Arnesby Brown painted several coastal views around the Suffolk coast, including 'The Saltings, Southwold', which depicts the town beyond the salt works of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century; and
- Henry Davy's 'Gun Hill, Southwold' (1829), a watercolour depicting life in the town in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and value of the green spaces and cannons at this time.

There are some views designed for functional reasons, such as those to and from the grade II listed lighthouse. Views of the building can be achieved from much of the Conservation Area's setting as well as within it, however, there is an obvious intervisibility with the seascape and beach to the east, where views outwards from the lighthouse into its seascape setting are essential. Views of Lighthouse are also prevalent from within the Conservation Area above building ridges. Views are secured by limiting neighbouring development to two storey heights; house builders would have been cognisant of the need to keep building heights low.



View from the Church Tower Mid-Twentieth Century

Historic military vantage points also offer strategically designed views, occasionally with relict structures. The cannons on Gun Hill require a panoramic view of the seascape for them to have practical value, for example, and have been *in situ* since 1745. From Gun Hill Cliff, views south extend to Walberswick and beyond to Dunwich and the Sizewell A & B Nuclear Plant, illustrating the strategic

importance of the view, enjoyed for recreation today. Similarly, views east and west along Buss Creek were required for the proper functioning of the WWII pillboxes on Buss Creek, near Mights Bridge. The structures give significance to views across and beyond the setting of the Conservation Area they were designed to help protect.

Views of, and from, Southwold Pier are integral to the experience of the structure. It provides panoramic views back to the coast and North Parade and passing ships on the sea to the east, as well as more distant landmarks, such as Sizewell A & B.



*View south-west from Southwold Pier.*





*View north-east from Southwold Pier, towards Covehithe and Kessingland.*

Although the pier would have offered views out to sea, for both recreation and passenger ship use, there are unplanned, attractive and well-established views back towards the town, such as the views towards the lighthouse and tower of St Edmund King and Martyr Church, set within the wider townscape. The composition of these landmarks in their wider setting and significant views, such as from the pier, is finely balanced and can easily be disrupted by poorly sited development, such as recent development on Field Stile Road, where both the height and aspect of the new buildings competes with the historic church tower in long views from the east.

Many of Southwold's dwellings were designed to look out over their landscape and seascape settings; evident not only in the aspect of many dwellings but in their architecture, where many have large bay or picture windows and, occasionally, balconies. Buildings designed to capitalise on their settings are prevalent at the edges of the Conservation Area, on [North Road](#), Godyll Road, North Parade, and Ferry Road for example. In addition, there will be numerous other examples of structures that have been designed to take advantage of full or part views of their landscape settings; the arrangement, design and siting of beach huts, being designed solely to maximise enjoyment of their seascape setting, is one such example.



*View of buildings north of York Road, overlooking the Southwold Golf Course towards Walberswick and the wider landscape setting.*



*View of dwellings on North Parade, designed to maximise sea views.*



*View of dwellings on Godyll Road, designed to maximise landscape and sea views.*

Unplanned but attractive views into the Conservation Area's setting are available from many of the designation's boundaries. Many of these views are available in the public realm, such as to the east where there are many panoramic views north and south along the coastline.



*View north along the coastline, towards Covehithe and Kessingland in the distance.*

Views are also available across the Town Farm Marshes to the North of Southwold, and in reverse from footpaths on the marshes and Might's Bridge, where there are good, elevated, views to the beach huts near the pier and settlement edge of Southwold. In views south-west from Might's Bridge and the footpaths across the marshes there are views of both water towers and the tower of St Edmund King and Martyr Church, as well as the settlement edge. From the bridge itself, there are attractive elevated views east and west along Buss Creek itself.



Views towards the settlement edge from Town Farm Marshes, including both water towers and the tower of St Edmund The King and Martyr's Church.



Left: View east across Town Farm Marshes, towards the beach huts north of the pier.



View south-west over the Southwold Golf Course.

To the west, there are aesthetically pleasing views into the surrounding landscape from the many buildings, footpaths and highways on or near the Conservation Area boundary. As former common grazing land, the views have historic value. Whilst the golf course to the west of the Conservation Area is juxtaposed with the less formal coastal landscape it has its own significance, having been *in situ* since 1884 and said to be laid out with some consultancy from James Braid, the famous golf course designer and golfer. The oak tree at the edge of the course, and on axis with Spinners Lane, is an interesting landscape feature that helps to give interest and orientation to this part of the common.

To the south-east of the town, there are historically important views to Southwold Harbour from the edge of the Conservation Area and Town Marshes, made more impactful by the harbour's many vertical elements. Many of the same views include the village of Walberswick in the further distance; particularly prevalent is the church tower, a positive visual aspect of the Conservation Area's setting. These elements combine to an environment of substantial visual, historic, and evidential value. There are various glimpsed views of these same elements from within the Conservation Area via the lanes to the west of the town, such as at Spinners Lane and Blackmill Road, for example. The lanes are intrinsically positive townscape elements as well as offering tightly controlled views of the Conservation Area.



View north towards Southwold and the Conservation Area, across Town Marshes from the footpath north of Southwold Harbour.



View south-west towards Southwold Harbour and Walberswick, including the tower of St Andrew's Church.

In reverse, there are attractive panoramic views north towards Southwold from Blackshore and Walberswick, which rises above the surrounding landscape as often depicted by artists visiting the area. All the town's key landmarks are identifiable on the horizon, adding to the quality and legibility of the view; Pevsner notes the church tower is as 'imposing from near, as well as far away'. (Pevsner, 1981)

The Landscape Character Assessment (2012) describes the landscape to the south of the town as having:

*'extensive scenic views of the estuary and marshes interspersed with areas of greater enclosure formed by mixed woodland and forestry. Here the changing view of open water at high tide and mudflats at low tide, with snaking remnant flood defences criss-crossing the area, is memorable.'*

*Lookouts and elevated positions across this landscape have been important throughout the centuries; in prehistory tumuli were located on the ridge overlooking the Blyth estuary, as are WWII pill boxes. From these elevated locations there is a real sense of place and openness as well as a remote and isolated character; the extensive areas of inaccessible saltmarsh and water help to reinforce this feeling.*

*Military activity is not limited to the elevated land surrounding the estuary; there is also evidence along the coast and particularly at The Denes south of Southwold, where gun emplacements and lookouts were established during WWII.'*

On the estuary itself, there are historic long views down the river from the footbridge at Palmers Lane and west to the Blackshore Windpump and Blythburgh; key landmarks include the church tower on Reydon Marshes and on to Tinkers Marshes and Henham Park.

There are no recognised 'viewpoints' marked on the OS map, however, the shelter on the cliffs is an obvious designed viewpoint, over the Conservations Area's seascape setting to the east. Above the shelter, is the highest point of North Parade, offering long views north to Easton Bavents and Easton Cliffs, part intersected by the pier that is viewed side-on. Views of Easton Bavents and Easton Cliffs from the pier are altered by engineering work to the beach and cliff. The seafront includes a series

of purpose-built structures and buildings for the enjoyment of the sea. Some structures on the coast are both important elements in the Conservation Area, such as the pier, beach huts and shelter, as well as defining views in coastal seascape. The pier itself enables views to more distant large landmarks, such as Sizewell B.

Southwold, although on gently elevated land, does not have a particularly prominent position in the landscape in long views, owing to the unvarying topography, however, intervisibility between the settlement and its setting is strengthened by the Conservation Area's taller structures. Southwold can be viewed in the wider landscape, across Reydon Marshes from Wolsey Bridge on the A1095, for example, where the lighthouse is clearly visible and identifies the town on approach from the west.

Other high points of land within the designation's wider setting are often covered with conifer and birch trees, some in active plantation use. The occasional tree cover provides some, but limited, enclosure to a predominantly open landscape; the settlement's compact form therefore contrasts with the low, open, landscape within which it is located. The limited enclosure and topography provide for visual links between Southwold and other settlements, particularly where there are high vertical structures. Some of these visual connections are historic and significant, such as intervisibility between the church towers of Walberswick and Blythburgh. From higher ground it is possible to see as far as Wenhaston from the Conservation Area's setting. In short and medium length views, there are visual links to other settlements, such as Reydon.

The beauty of this landscape, and the many view compositions possible, is recognized by its AONB designation and Heritage Coast status.

### 5.0.5 Townscape

There are many townscape compositions across the Conservation Area that are both aesthetically positive and reveal how the town's built form layout has evolved.

There are a number of long sweeping curves that draw users into the town, creating a positive urban form. Sinuous carriageways are one of the characteristic features of some parts of the Conservation Area. In other parts varied building lines and carriageway width provide for interesting urban forms.



*Constitution Hill / Queen's Road / South Green: provides one of the best townscape compositions in the town. The tower at Acton Lodge provides a focal point whilst the sinuous carriageway recedes behind the rising open space, giving visual interest that 'draws' users into the town. The built form works with the topography to provide a very positive layout. The lack of pavement gives the view a simple, reduced, townscape palette.*



*Ferry Road: the long sweeping curve of the road and built form that closes views into the town provides for an incidental gateway to entering the town from the south.*



*High Street: within the Old Town, long views are 'closed' by a gently curving carriageway and buildings pushing into the streetscape; in this case by the strong built form of No. 98 High Street, at the junction of Church Road.*

The town's rich maritime and military history gives the town a locally distinctive character that's reflected in its urban form, such as the man-made, elevated, landscape at Gun Hill.

The importance of the seascape and coast to the town can be experienced in the Conservation Area's road network, which has a loose east / west orientation; roads are broadly perpendicular to the coast. Consequently, the historic network of smaller alleyways and lanes that contribute substantially to the strong sense of enclosure in the town, remains substantially intact and in the Old Town typically run broadly in a north / south direction between the principal streets or connecting to courtyards. The town's alleyways and lanes are important townscape features, enhancing permeability; for example, where Woodley's Yard connects to Gardener's Road and the High Street. This fine grain gives the Conservation Area a strong sense of a historic street that is intriguing and fun to explore.

The town's dependence on the harbour to the south, that evolved after its focus around the seascape was well established, mean significant routes north / south run closer to the western edge of the town.

The urban form is generally 'looser' towards the edges of the settlement and denser to the centre.

Some streets have 'strong' ornamented corners that positively contribute to the character of the townscape and Conservation Area.



*Trinity Street: the curved 'Bullnose' corner to East Cliff House (grade II) presents 'strong' townscape feature.*



*Chester Road: Modern, altered, façade of a former shop that presents a strong corner accent with decorative quoins, dressings and pilasters with gault brick.*



*14 Mill Lane: strong corner to the street junction.*



*'Strong' bow corner at the junction of High Street and Church Street*



*High Street: terminated vistas are a positive townscape feature that increases the sense of enclosure.*



*Pinkneys Lane: strong enclosure created by the sinuous street layout and buildings that tightly control views.*



## 6.0 The Town's Historical and Architectural Development

In 1086 Southwold was a hamlet of Reydon and recorded in the Domesday Book as Sudwolda, which is Old English for south forest (OE Suth + wald). Then there was a population of nine families with five villeins and four free men. The manor of one caracute (about 120 acres) was in the possession of the Abbott of St Edmunds for monks' supplies, which included 25,000 herring and the produce of part shares in two sea weirs.

Southwold was one of several small fishing communities on the coast, which were subject to the catastrophic vagaries of a constantly shifting shoreline. The River Blyth meandered within its marshes, in a long loop around the north, west and south of the town finally reaching the sea at the much larger port of Dunwich.

Dunwich was then a national seaport with a town that stretched over a mile and contained nineteen churches and chapels and made prosperous by the ships that paid tolls to enter the river bound for the Blyth ports. The port was destroyed in 1328 by a storm that silted up the harbour and flooded the quays and never recovered, despite pitched battles between Dunwich and Southwold men for control of the port in the years between 1299 and 1398. By 1540 Dunwich had lost hundreds of houses and its marketplace to the sea through coastal erosion.

North of Southwold were the sandy cliffs, forest and settlement of Easton Bavents, which may have served as a breakwater for Southwold and Dunwich. It is suggested that it was the loss of this 'Ness' that led to the destruction of Dunwich through coastal erosion, the silting of its port the encroachment of the sea at Southwold.

In 1222 the Abbott of Bury St Edmunds was granted a market in Southwold, and in 1259 he exchanged Southwold for the manor of Mildenhall with Richard de Clare, who

obtained a licence to fortify his manor house and enclose 'Suthwald' with a wall. If a castle was ever built, its site was almost certainly on the top of Constitution Hill where Hill House, now stands.

In 1259 a charter was granted for a market and a fair on the eve of St Philip and St Jacob, and in 1490 permission was given additionally for Trinity Fair and St Bartholomew's Fair, to be held on the green south of the church. In 1338 a portion of the manor was annexed to the Priory of Wangford and in 1458 the Prior granted two pieces of land to the town for the enlargement of the churchyard. In 1504 the manor was incorporated into the Queen's Demesne Revenue.

In or about 1489, Dunwich Harbour, which was the Haven Port and formed the only access to the sea, became unusable for the King's Ships, at which time the King granted a Royal Charter to Southwold and transferred the Haven Port status to Southwold Harbour. The town was created a free burgh or corporation and governed by two bailiffs, a recorder and other 'inferior' officers. About 100 years later a way out to the sea between Southwold and Walberswick was constructed with a quay and harbour mouth.

The Prior and monks of Thetford were patrons of the church in Southwold through their patronage of Reydon. They may have been responsible for building the first church in 1202. The church was destroyed by fire in circa 1430 and rebuilt on its former site c.1444-82. The south porch was added circa 1488-93. The scale of the church building, and the quality of craftsmanship suggests substantial mercantile affluence. Medieval wealth was derived from trading, fishing, and ship building.

It was through the generosity of one such merchant, William Godell (or Godyll), that the commons, town marshes and the harbour was bequeathed to the town in 1509, land which remain in the ownership of Southwold to the present day.

Trade was primarily in butter, cheese, and cloth. For fishing, Southwold was prominent in the Iceland trade, fishing for cod and ling; sending ships laden with salt to preserve the catch on the long way home and packed with provisions including bacon, beer, beef, and flour. Herring were fished from Scotland to Norfolk, and mackerel were caught off the home coast in season.

The tradition of boat building was strong in Southwold, for in 1512 six Southwold shipwrights went with other men from the region to help build Henri Grace a Dieu for Henry VIII.

Knowledge of the medieval layout of the town is to some extent speculative, the nine Court roles having been lost in the fire of 1659. The medieval manor would have included large open common fields, worked by the villagers on behalf of the lord of the manor. Robert Wake's 1839 map shows fields north of the church, labelled 'open fields' which may refer to the former great open field of the manor. Enclosed on all four sides by water, access by road to the town was via the drawbridge, called Might's Bridge across Buss Creek (first recorded 1227). Remains of the structure of a medieval quay or wharf structure have recently been found at Buss Creek (HER 045). From there the road ran south-east along the northern edge of North Green aligned on the great west door of St Edmund's Church.



*The sixteenth and early seventeenth century Nos.82-86 (even) High Street c.1870 before remodelling to form a shop.*

To the south of the church was the Market Place and fair ground, and a guildhall, sited to the left of the church gate. Later, the pull of the harbour and beach led to the relocation of the Market Place and Market Cross from the area of Bartholomew's Green to a new commercial centre around the present Market Place.

During the sixteenth century, the number of sailors, merchants and craftsmen increased threefold, and in the early seventeenth-century the Southwold Common Council was active in administering the digging of docks and the maintenance of the New Cut and New Quays. They were also concerned by the suffering caused by pirates operating out of foreign ports who harried Suffolk shipping.

A fort on Gun Hill was originally constructed as part of the Southwold defences of 1588 when an earthen wall was constructed along the cliff. These defences were ruinous in 1626 when a privateer captured a ship in full view of the town, drove the gun crews from the battery and bombarded the town. It was not until 1746 that a strong parapet was built at Gun Hill, close to the remains of the 1667 work. This

mounted eight guns, the nine-pounders of the 1667 work being emplaced in a subsidiary battery nearby on North Parade.



*Mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth century survivals at the corner of East Street and Market Place.*

#### 6.0.1 1650-1775

In 1659 large parts of the town, including the town hall, market hall, the prison, shops, warehouses, and granaries and 238 dwelling houses were destroyed by fire. The blaze started on East Cliff and was carried into the town by onshore winds. Parliament declared Southwold to be a disaster area, the first in British history, and a nationwide collection was held for reconstruction. Timber framed pre-fire structures still survive however, on parts of the eastern and western sides of the High Street, at the western end of East Street, and further south in Queen Street and on Constitution Hill.

By 1674 the number of households was recorded as 200 and the number of inhabited houses had recovered to 139. A two-storey market cross was erected in the present Market Place, it was rebuilt in 1666 and, being ruinous, was finally demolished in 1809, to be replaced by the present town pump.



*Southwold Museum, Victoria Street.*

Nineteenth century photographs and watercolours of the town show that a number of high-status brick dwellings were built in the period in what is now called the 'artisan mannerist' style. (This term first coined by Sir John Summerson describes a style of building popular amongst masons and carpenters where classical details were used within largely vernacular buildings in ways which defied classical convention). Nos. 55-63 High Street, 16-18 Park Lane and The Red Lion Inn all had these attributes before nineteenth century alterations. Southwold Museum is today the town's finest surviving example, where a Venetian window sits within a Dutch gabled facade. Bricks were made locally in the Marlborough Road area until the mid-nineteenth century, and at South Cove.

The town contains many small greens, some of which are located at the junction of several roads. They seemingly originate in the medieval period, it is sometimes said locally, that the greens are building sites never reoccupied after the fire. There may be other explanations, one for example would be St Edmund's Hill and South Green, an extensive 'green' that was originally a town pasture. It remained undeveloped until circa 1800 and

was then protected by a group of 'shareholders' to whom it had been leased by the Corporation.



*Mid-Eighteenth-Century Cottages, East Street*

The three Dutch Wars of the later seventeenth century were fought over trade and naval supremacy, during this period Southwold went through uncertain and anxious times. The third Dutch War was declared in 1670, and the English fleet stationed on the east coast, with Southwold as its headquarters. In 1672 the Battle of Sole Bay took place, fought between British and French fleets against the Dutch; one of the most important events in the town's history. The battle was fought at sea over a day in full view of the population watching from the cliffs. Neither side won though the British lost men and ships more heavily. Despite the naval activity and Southwold's capacity to care for wounded sailors, the loss of trade and the interruption of the fisheries lead to the decline of the harbour in the late 17th-century.

A century later, in 1750, the port became the base for the Free British Fishery, part of a plan to end the Dutch monopoly in the North Sea herring grounds. Fifty large herring busses (fishing boats) were fitted out from their depot at 'Woods End', now Buss Creek. In an attempt to keep the harbour clear of sandbanks, new timber piers or groins were built on the north side in 1749 and the south side in 1752. Coastal trade was also buoyant, with colliers from Newcastle bringing coal and returning with

corn and malt, peas, and beans. In 1757 the River Blyth Navigation Act was passed, and the river made navigable by wherries to Halesworth.



*Early to mid-eighteenth-century facades to earlier dwellings, High Street*

Southwold flourished for the next twenty years and many of its finest merchant's houses date from the mid to late eighteenth century. A small number of mercantile families dominated the town's economy and politics, chief amongst these were the Thompsons of Buckenham House, High Street, the Nunns and Robinsons of the Market Place, and the May family of The Manor House, High Street. Unfortunately, a succession of poor seasons ended the fishery, and the herring fleet was broken up by 1792.



*Southwold and Walberswick Churchyards containing eighteenth century memorials which reflect the area's fishing and maritime heritage.*



*The Swan from a c.1870 carte de visite. This shows The Swan as remodelled in 1826 and extended c.1860.*

#### 6.0.2 The Resort Town 1775-1875

Wealthy families had begun to visit Southwold in the mid-eighteenth century staying at the inns or within private houses as boarders. The town's larger inns were rebuilt or altered in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to accommodate these visitors.

In the early nineteenth century compact classical villas began to be built to house wealthy visitors during the summer months. Over the following decades, both the number of these villas and their size grew significantly.

The first major villa development was begun c 1807 when the grazing land on St Edmund's Hill and Gun Hill were leased to a group of 'shareholders' who included the local vicar, a Bury St Edmunds merchant, and naval officers. This syndicate of five built a line of villas each within its own landscaped grounds, around the west side of the crowns of Saint Edmund's Hill and Gun Hill overlooking the sea. The Casino, an octagonal pavilion was built c.1801 on Gun Hill by John Thompson a wealthy Southwold merchant at a cost of £300. It was designed as a subscription reading room for the town's wealthier inhabitants.



*No.100 High Street, a purpose-built hotel of c.1834 built by the wealthy merchant James Robinson of No.17 Market Place to rival the nearby Swan, the townhouse beyond was destroyed by fire in the 1930s, from a carte de visite of c.1870.*

On the north side of South Green, a further villa development was begun by a group of largely nonconformist local businessmen in the 1820s, which was soon to be joined by the ambitious terrace of villas at Centre Cliff built as a speculative development by the Sheriffe family of Uggeshall.

Towards the middle of the century prosperous fisherman and local tradesmen built small terraces of cottages on the northeast side of the town. Often these new houses were run as lodgings for summer visitors to provide much needed additional income.



*Villas and lodging houses on East Cliff from an engraving of 1867.*

Southwold and nearby Walberswick had from the late eighteenth century attracted artists, whilst Turner visited in 1824 it was Henry Davy (1793-1865) who captured the town in great detail his sketch books and engravings providing an invaluable record of the town in the early nineteenth century.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the town's population had exceeded 2,000 and their homes and workplaces were depicted on Robert Wake's map of Southwold of 1839. By then the town had 37 coastal vessels, a fishing station, and a bathing place. Among the many industrial works was a herring & sprat fishery, a salt manufacturer, two breweries, two maltings and several fish curing houses. One of the breweries, the Sole Bay Brewery was established in the yard of The Swan. Transport to and from the town was by road and sea. The town's Congregational and Wesleyan Chapels were rebuilt and given restrained classical façades.

Wake's map shows two wind powered corn mills on the common. To the south-west was The Great or Black Mill on a mill site originating in the sixteenth century. The Great or Black Mill was erected on what is now Godyll Road in 1798 and demolished in 1894. A third windmill known as New (or Baggott's) Mill was erected

on church land on what is the approximate site of the present Victoria Cottages, Field Stile Road c.1841. It was burnt down in 1876.



*Victoria Buildings, Nos.13-29 (Odd), Victoria Street A well-preserved symmetrical mid-nineteenth century terrace of cottages.*

The town's salt works, was the last to operate in Suffolk, its offices were on the north side of Ferry Road before it turns towards Blackshore; the salt pan was situated over the road in the marsh and the wind powered pump and works located opposite on the east side of Ferry Road. They provided salt for preserving the fish catch. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century it belonged to the May family of The Manor House, High Street. Eventually the works was unable to compete with imported rock salt and the industry declined, latterly providing salt for saltwater bathing an early nineteenth century gothic bath house being constructed on the site of the present public toilets. Part of the site was cleared c.1894 the remainder c.1935. Only the grade II listed Salt Works Cottage now remains.

Beach companies were formed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries for salvaging wrecks and saving lives. Each company patrolled a length of beach and some of the company names remain on the beaches. For example, below Gun Hill are California and Long Island beaches.



*Southwold House (now Southwold House and Sole Bay House), Gun Hill from a carte de visite of c.1870. Originally built c.1807, it was greatly extended c.1830 and then rebuilt in 1855. Now two houses, it remains one of the town's most architecturally significant mid-nineteenth century buildings.*

### 6.0.3 *The Expansion of Southwold 1875-1918*

The Southwold Railway Company was formed in 1875 with a narrow-gauge railway linking the town to the nearby East Suffolk Railway by 1879. The Station (now demolished) was built on what became Station Road opposite its junction with Pier Avenue. Demand for both housing and holiday accommodation rapidly increased, whilst established industries such as brewing and milling also expanded.

The rapid northern expansion of the town began in the mid-1880s with the development of the Corporation owned North Cliff Estate and of adjoining farmland owned by the Hotson family. This development also allowed for the creation of the present Marlborough Road and Pear Avenue to create a new access route from the railway station into the town. In August 1893 the 'West End Estate' (now Godyll Road and Manor Park Road) was auctioned as building plots, and by the late 1890s large villas

were being erected overlooking The Common on Godyll Road. A golf club was formed on land which was part of The Common in 1885, with the course expanded and redesigned with advice from James Braid c.1901.

At the close of the nineteenth century three large hotels were under construction on the Southwold seafront, The Grand on North Parade (designed by Charles Henry Mileham c.1899-1901), The Centre Cliff (c.1899) occupying the seafront between South Green and East Street partly designed by George Skipper, and The Marlborough (c.1898-01 designed by Arthur Pells) on the corner of Marlborough and Dunwich Roads. By the end of World War One however, The Centre Cliff had closed, whilst the Marlborough was for sale in 1925 with adverts claiming that its gabled wings could be readily converted to large houses. Only a fragment of Skipper's Centre Cliff Hotel building now survives, whilst the Marlborough and Grand have long since disappeared.

Purpose built boarding houses also began to appear amongst the newly constructed terraces around North Parade and Marlborough Road at the end of the century, as well as smaller hotels like The Station Hotel on Station Road (Thomas Key c.1899), and the Temperance Hotel on East Street.



*The Marlborough Hotel on the corner of Marlborough and Dunwich Roads designed by Arthur Pells, it was destroyed in WWII.*

Southwold's shopping area also radically expanded to take in much of the northern end of the High Street and the bulk of Queen Street and East Street, with shops also appearing in the new suburban Streets around Stradbroke Road, and Marlborough Road. The impressive terrace which incorporates the Post Office on the High Street was also constructed in stages between 1895 and 1911 on the site of an old timber yard.

In 1898 the Corporation sold the Town Farm Estate, comprised of land north of Field Stile Road, to the Coast Development Company who by 1900 had begun to sell building plots. The creation of the northern part of Marlborough Road and of Pier Avenue had however first been championed by the Council in the 1880s and the Corporation may have had a considerable role in the layout of the entire site. The Company also constructed the pier to the designs of William Jeffrey as a landing stage for steam ships, as well as the Station and Grand Hotels. Steamers plied between the piers at Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft, and Felixstowe, terminating at

London Bridge. In 1998 the end of the pier was swept away and was rebuilt c.2000. The model yacht pond adjacent to the pier also dates from the 1890s. From this time suburban seaside development began to cover the flat grazing land between the town and Buss Creek, with suburban development also occurring at nearby Reydon, the pace of building however began to slow in the years immediately leading to World War One.

The first council houses in the town were built c.1905 by the Corporation in St Edmunds Road and are some of the earliest to survive in England. Further council houses followed in 1913 and in the early 1920s. The Corporation also commissioned a cottage hospital and nurses' accommodation in 1897 to mark Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. The hospital which opened in 1903 was designed by Thomas Edward Key of Leiston who moved his office to the Market Place.



*George Skipper's bedroom wing to The Centre Cliff Hotel of c.1905, its two upper floors have since sadly been removed.*

Bathing machines, donkey rides, and goat powered carts for children became features of the beach in the late nineteenth century, gradually replacing the weatherboarded net huts and store houses of the fishermen. The seasonal visitors increasingly made the lives of the fishermen more difficult, the beach being



their place of work. The advent of petrol driven engines to power the fishing boats made dragging them from the beach more hazardous, and from around the First World War it made more sense to berth them at the harbour. Today there are more than 300 beach huts ranged along the sea front whilst the fisherman's huts are confined to the river front at Blackshore.



*The Grand Hotel, North Parade from Southwold Pier. It was demolished in stages after World War Two.*

The cliffs are formed of hard sand and layers of gravel and are prone to erosion. Measures to prevent erosion took the form of timber groins and a sea wall, erected in 1882 and 1890, and further protection added in 1900 and 1907. These measures failed to prevent a major collapse of part of South Cliff during a January gale in 1906. Further damage occurred in March 1906 leaving the Sailor's Reading Room less than one metre from the Cliff edge and Cliff House in the sea. A major scheme of strengthening, renewing and constructing the sea wall in front of Gun Hill cliffs was in hand in 1948 when it was concluded that there were no means of protecting the cliffs to the north. 2006 and 2007 has seen a further scheme of repair and renewal of the sea wall and the replacement of the groins between the pier and the south end of Gun Hill Cliff.

The lighthouse replaced the 'low light' at Orfordness and was built on vacant land behind St James' Terrace. An impressive octagonal fish market (demolished) was

constructed on Ferry Road c.1907-08 as part of the Corporation's major improvement works to the harbour which enabled the town to compete as a leading herring port. By 1909 around three hundred drifters were landing catches at the harbour and teams of itinerant Scottish fish girls were employed to gut, salt and pack them in barrels ready for sale. Southwold's herring boom was however short lived, ending before World War One.

George and Ernest Adnams brought the Southwold Brewery in 1872 and expanded and partially rebuilt their premises in the 1890s. At the northern edge of the then town Smith and Girling built a large steam powered rolling mill c.1892 for the manufacture of flour and animal feed. Older industries such as rope making, and the salt works however began to disappear along with the town's windmills due to advances in mechanisation and the pressure for housing development.

Southwold was attacked during both great wars. She was shelled by a submarine in January 1917 when the villas known as 'Balmore' on the sea front, 'Iona' in South Green and the police station were hit.

#### *6.0.4 Southwold Post 1918*

After the First World War the northern expansion of the town continued but at a slower pace than before. Relatively few commercial buildings within the town centre were rebuilt or altered. The most notable examples being JA Sherman's c.1931 additions to the former Kings Head, High Street for Adnams and the large shop on the corner of Market Place and Church Street which was rebuilt after a c.1930 fire. On the southern edge of the town wooden holiday cottages appeared in increasing numbers on Ferry Road.

Increasing motor transport began to threaten the viability of the two means of transport by which late nineteenth century tourists had visited the town. The last steamer called at Southwold pier in 1928 and the railway which

ran between Halesworth and Station Road, Southwold, crossing the river at Walberswick closed in 1929.

In 1939 The Grand Hotel, Centre Cliff, the schools, and some of the larger villas were requisitioned for army use. Fearing a sea invasion in 1940, military engineers erected defence works including tank traps, obstructions, minefields, scaffolding, and spiked girders concreted into the beach. Naval guns were sited at the harbour and on Gun Hill.



*Hope Cottages part of a well-designed Southwold Corporation Development of c.1950 replacing bomb damaged cottages.*

During World War Two the town suffered from bombing with damage to the sea front, The Marlborough, and the Dunwich Hotels were demolished, together with late nineteenth century houses in Marlborough Road. Lorne Road was also badly hit together with houses in Ferry Road, St Edmunds Hall and the Constitutional Club on South Green. In all 77 buildings were damaged or destroyed, 13 civilians killed and 49 injured by enemy action.

In the immediate post War years some of the town's larger villas faced an uncertain future. Much of Park Villa was demolished whilst Southwold House and Gun Hill House were subdivided. Others including Stone House needed major repairs after years of army occupation. Southwold Corporation sensitively redeveloped the site of bomb-damaged houses on Bartholomew Green in the early 1950s whilst other sensitively designed housing also replaced large bombed terraced houses on Marlborough Road. Other bomb

sites however remained vacant for a considerable period. The Grand Hotel never reopened and was demolished in the mid-1950s.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 1953 major flood damage was caused along the entire east coast resulting in major loss of life. The sea inland to the north and south of the town badly damaging property at Blackshore, and in the area of Ferry Road. Five people were killed.

Adnams brewery was enlarged and modernised and diversified between 1970 and 1980 to become a national brand and wine importer expanding into East Green and Church Street. Its expansion caused the demolition of houses on the eastern side of Church Street c.1984 and the facading of nearby houses on Victoria Street.



*The Tibby's Triangle Development.*

The town has flourished as a resort, and a significant proportion of its houses and former shops are let for holidays or have become second homes. However, since the Second World War its population has steadily declined. Between 2001 to 2011, the resident adult population of Southwold fell from 1,328 to 974, a 27% decline, of which the population under 18 declined by 28%. This suggests that the overall decline has been principally among families with children.

There has been relatively little new housing constructed within the town in recent decades,

the most notable development being that known as Tibby's Triangle on the former Adnams Distribution Depot site between Victoria Street and Field Stile Road designed by Ash Sakula Architects. A number of the town's public houses have closed, and the number of shops has declined.

Its popularity as a recreational destination has been promoted by its use as a location for films and television and it has become increasingly popular with the day visitor or as a place to retire.

## **6.1 Archaeology**

There are no scheduled monuments within Southwold.

Scattered finds of prehistoric worked flints (CRN 9129) and medieval pottery (CRN 1864 & 1867) are however recorded in the Suffolk Historic Environment Record (HER). Details of archaeological finds and other sites of archaeological interest can be found at <https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/search>

## 6.2 Traditional Building Materials and Details

Southwold has developed over a considerable period of time and contains a varied building stock; consequently, the materials and detailing evident is diverse. It is this variety, combined with skilled execution and good levels of preservation that contribute significantly to the Conservation Area, as well as creating a varied public realm.

**Timber Framing.** The town's early domestic buildings were largely timber-framed, but many were destroyed in the 1659 fire which devastated the bulk of the medieval town.

There are no examples of exposed timber frames contributing to the streetscape and details such as half timbering or jettied upper floors do not appear in the town. Where structures retain a timber frame, they have been re-fronted, occasionally in render and often with brick, as fashion and wealth during the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries dictated the elevational treatment of properties.

Away from the High Street, as the age of properties generally decreases, the likelihood of timber frame properties being extant reduces, with locally made bricks becoming the primary building material.

The quality of timber framing is varied, as might be expected, and is dictated by the status and size of the property. Cottages with rudimentary frames are evident to Church Street, whereas more prestigious structures are found along the High Street; with the timber frame at Sutherland House being particularly well-preserved. A high-status timber frame of mid-sixteenth century date (behind an 18<sup>th</sup> century red brick frontage) exists at Buckenham House, High Street. Other buildings contain elements of timber framing reclaimed from demolished structures, and the

Grade II listed No.57 High Street, in which there is a re-used 16<sup>th</sup> century beam with religious inscription, is specifically mentioned in the listing description.



*Re-used 16th century beam with inscription within commercial premises to the High Street.*

During the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century the fashion for **half-timbering** returned and examples of this can be seen to large villas, such as Langford Lodge, Godyll Road, and to villas located to the eastern end of Pier Avenue.



*Half-timbering and 'jettied' accommodation to a late 19th / early 20th century villa on Godyll Road.*



*Weatherboarded side elevation to brick fronted cottage on the High Street.*

This decorative treatment is less commonly found on commercial properties, although where it is found the buildings are of considerable quality and originality, with the Blyth Hotel being a fine example of its type. The most spirited design in the town to employ the use, or suggested use, of a timber frame is seen at the former Southwold School of Industrial Art, No.1 Park Lane.

**Lime render, lime wash and tar.** Timber frames were often infilled with clay daub on timber wattles or covered in lime and sand render and then lime washed. Coloured lime washes were derived from earth pigments and could be pink or pale ochre. Later timber buildings were clad in timber boards (see weatherboarding, later) and painted or had coal tar applied; this material was not only an excellent preservative but also readily available due to it being a by-product of coal gas production (there existed a gas works on Station Road, founded in 1848). As well as the application of tar to timber boarding, this was also applied to the base of properties or particularly exposed gable ends to act as damp proofing. While little evidence of tarred plinths

remains, many houses maintain the tradition of having black painted bands to the base of elevations.

**Coloured lime washes** were derived from earth pigments and could be pink or ochre (ruddle), although there are few examples of this within the town, with the harsh coastal conditions resulting in the use of synthetic paints being widespread.

**Weatherboarding.** The use of horizontal weatherboarding on domestic buildings is uncommon, the type of understated structures that would have used this elevational treatment having long since been replaced. However, a fully weatherboarded gable end is preserved at Sycamore Cottage, High Street.

Weatherboarding is more commonly found to ancillary buildings, stores and commercial structures.

Black stained weatherboarding is found in relation to the fishing industry. Collectively the huts along Blackshore make a significant and generally positive contribution to the character of the area, as do the stores located to the west side of Gardner Road.

Painted weatherboarding, often shiplap, can be seen in an abundance to the beach huts lining promenade, and to Blackshore where it is black stained, or painted where previously it would have been protected with tar.

Corrugated sheet is not prominent within the town, although a recent use of this is to the Adnams Store, where galvanised sheet is seen to the walls and roof. More commonly it is used as wall and roof cladding, usually black painted, on the huts and small commercial stores along the north bank of the harbour.



**Left:** Black stained weatherboards to store building, Gardner Road.

**Bottom left:** Brightly painted weatherboards to beach huts.

**Below right:** Black stained weatherboards to huts and net stores, Blackshore.

**Bottom right:** Black painted corrugated sheet.



**Brick.** The quality of brickwork within the town is generally commensurate with the status of the building on which it was used. Suffolk red bricks are seen on properties ranging in size, date and significance. Early examples found to high status buildings on the High Street date from the early to mid-eighteenth century and include the imposing No.17 Market Place and the stately Manor House at No.65 High Street. Entire streets of terraced housing were constructed using this material during the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, and individual houses of size and quality, such as Acton Lodge, South Green, were built using this material. Often bricks were made locally, an industry that boomed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



In the mid and later eighteenth century 'rubbed' red bricks were used to embellish a façade, a practice which again became fashionable in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century. Rubbed bricks have a smooth polished surface and were commonly used for lintels. The seaward facing elevation of Southwold House, Gun Hill, has particularly well executed brick headers arranged in a highly unusual pattern.

Decorative 'special' bricks are occasionally found on later 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century properties, often adding fine detailing, and can be seen to the eaves course of No.6 Park Lane. Yellow or white bricks manufactured in Bedfordshire, Norfolk Cambridgeshire, and Suffolk became fashionable in the late eighteenth-century and 19<sup>th</sup> century as they loosely resembled stone (which is not found in the region) and were hard and durable. They are made from clay which is without iron and have been commonly termed 'gault' bricks since the early nineteenth century. There are several examples of buildings constructed from this high-status material particularly the large villas on Constitution Hill. More

commonly the material is used for a principal façade, with less expensive red brick used for the sides and rear.

Occasionally architectural detail, such as pilaster shafts on a principal elevation is constructed from this material, contrasting against a red brick façade, as at Nos.31 to 37 Victoria Street, whereas Regency House makes good use of this material for its entrance porch (Lorne Road) and principal elevation, with red brick to the sides and rear.

Fletton Brick was introduced in the later nineteenth century but did not become popular nationally until the mid-twentieth century. There are few prominent examples of this material use, it generally being used for secondary buildings such as garages or boundary walls, as seen to the corner of Stradbroke Road and Field Stile Road.

Brick gables vary in design and detail, and well-preserved brickwork is occasionally seen to flank elevations along the High Street. More prominent and stylish treatment can be seen to the early eighteenth century shaped gable at the Southwold Museum, Victoria Street, and twentieth century Dutch gables can be seen to the imaginatively detailed Hope Cottages, Cumberland Road.

Occasionally 'brick on edge' detailing is found, often to single storey buildings such as No.62 Victoria Street, or to boundary walls, owing to the economic benefit of placing bricks on edge, which lead to a taller wall using fewer bricks than if conventionally laid.

Further brickwork detailing exists in the form of corbels, brick arched lintels and brick pediments to Barclays, No.67 High Street.



Occasionally brick chimneys make a significant contribution to roofline as well as the property to which they are attached, and this is particularly evident to the north side of Nursemaid's Park, where stacks of varying size and design are found, with heavily corbelled caps, with expressed or inset bricks creating the sense of individual shafts.

**Above:** Historic postcard view of villas to the north side of Nursemaid's Park showing a lively variety of chimneys.

**Below:** Detail of the painted render pediment to the Wesleyan Chapel, East Green.

Painted brickwork is a commonly found feature within the Conservation Area, and attractive rows of multi-coloured cottages can be found on East Street, East Green and Church Street.



**Render, Decorative Stucco and Pargetting.** Painted render is a commonly found within the Conservation Area, often applied to buildings that previously would have had exposed brick elevations. Typically, the colour palette conforms to a varied but muted range of pastel tones.

Stone is not locally found, with render or decorative stucco being used to create features such as quoins or keystones on elevations with the intention of creating the impression of stone. The use of ashlar, a technique of scoring wet render with vertical and horizontal lines to create the impression of blocks of stone, is not commonly found in the town, although examples can be seen at Nos.3 to 5, St James' Terrace.

Skilled use of decorative stucco for applied detailing can be seen at the Wesleyan Chapel, East Green and to the former Centre Cliff Hotel.

**Pargetting and Incised Lettering.** Pargetting (applied plaster decoration, often in relief) is a surprisingly infrequent feature of the town and examples on Ferry Road are of modern date. Internally, fine late 17th century decorative ceilings exist at Sutherland House, High Street.

Incised lettering within render can be seen to the former Corn Store, Victoria Street. A restrained use of decoration within render can be found on Field Stile Road elevation of Dunburgh, No.28 North Parade, with horizontal bands with sun and flower motifs.

**Stone** is not found locally, so examples of structures built entirely from it are uncommon. A notable exception is the Sacred Heart Church, Wymering Road, of 1912.

Otherwise, stone is reserved for detailing, lintels and sills to the terraced houses to the Seaside Corporation Character Area, and less commonly for date plaques and decorative panels. It is also found decorating higher status late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial premises on the High Street

**Flint or washed cobble walls.** While the land around Southwold does not provide stone for building, it does have a plentiful supply of flint and washed cobble. Flint, which are used whole or broken open to expose their black vitreous interior are most notably used at St



Edmunds Church for the main building material, with panels of decorative flushwork to the tower and buttresses. Washed cobbles are seen laid in loose courses or randomly, occasionally for entire houses such as Stone House, Gun Hill, or more commonly for boundary walls, often with brick or stone margins and cappings. The boundary walls enclosing the north, east and southeast of Skilmans Hill are particularly notable.



*Concrete steps and promenade to the seafront area.*

**Concrete** is not a prevalent material within towns and villages in the East Suffolk district, however, it is a commonly found material within the Seafront Character Area, with much of the town sea defences and promenade being reinforced concrete. Steps and walkways link the coastline with the town and although the material use creates a utilitarian aesthetic, it is one that is recognisably Southwold. White painted metal railings, grass banks and brightly coloured beach huts help soften the appearance of the use of concrete to the seafront.

**Roofs.** Prior to the fire of 1659 the majority of the town and its building stock would have been timber framed and thatched, although use of this material post the fire was largely side-lined in favour of more fire-proof materials such as pan tiles. Thatch is not commonly found in the Conservation Area, but it can be seen to the spirited Arts and Crafts villa at No.53 Pier Avenue.



*Red clay pan tile roof covering.*

**Red clay plain tiles** to some extent took the place of thatch but most of the surviving examples date from the vernacular revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although there are examples that pre-date this along the High Street. Commonly found are red clay pantiles which can be seen throughout the town. Those to the High Street are occasionally seen on steeply pitched roofs, which were probably originally thatched.



*Black glazed pan tiles.*

**Black glazed pan tiles** are frequently found in the town, although often they appear only on the street facing roof slope, with cheaper red pan tiles being used to the rear. The profile of pantiles can be corrugated, flat, and the more common 's'- shape. Roof pitches for pan tiles can be significantly less than for plain tiles.



*Slate roof covering.*

**Slate** was imported into Suffolk following improvements in the transportation of bulk goods. Welsh slate is generally blue grey in colour, highly durable and widely used, particularly to larger villas of the early to mid-nineteenth century. Occasionally slates are clipped or cut and laid to resemble fishscales, whereas other laying methods - such as diminished course - do not appear in the town.

In recent years the material palate of Southwold has diversified, and a growing use of zinc for roof coverings and weatherings, as well as an unfortunate use of uPVC for replacement doors and windows has diluted the coherency of certain areas, including highly sensitive locations in close proximity to the promenade, the Pier and the dunes on Ferry Road.



*Detail of an early 19<sup>th</sup> century rainwater hopper.*

**Rainwater goods.** Often made from cast iron and less commonly lead, these items are often over-looked and replaced. However, there exists a few examples within the town where examples from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century are retained, including decorative hoppers and

lead downpipes and brackets. The frequency with which goods are replaced with uPVC is increasingly common and inappropriate.

**Windows.** Traditional windows and their historic glazing make an important contribution to the significance and character of an area and are often important objects in their own right.

In many parts of the Southwold Conservation area historic window frames have been lost. While preservation is generally high along the High Street, it reduces significantly to the rear of properties and with distance from the town's historic core. Where a building has lost both its original window joinery and the original structural opening has been altered, it is often to the detriment of the Conservation Area and to the significance of the individual buildings, or group of buildings, particularly where uniformity is an important characteristic.



*Plate glass sash windows, dating from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century.*



*Timber casement window, possibly dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.*

**Timber casement windows** are seen within the older parts of the town, and usually comprise of a painted timber frame, with an opening metal casement on pintel hinges. Such windows, often three panes wide and two panes high, are found to vernacular buildings dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and their glazing bar arrangements and size of panes reflect the status of the building, age and fashion. A good example of such windows can be found to the first floor of Collen & Clare (East Street elevation).



*View of 8 over 8 pane hornless sash windows.*

**Twelve or sixteen-light hornless sashes** of later eighteenth or early nineteenth century date survive in relatively large numbers. Their overall size kept in strict proportional harmony to the façades within which they were located, with the thickness of glazing bars and the position of the window set either within the façade or behind it providing stylistic clues regarding the age and status of a property.

**Horizontal siding sashes** were however once commoner in Suffolk than they are now, particularly in smaller cottages and workshop buildings. They are not a predominantly northern window type as commonly believed. The loss of small-scale commercial premises throughout the town means that this type of

window is not easily found. ‘Horned’ sash windows were first introduced in the late 1820s and became common during the second quarter of the nineteenth century along with plate glass with increasingly slender glazing bars from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Horns added additional structural stability to vulnerable frame joints on the upper section of a window frame. Their adoption by joiners was a gradual process.



*Detail of canted bay window with plate glass horned sash windows.*



*Timber square bay window.*



*Curved bay window (central door is a later insertion).*

**Bay windows** are frequently seen in the town, often positioned to take advantage of a far-reaching view, or simply to enliven a long row of houses. Predominantly canted or square sided, but occasionally of shallow curve design.

**Blind windows** or recesses are often thought to be the result of the window tax levied between 1696 and 1851, but this is not necessarily the case. Many urban dwellings were re-fronted in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and often blind recesses were designed to allow a new symmetrical façade to work with the internal dimensions, varying floor levels, and pre-existing fittings of rooms within an earlier building.

After World War One firms such as F.H. Crittall (based in Essex) revolutionized the manufacture of metal casement windows. After 1945 it became the practice to ‘galvanize’ the units after production, which involved dipping the frames in a bath of molten zinc so that the zinc forms a molecular bond with the steel. In common with most towns and villages in the district, these once commonplace windows have now largely been removed in favour of uPVC or softwood windows.



*Late 19<sup>th</sup> century panelled door within bracketed surround, with original painted name to fanlight.*

**Doors**, often panelled and retained as part of an entrance screen arrangement can contain historic glass or ironmongery and contribute significantly to the appearance of property. Retention of such items of joinery is important often for streetscape reasons as well as for the individual benefit to a specific property.



*External shutters.*



*Elaborate wrought iron railings with curved ‘bombe’ base.*

**Shutters**, both panelled and louvred, appear on historic photographs of many buildings within the town, particularly to larger properties within the Marine Villas Character Area. On larger houses panelled shutters tend to be a security feature, although rarely found, whereas louvred shutters were almost always a decorative feature often added during the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Balconies, railings and covered seating areas.** A particular characteristic of Southwold, and a consequence of far-reaching coastal or common views, is the existence of balconies, often to the first and second floors of houses.



*Elegant railings to first floor balcony, North Parade.*



*Restrained iron railings, supported below to form first floor balcony and covered ground floor veranda*



*Restrained iron railings, supported below to form first floor balcony and covered ground floor veranda*

Occasionally they are integral to a well-designed villa, with well-detailed balusters and other joinery. Where in close proximity to the sea they tend to be iron balconies, often of elaborate designs although as maintenance has required the replacement of ironwork they have tended to become more standardised in appearance. Glass balustrades are becoming increasingly common, particularly to the rear of properties, and contribute little to the aesthetic of the town.



*Timber screen, designed to work with scalloped top to wall.*



*Timber hand gate with bespoke strap hinges and ring handle, designed to complement the timber screen.*

**Gates and boundary walls.** Traditionally, most front gardens would have been enclosed with iron railings on top of low brick walls, however most railings were removed during the Second World War and tend only to survive in locations where removal would have created serious health and safety implications. In some instances, railings have been reinstated, although the quality and design of the items rarely reflects that of the originals. Hand gates and railings, or timber screens, are often elaborately designed and skilfully executed and the Conservation Area retains fine examples of arts and crafts gates and screens,

with bespoke strap hinges and cut out decorative balusters, which are of high quality and are rare survivors.

**Doorcases and porches.** Southwold retains a significant number of fine 18th and early 19th century wooden doorcases, many of which retain their original panelled doors and fanlights. These doorcases occasionally have broken pediments, pilasters and columns and a wealth of other Classical detailing. Detailing is often scholarly, and no less interesting where it is more of a regional interpretation.

The rusticated surround with Roman Doric columns and segmental pediment at No.17 Market Place is particularly memorable, as are the pair of pedimented doorcases with Gibbs surrounds at Nos.1 and 3 Queen Street. Astylar doorcases are found on less imposing properties and range from the deep architraves with pulvinated frieze and pediment seen at No.6 Park Lane to the refined reeded simplicity at No.77 Victoria Street. Such doorcases are particularly susceptible to harm caused through repair and the use of replacement mouldings that do not accurately match what exists.



*Decorative tiled threshold to shared entrances.*

**Encaustic Tiles, Paviours, Faience and Tile Hanging.** Encaustic tiles are seen around the town, often in the form of paths to houses and occasionally within the recesses of a shopfront doorway.



*Inset Glazed Tile Detailing to the apron of bay windows.*



*Square Staffordshire Paviours.*

**Paviours** were likely once more common in the town than they currently are, and generally historic surfaces within the public realm do not survive in any great number. One exception are the Staffordshire blue diamond pattern paviours found on York Road and the square paviours seen to Bank Alley, which contribute positively to the character of the highways and public realm.



*Faience shop front.*



*Detail of faience corbel, decorative capital and tiling*

**Faience** (glazed terracotta) is not commonly found in the town, but it exists to a well-preserved early twentieth century shop frontage at No.18 Queen Street, where Ionic capitals, pilasters and console brackets are executed in a green glazed faience.

**Tile hanging** is not an elevational treatment particularly associated with Suffolk, but its popularity and use, often for gable ends of larger villas, spread during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and

early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and consequently there are a few examples of this within the Conservation Area. Tile hanging can be seen at Uplands and Dunburgh, North Parade and to the sizeable arts and crafts villa The Links on Godyll Road.



No.64 High Street a well-preserved shop fascia of c.1906 for the baker and confectioner Frederick Eastaugh.

## 6.3 Commercial Frontages

### 6.3.1 Shops

Until the later nineteenth century the area of the town occupied by shops was a relatively small one centred on the Market Place. The retail area expanded rapidly however after the arrival of the railway, north along the High Street and northeast into the narrow streets of workers' housing around Victoria Road and Trinity Street. Many shops were simply the front rooms of small cottages without shop facias or extensive signage. In the late nineteenth century, a department store known as Debneys opened overlooking South Green with a smaller branch on Stradbroke Road, both have however long since converted to dwellings. Retail expansion largely ended with the advent of World War One, and there are relatively few notable shop fronts or commercial buildings of a later date.

The area of the town centre occupied by shops contracted in the last quarter of the twentieth century, as shops disappeared from Victoria Street, Church Street, and Trinity Street to the northeast of the Market Place. In 2021 The Old Town Character Area was the only one the Southwold Conservation Area's Character Areas, to retain large numbers of shops which

were still operating. The Conservation Area nevertheless retains a high number of historic shopfronts, as well as notable examples of bank and public house architecture.



Early nineteenth century shop fascia at No.25 High Street.

The earliest surviving shop fronts in the Old Town Character Area probably date from the second quarter of the nineteenth century with a particularly early and notable example surviving at No.25 High Street. This ornate



wooden shop fascia retains much of its original classical detailing.

Surviving shop facias from the early to mid-nineteenth century tend to be from high status retail premises, like that on the corner of South Green and Pinkney's Lane. This has a graceful, bowed front and rusticated pilasters to its doorway. Unusually for the period, this part of the building appears to have been constructed as a purpose-built shop rather than a shop fascia being inserted into an earlier structure. No.66 High Street is also a purpose-built shop, and still retains a simple pilastered fascia of mid-nineteenth century date.



*A fine mid-nineteenth century shop fascia at the corner of Pinkney's Lane and South Green.*

Consumable goods sold by butchers, grocers, fishmongers, and dairymen necessitated different provisions for display and sale than were required for non-perishable items. These businesses first made use of wide double-hung sash windows in the mid-eighteenth century and continued with that arrangement until new regulations in the 1950s brought the practice to an end. At No.25 High Street their survives in addition to a fine early nineteenth century pilastered fascia, a shop window of this type. Shop windows of this type of mid-nineteenth century origins can also be found at No.21 Market Place. The lower sash was normally fitted with large brass handles and was pushed up behind the upper sash to create an open shopfront in which produce could be

displayed, with sales made through the window.



*No.21 Market Place with mid to late nineteenth century wide sashes to its fascia associated with food retail.*



*No.11 Market Place, a shop front of the third quarter of the nineteenth century.*

Other businesses like farriers and blacksmiths tended to work behind large boarded wooden doors which were left open during the hours of business.



*The former International Stores, No.18 Queen Street, a fine early twentieth century shop front of tile and cast iron.*

The original appearance of surviving later nineteenth century shop fronts is relatively well documented, thanks to historic photographs. Often, unlike their predecessors these shop fronts were part of purpose-built retail premises and were intended to be an integral part of a façade's overall design, as can be seen at No.64 High Street which dates from c.1906. This exceptionally well preserved and delicate painted wooden shop fascia with tiles below, was constructed for Frederick Eastaugh whose bakery and confectionary business occupied the ground floor whilst above was a genteel café. A simpler but equally well-preserved Edwardian example can be found at No.69 High Street.



*An early twentieth century ironmonger's fascia at No.69 High Street.*

The surviving late nineteenth and early twentieth century shops on the High Street occasionally also retain tiled or mosaic floor panels within the well in front of their entrance doors. Surviving late nineteenth or early twentieth century tiled floor panels like that at No.15 Market Place tend to be of a geometric or floral design, whereas after World War One advertising panels become more common.



*Tile inset at No.15 Market Place.*



*Early twentieth century mosaic floor panel, No.88 High Street.*

There are few post World War One shop fronts of merit, and a few of the later twentieth century and early twenty first century interventions have not been to the benefit of the conservation area. The largest interwar period shop is that at No.2 Market Place of c.1930-32, but it is now considerably altered. At No.1 St James Green survives a well-preserved small lock up shop of c.1930 designed by FR Rowe for the tobacconist FC Barber.

One noteworthy and adventurously designed recent example of a retail building is however to be found close to the junction of Victoria Street and High Street designed for Adnams by Ash Sakula Architects c.2002. Whilst the visitor centre which forms part of the Swan Hotel complex also exhibits a high standard of modern design.

Twentieth century beach front kiosks tend to be of a utilitarian design, the only other retail outlets of note being those selling food at

Blackshore which have been designed to blend in with the simple weatherboarded fisherman's huts which they adjoin. Here however it is their construction materials rather than their facias which add interest to the Conservation Area.



*Unsympathetic shop window at No.40A High Street.*



*Late twentieth century shop fascia 11 East Street.*

### 6.3.2 Public Houses

The town's eighteenth-century coaching inns had frontages resembling those of the town's grander merchant's houses a trend that continued well into the nineteenth century. Of these the earliest survival is The Crown on High Street. When the former 'Two Brewers' at No.100 High Street was rebuilt c.1835 and the Southwold Arms at No.58 High Street c.1850 both were constructed to resemble private houses. The now much altered former Rising Sun on Trinity Street a back street ale house of c.1840 was also designed to resemble a private house.



*The c.1856 frontage of the former Victoria Public House on East Street survives remarkably intact.*



*c.1835 Sole Bay Inn, East Green.*

The c.1835 Sole Bay Inn (grade II) is probably the earliest purpose-built beer house to survive. It retains what appears to be an early pilastered wooden fascia to the original bar overlooking East Green which incorporates a doorway with a radial fanlight. The Nelson on East Street also retains what appears to be an original wooden fascia with pilasters of c.1860. Also dating from the mid-nineteenth century is the remarkably intact façade of the former Victoria Inn on East Street of c.1856.

Adnams distinguished Blyth Hotel, Station Road of c.1900 designed by Thomas Edward Key brought the designing of the exteriors of public houses full circle. It was again constructed to resemble a large private dwelling the fascia being replaced by large mullioned and transomed bay windows.



*The Swan Hotel, Market Place, a c.1907 reworking of an early nineteenth century façade for Adnams.*

Perhaps the best-preserved example of interwar period commercial architecture in the town is the former Kings Head Inn High Street (grade II), which was radically remodelled and extended in a restrained Tudor vernacular style to the designs of JA Sherman of Ipswich for the brewers Adnams c.1931-33. Now retail premises, the former public house's external appearance has been preserved.



*Detail of No.67 High Street.*



No.67 High Street built for Gurneys Bank c.1891.

### 6.3.3 Banks

The town's former banks were largely adaptations of substantial townhouses like Lloyds at No.17 Market Place, where the early eighteenth-century façade was retained unaltered. The only purpose-built bank structure is at No.67 High Street a former Barclays Bank. This is one of a series of notable bank buildings built for the former Gurneys Bank in Norfolk and Suffolk during the late nineteenth century by the Great Yarmouth architects Bottle and Olley, many of whose buildings are listed. No.67 dates from c.1891 and is of red brick with stone and rubbed red brick dressings. Its elaborately embellished frontage is one of the most memorable at the southern end of the High Street.

## 6.4 Public Realm

The Conservation Area's public realm is varied. It comprises a variety of green and open spaces, designed public spaces within the built environment, the beach and coastal dunes as

well as the sea and riverscapes. The public realm also includes the roads and pavements and publicly visible private gardens that contribute to the character of townscape. Some of these spaces have intrinsic significance and positively contribute to the character and significance of the Conservation Area, whilst others further contribute to the setting and significance of historic structures and landscapes.

Open spaces vary in size and quality but assist with reading the town's urban morphology. The open spaces complement the private gardens and seascape that provide the immediate setting for Southwold's many heritage assets. Most of these spaces are generally in an acceptable condition, however, enhancement would benefit the Conservation Area.

### 6.4.1 Open spaces

The town's open spaces comprise a rich variety of typologies, from formal and informal green spaces and churchyards to the river estuary and seascape, however, the Southwold Conservation Area contains no designed landscapes. The forms and siting of these open spaces make a substantial contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area.

Buss Creek is listed as a unique open space and defined on the ESC Proposals Map from the west of Might's Bridge. It presents a linear open space with its own distinct open landscape and harbour setting that is juxtaposed in character with the town's other open spaces. It offers extensive views along the creek and to various parts of the designation. It requires careful management as a landscape feature and heritage asset.



*View north-west over Buss Creek, Reydon and Busscreek Marshes, from The Bailey bridge over the River Blyth.*



*Wall enclosing courtyard at The Anchorage, No.14 Cumberland Road*

*(i) Courtyards*

The Old Town character area has a number of courtyards and small open spaces to the rear of the principal streets. These are typically spaces that related to a particular activity or industry, such as stables, carriage yards linked to workshops or service yards. Many of these spaces are today given over to car parking and associated structures, such as service ranges or outhouses often converted to dwellings. This notwithstanding, the courtyards are in integral aspect of the town's urban form and in some cases continue to the service the principal buildings around them. Where residential conversion has taken place, the courtyards have typically been 'tidied' and reflect their historic working character to a lesser extent; in some cases floorscape surfaces increasingly formalise their appearance. The 'working' character of Southwold's courtyards is a key aspect of their townscape significance, as is their 'openness' and, in some cases, a collection of elongated, single storey, structures. Access to courtyards is typically via narrow, single lane, tracks bounded by long, High, walls.



*Spinners Lane: view towards Barnaby Green; typical alley / lane environment.*



*View westward along passage connecting Blackmill Road to Godyll Road.*

*(ii) The Greens, Public Parks, and Gardens*

The open spaces, known collectively as 'the greens', are numerous and make a substantial and positive contribution to both their respective character areas and the Conservation Area as a whole; equally, they make a substantial contribution to the setting of a great many built heritage assets throughout the designation. The greens have an obvious positive aesthetic, environmental and amenity value but also have considerable

historic value, with many having been *in situ* at least since the town's fire, in 1659. They raise interesting questions around how the town's settlement pattern developed and why this network of small green spaces is present today, however, their concentration around the town centre gives them a prominence that benefits all. They are, collectively, an idiosyncratic townscape feature and one for which Southwold is recognised.



*View south-east from North Green.*

Individually, the greens vary in their scale, shape, and function. They range from small pockets of land at the centre of road junctions to substantial public spaces; each has its own character and sensitivity to change. There are few examples of public shrub and perennial planting, though most some have at least one mature tree, albeit there are few examples of particularly notable trees or interesting specimens, except for Church Green that has a substantial tree canopy. The greens can be said to have an open, verdant, character closer in character to small areas of common or pastureland than formal town gardens or parks. Some greens have 20<sup>th</sup> century hedgerows that are of questionable aesthetic, historic and biodiversity value that work against the prevailing open character of the town, though offer some enclosure. The greens become more open and coastal in character closer to the cliffs with wider paths that blend with the surrounding cliff and dune environment. They provide the open setting for many listed buildings around the town.



*View south-west across Barnaby Green.*



*View north across Church Green*

The open spaces on North Parade top the cliffs between Hotson Road to the north and Dunwich Road to the south. They have been part-formalised by low concrete walls, that form a simple demarcating line and *de facto* sunken lawn. The space is largely without landscape features, other than some benches accessed by narrow bitumen paths without edges and scattered amenity shrubs. The spaces comprise the interface between the coastal defences, beach and seascape to the east and townscape to the west. The space had a more informal, naturalistic, dune character in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and was seasonally used to give tourists cart rides from opposite the Grand Hotel. The spaces provide an open setting for the buildings on North Parade and ensure long views out the seascape.



*View north across the cliff-top open space on North Parade.*



*View south across the cliff-top open space on North Parade, c.1910.*

To the north end of North Parade, opposite the pierhead, are two rectangular spaces originally laid out as part of the pier and Town Farm Estate development. The northern space was formerly a car park, now a skate park and playground. The southern space has a putting green and café. The spaces were laid out according to the Town Farm Estate Plans but labelled as ‘tennis courts’ on the drawings.

Skillmans Hill is listed as an open space on the ESC Proposals Map and located east of Gardener Road. It has a steep incline to the east, otherwise it is a simple, roughly triangular, space laid to turf. Several houses front onto the open space most with high walls of brick and cobble, part-covered in ivy. To the west of the space is an informal roadside car park and scattered feather-boarded sheds alongside a high native hedge, giving the space as a whole a strong sense of enclosure.

Notwithstanding its strong boundaries, the space provides an open setting to the dwellings and positively contributes to the character of

the Conservation Area. Similarly, the open spaces to the west of the settlement provide the open setting to the dwellings that front onto Nursemaid’s Park, The Paddock, and relict parts of Southwold Common; areas of Southwold Common east of Godyll Road highway are within the Conservation Area. The spaces comprise relict common land that today make for green ‘fingers’ extending into the townscape, varying the settlement edge.



*View north-east across areas of Southwold Common, with views of both church towers.*



*c.1905 view north across areas of Southwold Common, with views of both church towers.*



*View south-east across Nursemaid’s Park.*





*The sea view across South Green and openness and long views of Constitution Hill are juxtaposed with the more enclosed urban forms of the greens within the old town*

### *(iii) Churchyards*

Southwold's churchyards present sizeable open spaces of contrasting character to the greens. They contribute positively to the public realm, character of the Conservation Area, the setting of listed buildings and structures; they also have substantial intrinsic historic value.

St Edmund The King and Martyr's Church churchyard, at the centre of the Conservation Area, contributes positively to the character of the Conservation Area and setting of the church. The space provides the sense of verdant permanence and enclosure synonymous with the typical English medieval churchyard; it has a recognisable memorial character that promotes quiet contemplation and reflection; separate from the surrounding townscape but very much connected to it. The churchyard contains 14 Commonwealth war graves from the First World War and four from the Second World War. The heritage values of

the many monuments and headstones are well covered elsewhere in this appraisal.

Notwithstanding the significance of the churchyard as a vegetated green space the churchyard's many mature trees are, in some places, damaging structures, monuments and the landscape itself. Trees and shrubs have grown too large in several places, particularly to the north and east of the church. By comparison, the church can be seen much more prominently in its churchyard in an engraving of c.1839.



*Early c.19th view north across the churchyard of St Edmund King and Martyr*



*View south across the churchyard of St Edmund King and Martyr.*

The St Edmund King and Martyr Churchyard has a physical and visual connection to Bartholomew Green, which extends the open space around the grade I listed church. The connection between the heritage assets is further reinforced by the war memorial, that is located on axis with the church's two-storey south porch. The green has its own historic significance, as the former commercial core of the town. Tibby's Triangle also provides a wider green setting to the grade I listed church

to the north-west, as does St Edmund's Green to the north and Church Green to the south-east. The transition between the churchyard and surrounding public realm or open spaces is marked by ornamental gates, including the grade II listed gate to the south and the simpler, single, gate at the south-east corner on high brick piers. The boundary is marked by a brick and cobble stone wall to the south and cobble stone and stone coping to the north, with hedgerow flanking Field Style Road.

The churchyard has several pedestrian routes that connect into the surrounding townscape and contribute to the town's strong permeability. The condition of the churchyard's paths and street furniture is declining and detracts from the setting of the church, and its significance.

The churchyard of Sacred Heart Catholic Church and the United Reformed Church are not burial grounds; however, their small open space settings are typical of the building typology and contribute positively to both the Conservation Area and setting of each listed building. Similarly, the Southwold Methodist Church does not have a churchyard but makes a positive contribution with a simple hedgerow to the front elevation.



*View of the open space surrounding Sacred Heart Catholic Church, from Blackmill Road*

#### *(iv) Seascape*

The seascape comprises the interface between beach, coastal habitats, townscape, and marine environments. The seascape is the most character defining open space in

Southwold. It gives the town its sense of openness to the east, focal point for the tourist industry and a centre of activity that compliments the commercial core of the town. In addition, there are less-tangible characteristics that are unique to coastal towns. Including:

- coastal biodiversity and wildlife;
- the sound of waves and moving water;
- the experience of reflected light and salt air that is markedly different to inland settlements and even Southwold's character areas further from the coast; and
- an exposed and windswept atmosphere that contrasts with the relative shelter of the townscape.

Access to the beach has, in part, influenced the development and layout of the town, through the establishment of roads and paths, views and vistas, such as on Field Style Road.

The beach offers long views north-east and south-west, enclosed only by the pier to the north and harbour to the south. The beach offers approximately 2km of uninterrupted views, animated by tourist activity, passing tankers, container ships and leisure boats; uninterrupted views to the horizon, across the sea, is an aspect of Southwold's special interest.

South of the sea walls, pier and tourist beach the coastal environment is more natural and dynamic, with the dunes moving and changing with the tides and weather events. The vegetation changes with the seasons and is characteristic of the east Anglian coast.

The seascape comprises a combination of natural and built features, including the concrete promenade and sea defences that reinforce the cliffs. These structures extend from the cliff-top down to the beach and, in places, provide foundations for the beach huts. The beach huts are synonymous with the identity of Southwold and feature heavily in local art and marketing materials, suggesting they have a particularly strong communal

value. The beach huts provide transition structures that connect the landscape with the townscape to west, softening the coast visually and reducing the perceived extent of level change from the cliff-top to the beach. The huts are positively noted in other character assessments, including the Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment and Great Yarmouth and Waveney Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity Study, where they are described as forming a '*key part of the town's character*'.

The beach huts number around 300 units, in irregular clusters on the promenade from the car park north of the pier to the Gunhill Beach Kiosk; most are good condition. They are uniform in their shape and size (approximately 3m<sup>2</sup>), but each is unique in its details and colour decoration. The gaily coloured huts contrast with the more sober, utilitarian, materiality of the town and sea defences whilst the regularity and uniformity of the structures themselves are juxtaposed with the seascape. No one hut stands out, despite the kaleidoscopic colour range; blue and white are probably the prevailing colours and a majority use a two-colour combination. The huts are simple structures, typically feather boarded / shiplap timber boards, some with decorated bargeboards, finials and pendants at the apex of the gables. They are all, except for the beach shop, aligned with their short elevations and veranda facing the sea, giving each row its regularity. The rear elevations typically have a small window; side elevations are generally undecorated. The fenestration to the front elevation varies from hut to hut, though they all have a high glass-to-timber ratio with varying balustrade details. Most are roofed in a green / black roof felt. This utilitarian material is visible to those on the Promenade, cliff-top and key open spaces including Gun Hill. In some places, the rear elevations of the huts are visible from the top of the cliffs or wider landscape, such as at Might's Bridge.

The huts effectively screen the car park to the north of the town in views back to the coast

from the pier. In the reverse view, from Might's Bridge, the huts draw the eye over the top of the surface car park and go some way to mitigating this detracting land use, though further enhancements are desirable. The huts screen some of the sea defences, where the sea wall meets the promenade and enhance the character area visually. The setting of the huts is typically one of coastal protection infrastructure and the beach environment itself.

The huts are a strong visual representation of the town as a tourism and leisure destination; this, and the rhythm in the hut's ensemble, colour and form make them of special interest.

The promenade comprises the concrete topped path above the "*wave wall*", first installed in the early the 20<sup>th</sup> century, building on 19<sup>th</sup> century works, and then replaced in the 1950s; west of the promenade is the exposed concrete sea wall and cliff protection works. In some areas, the use of concrete is expansive, such as to the front of the shelter at Centre Cliff. The walls, revetments and paths are predominantly exposed aggregate *in-situ* concrete. The aggregate could be a local material, with gravel quarries still open near Southwold. The concrete structures have been described as "*in harmony*" with the sand and cobbles of the beach<sup>3</sup>. Texturally, there is an affinity with the cobble and brick boundary walls found around the town. By contrast, the pebble filled gabions have no local relevance to the locality. The use of such hard materials has had a visual effect on the character of the seascape, urbanising it.

West of the promenade, the cliffs rise above the beach and host man-made elements such as iron and steel railings and concrete topped paths and steps. These elements are part-softened by coastal vegetation. The materials are in a variable condition: some older post-war railings are rusting with visible staining on the paintwork; newer unfinished steel railings have been installed at the promenade-beach level. Railings, and other tourist infrastructure,

have long been a feature of the cliffs (metal rails can be seen in an 1862 engraving of East Cliff Vilas, for example, and timber rails in early artists' depictions of the cliffs) and so they are a well-established feature. Notwithstanding their longevity in views, both paths and railings detract from the quality of views back to the cliffs, particularly from the Pier but in most views around the seascape and cliff tops.



*Early 20<sup>th</sup> century view of St James' Green, North Parade and iron railings running across the cliff, following paths*

Timber groynes run perpendicular to the cliffs and punctuate the long views north and south along the coast from the cliff, beach and promenade levels. To the north of the pier, dark grey rock groynes have been introduced; the groynes were installed as part of a major coastal protection scheme in 2005-7.

The cumulative visual effect of car parking, sea defences, railings and paths are exacerbated by the irregular heights, alignment and finishes. In addition, the paths and walls have a very angular quality. The interventions visually sit 'on' the cliff and beach rather than being 'of it'; consequently, the ensemble has a discordant appearance and generally detracts from the aesthetic value of the character area and seascape. Collectively, these features reduce the scale and visual effect of both the cliff and beach in views.

The use of heavy, man-made materials, laid over a natural and irregular seascape, appears incongruous and is not aesthetically pleasing, however, sea defence is an inevitable facet of the seascape's character. The built elements represent the latest generation of

interventions that likely overlay older 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century works and evidence the long history of settlement and coastal erosion initiatives.



*View of promenade, cliff paths and railings.*

Some structures, such as the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century WC block opposite St James' Green, have been better integrated with the cliffs, being cut into it. A utilitarian structure in design, in brick and concrete, it has a neutral effect on the character of the Conservation Area and views of the townscape.

The seascape, as well being a part-natural environment, has historical value as a place of human activity, including migration, industry and warfare over 1000s of years. It has also been the inspiration for many musicians, artists and writers, expanding its significance to include communal value. As well as those artists noted under the 'Location, Context and Setting' chapter, there are other associations such as the work of Eric Blair (George Orwell), who's thought to have taken his name from the River Orwell and is commemorated in a mural on the pier.

#### *(v) Private Gardens*

Open space, trees, shrubs, perennial planting and structures in private gardens make a substantial contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Planting can add structure, height, colour, texture, movement and variety to the public realm. Further away from the Old Town, larger gardens can accommodate larger trees and shrubs, generally to the rear of buildings but on occasion to the street - such

as west of Stradbroke Road or more dramatically at No.53 Pier Avenue, for example. Some large gardens, such as 53 Pier Avenue, contain fine examples of specimen trees that were planted in the late nineteenth and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. To the north of the town centre, front gardens are a notable feature of the Conservation Area. As well as aesthetic value, they have evidential value: illustrating the growing importance of private open space in housing and town planning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; there are positive examples on Field Stile Road and Godyll Road. Some front gardens comprise the setting of heritage assets and reinforce building lines in views.

The boundaries to many of the front gardens have a significance as either heritage assets or as curtilage structures to listed buildings, as well as positive contributors to the Conservation Area, with evidential, historic, aesthetic or communal value. Structures typically demarcate a historic line in the townscape, albeit sometimes with newer structures. The boundaries may have various features of interest, including:

- gate(s);
- brick bonds or decorative stonework, such as coping stones;
- railings or decorative ironwork; and
- timber panels or decorative fencing; and
- Tiles.

Private gardens in Southwold are frequently demarcated by high, well detailed, boundary walls. These make a strong, positive, contribution to the Conservation Area. To the street front, many buildings have small dwarf walls that also contribute to quality of streetscape, particularly where there are decorative railings, stone or timber. However, many boundaries have been subjected to alterations, the loss of railings and walls typically detracts from the quality of streetscape, such as those houses around the old Centre Cliff Hotel: here walls and railings

have been replaced with a 20th century *brise soleil*.

Where historic boundaries have been retained, they positively contribute to the character of the public realm, even where the historic buildings have been demolished, such as the boundary walls to the former Grand Hotel, despite the loss of railings.

The town's varied building aspects and medieval street pattern, with numerous passages and courtyards to the rear of principal streets, ensures that many rear gardens also contribute positively to the public realm and in turn the significance of the Conservation Area. Gardens that side-on to street to the street are an occasional but interesting feature of the Conservation Area, such as The Old Royal, Victoria Street and Montague House, High Street. Though in the Old Town front gardens are relatively unusual, where they occur, they provide valuable green 'relief' in the townscape. Positive examples include the courtyard to the front of the grade II listed Nos.16, 20 and 22 High Street and Sapphire House on Victoria Street.

Some streets and passages have soft vegetated boundaries; for example, the passage connecting Blackmill Road and Godyll Road, where pots, self-set planting and garden plants positively contribute to the character of the streetscape and diversify the public realm, adding texture and colour. These are not gardens but blur the boundaries between public / private.



*View westward along passage connecting Blackmill Road to Godyll Road.*



*View north-east along private road from Skillmans Hill to Constitution Hill*



*Houses on Constitutional Hill*

#### *(vi) Trees and Hedgerows*

Natural elements, such as trees, shrubs, and hedgerows, whether in public or private spaces, make a materially positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Trees in the setting of the Conservation Area are predominantly concentrated in clusters and belts; the landscape setting is typically very lightly treed, limited to scattered trees around the watercourses and drains on the grazed marshland landscape, such as around Might's Bridge. Most trees are of limited scale. The lack of trees adds to the setting's sense of openness, exposure and enhances the feeling of proximity to the sea across the landscape.

The most heavily treed part of the designation's setting is to the west, associated with Henham Park. The designed landscape by Humphry Repton included extensive boundary planting. In recent decades, birch and conifer plantations have been established, predominantly on rising slopes. An area of woodland, part of Suffolk Nature Reserve, is located to the north of the B1387 and south-

west of the Conservation Area; the woodland is predominantly oak and birch, interspersed with heather and includes two tumuli<sup>4</sup> that would have once had a visual connection to the estuary, prior to the establishment of mature trees.

Around the edges of the Conservation Area, where the townscape interfaces with landscape, vegetation is generally limited to scattered trees and shrubs around the watercourses, as in the wider setting. In some instances, trees have been used as screening, such as around the base of the water towers. However, the planting comprises an incongruous tree 'clump' and demonstrates the inherent harm screen planting can have in an open landscape.

Southwold is a settlement with few street trees, and few trees generally. Where there are trees they are typically within public spaces, such as the greens, or, where space permits in private gardens. There is no known planned tree planting associated with the town's evolution and development. Where there are street trees, or trees in open spaces, many are now over 100 years old, and little succession planting has been done to replace them.

With perhaps the exception of Church Green, none of the greens are heavily treed, but many typically have a few small-to-medium size specimens that positively enhance the surrounding townscape. Trees can be found in St Edmund's Green, East Green, and North Green; some also have boundary hedgerows. St Edmund's churchyard has the largest extent of tree cover, part screening the church in views to the north, particularly the dense yew trees.

There are some notable trees in private gardens that positively contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. In some places, such as Spinners Lane and the passage linking Godyll Road and Blackmill Road, where garden trees cross boundaries into the public realm, they also positively contribute to the street scene. Some gardens have trees large

enough to positively contribute to the street scene beyond their boundary walls. Notable examples include:

- cedar tree in the front garden of Forest Cottage, York Road / Blackmill Road junction;
- orchard and mature cedar trees in the walled garden south of Pinkney's Lane; and
- 53 Pier Avenue, where the gardens include several coniferous trees.

In the Marine villas character area, there are substantial gardens around the dwellings, each with some larger trees, including Gun Hill House and Place, Southwold House, and Sole Bay. To the west of the Conservation Area, fronting on to the Paddock, there are large gardens with a small clusters of trees, including at Homeleigh, The Paddock and Woodleys; east of these gardens are Manor House and Gate and Manor Lodge. Smaller gardens to the north of the town also contribute to the town's tree cover; there are several small rear gardens around Hotson Road, Pier Avenue and North Road.

Some smaller front gardens to the terraces and detached houses of Godyll and Field Stile Road, and those to the Town Farm Character Area, also contribute to the town's tree cover and are positive contributors to the character of the Conservation Area. There are scattered examples of small front gardens across the town, such as at Nos.39-41 Victoria Street and High Street, Nos.16-24, where the occurrence of small front gardens contributes positively to the aesthetic of the Conservation Area with planting.

In Conservation Areas, trees protected by a TPO are subject to the normal controls; an online record of TPOs, covering Southwold, is not currently available. Trees in conservation areas not protected by a TPO have a special provision that anyone wishing to carry out work to them must give the local planning authority six weeks' notice of their intent.

#### 6.4.2 Streetscape

There are few examples of hard landscape worth celebrating in Southwold. Only the development at Tibby's Way makes any attempt to provide anything over and above the usual, utilitarian, surfacing materials. There are substantial opportunities for an improved public realm throughout the town. Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the highest status streets, such as High Street and Market Place, would likely have comprised stone topped pavements and kerbs with compacted crushed stone highways. Today the High Street highway has pre-cast concrete slabs of mediocre quality and the street bitumen macadem.



*c.1900 Illustrated view east, over East Green and the surrounding informally finished roads; these have no kerbs or bitumen wearing course.*



*c.1900 View north-east over Market Place, with informally finished roads and no bitumen wearing course*



*View north-east along High Street, with bitumen wearing course to the road with concrete paving slabs and concrete blocks marking some of the alley entrances, such as at Manor Farm Close.*

The town's car parks comprise extensive areas of modern hardstanding, typically black-top bitumen macadam, such as the surface car park on North Parade, north of the pier; the surface detracts from the overall character of



*View north towards the North Parade car park, next to the pier head.*

Market Place has been, for a long time, the historic core of the town and as such should have a public realm appropriate to its position in the town's hierarchy of streets and spaces. However, the town's commercial core is dominated by highway, highway markings and consequent vehicle movements; it is a poor pedestrian space. The listed buildings and grade II listed Town Pump are frequently masked in views by parked or moving cars. The setting of Market Place's many historic buildings and structures, and character of the Conservation Area, could be greatly enhanced by improving the public realm. Whilst some effort has been made to use local materials,

the Conservation Area. Surfacing that is more in keeping with the Conservation Area could enhance the designation and other heritage assets, including the pier development that was designed as the focal point of the Town Farm Estate development. Currently its setting is one of extensive bitumen macadam and a public realm.



*The bitumen car park setting of the pier head.*

with River Pebbles in some locations, such as around the pump and parking spaces to the front of numbers 21 - 25 Market Place, and the existing paving slabs are satisfactory, they are insufficient to give the space a meaningful character.

Enhancements should consider the relationship of the space to the Town Pump, which currently has a diminutive presence at the centre of Market Place. The pump's status could be enhanced by improving the quality of hardscape around it and considering how to give it greater presence.

Small areas of urban open space can be found to the rear of principal streets, such as the courtyard to the rear of The Crown on High Street. The single-storey range of five open-fronted former cart sheds, once part of a continuous range of outbuildings running down to Victoria Street and shown on the 1884 1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map, make a strong positive contribution to the Crown's setting and evidential value relating to the historic role of the Crown as a coaching inn and the town's development as a visitor destination. The open space is the most complete of Southwold's



former coaching inn yards. This, and similar courtyards, are important for understanding the town's urban morphology generally, as well as individual heritage assets. There are similar industry specific spaces elsewhere in the town, including stables, carriage yards, workshops and spaces associated with fishing.

Such spaces are typically characterised by their 'openness' at the centre of low, single storey, buildings accessed by narrow entrances from the principal street. The access is not usually larger than a vehicle's width in most cases. Other spaces include Youngs Yard and Woodley's Yard.

*(i) Floorscape*

There is little surviving evidence of comprehensive historic floorscape development, however, small areas of surfaces and associated materials of interest can be identified.



*Spinners Lane: Unmade, gravel topped, road. The grass verges give the road an irregular edge and informal character.*



*Constitution Hill: Small areas of granite setts as junction treatments.*



*Exposed aggregate, in situ, concrete path within the churchyard of St Edmund the King and Martyr's Church. Whilst the material has little in keeping with the churchyard environment is likely a local aggregate and has association with the seascape environment.*



*Staffordshire Blue setts / cubes within the churchyard of St Edmund the King and Martyr's Church, adjacent to the public space's principle entrance, is juxtaposed with the Regency Gothic cast iron churchyard gate of 1838. The use of a robust material denotes the route's importance for ceremony and vehicle access.*



*Concrete pad (likely the base for a now removed bench) and white paint signs are not in keeping with the churchyard's character.*



*High Street: Concrete paving slabs and setts used to ornament the floorscape, however, their use is rarely appropriate in Conservation Areas.*

### *(ii) Historic Street Furniture*

Street furniture plays an important role in a Conservation Area: it serves and informs those living in or visiting a place as well as potentially enhancing safety in the public realm. The use of street furniture, its design and siting can have a positive or negative effect on the character and use of a space. Within the setting of significant buildings and open spaces the design and location of such items becomes an increasingly important consideration.

Generally, street furniture installations in Southwold have been *ad hoc*, and, in some locations, this has led to visual clutter and an incoherent sense of place. What's regarded as important and necessary street furniture will likely change from settlement-to-settlement, in accordance with the activities of resident and visiting populations; need will also likely change over time. In Southwold, street

furniture is typically more prevalent at the seafront and in open spaces. The residential and commercial areas of the town have fewer items or features.

Some features of the Conservation Area are of special interest and positively contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. This includes the cannon on East Green, two cannons on St James' Green and six sentinel cannons on Gun Hill; these have become focal points of their respective public spaces. The cannons at Gun Hill were installed to commemorate the Battle of Sole Bay, 1672, and have been *in situ* since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The cannons have intrinsic aesthetic and historic value, illustrating Southwold's story as a site of periodic military action and defence. The cannons are likely to have some communal value for both residents and visitors, including children that frequently play on them. Similarly associated with Southwold's military and coastal history are the crows' nest and mast, also on Gun Hill.



*View of St James' Green, with canons and mast.*

Structures such as the war memorial and town pump are a form of public art and enhance the visual and historic value of the Conservation Area. The setting of these installations needs to be managed, partly to reflect their listed status but also to enhance the public realm.



*Market Place: town Pump in context*

The timber turnstiles, located at the entrance to Southwold Common, from Spinners Lane and the Godyll Road end of the passage that links to Blackmill Road, are unusual features of historic and aesthetic value.



*View west towards Southwold Common, from Spinners Lane.*

The World War II mine on North Parade places Southwold in a family of coastal settlements where used mines have been installed as collection boxes for the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society. This links Southwold with these other settlements and highlights the town's historic communal connection to the sea.



*Used mine collection box for the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society on North Parade*

Red phone boxes are internationally recognised design icons of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and considered to positively contribute to historic townscapes and rural areas alike. A K6 model phone box has been reinstated on Victoria Street, replacing a late 20<sup>th</sup> century BT phone box, and given a new use as storage for a defibrillator.



*K6 phone box, reinstated on Victoria Street.*

There are seven traditional red post / pillar boxes in the town, all within the settlement boundary. Like the early 20<sup>th</sup> century phone boxes, these remain iconic townscape features that positively contribute to the interest and character of the Conservation Area.

The ship's figure head above the front door of Dolphin House and Douglas House No.12, Stradbroke Road positively contributes to character of the Conservation Area, as do the bench / windbreaks on the pier and seafront. The latter, designed by Tim Hunkin in 2007, have a sculptural form and are unique features in the townscape, designed specifically for it and the coastal environment.

The limestone boulder at Nursemaid's Park includes a blue plaque that commemorates William Godell, (or Goodell, or Godyll), a “prominent landowner, farmer and businessman in the area”<sup>2</sup>. The boulder is presented as sculpture, set on river washed river pebbles, and gives the open space a focal point.



Memorial plaque to Captain D. Simpson at the base of the flagpole at the Southwold Sailors Reading Room, 42 East Street.



The town stocks at Bartholomew Green provide a form of historic public art.



Water trough on Ferry Road positively contributes to the historic environment.



Ferry Road: Pargeting to the side of the building, visible from the public carriageway.



Features such as the winch at Southwold Harbour for use by the RNLI adds interest to a sparsely used area and further highlights the site's use with activity specific infrastructure.

### (iii) Street Furniture

There are very few planters in the town. Those that are *in situ* typically date from the mid-to-late 20th century and use materials synonymous with that period. Where well designed, and maintained, planters can add texture and variety to the townscape; however, where this is not the case, planters can detract from the character of the Conservation Area and become added clutter in the streetscape.

There is relatively little street furniture relating to transport infrastructure, such as bus shelters (a single shelter is located near the York Road / Station Road junction: a simple black powder coated steel design). There are highway signs throughout the Conservation Area and whilst this is detrimental to the

designated area's character, they are not dominant features at their current use-level.

Timber telegraph poles and wires are commonplace across the town; these have a marked effect on the quality of the townscape. Although the poles are a natural material, and frequently used to attach signage and lighting to and to some extent reduce street clutter, they are in themselves intrusive. Sometimes they extend above, and disrupt, the roofscape, such as on Blackmill Road where the ornamental chimneys of No. 7 Godyll Road would otherwise be positive visual features. There are other views where the poles and wires combine to have a greater cumulative effect, such as those from the pier back to the coast along perpendicular streets like Hotson Road. The intrusion is commonplace across most of the character areas to some degree, however, there are some key streets where it is particularly noticeable. The axial view towards St Edmunds Church Tower on York Road and on Barnaby Green, similarly the view north-east along Constitutional Hill and Queens Road. The cumulative effect of these features is that they have a negative effect on the character of the Conservation Area.



*View south-west towards Walberswick, from Constitution Hill and Queens Road. View is cluttered with telegraph poles.*

Bollards vary across the Conservation Area. In some areas, such as the old town, they are modern steel bollards in a traditional 'Victorian' style. However, around the greenspaces they are more likely to be simple square timber posts. Some, such as those at

Southwold Common, are painted white. These are used also to demarcate the Southwold Golf Club's extents. The bollards typically reflect their surroundings well.

Cycle parking is relatively limited in number across the town, however, where it is *in situ* it is in a simple black steel and 'Victorian' style that has a neutral effect on the character of the Conservation Area, such as those near the entrance to Southwold Common on York Road and Cumberland Road.

The standard green telecoms boxes can be seen all over the Conservation Area; these have a negative effect on the quality of the designation.

#### *(iv) Seating and Bins*

As a tourist destination, where the experience of seascape and landscape views is integral to the town's success, street furniture, particularly benches and bins, are important. Individually, most items are of a reasonable quality, however, there is variation in the materials, colour and design of benches and bins. Their contribution to the special interest and character of the Conservation Area ranges from neutral individually but becomes more negative when considered collectively. Generally, the town's street furniture lacks coordination and coherence in design and typically fails to reference the designation within which it sits; in some instances, the street furniture gives the public realm a tired and discordant character, such as the cliff top on North Parade.



*Collection of seating and bins at North Parade.*

The beach is largely free of permanent street furniture: occasional bins on the promenade, supplemented by ‘wheelie’ bins during peak tourist season. Similarly, some of the green spaces are without street furniture, except for occasional bins and benches.

Picnic benches and tables are typically concentrated on the privately managed outside spaces of pubs and cafes and positively contribute to the Conservation Area by animating the street scene; away from the town centre there are some benches in the play space on North Parade.



*View of the outside eating and drinking space at the Adnams Store and Café, Drayman Square, part of the Cygnet Building, Swan Hotel Market Place (positive building).*



*The small outside space at the Red Lion pub animates the public realm on Queen Street.*

There is potentially unmet demand for public eating spaces across the Conservation Area.

The demand for bins outstrips supply at peak tourist season, when capacity is supplemented by numerous ‘wheelie’ bins located all over the Conservation Area, including most of the town’s most important open spaces. These have an obvious detrimental effect on the character of the designation.

#### *(v) Railings*

There is limited use of railings away from the seafront, where they are used in abundance. Railings in the public realm are typically of no particular interest nor significance (excluding those associated with historic buildings and structures), however, there are some materials and designs that are less detrimental than others. On the Seafront, the steps and paths are guarded by white tubular steel railings which are dominant visual features on the cliff. There is a cliff top path, from Gun Hill to the pier, also marked by painted tubular steel railings on the cliff top edge. The railings are simple but lacking in design quality and combine to have a cumulatively negative visual impact on views of the coast. The railings change in materials at various points, including to galvanised steel.

There are low quality, steel, highway style railings around some land uses, such as outside Southwold Primary School on Cumberland Road and, separately, on Queen Street.

#### (vi) Signage

Street signage is generally simple and varies in material, from steel to cast iron; the cast iron signage has a superior texture and patina to it. In residential areas, signage is attached to garden walls or buildings where possible, which reduces the need for posts and so reduces street clutter. Where signs are erected on posts, the posts vary from concrete to black steel, which have a neutral impact on the character of the Conservation Area, however, the variation introduces a sense of incoherence. The exposed aggregate concrete posts, though a utilitarian 20<sup>th</sup> century material, have a relationship with the materials used on the seafront; the steel posts are more generic and have no local significance. Occasionally, materials are mixed on single signs, such as those at Marlborough Road.

In some places finger signage is used to help direct visitors. These are in a traditional black, steel, 'Victorian' style and have a neutral effect on the character of the Conservation Area. The signs are limited in number and their siting is logical, such as on Constitutional Hill and at Victoria Street, where they are in keeping with the black Victorian style bollards. These complement the traditional style "you are here" notice board and map.

The town has some bespoke signage, used to mark key nodes in the townscape. This includes the town sign at the junction of High Street and Victoria Street. The sign is traditional in style and denotes the entrance to the town's retail and commercial core from the north. It depicts 'galleons at sea, recalling the tremendous sea battle fought off Southwold – the Battle of Sole Bay' and is therefore of local significance. A more contemporary styled sign has been erected at Might's Bridge, denoting the entrance to the town from the north. Most of the 'greens' have bespoke name signs, in a traditional form and are made from iron, painted green. The signs have neutral effect on the character of the conservation area.



*Southwold Town Sign, High Street*

Commercial and decorative signage associated with key uses or places can be found throughout the Conservation Area and many positively contribute to its character or are of intrinsic historic significance. There are numerous examples of good decorative cast or wrought iron work that compliments both the public realm and heritage assets that host them. Hanging signs, flag poles and clock faces also contribute positively to the streetscape; flag poles particularly are a common feature in the town centre. Examples of these items include:

- Hanging sign at The Crown;
- Elevation sign at the Electric Picture Palace;
- Adnams Brewery signs;
- URC chapel clockface;
- 17 Market Place (former Lloyds Bank);
- Ornamental iron sign at the Swan Hotel; and
- Clock face at Mills and Sons, Market Place.



*Hanging sign at The Crown, High Street*



*Clock face at the URC Chapel, High Street*



*Elaborate signage at the Electric Picture Palace, Blackmill Road*

The Conservation Area includes temporary signage in a number of places, but it is particularly prevalent around the parking areas and greenspaces and typically displays overnight parking messages. These yellow, A-

board style, steel signs weighed down with sand bags detract from the quality of the public realm.

#### *(vii) Lighting*

Lighting is an important feature of the street scene. At Southwold, lighting installations vary across the Conservation Area. A modern 'globe' style lamp and black steel column has been installed along the seafront. They give the character area some coherence and have a neutral effect on the significance of the Conservation Area. In other character areas, lighting equipment is mixed. Some lamps are mounted on buildings and whilst the lamps themselves are generally older and utilitarian in appearance the fixing to buildings reduces the overall street clutter, albeit in some cases have slightly negative effect on individual buildings of the Conservation Area, as can be seen on the south side of the High Street.

Elsewhere in the Conservation Area, a simple low black steel lighting column has been installed that is relatively unobtrusive in the conservation area. In other cases, the same older luminaires as those attached to buildings are fixed to telegraph poles, which themselves have a detrimental effect on the character of the designation, though do at reduce some street clutter.

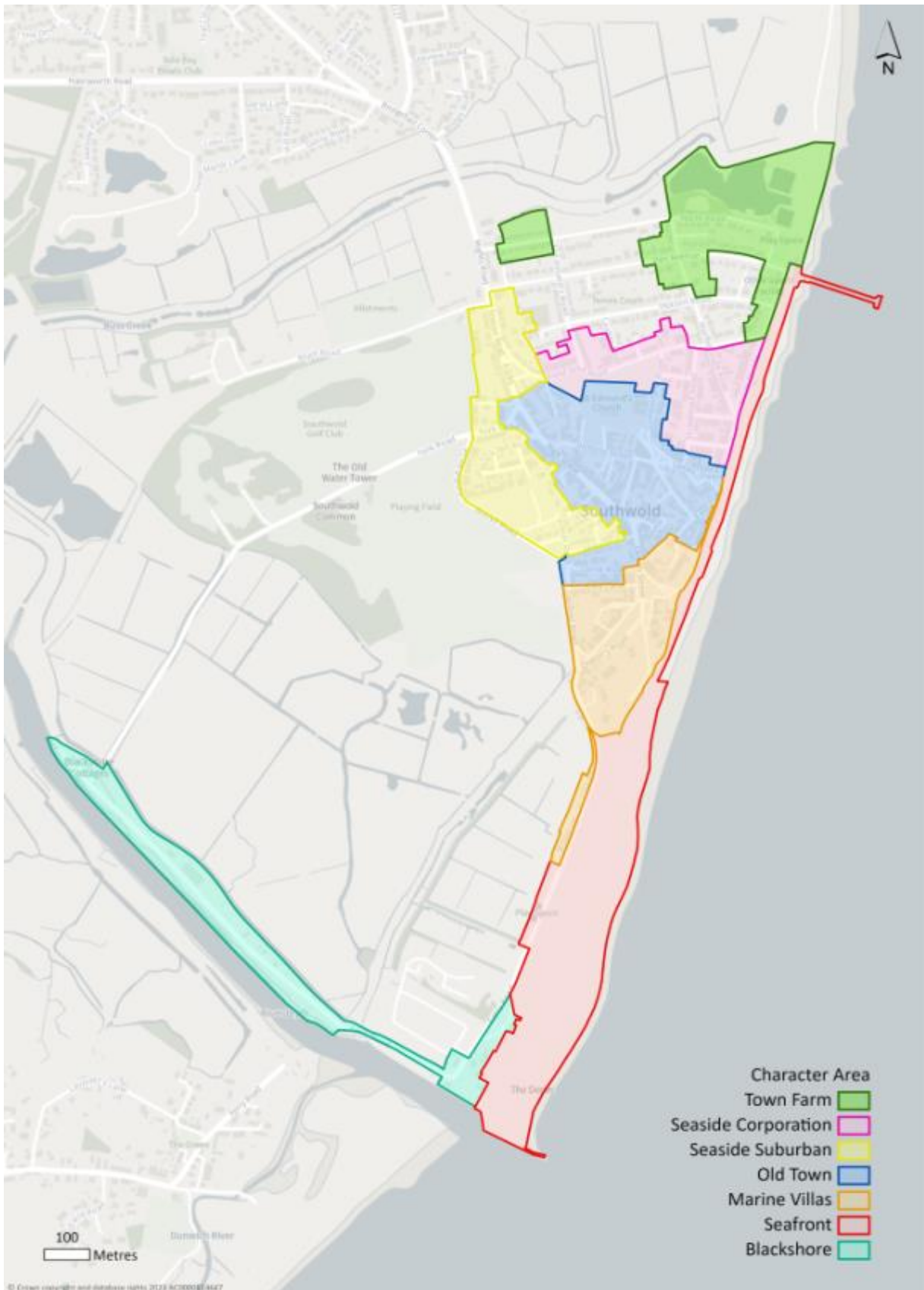
#### *(viii) Play Equipment*

Play equipment can be sizable features in the townscape; these are concentrated on the open spaces north of North Parade, supplemented by skateboard ramps, and at Tibby's Green. The existing play equipment is a neutral feature in the townscape, typically adopting natural colours. The cannons further south on the seafront are good example of how play can be integrated into the public realm in an incidental, and locally relevant, way



## 7.0 Character Areas

### Character Areas Map



## 7.1 Seaside Suburban Character Area



### Character Summary

This character area lies to the western periphery of the Conservation Area, enclosed on its western boundary by Godyll Road and the common beyond. It extends south to include the north side of Park Lane. The east boundary is drawn around the eastern side of the houses fronting the High Street and widens at its north end to include North Green, and is terminated by Blyth Road and Pier Avenue.

It is an area of considerable variety; containing suburban terraces, large detached villas with sizeable gardens and significant long views, green spaces and some commercial premises. Within the character area are 11 Grade II listed properties.

The majority of buildings date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and are predominantly residential, many designed and positioned to take advantage of the long south and west views over the common and towards Walberswick. The earliest structures within the character area are the terrace of three cottages located to the north side of North Green, and date from c.1740.

Generally, the quality of buildings is high, with many of the larger villas being architect designed and displaying considerable originality in their form and detailing.



*Villas located to the east of Godyll Road*



*Godyll Road, looking north, with sizeable villas located to the east side, with far reaching views of the common to the west and southwest*

Godyll Road commemorates the life of William Godell (d.1509) known as 'the father of Southwold' he was a landowner, farmer and merchant, and it was he who gifted to the town the land on which much of the town was built, as well as the commonland surrounding it. A limestone boulder located within Nursemaid's Park commemorates his bequest.

Robert Wake's 1839 map shows the area around Godyll Road, up to the west side of the High Street as open fields with a post mill called The Black Mill and a rectangular courtyard of mill buildings located close to the present day site of St Barnabas Home of Rest for Ladies, founded in 1897.

The land on which Black Mill stood, including the area between Godyll Road and the High Street, was developed between 1884 and 1904. Further east, and set back from Godyll Road, is a further group of impressive late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century properties, some of which were buildings associated with the Eversley School. The school closed in 1996 and has been converted into houses and apartments. The row is terminated by the sparsely detailed stone-built Church of The Sacred Heart; the juxtaposition of the church tower with the presbytery and the use of stone has no precedence in East Anglian vernacular.

The value placed on the development plots overlooking The Common in Godyll Road at the end of the 19th century is reflected by the size and opulence of the houses built on them.

Seen from The Common and beyond they form an important and impressive backdrop to the common that is both varied and unified, and the houses are generally fairly unaltered. Front gardens are a key feature of Godyll Road, as are the balconies facing west and overlooking the common.

The topography of the Seaside Suburban Character Area is predominantly flat, although there is a rising gradient from the northern edge which flattens out beyond North Green.

The existence of green spaces and significant trees is relatively low. Where there are pockets of high density dwellings, front and rear gardens are small, occasionally non-existent, with dwellings often located next to the pavement. Larger detached houses are commonly surrounded by sizeable private gardens, with front gardens in particular creating an attractive transition between the greens and common, and private spaces.



*The northern tip of the Seaside Suburban character area, at the junction of Pier Avenue, looking south and showing the rising gradient of Station Road*



*High Street, looking south, showing houses located next to the pavement*



*North Green, looking southeast towards Field Stile Road*

North Green is a triangular grassed space, now enclosed by established hedging and crossed by paths, with flower beds and young trees. It is a welcome pocket of green space between the high density of properties and commercial outlets to Station Road and High Street.

To the north east side of North Green are closely grouped cottages, with their frontages located directly off the access track. The character of the southern side is dominated by the former commercial 'Mattress Factory', now converted to residential use. The three and a half storey form of this building is an unusual departure from established building heights surrounding it.

The western boundary of the Character Area follows the former 'Rope Walk' which runs north-south from Spinners Lane to Blyth Road. It was one of the long straight paths required by rope makers for twisting hemp into strands and from strands into ropes. At the north end of Rope Walk is a group of houses facing the common.



Spinners Lane is an unmade road leading from Barnaby Green (within the Old Town Character Area) to The Common. Houses are grouped close to the road, some at right angles to it, creating a varied and enclosed feeling. The lane contains a varied mix of houses; some historic but interspersed with more recent development.

Blackmill Road, named after the post mill which was demolished in 1894 serves the backs of the houses in York Road & Godyll Road, and the curve of the road reflects the curve of Godyll road. The Electric Picture Palace relieves the utilitarian uniformity of the rows of garages to the west side Godyll Road, and recent developments near to Eversley Road have not enhanced the area.

Strickland Place, to the north side of Nursemaid's Park contains a number of semi-detached properties of considerable quality and character, varying from the Tudor revival house at its west end to the quieter red brick villas with white brick dressings at the eastern end.



**Above left:** Looking north towards the Rope Walk  
**Bottom left:** Spinners Lane, looking east  
**Above:** Strickland Place, looking west

Within Woodleys Yard is the former maltings which has been extended and reconstructed first into a drill hall and then the Conservative Club. The later pebbled dashed elements of the club building do not contribute positively architecturally or historically to the character of the area.



**Above left:** Woodleys Yard, looking north east

**Below left:** Mill Lane, looking east towards Queens Street

Mill Lane has an enclosed feeling, created by tall boundary walls or properties fronting the road. The lack of footpath accentuates this feeling. Towards the west end on the southern side of the road are a row of modest cottages. Elsewhere modern development has altered the character of the lane, particularly the conversion of the 'U' plan former stables for Adnams Brewery (previously part of the G Childs Iron Foundry complex) which is now residential. The loss of this operational stable and its subsequent conversion has significantly changed the character and feel of the eastern end of Mill Lane

The 2008 reappraisal of the Conservation Area extended the northern boundary of the character area to include properties to the west and east of Station Road up to Blyth Road and Pier Avenue. This extension was an important addition to the conservation area boundary, with the area around the junction of Pier Avenue generally being regarded as the start of the town.

Views within and towards the character area are extremely varied and range from close-range vistas within densely populated areas of the High Street and Station Road, to unobstructed views of the western edge of the town seen from the common land and beyond.

Entering the character area from the north, heading south along Station Road, the existence of development sites and mid to later 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century housing infill housing means that key views are not apparent until North Green. Here the open green space provides pleasant view east towards Field Stile Road.

Views west along Sinners Lane are memorable for the quiet character presented by the unadopted track and the mix of housing located alongside and also set back from the road. The dispersed nature of properties means that there are plenty of examples of private gardens enhancing views, and the common land to the west terminates the view.

From the common, varied views of houses are had from the Rope Walk to the north, and continuing south and east along Godyll Road and towards Strickland Place. Here, detached villas provide focal points of considerable quality and variety. Of considerable merit is the view towards the Church of The Sacred Heart, the villas to the west and the area of green to the north of Godyll Road.

Three small extensions to the Seaside Suburban Character Area were added in 2024. Two of these are comprised of public open spaces partially enclosed by buildings which make a strong positive contribution to the character area. These proposed additions give additional controls over the setting of the grade II listed RC Church and Presbytery, and a number of the town's finest late c.19th and early c.20th villas fronting Godyll Road and Strickland Place.

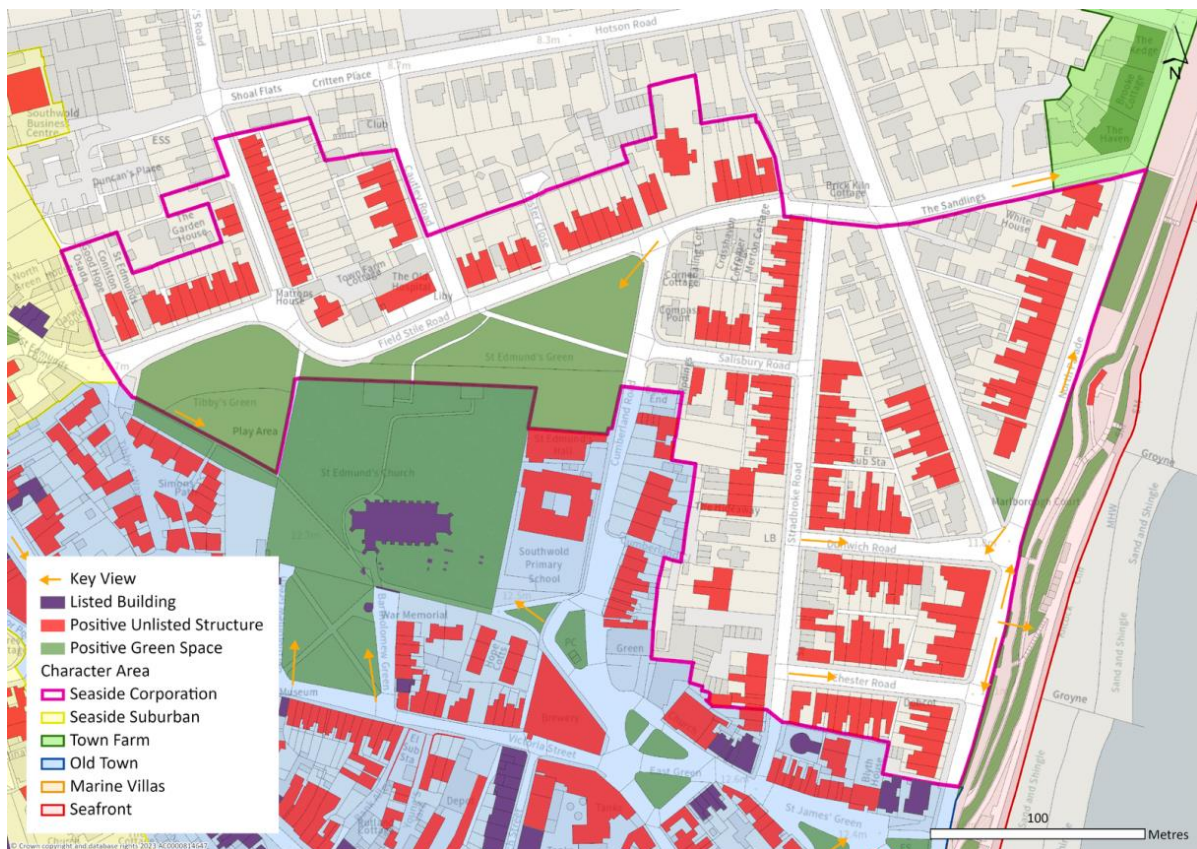
The larger of these two open areas is The Common, flanked by Godyll Road to the west and is overlooked by the grade II listed Roman Catholic Church and presbytery on its northern

side. All of the houses flanking its northern and southern sides are included within the inventory of structures making a strong positive contribution to the Seaside Suburban Character Area of the Conservation Area, as is the wall enclosing the gardens flanking its western side. Godyll Road to the west, the front gardens of Nos. 1-6 Strickland Place to the north, Gardner Road to the west and a small section of Mill Lane to the south. Nos.1-6 Strickland Place are again historic buildings which make a strong contribution to the character and significance of the Conservation Area. The park is home to the recently constructed memorial to William Godyll a

prominent town merchant who died in 1509 and is also planted with attractive specimen trees and shrubs. To the immediate south of the park is a further smaller triangular island plot of lawn which would also be included. On the north side of Nursemaid's Park, a narrow strip of open land is utilized by the occupiers of houses on Strickland Place for car parking.

The third additional area is also small and is located on the eastern side of the High Street at its northern end. This consists of the c.1937 former Suffolk Regimental Drill Hall and parade ground now known as Unit 20 Southwold Business Centre, St Edmunds Road.

## 7.2 Seaside Corporation Character Area



### Character Summary

The Seaside Corporation Character Area is situated just to the north of the old town, the area was developed within a relatively short period between 1885 and 1900 largely on land which was then known as the North Cliff Estate. To its east is the seafront, and to its west The High Street and Station Road.

Until the late nineteenth century the North Cliff area had remained largely undeveloped, with rope making and grazing being its primary functions. The residential suburb we know today grew to relative completion in a short period, with only two surviving dwellings dating from before c.1880. It is remarkably cohesive in terms of the design of its surviving houses, their scale, and the materials from which they are constructed. Census returns suggest that around a quarter of the buildings functioned as boarding or lodging houses from around the time of their completion, whilst early twentieth century directories suggest that this percentage began to grow significantly from the First World War. Today many are holiday lets. There has been very little subsequent development within the area other than where buildings were destroyed or damaged during the Second World War. Only one significant building, a villa at the eastern end of Field Stile Road, has been lost since the area was included in the Conservation Area.





*Cumberland Road, Dunwich Road, Stradbroke Road and North Parade from the church tower (Copyright Marcus Knight 2021).*



*Field Stile Road and St Edmunds Road from the church tower, the northern boundary of the Conservation Area is just behind the gardens of the terraced houses in the foreground. (Copyright Marcus Knight 2021).*

Public green spaces within the character area are mainly centred on the land on the southern side of Field Stile Road where the churchyard and a grassed recreational space can be found. They provide attractive views from the houses on the north side of the road. This public open space also makes a strong contribution to the character of Cumberland Road where it terminates with a hedge flanked by a line of mature trees and make a strong positive contribution to the setting of the grade I listed medieval parish church (see Old Town Character Area).

Elsewhere within the character area there are relatively few trees even in private gardens. Stradbroke Road is however a welcome exception, the attractive leafy front gardens of No.43 and Nos.20-34 adding greatly to the streetscape. The earliest houses on Field Stile Road Nos.24-26 also sit in large leafy gardens which were laid out on the site of a former windmill.

The substantial houses built at the end of the nineteenth century are primarily faced in red brick, and many have elaborate Suffolk white brick dressings. The bulk of their roofs are covered in Welsh slate. Usually of either two or three storeys, most either stand directly against the pavement edge, or have very small front gardens. A visitor will soon detect that a number of the villa designs reoccur regularly throughout the character area, repeated in clusters of three or four houses. Whilst most are attractive

well-built houses of relatively standard designs, there are also well-detailed elevations of considerable originality such as those to Nos.27 & 28 North Parade and Nos. 27-31 Field Stile Road.

Before auctioning the first parcel of 95 plots of land on the North Cliff Estate for development in August 1885, the Corporation laid out the streets and specified the minimum value of the house which was to be built on each plot. This initial parcel of land comprised the southern ends of Stradbroke Road and North Parade with



*Doorway in Chester Road*

Chester and part of Marlborough Roads including the site of the former Marlborough Hotel. The most prestigious plot was that at the corner of Dunwich and Marlborough Roads which had sea views. Upon this plot the Marlborough Hotel was built to the designs of the Beccles architect Arthur Pells; Southwold Corporation specifying that a structure costing no less than eight hundred pounds should be constructed on the site. The plots fronting North Parade were to have houses costing not less than four hundred pounds built on them



*Dunwich Road looking west*

with those to the south of Chester Road being slightly cheaper at three hundred and fifty. The plots on the inland roads were to have slightly cheaper houses built upon them.

The North Parade houses overlook the sea and are the largest in the character area; most were built between 1891 and 1904. Usually of three storeys with red brick façades embellished with white brick, and with Welsh slate roofs, many were occupied as boarding houses from completion. Some of the houses including the former Craighurst Hotel were damaged in a 1941 bombing raid and were modified during their reconstruction. The majority however retain their original external joinery and detailing.

The southern end of Stradbroke Road on its eastern side was originally envisaged as a parade of shops, but all of its surviving shop buildings have since been converted to flats and houses. The most distinguished of these



*The Field Stile Road elevation of the c.1895 No.28 North Parade, this was designed to overlook the forecourt of the now demolished Grand Hotel.*

former commercial buildings is to be found at the northern corner of Chester Road and Stradbroke Road and was constructed c.1895 as a branch of Debnay's Department Store. It is in this small area that some of the most altered of the character area's structures are located. The eastern side of Stradbroke Road between Chester Road and Dunwich Road containing the most unfortunate examples.



*The former Debnay's Department Store Building, Chester Road now sensitively converted to flats.*

Opposite these former shops on Stradbroke Road area two terraces of distinguished late nineteenth century red brick houses which are set back considerably from the building line imposed on the remainder of the Street behind high hedges. These were not built as part of the corporation development but probably by a neighbouring landowner the Hotson family. Between them, are pleasant interwar period detached villas which also follow the same building line, whilst to their immediate south are a group of lack lustre flat roofed late twentieth century garages which detract from the area's character.

Towards the northern end of Stradbroke Road and on the side roads which lead from it the villas are in general both well-maintained and well-preserved. The land at the northern end of Stradbroke Road and fronting Dunwich and

Salisbury Roads was sold by the Corporation in a second auction at a slightly later date. Here the houses rarely rise above two storeys.

Salisbury Road was originally a cul-de-sac accessed from Stradbroke Road, it was only linked with Cumberland Road shortly before World War One, as its western end did not form part of the Corporation's land holding. The northern end of Cumberland Road and Field Stile Road were developed separately, the Hotson family being landowners in the Cumberland Road area having purchased land there from the Corporation c.1877.



*Brightmer Villa, Stradbroke Road a terrace displaying an inventive use of decorative brickwork.*



*Field Stile Road looking west.*

Field Stile Road runs west-east at the northern edge of the character area. For most of its length it is only developed on its northern side, its southern side being occupied by the churchyard and public open spaces. Amongst the c.1900 brick villas is the area's most important public building, the former town hospital designed by the Leiston architect Thomas Key. Now converted to other uses, its original building makes, with the adjoining villas, a strong positive contribution to the setting of the grade I listed parish church which stands immediately to the south (see Old Town Character Area).

Behind the hospital on the western side of Cauntley Road are a notable group of c.1902 villas built as a speculative development by the London builder Robert Jerman. These substantial houses retain their original front doors within recessed porches with decorative wooden overthrows. Also springing from the northern side of Field Stile Road is St Edmunds Road which is notable for its well-designed early council housing. These include a notable red brick terrace constructed by Southwold Corporation c.1905 which is one of the earliest to survive in England.

The north-eastern corner of the character area suffered badly during World War Two and has lost its largest and most distinguished building, The Marlborough Hotel this has been replaced by low rise buildings which reduce somewhat the visual interest of the townscape when viewed from the Pier. On Marlborough Road however are two interesting Neo-Georgian terraces built in the 1950s to replace bombed late nineteenth century houses. They are thoughtfully designed and well detailed, although their quality is rapidly being eroded by poorly detailed replacement doors and windows.

The last significant development within the area occurred c.1970 when a two-storey block of brick faced apartments with flat roofs and garages to the rear were constructed at the corner of Marlborough and Dunwich Roads to replace the much taller bomb-damaged former Marlborough Hotel. Whilst of an inoffensive design they lack the scale and grandeur of their predecessor.

At the southern edge of the character area close to the junction of Stradbroke and Chester Roads stands the grade II listed lighthouse (see Old Town Character Area) around which clusters of late nineteenth century villas stand. The lighthouse's stark form dominates views between the houses and can be glimpsed on Chester Road and North Parade. Stradbroke Road and the pier provide memorable longer views of the structure. Elsewhere the most memorable views are those to be obtained of North Parade looking into the character area from the pier, and of the church from St Edmunds Road. Dunwich Road and Chester Road also provide fine views looking out to sea.

The 2024 additions to the Seaside Corporation Character Area are relatively small. They include Nos.2-8 (even) on the western side of St Edmunds Road at its southern end. The eastern side of this section of the Road was already in the Seaside Corporation Character Area. The proposed addition provides additional protection to the setting of the remarkable terrace of early council houses on the road's eastern side as well as providing protection to a small number of additional early twentieth century structures on the road's western side.



*The parish church from St Edmunds Road and early council houses of c.1905*

### 7.3 Old Town Character Area



### *Character Summary*

The Old Town Character Area incorporates both the bulk of the pre-nineteenth century town, and virtually all of its commercial heart. Its buildings primarily open onto the pavement and are of two and three storeys. Here too are the town's major employers like Adnams Brewery, the bulk of its places of worship, and its principal former coaching inns.

The High Street, Queen Street and East Street radiate from the Market Place and are the town's principal shopping streets. Springing from these streets are narrow alleys and courtyards which were once home to workshops and smoke houses. The Market Place is the town's most important public space but is all too often blighted by insensitive parking.

The High Street is a long largely straight throughfare which forms the town's principal shopping street. It runs from North Green (Seaside Suburban Character Area) to the Market Place with pavements of generous width south of Victoria Street. The street is lined by a continuous row of buildings set along the back pavement edge. This building line fluctuates slightly adding architectural vitality and interest to the scene. The tallest buildings are three storeys high though the majority are of two storeys which, in a wide street, provides it with a comfortable human scaled environment. A distinguished classical chapel, handsome eighteenth-century town houses and a large former coaching inn can be found between its small shop frontages.

The late nineteenth Adnams brewery complex stands to the Northeast on Victoria Street and gives its central section a strong industrial character. Victoria Street was until the nineteenth century three distinct streets, Camels Lane to the west, Jacks Street to the centre, and East Lane to the east. To the north of the brewery is an early nineteenth century former maltings now converted to other uses. The remainder of the street is primarily lined



*The Medieval Church tower is the dominant structure in the northern part of the character area.*



*Cottages on East Green*





*The light house and Methodist Chapel from East Green*

with two storey nineteenth century workers housing. Further east towards the shore are terraces of small early nineteenth century cottages and the lighthouse.

damaged by bombing. Elsewhere there has been remarkably little loss of historic buildings, save for the clearing of cottages from parts of Church Street and Victoria Street.



*Corner of Trinity Street and Victoria Street*



*Bartholomew Green and St Edmund's Church*

During World War Two the cottages surrounding the church on its southern side were badly damaged and here the old street pattern was replaced by a sympathetic low-rise development in the 1950s. Lorne Road at the old town's southern end was also badly



*The Swan Market Place*

The award-winning Tibby's Triangle housing development close to the western end of St Edmund's Church is formed of apartments, a café and shop and dates from c.2008-2012. Constructed on the site of the former Adnams distribution depot to the design of Ash Sakula Architects. It is primarily of three and four store faced in buff brickwork which is



*Sole Bay Inn and lighthouse*



*Bartholomew Green from the church tower with Victoria Street and High Street in the distance (Copyright Marcus Knight 2021).*

occasionally whitewashed or tarred. It is the most memorable development in the town of recent decades.

A particular feature are the small greens Bartholomew, Church, East and St James Green which can be found in the north-eastern part of the character area and which are linked by the thoroughfare now called Victoria Street. Until the early twentieth century these were

largely devoid of planting, but they now contain mature trees which contribute considerably to the area's character and amenity.

At the northern end of the Old Town is the churchyard which contains a notable collection of seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth century memorials. St Edmund's Church is at the centre of a hierarchy of spaces, formed by Bartholomew Green, Tibby's Green and St Edmund's Green. It is enclosed on four sides by a 1.2m flint wall with various types of coping.



*The junction of Victoria and High Streets*

The churchyard is divided up into a number of compartments, principally in the north churchyard where there is a substantial area, enclosed by hedges and trees, reserved for ashes.



*The late seventeenth century No.55 High Street retains a contemporary crow-stepped gable beyond are further early survivors which were re-fronted in the mid-eighteenth century.*

The character area's other important linear green space was the Ladies Walk, established as a sea front promenade in the early nineteenth century its original route has since largely been lost to the sea. Its route has however been recreated further inland.

In the 1930s a small but visually prominent green space was created at the junction of Victoria Street and High Street by the demolition of a group of cottages for road widening. This green space now contains the town sign and welcome seating.

There are very few sizeable private green spaces within the character area, although some of the eighteenth century merchant's houses on the western side of the Market Place and the southern part of the High Street had large gardens which survived into the early

twentieth century. A few of the smaller gardens do make a significant contribution to the area's character including those on Lorne Road and the southern side of St James Green.



*The mid-eighteenth century Manor House High St.*



*No.17 Market Place of c.1716 home for much of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of the powerful mercantile Robinson family. It became a bank in the mid-nineteenth century.*

Three tall structures, the medieval church, and the late nineteenth century lighthouse and brewery are the focus of some of the most memorable views within the character area. The lighthouse is the dominant feature in views from both East and St James' Greens and from East Cliff and can also be glimpsed from the courtyards on the north side of East Street. Whilst the brewery provides the termination of views looking north along Victoria Street.

At the northern end of the character area, it is the fine medieval church tower which is the focus of visual interest.



*Mid-Eighteenth Century Cottages on Church Street*

The earliest surviving structures pre-date the great fire of 1659 which destroyed large parts of the town. Timber framed buildings survive on parts of High Street, East Street, Queen Street and within the Market Place, whilst the northern part of the character area is dominated by the grade one listed medieval parish church.

Most of the surviving pre-fire fabric is however now hidden from view. The unassuming Nos 82-86 (even) High Street for example, contain the remains of a late sixteenth century hall and cross wing house altered in the seventeenth century. Late seventeenth century brick façades survive at Nos.55-63 High Street albeit in a heavily altered state, and to the museum on Victoria Street.

No.17 Market Place is a fine large merchant's house of c.1716 with a doorcase similar to those of contemporary houses in Spitalfields in London. The bulk of the surviving façades date from the period c.1750-1900 although the fabric behind them may be considerably earlier. These include a group of distinguished early to mid-eighteenth century classical merchant's which occupy prominent sites on the western side of Market Place, Queen Street, and High Street. These houses often once had extensive walled gardens, and

occasionally, as on the north side of Lorne Road, and Mill Lane, sections of their eighteenth and early nineteenth-century red brick garden walls still survive. These walls contribute considerably to the character of the area and to our understanding of its historic development. The majority of these surviving large gardens were developed for housing in the mid-twentieth century.

Occasionally, examples of humbler mid-eighteenth century dwellings survive, such as those at the northern end of the High Street which include the former Kings Head Inn and No.32 which has been a fish and chip shop for over a century. The most notable surviving row of small cottages from this period however is probably Dutch Cottages on Church Street. Church Street was formerly an area of great poverty but is now largely holiday cottages, whilst much of its eastern side is occupied by Adnams bottling plant.



*A mid-eighteenth-century cottage which until recently formed part of the Kings Head on the High Street.*



*Victoria Street, an area of small cottages dominated by nineteenth century brewery buildings.*



*Early nineteenth century cottages in Lorne Road*

Numerous examples of smaller cottages built between 1790 and 1830 survive within the Old Town Character Area. These are mostly restrained red brick structures with pan tiled roofs and dentilled brick eaves cornices. Many were however rendered and painted in the later twentieth century. Two of the most attractive cottages can be found on Lorne Road. These are unusual for being placed at a right-angle to the road and having attractive gardens.



*One of a pair of Gibbsian Doorcases at Nos. 1 & 3 Queen Street. The right hand doorcase is of mid to late eighteenth century date whilst that to the left-hand house dates from c.1925.*

Occasionally small clusters of cottages also survive in courtyards off the town's busy shopping streets including of Pinkneys Lane,



*Market Place looking towards Queen Street*



*Adnams Brewery, Victoria Street the gault brick ranges are by Inskipp and Mackenzie and date from c.1897-98*



*Junction of High Street and Victoria Street looking south.*

and in Youngs Yard off Victoria Street, and Snowden's Yard off East Street. Similar groups of cottages continued to be built well into the nineteenth century in the area of East Green, Victoria Street and St James Green however the true age of these cottages has often since been disguised by the replacement of their four light plate-glass sashes with small pane equivalents and the rendering of their façades.

The first purpose built commercial buildings date from the 1830s and include No.100 High Street a purpose-built hotel of c.1834 built by the wealthy merchant James Robinson of No.17 Market Place to rival the nearby Swan and No.66 High Street A gault brick faced shop with accommodation above of c.1830 with a notable early shop front. Amongst the most notable however is the well-preserved façade of the Sole Bay Inn, East Green of c.1835.

The next significant wave of commercial building did not take place until sometime after the opening of the railway in 1879. The former Barclays Bank, High Street of c.1895 and the fine premises at No.64 High Street constructed for the confectioner Frederick Easthaugh c.1906. From this period also date the rebuilding of Adnams Brewery, Victoria Street (designed by Inskipp and Mackenzie 1897-98) and the well-preserved workshop of the engineer William Powditch of c.1896 at Nos.2 & 4 Church Street. The façade of the

former office building at No.1 Market Place of c.1890 is equally well-preserved. The most ambitious development of the period however was constructed at the northern end of the High Street in two stages between 1895 and 1911 and included both houses and a Post Office.



*Former Southwold School of Industrial Art, Park Lane*

The former Southwold School of Industrial Art in Park Lane is a fine arts and crafts building of c.1894 paid for by the philanthropist Arthur



Flowers, sadly the school did not survive the conscription of its pupils in the First World War and closed c.1916. Its timber framed façade is a prominent landmark on the northern side of the street.



*Sensitively designed 1950s housing adjoining the parish church.*

At the northern end of the Character Area, just to the south of the parish church is a remarkable development of public housing built shortly after World War Two by Southwold Corporation to replace war damaged cottages. This carefully detailed and remarkably sensitive development draws on local vernacular buildings of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries for much of its inspiration.

Of later twentieth century buildings, two of the most pleasing flank the former Southwold School of Industrial Art, that to its left is a graceful late twentieth century Neo-Georgian re-fronting of a later nineteenth century villa, whilst that to its right a Dutch gabled red brick house of roughly the same date. Adnams late twentieth century bottling plant on the corner of Church Street and Victoria Street did much to preserve the character of this sensitive corner of the Conservation Area.

It is the Tibby's Triangle development however, at the northern end of the High Street which has provided the town with its most significant recent buildings. Formed of apartments, a café and shop it dates from c.2008-2012. Constructed on the site of the former Adnams distribution depot to the design of Ash Sakula Architects. It is primarily of three and four storey blocks faced in buff brickwork.

There are relatively few significant views into the character area except from South Green, the northern end of the High Street, or the beach. Views within the character area tend to be small-scale intimate ones, save for on the High Street, whose broad sweep allows memorable views along much of its length. East Cliff and St James Green provide memorable views out to sea as does the eastern end of East Street.

## 7.4 Seafont Character Area



### *Character Summary*

The sea front character area stretches from the southern end of Gun Hill to the pier. Its eastern edge is the sea, and the area's west boundary coincides with the kerb of the eastern footpath of North Parade and the cliff top path of Long Island Cliff and Gun Hill Cliff. From the seafront memorable glimpses of the marine villas and old town can be obtained, whilst from the pier there are fine views south towards the row of 1890s houses on North Cliff. These views south from the Pier have changed radically since its construction due to the loss of the large Edward Grand, Marlborough and Dunwich Hotels and the construction c.1948 of concrete shore defences. At the beach's southern end Sizewell power station can be seen in the distance.

The low sandy hill on which Southwold lies has been cut by wave action to form low cliffs covered in vegetation. The current Ordnance Survey map shows Gunhill Cliff to the east of

Gunhill; Long Island Cliff to the east of St James' Green and Kilcock Cliff to the east of Dunwich Road. Historically, Robert Wake's map of 1839 shows 'North Cliff' east of St James' Terrace, Long Island Cliff, east of East Street, and New York Cliff east of Centre Cliff House.



*The steep banks between the beach and Promenade are home to wild flowers.*



*A c.1930 view of the shelter and garden on North Parade with the Pier and old pavilion (demolished 1935) in the distance.*

Long island, New York and Kilcock were the names of Beach Companies and their beach territories from which pilotage and lifesaving services were provided.

There were three breaches in the cliffs with lateral tracks down to the beach; now represented by the steps east of St James'

Green, East Street and South Green. Timber groynes had been introduced as a sea defence in the latter part of the eighteenth century, though they were not enough to prevent a major collapse of the Southwold cliffs in January and March 1906. Then additional protection to the crumbling cliffs was provided by additional groynes.

There had been tarred wooden fishermen's huts against the cliff and fishing boats drawn up on the beach since ancient times, though once sea bathing became popular in the nineteenth-century they had to share the beach, which became closely packed with both bathers and their bathing machines. Until the later nineteenth century the character of the beach area was very much like that of Blackshore today, with some poor families living in the wooden huts. Photographs of the beach below East Cliff show it very much as a working environment well into the 1890s, as was the South Beach close to Ferry Road. The

present character of the seafront dates very much from the years following the end of World War One, when the introduction of engine powered fishing boats made it more practical to birth them at the harbour.



*The late nineteenth century shelter and garden close to the pier c.1920*

The beach huts are generally of a plain standard, single storey type, of a modest scale about three metres square in plan, and with ship lap or feather edge softwood boarded walls. Most



*Beach Huts below East Cliff*

have a veranda under a single shallow pitched felt roof with bargeboards to the gables. What makes them special is their arrangement in line and en masse; their bright and varied colour schemes; and the imaginative names given to each hut. Most of the beach huts were

originally stained black but are today largely gloss painted. The 1927 1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map shows an early group of huts below East Cliff and one below North Parade. They are privately owned and located on sites leased from the council, there are conditions

to each lease including that the huts cannot be used overnight.

The sea wall is built of sun bleached and sea washed concrete and is from a distance visually in harmony with the sand and cobbles of the beach. It was not until 1948 that there was a comprehensive scheme of renewal and the construction of a sea wall. Since then, there have been a number of schemes of renewal and enhancement, the latest closing the beach for 2006 while the sea wall was repaired, and the groins were replaced.

The most significant open space is the beach, whilst the sea front is on three levels. The first, nearest the sea is the wide and level promenade with a second higher level immediately adjoining. It is on this level that the town's picturesque beach huts sit.



*c.1948 Concrete Steps, North Parade*



*Looking towards East Cliff from the beach close to the end of East Street*

Above the beach hut ledge is the face of the cliff, covered in vegetation, some of special east facing coastal flora. Concrete steps climb

the cliff to the street level. There is an intermediate level in Kilcock Cliff in the form of a path running parallel with the road above.

Above on the top of the cliffs are areas of grass laid out in the early twentieth century which, near The Pier once contained colourful formal planting.

The steps and paths are guarded by tubular steel railings which are dominant visual features in the cliff. There is a cliff top path, from Gun Hill to the pier, marked by painted tubular steel railings on the cliff top edge. Between Hotson Road and East Cliff are grassed areas, (those to north possibly once flower beds). Set into the cliff opposite St James' Green is a red brick public WC with a flat asphalt roof.



*Detail of the water clock, Southwold Pier*

To the northeast of the pier is the Model Yacht Pond of c.1892 one of the first structures to be constructed in the area predating both the pier and the surrounding villas by a considerable period. Between it and the seafront are however now large and well used areas of tarmacked carparking.



*Beach Huts from the north side of the pier and No.72 North Road (presently outside the Conservation Area)*

The views from the Pier southwest towards the town are some of the most memorable and most photographed within Southwold. From the north side of the Pier there are also memorable views out towards North Road to the northwest and Easton Bavents to the north. There are also attractive long views south along the beach towards Dunwich and more intimate sort views up into the old town from the beach below Centre Cliff, York Cliff, Primrose Alley, Gun Hill, and East Cliff. The most significant views into the character area are probably those from East Cliff, the eastern end of East Street and Gun Hill.

The 2024 extension area covers the small area of land between the north side of the pier on North Parade, to the northern termination of the beach huts fronting the sea at the North Parade Car Park where the mouth of Buss Creek joins the sea. Its western termination is the western side of the car park, its eastern the sea. This is one of the most visited areas of the town and contains vital visitor facilities.

The extension area is designed to protect the setting of the pier and of the early twentieth century houses on North Road. It will also provide protection to the setting of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the immediate north.

Like the beaches to the immediate south, this part of the seafront falls within the line of the mid-twentieth century concrete sea defences. The beach huts sitting along their seaward edge. The groins made of huge lumps of rock are a twentieth century intervention.

In the early twentieth century Southwold's fisherman congregated around the foot of the pier their boarded wooden huts lining this part of the beach which they called 'Klondyke.' This must have been a somewhat sarcastic naming of this small area of beach given that the fisherman had just been displaced from their more traditional seafront home in front of the then newly built Grand Hotel. By the end of World War One the fisherman had gone from here to, and beach huts replaced those of the fisherman.

Hard man-made surfaces are also the predominant feature of the narrow strip of car park overlooking the sea. Tarmac being the most prominent.

From the beach to the immediate north of the pier there are fine views of the pier itself, whilst from the pier there are fine views towards the beach huts with glimpses of the villas on North Road beyond. From the car park area there are fine views over the marshes and notable views towards the Edwardian villas on North Road and towards the lighthouse and church tower.

The South Beach and Denes extension area added in 2024 covers the open land from just southeast of Stone House on Gun Hill to the northern edge of the public carpark just north of the Alfred Corey Lifeboat Museum. Its western boundary is the eastern edge Ferry Road, most of the houses on Ferry Road being in the Marine Villas Character Area of the conservation area. On its eastern side the sea. Much of the area is a designated County Wildlife Site and part of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

At the extension area's centre a small area west of Ferry Road is included which incorporates the c.1892 model boat pond. This is one of the towns earliest purpose-built structures aimed at the mass tourist trade. To its north is a small car park. On the site of this car park there were from the 1920s a row of wooden chalet bungalows with distinctive verandas. The destruction of these buildings in the disastrous 1953 floods did however open up views of the southern façade of the c.1800 Chandlery Building (located within the Marine Villas Character Area) just to the north.



*From the top of the sea defences are small scale intimate views of the houses on the western side of Ferry Road located within the existing Marine Villas Character Area.*



*Looking towards the South Beach from Gun Hill 2021*

At its southern end on the eastern side of Ferry Road are a group of mid-twentieth century detached dwellings which were formerly within the Southwold Harbour and Walberswick Quay Conservation Area and now form part of the Blackshore Character Area with the East Car Park, Alfred Corey Lifeboat Museum, Public Toilets and Kiosk.

Located to the south of Gun Hill this is a wide area of sand and shingle beach with low dunes held to the south by the north pier of

Southwold Harbour. The Denes coastal dunes form the sea defence to the south side of the town and are backed by Ferry Road on its west side. The area is primarily one of beaches and open treeless grasslands including purposely planted Marram Grass designed to stabilize the dunes. Other species include Sea Holly, Sea Pea and Bulbous Meadow Grass. Its topography is however partly man-made being the product of the massive sea defence works undertaken after the 1953 floods.





*Looking north from the sea defences towards Gun Hill and the lighthouse*

Originally the houses on the western side of Ferry Road (see Marine Villas Character Area) enjoyed open views out to the sea, but following widespread damage caused by the 1953 storms the high protective bank enclosing its eastern side was significantly enlarged. The last remaining wooden structure on the beach itself, the lifeboat station, also disappeared around this time.

Unlike the beaches to the north, the south beach is today largely free from huts. Historically this was not the case, for Edwardian photographs show weatherboarded fishermen's huts, fishing boats and bathing machines here. The advent of petrol driven engines to power the fishing boats however made dragging them from the beach more hazardous, and from around the First World War it made more sense to berth them at the harbour.



*Light House from The Pier Looking South West*

The South Beach area is one from which there are fine long views from almost all directions, whether out to sea, south towards Sizewell power station or north towards Gun Hill and the lighthouse. From the top of the protective bank overlooking Ferry Road there are also

small-scale intimate views of the weatherboarded chalets and cottages which line its western side and longer ones over the marshes beyond. From the model yacht pond there are also fine views towards the water towers.

There are also, good views into the South Beach from Gun Hill (Marine Villas Character Area).



*Southwold Beach Huts*

## 7.5 Marine Villas Character Area



### *Character Summary*

The Marine Villas Character Area is located to the southwest of the Conservation Area and abuts the Sea Front Character Area (to the east) and the Old Town Character Area (to the north). It contains 38 nationally listed buildings (all registered at Grade II). The area comprises almost entirely of residential properties, with the exception of the Red Lion Public House and an adjoining retail outlet, both located to the corner of South Green and Pinkney's Lane. Other non-residential landmarks include the cannons and The Casino, both on Gun Hill.

The area developed incrementally following the fire of 1659 and the street layout evident today likely developed as part of the post-fire rebuilding. Wake's map of 1839 shows the layout of roads and greens largely as they exist today.

Historically much of the area was grazing land, but the construction of the first villas during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century began a transformation from pasture to residential and recreation. It is these buildings added during the first and second quarter of the nineteenth century that best define the character of the area.

From Ferry Road the topography rises to the north and east, with Skillman's Hill, Constitution Hill and Gun Hill all representing the high ground within the character Area. To the west the land slopes gradually down to the marshes and to the east it drops down sharply to the sea.

The spatial quality of the Gun Hill villas means that views between houses are enjoyed, and this adds to the sense of space and openness that is experienced within the character area.



*View from South Green and Constitution Hill looking east towards Gun Hill*



*Skilmans Hill, looking north*

To the south and east the density of the character area is one of a dispersed settlement comprising substantial 19<sup>th</sup> century villas set within large gardens. Many properties have low barely enclosed boundaries, resulting in private gardens making a significant visual contribution to the public realm, while enhancing the sense of informality between the private and public spaces.

The northeast and northwest parts of the character area are more densely populated, and the regimented parallel lines of Park Lane and Lorne Road present a different character to the loose

grouping of villas around Gun Hill. Park Lane is particularly memorable; houses to the south side of Park Lane (the north side being in the Old Town character area) vary in age and status, and there is a high density of Grade II listed properties. Highlights include Nos.6-12 (inc) and the imaginatively designed modernist villa at No.28.

A significant feature of the character area is the number of public greens, including Gun Hill, South Green, Constitution Hill and Skillman's Hill, which create a sense of spaciousness enhanced by properties being set back from the road and with distance between them.



*View from the dunes, looking north towards Gun Hill*

Perhaps the most visually significant of these greens is Gun Hill, an area that remained undeveloped until c.1807 when a group of 'shareholders' built a line of superior residences, each within its own land, around the west side of the hill. The houses were (from south to north) Stone House; The Lodge (Sole Bay House and Southwold House); Centre Villa (Gun Hill House); and nearest the sea; 'Marine Villa', (White Lodge). 'The Casino', an octagonal structure, was built c.1800 and has been used as a garden room, reading room and coastguard lookout. The overall impression of this area is one of open space, sky, sea, and long views towards the horizon.



*Engraving dated 1867 showing Centre Cliff prior to the construction of the Centre Cliff Hotel in 1899*

To the north is Centre Cliff, dominated by an important row of speculative lodging houses built in 1829 for Thomas Sheriffe. Symmetry, proportion and understatement are important elements of the design, although this symmetry was altered when a three storey stuccoed wing was added to the northern end in 1899; indicating both the growing popularity of the town as a tourist destination towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a strikingly marked contrast of architectural styles.

South Green to the south and south west has a varied and open character. Here large Regency villas are found opposite a Public House and late 19<sup>th</sup> century flamboyant design amongst restrained 20<sup>th</sup> century work and a row of small Georgian brick cottages.

It is within this Character Area that side hung exterior louvered shutters and balconies are most prevalently seen, which helps establish a unified character in an otherwise stylistically varied area.

To the north westside of are a row of mostly abutting houses, of varying age, style, and interest. Visual unity is achieved through the size and detailing of windows which imparts a rhythm.

The houses on Constitution Hill and Park Lane back onto the east and north sides of Skilmans Hill, which is a steeply banked roughly triangular piece of open grassland. View to the south and west are some of the finest long views in Southwold.

Ferry Road, at the southern end Queen's Road and Gardner Road was the location of the former Salt Works (the principal saltworks building was on the site of Gun Hill Bight), where extracted salt from the tidal marsh was used in fish preservation. Nos.4 and 6 Ferry Road were part of the works, and over the road was Salt Works Creek where stood a salt bath house and a small cloth sailed wind pump. The pump moved the salt water into troughs in which it flowed under the road to the works. The trade was ended after 1879 when the railway brought cheap rock salt to Southwold.

The character of Ferry Road is varied, ranging from zinc clad modern structures to understated painted brick cottages. The well-preserved 'Morningside' (No.23) and 'Kilkee' (No.33) both hint at the modest buildings that once lined the west side of Ferry Road, however the rate of change in this area is rapid, and the understated is systematically being replaced by houses more ambitious in design and material use.

A significant feature of the Character Area is the quantity and quality of its green spaces; Gun Hill is a particularly noteworthy space, located high above the coastline and providing a setting to a number of distinguished villas.



*Constitution Hill, looking north*



*Ferry Road, looking south*



*Houses towards the northern end of Ferry Road, looking north west*



*Houses to the southern end of Ferry Road, looking south*

South Green lies at the centre of the character area, alongside Queens Road, and Skilmans Hill to the west provides a steeply sloping and attractive setting for the rear of properties on Park Lane and Constitution Hill.

The 2008 review of the Conservation Area extended the Marine Villas Character Area to include Ferry Road, from Stone House up to (and including) No.53 Ferry Road. This did not include areas of the marshes to the west nor the dunes to the east.





*Informal track between houses, looking west onto Skilmans Hill*

Views within the character area are varied and range from the expansive sea views found around Gun Hill, to the shorter views experienced along Park Lane and Lorne Road. The dispersed nature of villas and the abundance of open green space generally afford far-reaching views between properties.

The view looking south along Queens Road as it winds and becomes Ferry Road is highly memorable, in part due to the quality of the housing and also the green spaces flanking the road. The open quality at the northern end of Queens Road restricts as it winds south, with houses gradually being located closer to the road, creating a visual pinch point before the road bends and heads south becoming Ferry Road.



*Constitution Hill, looking east towards Gun Hill*



*South Green (west side) looking east*



*South Green (west side) and Constitution Hill*

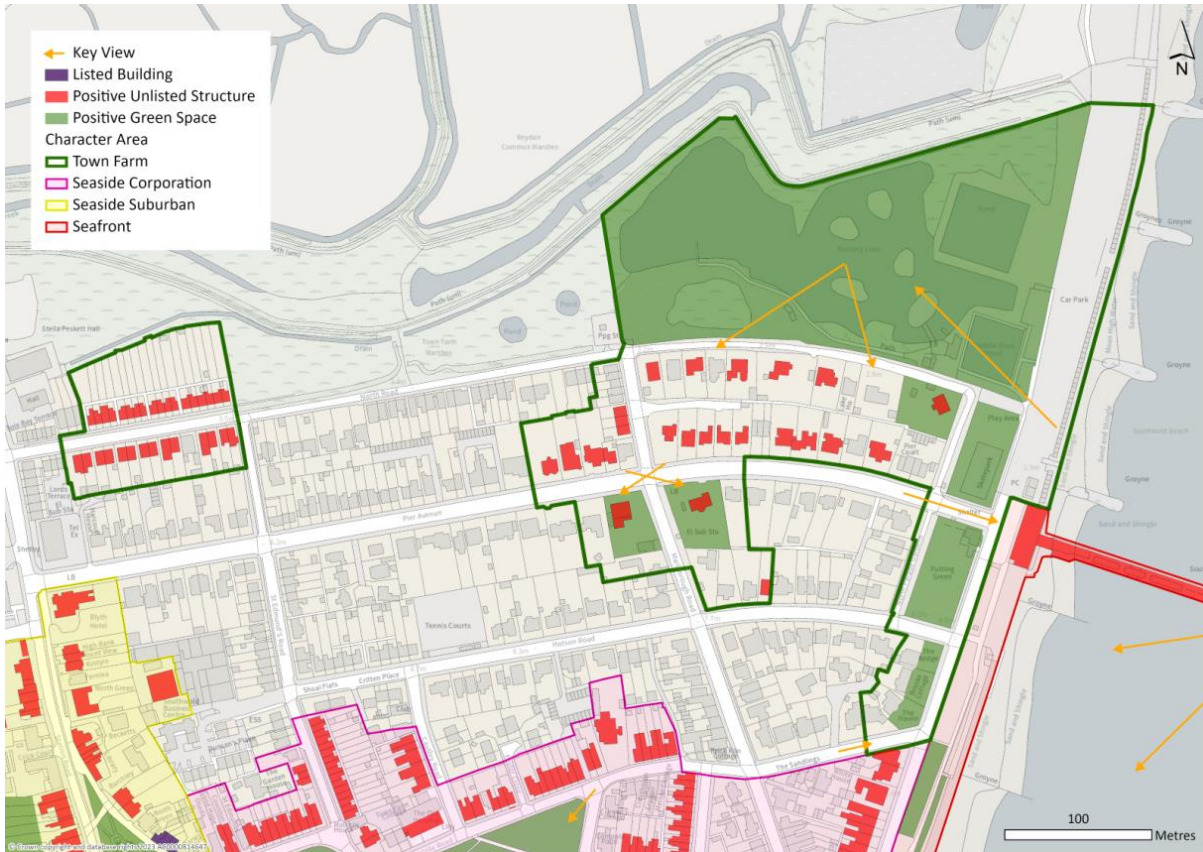
The variety of houses to the west side of Constitution Hill, combined with the setting of South Green displays a great range of age and styles of houses, reducing in scale from the imposing Hill House and Woldside to the varied and charming form of Iona Cottage. These properties are all set back from the road and their private gardens make an attractive contribution to Constitution Hill.



*The Canons, Gun Hill. Looking north*

The rising gradient to the northern end of Queens Road, and the grouping of prominent villas around Park Lane and Lorne Road, also makes a highly significant contribution to the character area.

Gun Hill is a particularly popular and special area. Here, large villas provide the backdrop to a large open expanse of grass and an impressive row of six Elizabethan canons. Additionally, the area provides elevated views of the sea and the dunes and harbour mouth to the south.



## 7.6 Town Farm Character Area

The proposed Town Farm Character Area is located on low lying ground at the northern end of the town beyond Field Stile Road and was until the 1890s largely grazing land. It had been historically owned by Southwold Corporation and was known as the Town Farm. Its development represents the last major phase in the development of the town before the First World War. Unlike other suburban developments in Southwold, this was one that was initially primarily aimed at housing its existing middle and working-class residents rather than wealthy tourists.

It is today primarily an area of substantial early and mid-twentieth century private dwellings of two or sometimes three storeys. The houses are set back to a common building line which was specified at the time of its initial construction, as was the size of the individual plots. Each of the Pier Avenue villas for

example, are set back within its plot to a twenty-foot building line as specified by The Coast Development Company. On less prestigious thoroughfares within the building estate however, the building line was set at 10 feet from the road. The bulk of the houses sit within generous plots, many retaining specimen trees and decorative shrubs.



Allan Collard's c.1910 design for Craven Cottage, Pier Avenue, appeared in *'The Studio'* in 1914.



*Looking toward the eastern end of North Road showing the early twentieth century Nos. 71 & 72 amidst later infill housing.*

The remaining undeveloped elements of the old Town Farm were sold by the Corporation in 1899 and 1900 to The Coast Development Company of No.33 Walbrook, in the City of London, who had ambitious plans to develop the town as a holiday resort. It was The Coast Development Company who laid out the grid pattern of streets on the 25-acre building estate, extending St Edmunds Road and North Parade, and laying out Hotson Road and North Road. The Company's Chairman Abel Penfold (1833-1900) was largely responsible for the development of Clacton and had interests in other east coast resorts including Walton on the Naze as well as the Belle steamship and other lines. Penfold died soon after the Company acquired its land at Southwold however, and the company's fortunes went into decline, its last major venture being the Felixstowe Pier of c.1905.

Southwold Corporation were also to have a hand in the area's development however, building early council houses at the western end of North Road and laying out allotments for their occupiers. The construction of what is now Pier Avenue and the northern part of Marlborough Road had originally been proposed at least a decade earlier by Southwold Corporation partially to relieve pressure on Station Road and the High Street.

Two of the Coast Development Company's most important surviving buildings, The Pier and The Blyth Hotel Station Road are located within other adjoining character areas of the

existing Conservation Area. Amongst the first structures to be completed were The Pier (see Sea Front Character Area) and the now demolished Grand Hotel of 1901 which was designed by Charles Mileham and stood on North Parade. A model yacht pond and tennis courts were also laid out before 1919. A small number of well-designed villas also date from before the First World War including Nos.27-33 North Road, and Nos.60, 62, 80, 82 & 86 Pier Avenue. A group of five large villas were also built on the North Road east of Marlborough Road c.1912, which were designed to exploit views over the boating lake and marshes. The First World War then intervened, and the heavily indebted Coast Development Company folded in 1915, its steamers being unable to operate. Its Southwold land holdings were sold off in lots in 1919.



*Inventively designed late 1960s housing Nos.72-78 (even) Pier Avenue*



*Junction of the Town Farm, Seaside Corporation and Sea Front character areas just south of the Pier, one of the most widely appreciated views of the town experienced by visitors. To the right is the site of the former Grand Hotel*

On the sea front the proposed character area begins at the junction of Field Stile Road on North Parade where The Edwardian Grand Hotel once stood, this prominently located site is highly visible from the pier.

Pier Avenue and the eastern section of North Road were designed to be the most prestigious addresses within the building estate. Pier Avenue was designed to connect the town's railway station to the Pier and its steamer services, whilst it also provided a secondary means of access to the town centre via Marlborough Road.

Sadly, very little building activity took place on Pier Avenue before World War One, and only parts of the eastern and central sections of it are therefore included within the conservation area. It is in these areas that the developer's original vision of large 'Arts and Crafts' inspired houses set within leafy gardens, and tree lined avenues is best preserved. Here can be found several large villas which were probably designed by the Frinton and London architect

Edward Charles Homer (1845-1914) some retaining their originally cream painted applied plasterwork imitating timber framing to their upper floors. The Coast Development Company owned the pier at Frinton at that time. This section of Pier Avenue was however extensively damaged on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Feb 1943 when a German bomber left a 60ft by 30ft crater destroying one house completely, badly damaging seven, and causing minor damage to a further twelve.



*Goat powered carts for children, Close to the now demolished Grand Hotel, North Parade c.1910*



*Corner of Pier Avenue and Marlborough Road*

The northern end of Marlborough Road is also within the proposed character area. Marlborough Road was originally intended to be primarily lined with shops, but the expected demand for commercial space never materialized, and by c.1912 the first large house No.51 Pier Avenue had appeared on one of the most prestigious of the corner plots.

At its junction with Pier Avenue on the eastern side there had been in the nineteenth century a brick works. The site of this brickworks was one of the last to be developed, with the construction c.1967 of an inventive group of brick faced houses with first floor living rooms. The construction of a Wesleyan Chapel had been originally intended for the plot on the western corner of Marlborough Road and Pier Avenue but this idea was abandoned c.1919. Marlborough Road arguably suffered greater war damage than any other thoroughfare in Southwold, many of the large three storey houses which occupied its southern and central sections, being destroyed.

The Character of North Road to the north of Pier Avenue is radically different at its eastern and western ends. Its eastern end retains large,

detached villas which built before World War One to exploit the fine open views over the Town Farm Marshes to the north. At its very eastern end is a 1920s villa which sits at an



*North Road and the Town Farm Marshes looking south*



*No.72 North Road from The Pier*

angle so as to exploit views over the sea and marshes. Between the plots is a small amount of late twentieth century infill development.

At its western end beyond St Edmund's Road are two blocks of stylish tile hung Arts and Crafts houses which are amongst the earliest to survive in the area. Plain tile hanging was frequently used well in to the 1930s and can additionally be seen on Marlborough Road and in Pier Avenue.

The early and well-designed public housing on the northern side of the Road is also of considerable historic significance Southwold Corporation having a pioneering role in the provision of well-designed public housing in the first two decades of the twentieth century.



*Boating lake and beach huts.*

Hotson Road to the south of Pier Avenue was only partially developed by the end of World War One, and most of those early houses which do survive have been heavily altered. Only one small section of its north side is therefore included within the proposed character area, this includes the remarkable single storey c.1924 cottage built by the people of Southwold to house, rent free, a married wounded soldier and his dependents. Standing next to it is No.54 a substantial and inventively designed villa sadly damaged like many others in a 1943 bombing raid.



*Field Stile Road, Hotson Road, Pier Avenue, and the Pier Pavilion where the Seafront, Seaside Corporation and Town Farm Character Areas meet. From the Church tower (Marcus Knight 2021).*

## Green Spaces

To the north of the character area are the wide, open expanses of the Town Farm Marshes and Buss Creek which include a SSSI. In the early modern period these marshes were a thriving shipbuilding centre and have considerable archaeological significance. A small network of footpaths connects the streets within the character area to this open marshland to the north. Large informal gardens, allotments (sometimes now disused), a boating lake and tennis courts also contribute significantly to the character of the area. The tennis courts and a putting green were laid out in the early twentieth century directly opposite the Pier Pavilion on North Parade Gardens flanking the entrance to Pier Avenue partially for the benefit of visitors to the adjacent Grand Hotel.



*The Putting Green and Pier Pavilion.*

Trees within the public realm are hard to find except at the eastern end of Pier Avenue where they give some indication of the leafy garden suburb like vision for the area of its original pre-World War One developers. It is in this part of the character area that a number of substantial leafy private gardens can also be found which contribute strongly to the area's character, including those to Nos.51 & 53 Pier Avenue. Also of note are the large rear gardens overlooking the marshes belonging to the Corporation housing on North Road envisaged by the then Council as being for the production of healthy food.



*The large well stocked garden of an early Pier Avenue Villa, No.60.*

The most significant landscaped space within the character area has sadly been destroyed. The substantial formal gardens to the rear of the Grand Hotel were an important local attraction in the early years of the twentieth



century. Mid-twentieth century bungalows and villas now occupy their highly sensitive site. The landscaped forecourt area of the Grand Hotel partially still exists however on the form of the lawns fronting the villas between Field Stile and Hotson Roads on North Parade as does its low forecourt row. Over these lawns there are fine views from the pier towards the church tower and from Field Stile Road towards the Pier.

### Key Views

The most important views out of the character area are from the east and north. The Art Deco Pier Pavilion (Sea Front Character Area) terminates views along Pier Avenue whilst there are fine views towards the pier and out to sea from the northern part of North Parade and from the eastern end of Field Stile Road. From North Road there are fine views looking north over the open expanse of the town marshes. From the Pier itself are views towards the northern end of North Parade and No.72 North Road and south towards the site of the former Grand Hotel on North Parade.



*Rear of c.1905 houses on North Road from St Edmunds Road.*

Within the character area the most significant views are arguably those from the junction of Pier Avenue and Marlborough Road looking east towards the leafy eastern section of Pier Avenue. From the northern end of North Parade there are also notable views looking south towards the Edwardian villas within the Seaside Corporation Character Area.



*Centre Cliff, looking north*

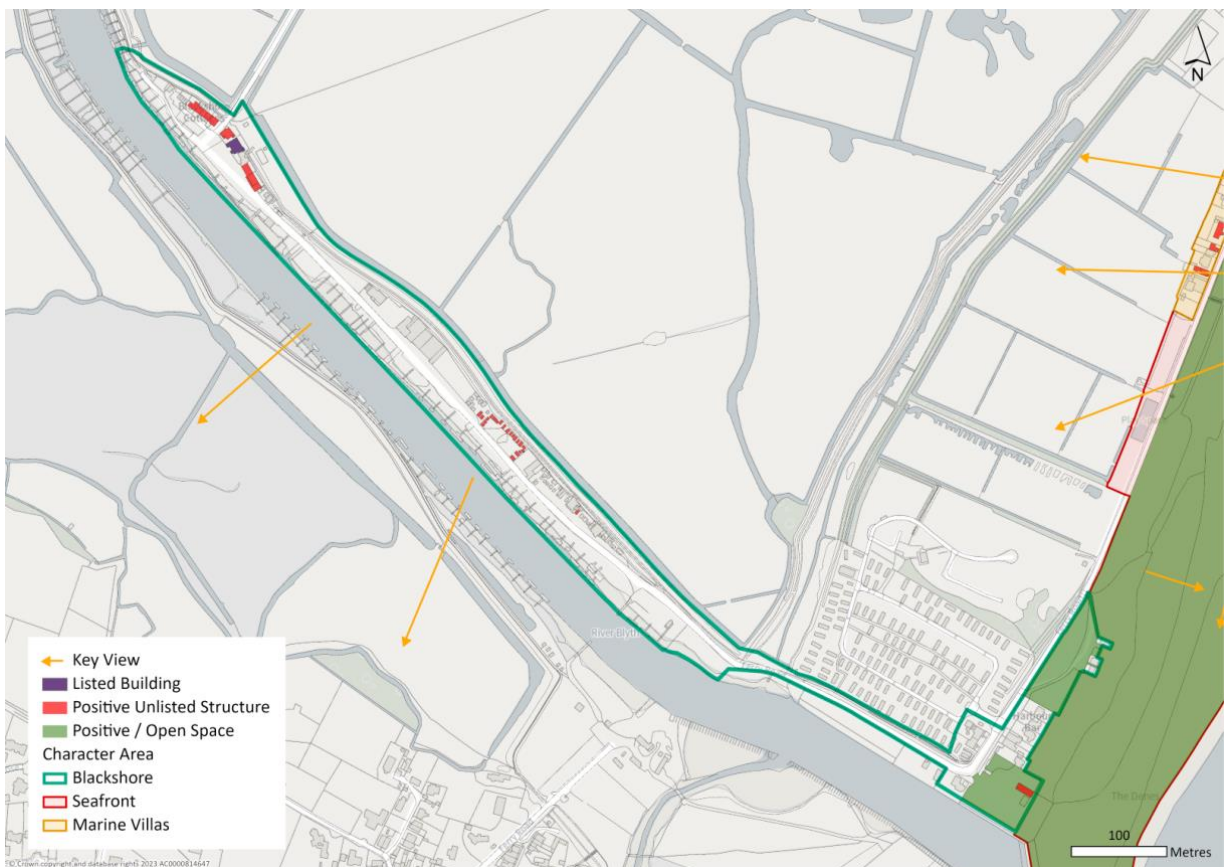
Further north, at the eastern end of South Green is Centre Cliff. Here a row of Grade II listed villas of 1829, terminated to the north end by the stuccoed exuberance of Nos 4 and 4 Centre Cliff, provide an attractive and largely unspoilt backdrop to the elevated coastal path.

Views along Ferry Road are restricted by the engineered dune bank to east, although glimpses between properties of the marshes to the west can be found.



The Harbour Inn, Blackshore Quay

## 7.7 Blackshore Character Area



The Blackshore Character Area was formerly part of a separate conservation area in its own right with Walberswick Quay. It is formed of a narrow strip of land on the north bank of the River Blythe and is linked to the town via Ferry Road at the eastern end and Carnsey Road at its western end. Its northern boundary follows the line of the levee and its southern runs along the centre of the river. At its far western end is 'The Studio', northwest of Blackshore Cottages which stand on the corner of Carnsey Road, it then runs along the north bank of the Blythe to Salt Creek, at the north-west boundary of the caravan park. (See plan of conservation area overleaf).

The harbour area is used for landing, processing, and retailing fish, for boat building, sales, and repairs, for sailing, canoeing, walking, and crabbing and as a tourist destination; served by restaurants and a public house. There are also five dwellings on Blackshore Quay.

### Character and Setting

The Harbour is situated next to the sea, on a remote channel in a marshland landscape. The entire character area is within the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Suffolk Heritage Coast designations and the beach is a County Wildlife Site. The Town Marshes immediately to the north are also a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The harbour mouth is comparatively long and wide and is enclosed by long, heavily engineered reinforced concrete piers and concrete walls up to the Walberswick Quay. The harbour buildings are informal and functional and follow a narrow strip on the north side of the river, with timber landing stages at the water's edge, an unmade access road, informal parking widest adjacent to the Harbour Inn. Then there are many small plain black tarred huts and sheds and some larger industrial structures ranged along the north-east side according to the available space.

Surrounded by marshland, its wider environment is watery and remote, with long

views across reed beds and water meadows. The landscape is made up of grazing marsh, fields of deep lush grass, enclosed by deep ditches, some filled with flag iris sedge or bushes of elder. Here are raised levees; earth ridges devoid of trees, marking the course of the slow meandering rivers. Between the marsh and the sea is a strip of sand dunes and a wide beach through which the harbour channel passes. Close by to south on a low hill and among trees lies the Walberswick Conservation Area, with close to the water a busy car park which is prominent in views from Blackshore. Close to the harbour mouth is a large caravan park.

There are harbours on each side of the River Blyth, where it runs into the sea. On the south side is Walberswick Harbour, once a thriving port trading in butter, cheese, bacon, corn, timber and fish. The quay has been in continuous use since then. Southwold's quay was at Blackshore, one mile upstream from Walberswick Quay, at the time when the River Blyth meandered in a long loop around the north, west and south of Southwold, reaching the sea at Dunwich. Southwold's haven was within a branch of the river to the north of the town originally known as Woodsend and latterly as Buss Creek. The herring fishing boats or 'Herring Buss', when not moored in the creek, were pulled up on the beach under the sand and shingle cliffs on which the town was built. The mouth of the old river was constantly moving and silting up with disastrous consequences for Dunwich, whose harbour was silted up and quays flooded by a storm in 1328 and, as a consequence of other storms, had by 1540 lost hundreds of houses and its marketplace to the sea. In or about 1489, Dunwich Harbour, which was the Haven Port and formed the only access out of the sea for Southwold and Walberswick, became unusable to the King's ships. The King granted a Royal Charter to Southwold and transferred the Haven Port status to Southwold Harbour. William Gödel, one of the first two Bailiffs of the town, left in his will of 1509, the commons, town marshes and the harbour to the Town of Southwold.

One hundred years later the way out to the sea from the River Blyth was shortened by the excavation of an artificial cut to the sea between Walberswick and Southwold. The mouth of this cut was frequently obstructed by sand deposited by a southerly sea drift, making the harbour difficult to enter and frequently impassable. Silting was blamed on the reduction in tidal flows caused by the enclosure of the coastal marshes which held the necessary volume of tidal water to scour the channel and the harbour mouth.

The harbour declined during the Dutch wars, with loss of trade and the interruption of the fisheries. The Corporation would also have

been concerned about the pirates operating out of Dunkirk and other channel ports, and it may have been for defensive reasons against these pirates that Royal Ordnance, in 1745 provided the Southwold Corporation with the six, 18 pound cannons now on Gun Hill.

In 1736 local landowners and merchants built a new quay on the north bank of the river at Reydon with warehouses, granaries, and a timber yard. The quay was four miles closer to Reydon and Wangford than the Blackshore Quay and attracted much of Southwold's commerce. However, a new lease of life came to Southwold's fishery and to the port in 1750



*The Alfred Corey Lifeboat Museum, Ferry Road*

with the Government's decision to make the town the centre for the Free British Fishery; an initiative set up to reduce Dutch dominance of the herring fisheries. Local merchants and landowners recognised the importance of a viable harbour for the exploitation of the opportunities for trade in coal and corn.

In 1741 The Corporation agreed to procure a new haven and stop up the old one, and to build piers to stabilize the harbour

permanently. The control of the harbour was passed to twenty-two commissioners under the 1746 Southwold Harbour Act with the powers to claim dues on cargoes and to raise money for repairs. They built timber piers, or breakwaters, at the harbour mouth to deflect the sand carrying waves and concentrate the internal scour in a narrow channel. The old existing pier to the north was strengthened and extended and a new south pier was erected. The piers were soon in trouble,

weakened by winds and sea worms and requiring further heavy expenditure for repair.

To raise funds a second Harbour Act of 1757 was passed which increased the harbour dues



*The Lifeboat Station, Ferry Road*

and laid down stringent financial controls on the commissioners. In 1757 the River Blyth Navigation Act (the first of several Harbour Acts consolidated in 1933) was granted Royal assent to make the river navigable from Halesworth Bridge into the Haven. The navigation was completed in 1761, allowing barges and wherries to carry grain, malt, and cheese from Halesworth for transshipment at Southwold (and the other coastal ports) and in return to bring back cheap coal now increasingly needed for the furnaces of developing rural industries.

In 1805 Blackshore Quay was lengthened and repaired at the entrance to Buss Creek, and in 1820 there were about twenty ship owners and merchant skippers at the port.

By 1829 the harbour had again deteriorated, the mouth was frequently blocked and with the shoaling in the main channel so severe that ships could only unload at a jetty close to the harbour mouth. By using a steam dredger, almost a mile of the river was cleared up to Blackshore Quay and the bar at the harbour mouth washed away by the force of water now able to come down. The dredged channel enabled sea going ships to proceed to Blackshore and Reydon Quay. Keeping the harbour clear was a constant battle; for example, the sand bar twice blocked the harbour in 1839 despite the efforts of the

steam dredger. Trading out of Halesworth was again adversely affected by the sand bar and eventually came to an end with the opening of the East Suffolk Railway in 1859.

The Navigation was wound up in the 1880s, the celebrated photographer Peter Henry Emerson describing Blackshore Quay c.1885 as 'a few cottages clustering round a small tavern 'The Fishing Buss' (now Harbour Inn) ...a cow house, a quay in places decayed, a couple of condemned smack's hulls lying alongside The Quay or drawn up on the land, and occasionally a weather-worn 'billy boy' (fishing boat) moored on the quay.'

Between 1820 and 1870 a class of twenty-to-twenty-five-ton fishing boats with a crew of eight were operating out of Lowestoft. They caught North Sea and 'home' herring and summer mackerel. Many of these boats were built and owned by Southwold businesses. Those built in Southwold were built north of Might's Bridge on the shore of Buss Creek, or on the beach near California Cottage and at Blackshore.

By the end of the 19th-century herring fishing had become very productive with upwards of 1,000 Scottish drifters coming south to Lowestoft, which became very congested. Southwold Harbour, which had once again fallen into dereliction, was proposed as a port for the overflow traffic.



*Gentrification of the Blackshore huts is gathering pace, this photograph was taken early in 2021 that below of the same hut in late summer of the same year.*



For the implementation of the scheme the port commissioners vested the harbour in the Corporation. They in 1906 sold it to Anthony Fasey & Sons of Leytonstone, a public works contractor who built a new harbour with longer timber-piled pier heads, concrete harbour walls and, on the Southwold side of the river, gutting stations, pickling plots and market offices. Fasey and Sons had previously worked on the construction of Southwold's Pier. In 1908 fishing and curing began with some 300 boats visiting the harbour. Much of the catch was exported to Germany, the fish arriving by drifter and leaving by sea for Germany in barrels. The herring trade with



*Houses on Godyll Road from the levee running along the north side of Harbour Road*

Germany was ended by the outbreak of the First World War.

In 1932 the Corporation bought back the harbour and in 1939 it reconstructed its entrance in reinforced concrete. The northern pier was designed to bend east-north-east forming a bell-shaped entrance mouth. A closed pile concrete wall was also built on the southern side through to a new outlet at Dunwich Creek. This new entrance was not a success, tending to trap the seas which in moderate winds travelled up the harbour in an increasing velocity resulting in structural damage. A 90 ft gap was therefore made in the

south pier to eliminate accelerating wave motion. The port continued to be used by local fishermen and for the import of coal, 3,000 tons being landed from 20 vessels in 1932.

From 1885 a pontoon ferry operated manually on chains crossed the river at a point midway between Blackshore and the river mouth. In 1899 it was replaced by a steam ferry. The ferry ceased work in 1942, reverting to a rowing boat in the summer months, the means employed for the preceding 700 years.

Recent years have seen the rapid growth of recreational sailing and boat yard services and

increases in the numbers of visitors, cars and of black weatherboarded huts.

### Key Views

From most locations on the footpath on the north side of the harbour, there are fine views of Southwold, with two church towers, a lighthouse and two water towers spread across a low hill to north. From the footpath north of the Harbour Inn, are fine views of the Reydon Marshes and of Tinker's Marshes. There are also views up and down the coast from the harbour mouth, where in the winter months the observer can experience isolation and solitude. There are footpaths along both banks of the harbour which continue along the river beyond Blackshore and there are branches to north across the common to Nursemaids

Green and two more along both banks of Buss Creek.



*An early twentieth century view of the Ferry which ran from 1885 to 1942, taken from Southwold Harbour*



*Wide open views can be gained towards Southwold from Blackshore*

Around the character area are the wide-open spaces of the coastal marshes. There are long views over the sea to the east, over the Town Marshes towards Southwold to the north and the Reydon Marshes to the northwest.

To the south the space is enclosed, and views obscured by the gently rising ground close to Walberswick Quay and the many houses and cottages, partially hidden within the trees beyond. Much of the foreground is a sandy gravelled car park, though there is visual interest in the groups of black timber huts

mostly in small groups near the edge of the quay.

There are good views from the quay at Walberswick across the river towards Blackshore and Southwold, and views of the jetties and their moored craft on the harbour

There are fine views from serial locations along the access road looking north to Southwold and its churches and lighthouse; views over the Reydon Marshes and Tinker's Marshes with the drainage wind pump tower and, importantly, views up and down the river with the clustered jetties, boat masts and moored craft. Looking south across the Harbour from serial locations, are the buildings of Walberswick Quay, the village of Walberswick and the tower of the parish church seen above the trees.

### Character

At its eastern end just north of the Alfred Corey Lifeboat Museum are two small clusters of dwellings which are protected by the levee running along the eastern side of Ferry Road. These were formerly part of a much larger group of dwellings which largely disappeared in the 1950s.

The northern group sit well back from the road on an unmade track and consist of a cluster of three weatherboarded late twentieth century bungalows.



*Nos.34-38 (even) Ferry Road*

The southern cluster are closer to Ferry Road, are more substantial, and sit within large lawned gardens. No.34 is a rendered and

The long vistas reinforce the perception of remoteness, and informal grass areas; the sand and gravel parking areas and roadways; the muddy streams: and the vernacular timber buildings enhance the sense of escape from the town.

painted interwar period bungalow with a Welsh slate roof, casement windows and an open sided wooden porch. Its external joinery appears to have been largely replaced.

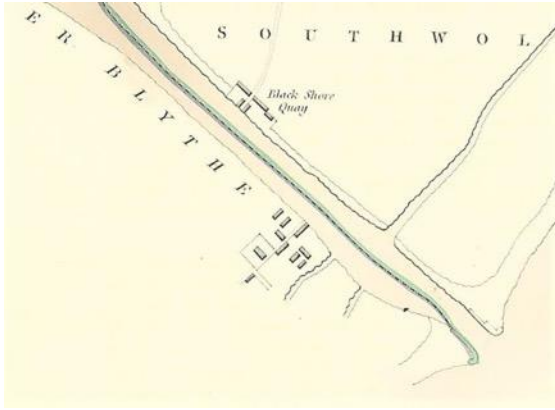


*The eastern side of Ferry Road c.1935*

Just to its south are two distinctive gabled late 1930s houses of one and a half storeys beneath green pan tiled roofs and with rendered walls. They are linked on the seaward side by a screen containing a pair of arched doorways into the gardens and capped by a green pan tiled hood. Despite largescale late twentieth century alterations the quality of the original design of Nos. 36 & 38 (Harbour Lights) is still evident.

Only one of the structures (that now known as Harbour Cottage No.40 and Harbour House. No.40A) is shown on the 1925 Ordnance Survey map. Built of pebble dashed red brick and of one and a half storeys, a lone terracotta finial on its southwestern corner is now the only real reminder that it was once a house of considerable character. It was remodelled c.1980. No.42 is a small weatherboarded bungalow set behind tall painted wooden fencing.





*Detail of 1839 Parliamentary Boundaries Commission Map showing Black Shore*

The nineteenth century harbour is shown on Walker's Map of 1840 with its timber pier on

the south side of the harbour mouth and the quay at Blackshore where the road across The Common, known locally as Carnsey Road, meets the harbour road.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1904 shows it little changed, with wide muddy banks with mooring posts. Contemporary postcards also illustrate boats dragged up on the harbour shore and the area of hard standing retained by a timber revetment that formed the quay. After the major 1906 reconstruction, there were two piers 250ft long and the quay walls were made of concrete.



*Nestling against the levee, the older huts contribute strongly to the area's character*

The octagonal herring processing house, known locally as the 'Kipperdrome' of c.1907, stood at the end of Ferry Road. Here now is a large windswept gravel covered car park and

public toilets, visual interest being provided by the remarkable Alfred Corry Lifeboat Museum building of 1923, moved here from Cromer in 1998 and extended c.2017. This timber and steel framed structure with painted pine stud

work walls and a distinctive curved zinc roof was amongst the first of its kind to house motor powered craft to be constructed in England.

At the edge of the car park terminating views looking south on Ferry Road is the RNLI lifeboat station. This 1993 weatherboarded structure has a first-floor operations room overlooking the harbour, crew facilities, and fuel stores. Its compound is surrounded by high security railings and contains storage buildings.

Further west where the camp site is now was a fish market and fish processing factory, which blew down in the early 1920's.



*The Herring Processing Building known as the 'Kipperdrome', Ferry Road (demolished).*

From here the road changes direction and heads west. To the south is the river with clusters of timber jetties, along the water's edge. Running parallel with the harbour edge, is an unmade road surfaced of gravel. North are the black stained timber huts and industrial buildings, tightly packed together between the roadway and the levee that follows the edge of the marsh. The road is narrow and linear for most of its length, broadening out as it approaches Blackshore Quay and the sailing club and Harbour Inn.



*This former railway carriage is the only one to survive from a group of former carriages*

The entire harbour area is within Flood Zone 3b, the functional flood plain. The National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance restricts development in these locations to only water compatible development and essential infrastructure. The existing buildings (except the Harbour Master's office and 'Voyager Boat Trips') are confined to the 'higher ground' on the space between the access road and the levee of the drain running northwest to south-east along the length of the conservation area.

Beyond the caravan park and the mouth of Salt Creek the road is unmade, surfaced with sand and gravel, and retained by reused hardwood beams and piles, their natural colour bleached by the salt air. This road is classified as a restricted byway. It is constantly being damaged by flooding and the relentlessly increasing level of commercial and visitor traffic. The state of the roadway however acts

as a break on development and adds to the area's character.



*Seating area outside Fish Restaurant*

The riverbanks and road verges are still occasionally grass covered and in one location at least, close to the boatyard buildings, the riverbank sustains samphire. Peter Henry Emerson's photographs taken in the 1880s show sheep grazing on the bank of the Blyth just east of the Harbour Inn.



*Blackshore Quay from Walberswick*

At Blackshore Quay the road tapers out into a wide space used for visitor parking. Here also the highway leaves the harbour, heading north towards The Common on a causeway above the marsh, and from where there are fine views in all directions, including of Southwold, its water towers, church towers and lighthouse. There are timber landing stages along the shelving water's edge for the whole of the character area. The stages are of indeterminate age and ad hoc design. Some consist of a floating jetty deck running parallel to the water's edge and connected to dry land by a walkway. The deck is stabilised by restraint piles and the walkway is supported by vertical timber piles and has a hinged section over the last five to ten metres.

With others, for example the jetty along the length of the Blackshore Quay, the plan is roughly in the form of a 'T'. with the jetty and walkway fixed above high water by parallel lines of timber piles. Traditionally they were built from untreated hardwood, which looks black when wet and a silvery brown when dry.

There are also slipways, lined by heavy hardwood piles set in lines at right angles to the water's edge. Here the hardwood piles are doubled on one side to carry a deck. The landing stages have a visual attraction of their own, due to their weathered appearance, uniform colour, simple functional construction, and visual complexity. The visual effect of the stages and jetties is further enhanced by moored yachts and fishing boats.

There is a great deal of enjoyment to be had, for those with time, to admire the variety of huts, sheds, and buildings on the harbour and to watch the activities associated with them. These structures can be roughly categorised according to location; first the conventional brick and clay tile houses set in commodious gardens at Blackshore at the character area's western end. Then further south-east, the boat builders' large works buildings, located where there is a bulge in the harbour strip to accommodate them. Then the many little black huts found in two groups between the boat builders and a point north of the ferry jetty. The northernmost of this group are arranged attractively in an open square, facing the harbour, appearing to be a lower density, and possessing clearer legibility. The south-eastern group of sheds is arranged in two parallel lines aligned with the marsh levee; longer buildings span both rows and the gables face the harbour road.

Within this group towards the eastern end are the Sole Bay Fish Company buildings and the Christina Cara/ 'Mrs T' Buildings. The Sole Bay Fish Company buildings are timber-framed with black weatherboard walls and shallow pitch-black painted sheet roofs. It's outdoor seating area is partially surrounded by stained mast like wooden poles from which coloured lights hang. The Mrs T building is comprised of two units, arranged in a double pile with double gables facing the river. It also has a

timber-framed structure with black weatherboard walls and shallow pitched sheet roofs. It also has a large outdoor seating area to its frontage.

To the west of these are a good group of smaller and much older huts including one constructed from an early railway carriage. These harbour huts are an attractive group of buildings that contribute positively to the character of the Conservation Area for both historic and aesthetic reasons:

- Each reflects the character of the other huts and sheds in the conservation area.
- Collectively they are a relic of the fishing industry which flourished here; they reflect traditional local functional character.
- the median sized huts, with steep pitched roofs, traditional painted timber joinery and black stained weatherboard are visually attractive, particularly in groups.



*Part of Justin Ladd's Boat Building sheds*

The huts are largely used to store consumables and equipment by the fishermen and leisure sailors of the harbour. In plan, they are small, ranging in size between a domestic garage and a garden shed. The older huts are simple vernacular structures having steep pitched roofs of corrugated cement sheet or of mineral felt. The gables have timber barge boards with timber capping. The timber-framed walls are clad in weatherboard laid horizontally or boards with capping strips laid vertically. The joinery of doors and windows is often painted a cheerful gloss colour, and the roofs and walls are painted with black stain or paint. There is a great variety in the design of the huts. A few

are in poor condition, requiring fresh paint or structural repairs. The air of clutter and decay in this instance is part of the character of the area that comes with a working harbour and boatyard. They are also a historic testament to Southwold's fishing heritage. Sadly, in recent years a small number of the old huts have been replaced with more assertively designed structures.



*Former Boat Buildings Huts from the levee*

Justin Ladd's corrugated iron clad, and roofed boat sheds are located further southeast among the huts and contributes a focal point to their layout. The two attached buildings have small lean-tos on each side and its roof and walls are clad in rusting corrugated iron.



*The assertively designed Novoboats Building a recent addition to the Blackshore huts.*



*Blackshore Cottages from the southwest*

The Harbour Marine Services buildings further to the west are amongst the largest on the quayside and were constructed in the late twentieth century. Surrounded by dry birthed vessels, these large functional

weatherboarded portal framed structures cover around 10,000 square feet and incorporate a substantial chandlery. The large, often open doors within the frontage allow visitors glimpses of the activity within. Beyond

them, on the riverbank is the single storey gabled and weatherboarded harbour master's offices which dates from the late twentieth century.

To its west is the recently constructed wooden Novoboats Building of two storeys with large areas of glazing to its gabled ends and a first-floor balcony, a somewhat brash intruder amidst the fishing sheds.

Finally, at Blackshore Quay built against the river side of the levee, is a linear group of more substantial brick structures, the most easterly of which is the 1960s flat roofed Sailing Club building. The upper storey is box like, clad in black weatherboard and carried on brick columns with a long gallery open to the air on the river side.



*The Sailing Club Building, Blackshore Quay*

Beyond to the west, The Harbour Inn is a deceptively large structure, formed through the amalgamation of two distinct historic buildings. The original inn of c.1840 is of painted brick and has a steep pitched hipped red pan tile roof. To the rear, facing the levee is a slightly later range of equal size. It claims to be the oldest public house within the borough boundary, extant in the Reign of Henry VIII. It was known as 'The Fishing Buss' and in 1801, as 'The Ship Inn'. It was purchased by Adnams c.1898.



*Blackshore Corner*

The Harbour Inn's popularity led to its extension c.1997, when a formerly detached early nineteenth-century two storey brick granary was converted to restaurant accommodation and linked to the inn by a single storey timber corridor with a glazed frontage and pan tiled roof. Standing in front of the pub is an eighteenth-century canon and to its rear is a garden consisting of lawns from which there are fine views towards the town.

The house known as 'Blackshore Corner' stands on the corner with Carnsey Road, just west of the Harbour Inn. This Dutch inspired painted brick house was originally designed in 1972 by the architect George Marsh (1921-1998) who was best known for his high-rise developments including London's Centre Point. It was not in fact completed until 2000 after the architect's death. The house's Blackshore façade, western and rear elevations are all highly prominent. The house replaces a taller and much altered early nineteenth century brick warehouse building.

Blackshore Cottages are a terrace of five cottages which stand aligned with the levee north-west of Blackshore Corner on the western side of Carnsey Road. The terrace is built of painted red brick with a red pan tiled roof. The easternmost of the five has been extended to the east with a two storey one window shallow pitched roofed extension which sadly partially disguises the impressive mass of the terrace's original blind wall to Carnsey Road. The pair of cottages to left were probably built in the late eighteenth-century

and the right-hand trio possibly in the mid-nineteenth, encroaching onto the Blackshore Quay. Intriguingly however, the notes published by Peter Henry Emmerson to accompany his c.1885-6 photos of Blackshore refer to witnessing the construction of cottages at Blackshore Quay on his last trip there, so their construction date may therefore be far later than their style suggests. Their attractive gardens replaced a group of substantial waterfront weatherboarded sheds visible in nineteenth century photographs. These sheds are still shown on the 1925 Ordnance Survey map but must have been removed soon afterwards. The rear elevations rest on the crest of the levee and are prominent in views from the footpath to its north.



*Rear elevation of Blackshore Cottages from the footpath*

Beyond the terrace is a single storey red brick structure with a red pan tiled roof, which is probably of mid-nineteenth century origins. It has been adapted to form garages.



*'The Studio', the western most structure within the character area.*

Beyond facing west is an early twenty first century prefabricated cabin which faces west towards the curve of the Blythe and the marshes.

## SOUTHWOLD CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

### Introduction

Section 71 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990, sets out that local planning authorities have a duty to *'formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement'* of conservation areas. Good practice is to use appraisals to identify the heritage asset's significance.

Section 72 (1) of The Act sets out that *'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.'* The appraisal can be used to develop a management plan that is specific to the area's needs and responds to identified threats and opportunities, with targeted recommendations.

Whilst the appraisal considers the character and appearance of an area, the management plan will be used to set out how best to preserve or enhance that character.

Historic England<sup>8</sup> recommends that management plans provide a *'positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.'* This should lead to local planning policies that identify *'neglect or other threats and how should these be addressed.'*<sup>9</sup>

This management plan, and associated character appraisal, comprises part of the Local Plan and has the status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Opportunities for public benefit should be identified through the management plan.

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<sup>8</sup> Historic England 2019 *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Second edition, Historic England Advice Note 1*, Swindon. Historic England.

Benefits could include enhancements to the public realm, open spaces or setting of either the Conservation Area or individual built heritage assets, albeit with regards to the Article 4 Direction that covers the Conservation Area.

Generally, the council will pursue:

- preservation or enhancement of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- preservation or enhancement of the setting of the Conservation Area, designated heritage assets and structures that make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area (see *'Southwold Conservation Area Appraisal: Structures Which Make a Positive Contribution to the Conservation Area'*);
- protect or enhance landmarks, views and vistas within and without the Conservation Area;
- safeguard the Conservation Area's historic urban form and public and private open spaces that positively contribute to the character and significance of the Conservation Area; and
- promote high quality design that responds positively to the existing character of the Conservation Area and character area more locally where considering new development.

### Overview of Change

Since the last Conservation Area appraisal and boundary review, completed 2007 and published 2008, the designation has not

<sup>9</sup> Historic England 2019 *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Second edition, Historic England Advice Note 1*, Swindon. Historic England.



suffered from any pronounced detrimental change or substantial harm.

The town has a buoyant local economy and nationally listed buildings are typically in positive use and good condition. Similarly, structures that positively contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area are typically in optimum use and a good state of repair.

Notwithstanding the Conservation Area's positive baseline condition, with demand, investment and improvement there are cumulative effects. Where these cumulative effects are negative they can erode character and special interest harming the significance of the Conservation Area. These pressures require management to enhance or preserve the asset's special interest. Pressures include changing travel and retail patterns, edge of settlement development in the designation's setting, increased demand for tourist infrastructure and interventions to manage coastal erosion and climate change.

### Summary of Baseline Condition

Southwold's historic character is varied, multi-phase and one of incremental change; planned development is largely confined to the northerly areas of the town.

Whilst 20th and 21st century structures have, in some circumstances, had a neutral or occasionally adverse effect on the town's special interest there has generally been little physical change since the Second World War, with the Tibbys Triangle development being the largest in recent years. Change is not generally of a scale that's detrimental to the significance of the heritage asset as a whole

and would not challenge the designation's validity.

The landscape character assessment<sup>10</sup> *'Touching the Tide'*, 2012, considers some of the land use trends in the town, some incrementally changing the character of the Conservation Area. Changes include the evolving use of Southwold Harbour for retail and leisure operations, increasing demand for tourist infrastructure and the impact of second homes. In recent years there has been greater pressure on the road network, cited as an issue that needs positive management in public consultations for the [Southwold Neighbourhood Plan](#), 2020-2039<sup>11</sup>. Whilst accessibility is partly linked to the town's prosperity, car use gives rise to some of the poorest quality environments in the town as well as having a generally detrimental effect on the overall character and usability of the town.

The quality of the town's built heritage assets and urban form remains high. Southwold's buildings, and their layout, comprise an ensemble of variety, charm and historic interest with few rivals; it has been described as *'one of the happiest and most picturesque seaside towns in England'*<sup>12</sup>.

The variety of building typologies, uses, and architectural elements makes the Conservation Area visually stimulating; this diverse aesthetic is one of the town's defining special characteristics. Many of the Conservation Area's structures have aesthetic, historical and evidential value that connect the population, whether visiting or resident, to the town's past industries and commercial activity. These heritage values are further revealed by the settlement's development pattern and landscape setting.

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<sup>10</sup> Alison Farmer Associates, *Touching the Tide Landscape Character Assessment Final Report*, September 2012

<sup>11</sup> Southwold Town Council, *Southwold Neighbourhood Plan, 2020-2039*, March 2021

<sup>12</sup> Pevsner, N (1981), 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, revised by Radcliffe, *'The Buildings England, Suffolk'*, E, Penguin Books Ltd. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England



*The town has a picturesque blend of architectural diversity in a high quality seascape and landscape setting.*

## Managing Change

There are various tools available to promote the positive management of Conservation Areas that compliment appraisals and management plans; those relevant to the Southwold Conservation Area are explained in brief below.

Demolition or works to buildings and structures on The National Heritage List for England (NHLE), whether inside the Conservation Area or not, require an application for listed building consent from ESC, where proposed works may affect the structure's character or appearance.

Where an Article 4(j) Direction is imposed, as at Southold, permitted development rights are withdrawn and planning permission is required for any material change to any part of a structure facing a public thoroughfare (defined

as a highway, waterway, or open space). This includes works replacing windows; painting previously unpainted buildings or stripping paint from them; erection, alteration, or demolition of part or all a wall, fence, gate or other enclosure or the construction of a porch. Also covered by the Direction is the enlargement, improvement, or other alteration of a dwelling; any alteration to its roof; the provision of a building, enclosure, swimming pool or hard surface within the grounds or 'curtilage'. Elevations not visible from a public place (other than roof or chimneys) are not affected and these will enjoy the normal 'permitted development' rights, however, will be subject to usual planning and listed building controls.

Buildings that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area's designation should be identified, where they meet the Council's adopted selection criteria (set out in Appendix 1 of ESC's, '[Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document](#)'). Their contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area merits consideration in accordance with Paragraph 192 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) (July 2021), which notes the importance of maintaining an evidence base on the historic environment.

The (NPPF) and Local Plan, supported by the '[Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document](#)', include dedicated policies for managing change in the historic environment, that should be read in conjunction with this appraisal and management plan.

The Use Class Order can be used to protect positive uses and, in turn, building fabric associated with those uses.

The (ESC)- Waveney Local Plan, 2019<sup>13</sup> includes housing allocations. Whilst the Plan recognises the demand for new housing locally there are no allocations within either the Conservation Area or settlement boundary of

<sup>13</sup> East Suffolk Council - *Waveney Local Plan*, 2019

Southwold. New housing allocations are on land north-west of Reydon.

At the time of assessment, there are no development briefs for sites in the Conservation Area or Southwold settlement boundary.

Southwold Town Council has completed their Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version November 2021), using it to identify the challenges facing Southwold and develop policies that supplement the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan reinforces the ESC's Local Plan policy of 'high quality design which meets local distinctiveness' (Policy WLP 8.29 – design), referencing the National Design Guide (NDG) and the Southwold Character Area Appraisal (SCAA) in its design policy (Policy SWD6 – Design).

The SCAA sets out the sensitivities and susceptibilities of each character area. Development, and development applications for change, should demonstrate how they respond positively to those sensitivities and susceptibilities. The Plan also notes the reciprocal relationship between the settlement and its landscape setting.

The NPPF recommends using local design guides to help achieve high quality design. Where there is no local design guide in place the National Design Guide provides high-level guidance.

The list of structures that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, included with the Southwold Conservation Area appraisal, provides a non-exhaustive list of features that contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area. This list can be used to identify and manage change to the assets themselves, as well as their setting. Similarly, the Conservation Area Appraisal can be used to manage other positive NDHAs, such as key open spaces and elements that give them special interest, such as views.

There are no known structures that would benefit from being 'scheduled', however, some unlisted structures, such as historic walls and relict WWI and WWII structures, may be better protected by being nationally listed independently.

## Setting

The designation's setting is complex and varied, including, Southwold Harbour, open agricultural land, coastal landscape and water management features, neighbouring settlements and the seascape to the east.

A Conservation Area boundary encloses an area of special historic interest, however, changes beyond that boundary can have an effect on its character and significance. The setting of the Conservation Area, and the contribution it makes to the significance of the Conservation Area, should be acknowledged, understood and appraised when considering proposals for change.

Annex 2 of the NPPF describes the setting of a heritage asset as:

***'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'***

The Historic England Good Practice Advice Note on the Setting of Heritage Assets (2017) echoes that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which it is experienced and 'Where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way) then the proposed development can be said to affect the setting of that asset'. The same document provides a non-exhaustive check-list of positive setting attributes that may contribute to the significance of a heritage asset. The guide notes that understanding

setting is not exclusively an appreciation of views and intervisibility, though views will likely be an integral aspect of a conservation area's setting.

Southwold's setting makes a substantial contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area. The designation does not cover the whole town and the setting is therefore part urban, suburban, urban hinterland and open landscape. The setting of the Conservation Area will therefore be different for each character area.

The landscape's aesthetic qualities and values are recognised in its designation as the 'Suffolk Coasts & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' and 'Suffolk Heritage Coast', which abut the settlement edge and promote the aesthetic qualities and values as part of the area's significance; the management plans for these designations provide guidance on the landscape's qualities.

Setting is more varied than aesthetic value alone and contribution to significance not uniform; Historic England's GPA3 sets out that:

*'the entirety of very extensive settings may not contribute equally to the significance of a heritage asset, if at all.' ... 'Careful analysis is therefore required to assess whether one heritage asset at a considerable distance from another, though intervisible with it – a church spire, for instance – is a major component of the setting, rather than just an incidental element within the wider landscape.'*

The definition of setting is further defined in paragraph 16 of GPA 3:

*'setting is different from general amenity. Views out from heritage assets that neither contribute to significance nor allow appreciation of significance are a matter of amenity rather than of setting.'*

Setting comprises a sum of parts and the relationship between those parts, including visual and material relationships and the experience between people and place; setting does not need to be visible to be significant and may be designed or coincidental. Development in the setting of a heritage asset is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

The following positive qualities and attributes of Southwold's setting have been identified in the appraisal:

- textured open landscape and seascapes with wide, open, skies enhanced by limited landform variation
- long distance vistas, '*punctuated by church towers, water towers, mills and the masts of sailboats*'.
- panoramic views to and from the landscape, marshes and seascape;
- '*The lighthouse, church and water tower are key landmarks visible on the horizon.*'<sup>14</sup>;
- absence of substantial built development beyond the settlement boundary;
- natural elements: seascape, with low dunes and cliffs and a coastal landscape, influenced by human activity, including wooded areas that provide the backdrop on the rising farmland;
- a strong sense of tranquillity and remoteness from a largely unsettled landscape;
- distinct settlement edges not, typically, filtered in views by vegetation;
- the capacity to circumnavigate the town and view the town's development profile from different vantage points;
- intervisibility and strong contextual relationships between settlements;
- tension between the land and water, resulting in landscapes with complex

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<sup>14</sup> The East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, 2019

natural and human land management processes;

- evidence of historic and contemporary social and economic activity, linked to the town's vitality; and
- maritime industry and harbour, with some vertical elements.

Whilst some of these qualities are noted in the Local Plan (Policy WLP 8.35), where change is proposed the contribution qualities make to the significance of the Conservation Area should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The contribution could be contextual, cultural, intellectual, spatial or functional, or include the relationship of one heritage asset to another of the same period or function, designer or architect and could apply irrespective of distance. The setting's contribution to significance can evolve over time and understanding its history could, therefore, help determine the capacity for change. Alterations in the heritage asset's setting may have already enhanced significance; equally, the setting may be enhanced by the removal of inappropriate past change. The contribution of setting to significance does not depend on public access or visual links to it. Where the significance of an asset has been compromised in the past by unsympathetic development, affecting its setting, consideration should be given to whether additional change will further detract from, or can enhance, the asset.

The *'Great Yarmouth and Waveney Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity Study'* considers the landscape value and capacity of the landscape that falls within the Conservation Area's wider setting and offers a tool for understanding the setting's capacity for change. The landscape to the north, west and south of the Conservation Area is considered to be of *'Very High'* landscape value and so, when considered alongside the landscape setting's *'sensitivity'*, is rated as having a *'low'*

capacity for development. The study goes on to note that although the landscape north of Easton Marshes is less historic than the landscape north-west of Reydon, lowering its score for *'strength of place'* it retains historic landscape features such as field boundaries, which reduces some intervisibility across the landscape.

The landscape to the west and south of Southwold is considered to be of the same value and capacity for change as that to the north. Although not an ancient landscape, being more modern around the common, the coastal vegetation adds to the local distinctiveness of the landscape whilst still affording long views to Walberswick, Blythburgh and Henham.

Having a *'low capacity'* for change in the landscape is defined as places where *'large or medium-scale development is likely to erode the positive key features and characteristics of the landscape'* but that there might be *'potential to accommodate some small-scale development in specific locations within the landscape...subject to appropriate siting, design and landscape mitigation'*.<sup>15</sup>

## Enhancing Setting

Where the contribution made by setting to the significance of the Conservation Area is diminished by badly designed or insensitively located development it can compromise the economic viability of the heritage asset. Car parking, for example, while increasing the public's capacity to visit may boost economic activity, it may equally erode the Conservation Area's special interest.

Energy generation is an activity that could have a detrimental effect on the setting of the Conservation Area. Solar panels or wind turbines might interfere with the visibility or

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<sup>15</sup> Chris Blandford Associates, *'Great Yarmouth and Waveney Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity Study'*, December 2016

inter-visibility of heritage assets or alter the open character of the Conservation Area's setting; similarly, energy plants can be notable additions in the landscape. The impact of such large infrastructure might have an impact beyond the asset's immediate setting, affecting the open character and wider setting of the Heritage Coast and Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.

Local Plan policy WLP 8.35 sets out that the strategic objective is to conserve and enhance the *'wild and coastal character which is intrinsic to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB'* and includes *'Subtle ridge lines which rise to the edge of the marshes'*; enhancement opportunities should be pursued with regard to this objective. The Local Plan also sets out that the *'traditional low key character of Southwold should be considered along with the understated resort development...[and] 'Potential work to coastal defences should respect local character'*.

There is potential to enhance the immediate and wider setting of the Conservation Area, in relation to all character areas.

At the settlement edge, the expansion of car parking has had a detrimental effect on the setting of parts of the Conservation Area, including on York Road and Godyll Road. Fringe development has also affected the significance of the Conservation Area, the Southwold Golf Club for example (though this has its own significance as a designed landscape). Both uses, and others like them, introduce modern materials, infrastructure and land management processes that juxtapose with the earlier landscape. In some cases they impact negatively on views in and out of the town.

To the south of the Conservation Area, the Southwold Caravan Park has had an adverse effect on the setting of Blackshore, as well as the neighbouring Walberswick Conservation Area, in views from the harbour and beach.

Bridge Road, Reydon, is now clearly visible in views north from North Road and the Town Farm Marshes and diminishes the sense of separation and openness. New housing allocations are located to the north-west of Reydon. Consequently, there is no imminent threat to the Conservation Area's setting from mass housing, however, potential harm remains from small-scale, cumulative, change.

Mights Bridge is first recorded in 1227, providing access to the town by road via the drawbridge by the same name. The bridge today provides the same clearly defined 'gateway' into the town, and development that further diminishes the sense of 'entering' the settlement from the landscape on this historic route should be resisted. Careful consideration should therefore be given to how the car park near Mights Bridge is integrated with the landscape and setting of the Conservation Area.

'Policy WLP8.35—Landscape Character' of the Local Plan sets out that:

*'proposals for development should be informed by, and be sympathetic to, the distinctive character areas, strategic objectives and considerations identified in the Waveney District Landscape Character Assessment (2008), the Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity Study (2016) ... and the most current Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate their location, scale, form, design and materials will protect and where possible enhance:*

- *The special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area*
- *The visual and historical relationship between settlements and their landscape settings;*

- *The pattern of distinctive landscape elements such as watercourses, commons, woodland trees (especially hedgerow trees) and field boundaries, and their function as ecological corridors;*
- *Visually sensitive skylines, seascapes and significant views towards key landscapes and cultural features;*
- *The distinctive landscapes of the Suffolk Heritage Coast;*
- *The natural beauty and special qualities of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and*

*Proposals should include measures that enable a scheme to be well integrated into the landscape.*

*Development will not be permitted where it will have a significant adverse impact on:*

- *The landscape and scenic beauty of the protected landscapes and the settings of the designated areas of the Broads or the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; or*
- *Locally sensitive and valued landscapes including Rural River Valleys and Tributary Valley Farmland character areas.*

*Proposals for development should protect and enhance the tranquillity and dark skies of both the Waveney District and Broads Authority areas'*

## Views and Vistas

Historic England's document GPA 3 'Setting of Heritage Assets' sets out that in considering

the contribution setting makes to the significance of heritage assets there will typically be due consideration of views and the ability to visually appreciate that significance. Views can, however, be valued for reasons other than their contribution to heritage significance and the difference should be understood where change is proposed. Guidance on the assessment and management of views for their own value is available in 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', 3rd edition, published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (in partnership with Historic England).

GPA3 sets out that views are 'a purely visual impression of an asset or place which can be static or dynamic, long, short or of lateral spread, and include a variety of views of, from, across, or including that asset.' It goes on to set out that a view that contributes to an asset's significance could be:

- *'those where the composition within the view was a fundamental aspect of the design or function of the heritage asset;*
- *those where town- or village-scape reveals views with unplanned or unintended beauty;*
- *those with historical associations, including viewing points and the topography of battlefields;*
- *those with cultural associations, including landscapes known historically for their picturesque and landscape beauty, those which became subjects for paintings of the English landscape tradition, and those views which have otherwise become historically cherished and protected;*
- *those where relationships between the asset and other heritage assets or natural features or phenomena such as solar or lunar events are particularly relevant*
- *Assets, whether contemporaneous or otherwise, which were intended to be seen from one another for aesthetic,*

*functional, ceremonial or religious reasons include:*

- *military and defensive sites;*
- *telegraphs or beacons;*
- *prehistoric funerary and ceremonial sites; and*
- *borrowed landmarks beyond the park boundary'*

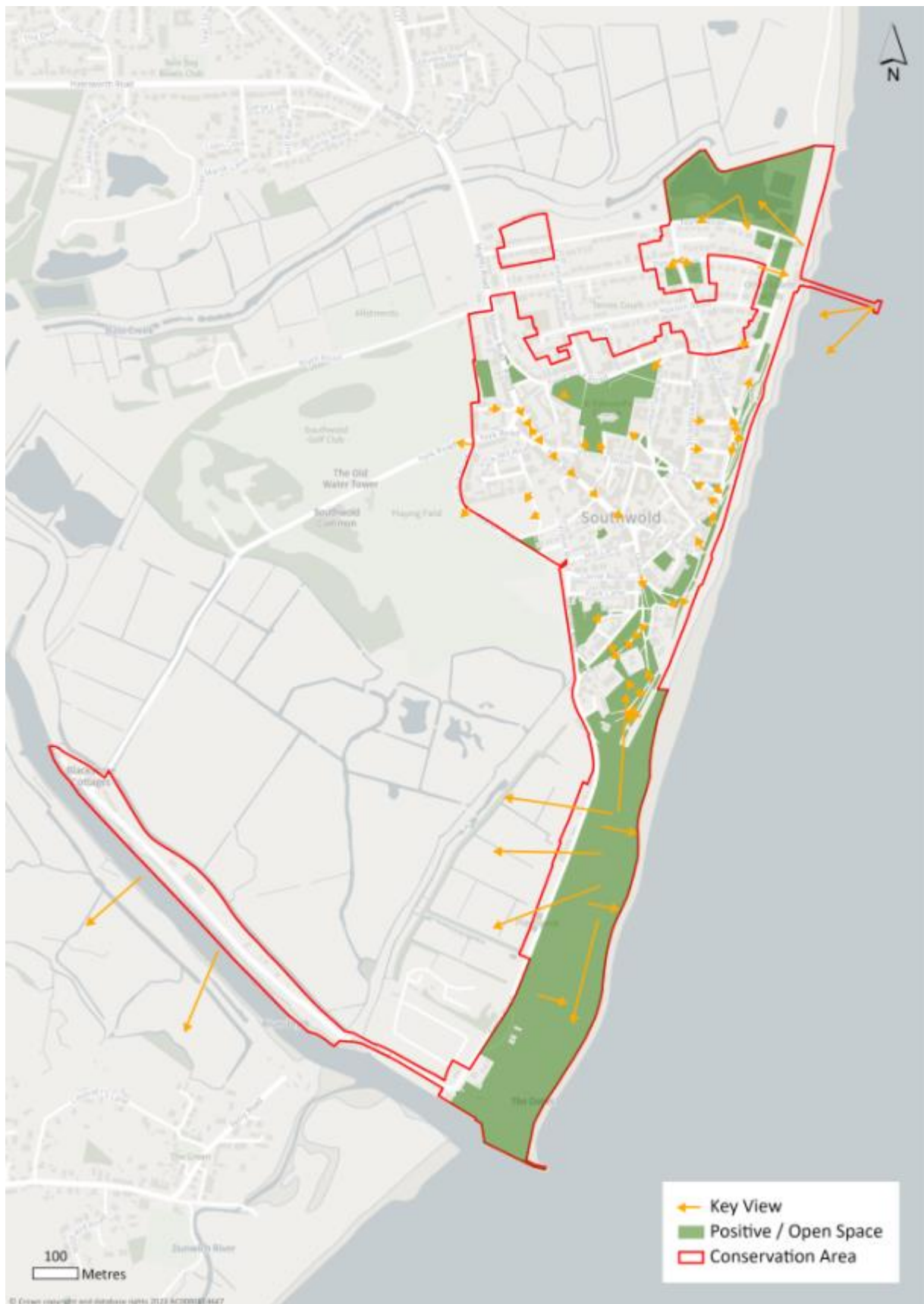
Historic England sets out that a series of steps could be used to understand the effect of proposed development on views relating to heritage assets:

1. *'Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected*
2. *Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated*
3. *Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it*
4. *Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm*
5. *Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes'*

As well as those views described in the Conservation Area Appraisal, and those shown on the Key Views Map, the Local Plan describes some views considered significant, including where *'Panoramic views extend across the coastal marshes and from the Blyth Estuary back to Southwold along with wooded backdrop created by the North Suffolk Sandlings which buffer the town'*. As well as where *'The lighthouse and St Edmund's Church create a distinctive backdrop'*.



## Map of Key Views and Green Spaces



## The Location of New Development

New developments, and the cumulative effect of incremental change, are an ongoing management challenge to the special architectural and historic interest of a conservation area. Detrimental change can take many forms, from settlement 'infill' with poorly designed new houses or buildings to inappropriate alterations to the existing building stock.

The location of new development will typically be led by the Local Plan, however, small sites within and around the Conservation Area may present development opportunities. Where this is the case:

Some infill development is more successful than others. Successful infill development will rarely be a matter of scale only. A thorough understanding of the site's physical and historic context is essential for delivering a successful development.



*Blackmill Road: Contemporary 'infill' development on the former Southwold and Reydon Royal British Legion site presents a notable departure from its built form context.*

## The Design of New Development

In a conservation area as varied as Southwold the prevailing historic character can be difficult to define, given the multiplicity of styles and materials; consequently, determining an appropriate language for the design of new development can be challenging.

High quality, modern, design can offer a positive idiom where thought is given to the architectural and aesthetic sensitivities of its surroundings. The former "Kitchen Store" development site, now the Tibby's Triangle, is a good example of such development: the spatial layout is a positive response to its townscape context and contributes to the town's public realm and physical permeability. The scale and massing of the buildings and the avoidance of assertive cladding materials contributes to the development's success.

Designs based on traditional styles may also be acceptable, where they follow the local vernacular tradition or seek to utilise polite classical or other historicist styles. Classical idioms require a careful and scholarly approach to ensure the output doesn't become debased; especially where working with an existing structure. Modern developments based on historical styles are not always well realised, especially where the existing building stock abounds in decorative features, or in the case of classical buildings, where the carefully calculated proportions of their façades are key to their architectural success.

Generally, new development should respect the prevailing townscape pattern of the Conservation Area, including preservation of building lines, relationships to gardens, streets, and common land, and surrounding scales, densities, and uses. For example, in Southwold building alignment is frequently sited hard against the back of the footway or forms the highway edge, giving the settlement its dense urban form.



*Typical Southwold townscape detail, with the buildings hard to the highway edge.*

The intensification of existing sites can be found around the Conservation Area. Ferry Road, for example, has been the focus of several rebuilding or enlargement projects. The replacement of modest holiday cottages with larger dwellings has led to the introduction of modern materials, such as frosted glass, aluminium and artificial roof slates.



*Ferry Road: the rebuilding of 20th century ribbon development retains some of the idiosyncrasies of the earlier structures but with greater formalisation of boundaries, modern building materials and more ambitious scale, incrementally changing the road's modest 20th century character.*



*Larger developments are beginning to dominate the road's modest, 'looser', 20th century character and built form.*



*Nos.2 & 4 Church Street (Positive Unlisted Building); formerly a purpose-built engineering works of 1896, now sympathetically converted to offices. Residential development can be achieved whilst preserving the character of the Conservation Area.*



*Blackmill Road: the conversion of buildings in less visible locations should not be considered an opportunity for less visually sensitive, locally distinct or relevant development.*

Southold is notable for its continued building frontages, particularly in the Old Town Character Area. Where there are breaks in the building line of the principal building frontages these frequently provide access to alleys and lanes that give access to courtyards. The prevailing aspect of existing buildings should be given due regard; where this is highly varied, new development should not compromise or dominate the existing composition.



*Blackmill Road: Illustrates how the side and rear elevations of some structures can contribute as much to the townscape character of smaller roads, lanes and alleys as the principal façades and street.*

## Demolition, Potential Development Areas and Enhancement Opportunities

Notwithstanding this proliferation of high-quality historic buildings, the loss of either individual or groups of buildings that positively contribute to the character of the Conservation Area, through unwarranted demolition or neglect, would erode the special interest of the designation. The NPPF, July 2021 contains policies designed to safeguard heritage assets that positively contribute to the Conservation Area.

In order to protect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area the Council will seek to prevent inappropriate development, assessing each proposed development on its merits. Each character area of the Conservation Area will have different sensitivities and capacity for change; an appreciation of the baseline conditions of each character area and proposed development's impact on those conditions is essential when assessing proposals for change.

The Conservation Area contains a single nationally designated Building at Risk, as defined by Historic England<sup>16</sup>: The Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic church, grade II listed. Repairs were completed in 2020 and it anticipated that this enhancement will put the building on a positive trajectory sufficient to remove it from the register in due course.

Monitoring and planning for how long-term economic change is impacting the Conservation Area is a potentially valuable tool, such as the closure of high street banks and pubs. The optimum viable use at 17 Market Place, for example, is unlikely to return and sensitive alternative uses could be planned for; similarly, the future of the Blyth Hotel is uncertain.

<sup>16</sup> Defined as buildings and structures in need of repair, maintenance and appropriate long term use.

There are few sizable development plots / opportunities within, or within the setting of, the Conservation Area, however, with sustained development pressure it is highly likely that land and buildings will be recycled. Consideration to how sites might be redeveloped through planning briefs can be a useful tool, particularly where they include structures that might be unprotected but positively contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area.

Potential development sites exist in the Conservation Area's setting; where there are larger mid or later twentieth century structures on the A1095, between Mights Bridge and Blyth Hotel. Structures are typically of little architectural or historic merit, such as the former police station, public hall, and Scout hut. Any future development proposals should consider the effect on the character of the Conservation Area and its setting, including the open Landscape setting.

The Post-war flats on Dunwich Road / Marlborough Road and bungalows on Field Stile Road, both formerly sites of large hotels, have a neutral effect on the character of the Conservation Area. However, given their low density and limited architectural interest it is possible that they will be considered a development opportunity in the future. In urban design terms, they present a weak frontage to the wider Conservation Area. The sites, and their setting, is highly sensitive to change and development would need to relate well to its surroundings. Their large garden setting and boundary treatment to North Parade is an important aspect of the conservation area's open space network and a surviving element of the former hotel.

The Southwold Conservation Area contains a number of nineteenth and early twentieth century shop and public house fronts that the local authority will seek to preserve or conserve where possible. However, retail and pub activities are changing and under

increasing pressure from external economic forces; monitoring and understanding this change is an important tool for the conservation of the historic environment. Changes to historic shop and pub frontages should be proposed with full understanding of the significance of these building typologies and the building concerned; a philosophy of minimum intervention is recommended. Additional guidance on managing these buildings is provided in ESC's document '*Historic Environment SPD, June 2021*'; it identifies key building elements and sets out that change should be '*in a way that preserves the historic character of the town centre and does not damage the architectural integrity of individual buildings*'.<sup>17</sup>.

Shops and public houses have an important role in the townscape, animating and activating the commercial core. Frontages that contribute to the Conservation Area's historic and architectural significance, by demonstrating the history of trade in Southwold, its products or methods of display, are of special interest; particularly where locally unique forms are apparent.



*No.8 East Street: An externally well-preserved former public house that is now a shop.*

There are historic shop frontages in the town that are not currently in retail use; whilst they

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<sup>17</sup> East Suffolk Council, Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document, June 2021 (P86)

no longer activate the streetscape in the same way they once did, the significance of fabric needs to be understood when proposing change; these buildings will likely continue to provide some visual and architectural special interest.

Today, Southwold's active shopping frontages are concentrated in the Old Town Character Area and changes of use controlled through the Local Plan (Policies WLP8.18 and WLP8.19); they are categorised as either primary or secondary frontages.

### Building Alterations

There are opportunities for individual historic properties to reinstate original materials and architectural details that have been lost, for example traditional painted timber windows, doors, roofing materials or chimney stacks. Applications for such works are likely to be supported by the council. Conversely, inappropriate alterations and extensions to structures that do not respect the scale, form, materials and detailing can erode the Conservation Area's special architectural and historic interest. In a town of high density such as Southwold the cumulative impact of small scale changes can have a disproportionate effect on the character of the Conservation Area.

The use of modern materials and details can cause direct harm to the physical condition of historic structures as well as the character of the Conservation Area. Upvc replacement windows and doors, for example, change not just the way historic structures look but how they perform. The use of concrete tiles, artificial slates, plastic and aluminium windows and doors and modern bricks should all be avoided. So too should the use of brown stain on timber joinery, windows and doors as it invariably appears as a discordant feature. Where new, or altered, fenestration is proposed this should consider both the hierarchy and rhythm within the elevation

concerned but also within the context of the adjacent building stock to ensure it is in keeping.

There are many window and door designs and details across the town and they will typically occupy a high percentage of the principal elevation; however, their dominance will invariably be reduced by well-crafted timber joinery that uses smaller panes of glass. The distinctive appearance of historic hand-made glass is not easily imitated in modern glazing and float glass. The loss of historic joinery such as sash and casement windows and panelled doors will inevitably result in a degree of harm to the significance of a historic building, the loss of crown or other early glass can also cause harm to the significance of buildings. Historic England's 2017 advice, *'Traditional Windows Their Care, Repair and Upgrading'*, recommends that *'Surviving historic fenestration is an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved and repaired whenever possible.'*



*North Parade: some timber windows have been replaced with Upvc units at this prominent corner building.*



*Station Road: the Arts and Crafts joinery details and leaded glazing at the Blyth Hotel demonstrates the importance of retaining historic fenestration and the contribution it makes to the architectural interest and significance of the Conservation Area.*

The significance of individual character areas often stems from the quality and style of window and door joinery that can themselves be important artefacts of greater quality, skill and material, than is generally available today; the decorative Arts and Crafts joinery details concentrated in the Town Farm Character Area, for example. The Conservation Area is therefore sensitive to the cumulative loss or alteration of these features. Historic England (2017) advises that *'the loss of traditional windows from our older buildings poses one of the major threats to our heritage.'* The form of fenestration and apertures is also integral to the character of the Conservation Area, such as the variety of bay windows across the town, some canted and some over two storeys.

Apertures can provide a vital visual connection to character areas history or building's evolution, making a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area; former coach entrances, for example.



*No. 16 Victoria Street: the former coach entrance provides an evidential link to the site's former building merchant's use with yard that survives to the rear.*

Historic roof forms, details and profiles should be protected and repaired appropriately: hipped roofs, dormers, barge boards, finials and dentilled cornice positively contribute to the character of the Conservation Area and their removal would erode its special interest; changing roof materials can result in the loss of other roof details, such as finial and ridge tiles. Changes to the Conservation Area's roofscape can have a pronounced effect on the quality of views from within character areas and beyond. Removing historic roof materials is usually inherently harmful, however, this is typically exacerbated where rooflights are introduced. Even where rooflights are introduced to rear roof pitches they are frequently visible, made possible by the Conservation Area's irregular street pattern and building aspects. Rooflights usually present an aesthetically poor juxtaposition with the historic roof-scape. The Conservation Area has a locally distinct roofscape that positively adds to the character of the Conservation Area; notable materials and details include:

- black or blue glazed pan tiles;
- fish scale slates;
- plain roof tiles;
- natural Welsh slate;
- ridge tiles;
- barge boards;
- dormers; and
- gables.



*Snowdens Yard: rooflights set into traditional roof materials.*



*Blackmill Road: the contrasting visual effect of modern roof materials in the foreground with historic roof materials beyond.*



*Victoria Street: the visual effect of modern rooflights on the character of the Conservation Area. In this view, incidental glimpses of the lighthouse above the roofscape illustrates the effect that alterations to rooflines, ridges and heights could have on the visual quality of the Conservation Area.*

There is demonstrable need for careful design of roof pitches and aspect in the Conservation Area generally, to protect known views, such as those of the church tower from the pier. Recent development in front of the tower, on Field Stile Road, has negatively affected the view owing to both the height and aspect of the adjacent buildings' rooflines.



*Variation in gable design across the Conservation Area makes a substantial contribution to the character and significance of the Conservation Area: Dutch and pedimented gable (top) and Crow-stepped gable (bottom)*





*Barnaby Green: historic dormer windows can add a further layer of detail to a roofscape (top) and significance to heritage assets (below).*



Gables and dormers on principal façades are common, the Southwold Arts Centre, former hospital and many dwellings included.

Whilst concrete and cement are commonplace across the Conservation Area, and especially around the seafront, their use can be detrimental to the character and fabric of the designation and should be carefully considered before being introduced. Where the materials are causing harm to historic fabric the council will support their removal.



*Woodleys Yard: This simple service lane has lost texture and visual interest with the use of modern cement render on an earlier brick wall. There is some evidence of damage to the brick as a result of water ingress.*



*St James' Green: modern cement render (top) on earlier block wall and steps (below).*



*St James' Green: prior to cement render on earlier block wall and steps.*

The designations' special interest is frequently compromised by the loss of railings and decorative iron work to front gardens, walls and bay windows, which detracts both the historic structures and the quality of streetscape. The loss of historic boundary treatments can have a similar effect on the aesthetic value of the Conservation Area.



*North Parade: decorative ironwork makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area, however, the front boundary wall has been largely rebuilt with unremarkable timber fence above.*

There are many dwellings that have replacement boundary treatments. Many simple dwarf brick walls, some previously with railings, have been replaced with poor quality materials and / or poor or unusual brick bonds that work against the unity of some character areas, such as the unlisted buildings on Chester and Dunwich Road. Cement render, concrete block and copings can readily be found, either to re-finish older walls or in wholesale replacement.



*Chester Road / North Parade: loss of historic boundary treatments.*

The quality of large boundary walls, and the positive contribution they make to the significance of the Conservation Area is a defining aspect of the designation. Consequently, the harm from alterations can be considerable.



*Increased demand for privacy at larger dwellings with willow screens, reducing openness across the Conservation Area and public realm.*

There are some extant historic boundaries where they are all that remains of heritage asset, such as the location for former Grand Hotel site, at the junction of Field Stile Road and North Parade. Proposals to alter such boundaries should be properly assessed for their impact on the Conservation Area's historic and evidential value.

Further details of inappropriate developments and alterations are noted in the ESC Historic Environment SPD, June 2021.

### **Brick, Colour Washes, Renders and Mortars**

Southwold benefits from numerous examples of polychromatic brickwork, often where both local brick colours (red and white/gault) are combined or contrasted with render. In some cases, this is used to striking effect, such as Nos.13-29 (Odd), Victoria Street, and in others as simple bands that offer relief to building facades. This is an important feature of many of the town's 19<sup>th</sup> century expansion areas and adds a vibrancy to the elevations.



*No. 14 Barnaby Green: Simple polychromatic brickwork enlivens the 19th century façade.*



*Suffolk red brick, used to ornament Southwold House & Sole Bay House, Gun Hill, in contrast to the render.*

There has been sporadic over-painting of facades, perhaps in an attempt to replicate stucco buildings. Whilst this fashion is of some minor historic interest the harm caused to the historic character and fabric of these buildings is notable and its proliferation will be resisted by the council.

Colour washing and renders, whether to brick or timber framed buildings, requires careful consideration as it can have a notable impact on the character of the Conservation Area. There are various facets to its use:

- it covers historic materials, brick patterns, architectural features etc. and can reduce variety;
- it introduces colour / whitewash to areas previously darker in appearance, changing the effect of light;
- the choice of materials can be inherently harmful, where they cover up existing damage or decay as well as causing it where inappropriate materials are introduced, using high cement content renders for example; and
- removal of inappropriate materials can be expensive and the process sometimes harmful to the fabric of the building.



*Colour washed brick (left) and render (right), using modern colour palettes. Colour washing and renders have become part of the Old Town's retail character, such as on the High Street.*

Traditional colours used in the Conservation Area are typically derived from earth pigments, including pink and pale ochre and soft whites. The choice of colour will be controlled inside the Conservation Area by the requirement for planning permission for works fronting onto a highway. Where the choice of colour is visible in the wider townscape this will also be taken into account when determining applications.

Both the colour choice and type of paint will be material considerations. Some modern paints, like hard renders, have a detrimental effect on the 'breathability' and performance of the structure below them.



*Chester Road: Colour washes can result in a unified terrace's visual 'rhythm' being disrupted and the masking of gault brick dressings.*

Where render is a feature of a historic building, contributing positively to the significance of the Conservation Area, its retention and proper maintenance is desirable. Understanding the materiality of existing renders is critical where carrying out repairs; where using traditional lime renders and washes for example. Visually, harder renders lack the texture and interest of lime-based mixes. The complete replacement of renders should only be undertaken where the existing is beyond repair, to avoid the loss of fabric and damage risk to the structure.

In some rare circumstances, sections of brick may need to be replaced or re-built. Care should be taken to ensure re-built sections use bricks and brick-bonds to match the existing structure as far as possible.

There are some examples of poor pointing, where strong cementitious mortars have been used. The result is visually inferior to traditional lime-based mortars, introducing a dull grey, and often damaging too. The traditional bricks of Southwold, Suffolk Red / White and Gault brick are soft and can be easily damaged by the use of hard mortars, causing the brick to 'spall' under some conditions.



*Blackmill Road (above): the effects of cementitious mortar pointing on historic boundary structures when combined with road grit and water spray from rain and passing vehicles.*

## Maintenance

Good maintenance of historic structures is essential promote a sustainable use of historic materials and preserve and enhance significance. Simple, timely, operations such as a clearing rain goods and repairing roof tiles can reduce the scale of future repair works.



*Good maintenance this early 19th century rainwater hopper would help to prevent damp and damage to brickwork and other decorative features.*

Brick bonds are an important aspect of the Conservation Area's character and add to the designations variety. Examples of English, Garden Wall, Flemish and Rat Trap can be found. These should be preserved where new works are proposed and careful consideration given to the justification for replicating historic brick bonds in new work.

Brick chimneys can be found throughout the Conservation Area and collectively they have a marked, positive, impact on many long views, giving variety to the roofscape; the view to North Parade from the pier, for example. The loss of even simple brick chimneys therefore will have a detrimental effect on the significance of the Conservation Area. They can be found as both central ridge and gable stacks in a variety of forms and decorative patterns.

Some chimneys are in themselves decorative and contribute to both the significance of the Conservation Area and the individual structures. There are many examples of decorated and polychromatic brick chimneys, from the Arts and Crafts styles on Godyll Road and Pier Avenue to 19<sup>th</sup> century stacks on Field Stile Road, such as Victoria Cottages. Given their less accessible location, the stacks can sometimes be overlooked for maintenance, however, they should be monitored as part of a good maintenance of programme. Leaning stacks can be dangerous and cause further damage to historic fabric where not addressed in a timely manner.



*East flank of Southwold Common: altered ornamental brick and cobble wall that positively contributes to the character of the Conservation Area.*

The cleaning of brickwork *could* be considered part of a good maintenance programme, however, consideration should be given to whether cleaning is necessary and the effect it will have on both the character of the built heritage asset and the Conservation Area, especially where the building is part of a

terrace. Where cleaning is considered necessary, careful consideration should be given, and expert advice sought, regarding the methodology. Some cleaning techniques can be inherently harmful to the soft bricks typically used in Southold.



*Chester Road: recently cleaned brick work.*

## Southwold Harbour

Blackshore is a very different environment to the other character areas and requires unique management strategies that consider the increasing demands. To the south of the Blackshore Character Area, the River Blyth is itself an open space that needs management to protect its openness. This includes management of the landing strips and jetties as well as structures and uses around the water.

Blackshore remains a gateway to the sea, and historically, the wider world. Today it provides access to Southwold from the south, as well as

Walberswick. It provides more of a visual and aesthetic gateway today.



*Southold Harbour from the Walberswick Conservation Area, with key landmarks of Southwold visible on the horizon: preservation of the maritime activity and vitality of the harbour is integral to preserving its character and significance, however, managing increasing demand for landing stages and commercial space, with tourism, is challenging.*



*Timber landings at Blackshore, within the Walberswick Conservation Area: Walberswick Conservation Area has a symbiotic relationship with the harbour within the Southwold Conservation Area.*

The Local Plan's strategic objectives are to conserve the open expanse of the estuarine landscape, of which the Blackshore character area is an integral part.

The Southwold Harbour is particularly sensitive to new development. The is defined by a fine balance between the working uses of the harbour and the tourism economy. There is a potential threat from intensification of the tourism economy, which is generating greater demand for larger food provider premises and associated infrastructure, such as awnings, signage, seating and parking. There has, since the last appraisal, been some rebuilding of the small fishing sheds to provide larger units for

this purpose. This reduces the variation in rooflines and ratio of built environment to landscape, in part contrary to the objectives of the Local Plan.



*Blackshore: Informal, working, character of the north side of Blackshore.*

The Local Plan sets out that no more moorings will be permitted; consequently, the use of informal or unapproved moorings and landings will need active monitoring to avoid over development. Whilst the Local Plan presumes against further built development in the harbour area, in order to protect the Conservation Area's character and owing to the harbour's flood risk, there are still examples of intensification for food sales that could, cumulatively, undermine the significance of the Conservation Area through combining, enlarging and replacing buildings. Enlarged buildings can reduce the visual effect of the strong vertical elements in views within the character area, as well as views across the landscape and setting of the Conservation Area from Blackshore: this relationship between estuary and landscape is critical to the character area's character and significance.

Yellow safety signs, boat masts, flag poles and telegraph poles combine to give the character area a character of maritime industry. As so many of these features move or change, they add a dynamic and temporal quality to the character area.

Careful assessment of the harbour's prevailing materials should be carried out in order to protect its character. These include:

- tarred shiplap and feather edge board building cladding with care given to colour maintenance;
- batten and vertical board, painted or stained black;
- oak / cedar shingles;
- landing stages built of sustainable hardwood or black stained softwood;
- gloss painted doors and windows; and
- corrugated iron.

Roofs in the Blackshore Character Area and harbour are notably different in their materials and form to elsewhere in the Conservation Area; they are much more simple structures, using pre-fabricated materials known to have limited lifespans, including:

- green or grey mineral felt;
- corrugated iron painted black or rust red;
- corrugated fibrous cement sheet painted black; and
- red clay pan tiles.

Renewal of materials is therefore encouraged, however, this should seek to provide a continuation of prevailing materials and building techniques.

The floorscape at Blackshore is fundamentally different to that of the rest of the Conservation Area, where roads are typically un-surfaced compacted stone. As the area becomes a more popular centre for tourism, and where the size and number of vehicles continues to grow, the informal characteristic is going to become more difficult to maintain as the number of vehicle movements damaging the unmade road. Where more stable surfaces are considered, these should complement the character area's prevailing character.

The potential harm from flooding to built heritage is particularly pertinent at the harbour. The existing concrete defences are frequently compromised. Whilst built defences are to the rear of most built heritage assets, and so of limited visual impact, any rebuilding or expansion of these defences may have an

impact on the existing character and fabric of the harbour, its delicate built environment and economy.



*Southwold Harbour: modern sheds developed to be in keeping with the prevailing vernacular of Southwold Harbour, used by the RNLI.*



*Access road at Southwold Harbour: like the built environment, the public realm is informal in character. Whilst this can lead to management issues, such as pot holing (below), the 'working' character of the public realm is equally important to the character area as the built environment.*



*View of the Alfred Corry Lifeboat Museum and kiosk in its open, un-formalised, car park setting.*



*The extensive space around the buildings, not formally designed, with low fences and simple private spaces are just as important as the simplicity of the buildings, which lack uniformity and regular development patterns.*



*Unmade path and rammed earth flood banks provide the setting to scattered weather-boarded houses. There is increasing evidence of formalisation and subtle 'tidying' of the character area with modern materials and new buildings (below).*



## Climate Change

Climate change is having a pronounced effect on landscapes and townscape across the region and this is no less significant at the coast where 'landscape changes are due to inundation by the sea'<sup>18</sup>, coastal erosion and changing weather patterns. Climate change management and mitigation may affect both the designation and its setting. The effects of new development proposals should be assessed for the potential to exacerbate the effects of climate change on the Conservation Area.

Whatever the management strategy for climate change, the landscape setting of the town will likely change in the coming decades: sea water ingress may lead to the loss of productive farmland on drained marshes as well as the loss of grazing marshes, with associated shift from freshwater to saltwater habitats having an impact on landscape character. The cliffs between Benacre Ness and Southwold have recorded some of the fastest coastal recession rates in the UK, with some effect on existing land use patterns. Whilst climate change will likely present challenges to managing the heritage asset, the Conservation Area's open setting should be preserved.

Physical interventions to the existing sea defences along the Blyth River and coast around Southwold and Walberswick may have an impact on the character of the Conservation Area; proposals for coastal management in and around the designation should be considered in this context. The assessment of proposals for coastal management should consider, *inter alia*, the following:

- the impact on views across lower land and marsh landscapes that contribute to the setting of the Conservation Area;

<sup>18</sup> Alison Farmer Associates, Touching the Tide Landscape Character Assessment Final Report, September 2012



- the visual and landscape character impacts of landscape change, including the impact of reintroducing natural processes;
- the interface between the settlement and its landscape;
- collaboration with statutory and advisory bodies on positive landscape management; and
- the need for further research and archaeological work to better understand the complex history of the marshes, rivers and the landscape's relationship with Southwold to inform future management decisions.

The Suffolk coast has always been dynamic, presenting a threat and risk to people and property. The Shoreline Management Plan 7 (Lowestoft Ness to Felixstowe Landguard Point) identifies approaches to managing coastal flood and erosion risk. Furthermore, it seeks to deliver environmental, social and economic benefits for the town. East Suffolk Council is the lead authority for this Plan and seeks to:

- sustain recreation facilities and beaches;
- maintain character and commercial activity;
- maintain navigation to Southwold Harbour;
- maintain the cultural value of Southwold and Blyth Valley; and
- maintain important heritage and archaeological value.

The plan notes that parts of Southwold are at risk from flooding, including the Blackshore character area. The Council is working with partners to ensure the delivery of strategic flood protection measures to mitigate these risks.

Tree and plant selections are going to have to be increasingly climate change resilient; chosen for their capacity to survive drier summers and wetter winters. Consideration should be given to the impact the proposals

will have on the character of the Conservation Area or its setting.

### Public Realm

Despite the high concentration of significant buildings and structures, the public realm does not always enhance the Conservation Area as well as it could. Street furniture, highway infrastructure and floorscape generally lack a coherent design, local relevance, distinctiveness or interest.

The Conservation Area's public realm is varied. It comprises:

- the beach and coastal dunes;
- a variety of green spaces;
- public spaces within the built environment;
- the sea and riverscapes;
- streetscape: the roads and pavements
- publicly visible private gardens; and
- street furniture: the elements of streetscape.

### Beach, Coastal Dunes and Sea

Perhaps the most character defining open spaces in Southwold are its beaches, coastal dunes, sea and riverscapes. The way these environments are managed has a marked effect on the character of the Conservation Area; however, they are challenging to manage. The coast is dynamic, owing to the effects of the sea's ingress, dune shift and coastal erosion. There are, however, many aspects of the Seafront Character Area where the Conservation Area can be directly better managed or enhanced. The Seafront Character area can be considered in terms of six typologies:

- the sea;
- beach;
- promenade;
- dunes;

- cliffs; and
- estuary.

The character of the seascape and beach has changed with the town's economic activity. The fishing boats on the beach have been replaced by tourist infrastructure, including the pier; engineering works have been added to protect the coast, which also have a visual impact. The beach has been visually compartmentalised by interventions perpendicular to the cliffs that interrupt long views along the beach, as would be possible were the coast not actively managed. Notwithstanding the visual impact of groynes and other coastal protection works, these have in part given rise to the establishment of the beach and comprise a part of the east coast's evolving fabric and character.



*View of timber groynes, perpendicular to the coast and compartmentalising the beach to the south of the pier.*



*View of the seascape, 1867, prior to the introduction of perpendicular coastal features.*

The quality of the coastal management features that affect the seascape vary across the character area. To the north of the pier, the 'rock armour' is larger than timber groynes, comprising large boulders of natural stone. The stone colour used juxtaposes with the Suffolk coastline's natural colour and material palette and the scale of the rocks is considerable. The materials and techniques selected to protect the cliffs has an important bearing on the quality of the character of the Conservation Area.

The promenade comprises the concrete topped path on top of the 'wave wall' and continues south to the dunes. The exposed aggregate materials of the surface are characteristic of their 1948 construction date and other settlements on the east coast. The materials are echoed in other streetscape elements around the town, such as the street signs posts.

Some attempt to reduce the uniformity of the surface has been made, whereby the promenade is inlaid with timber 'sleepers' that pick up the timber of the groynes; these may be vestiges of the late 19<sup>th</sup> / early 20<sup>th</sup> century sea defences that the promenade replaced.

These materials, *en masse*, are less well regarded today and may be considered to detract from the character of the heritage coast and Conservation Area. However, it is likely the aggregate was sourced locally, near Wangford where there are large gravel extraction works, and the material is therefore likely to be as locally distinctive as is possible.

The impact of the engineering works on the general aesthetic of the character area, and views through it, have been exacerbated by *ad hoc* accessibility improvement: this includes additional ramps used to traverse the small level changes close to the cliff edge and the unpainted tubular steel railings that dilute the materials palette on and around the promenade.

In the future, there may be demand for improved access between the cliffs, promenade and beach. There may be demand for lifts or other infrastructure, as at other resorts. The visual impact and justification of such a development would require careful assessment.

The promenade provides the immediate setting for the approximate 300 beach huts, arranged in irregular clusters along the length of the promenade. They are mostly uniform in their shape and size (approximately 3m<sup>2</sup>) but each is unique in its details and colour decoration, which contrasts with the engineered character of the promenade. Notwithstanding that most of the huts are removed from the promenade during the winter months, there remains a threat from climate change, whereby the huts might become less attractive to own and maintain where there is persistent damage.

The huts have other benefits for the character area: they screen some of the negative visual effects of the sea defences and tourist infrastructure. They soften the hard concrete engineering works and help aid the visual transition of seascape to townscape. North of the pier, the huts screen the car park adjacent to the pier head; consequently, views back to the coast from the pier are enhanced by the huts. In the opposite view, the huts draw the eye beyond the surface car park from the town marshes and go some way to mitigating this detracting land use.



*View of beach huts screening the car park, north of the pier with the town's landscape setting rising behind it.*

There is little furniture on the promenade itself, however, there are numerous low quality plastic bins, supplemented by plastic 'wheelie' bins, which detract from the aesthetic quality of the character area.

The cliffs rise above the promenade and host various man-made elements: iron and steel railings and exposed aggregate concrete paths and steps. These are partly softened by coastal vegetation. The railings, whilst important from a safety perspective, and having been a necessary consequence of tourist activity since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, have become a prominent feature of the cliffs. The older rails are typically painted white and are highly visible in views back to the cliffs from the pier and beach. There are newer sections of unfinished and galvanised railings with smaller sections of timber post and rail fence. Whilst not in themselves detrimental, the various materials dilute the local palette and reduce the quality of the character area.

The walls, revetments and paths linking the cliff tops to the promenade are typically exposed aggregate, *in-situ*, concrete. By contrast to the exposed aggregate, the river pebble filled gabions used in places have no known local relevance and exacerbate the uncoordinated appearance of the seafront. The varying form of the coastal protection measures also gives them an uncoordinated appearance.

Vegetation along the cliffs is inconsistent. At the time of survey, June 2021, there are some positive elements, including flowering coastal species. However, there are also areas that appear unkempt or have lost vegetation. Vegetation goes some way to softening the hard engineering works, where it is well established, and can help to unify the varying form of the cliffs and coastal defences. The benefits of Sea Aster, for example, that already enlivens the sea defences in places, has the

added benefit of supporting coastal ecology, such as threatened species like the Sea Aster Mining Bee and other threatened salt-marsh species.



*Sea Aster softening the top of the cliff revetments.*

Notwithstanding the above, traditionally, the seafront was not planted or not 'prettified', it had a rugged and informal character. Introducing coordinated planting, therefore, would be a notable character change.

### Landscape Setting

The [Southwold Neighbourhood Plan](#) sets out that the town covers 263 hectares but its settlement boundary is much smaller than that, covering approximately 18% of the land in the parish. The majority of the land within the town's boundaries is therefore an open landscape created by the Common, Buss Creek, dykes, marshes, the River Blyth, the beach, the dunes and the North Sea.

The Southwold coast is particularly sensitive to belts of large shrub and tree planting, having very light tree cover except for the introduction of occasional plantations and parkland. Belts or clusters of large shrub and tree planting may therefore be intrinsically harmful to the character of the landscape and setting of the Conservation Area. The use of screening to mitigate an otherwise unacceptable development, for example, can be inherently harmful, both within the Conservation Area and its setting.

The proliferation of views and vistas, landmarks and small open spaces ensures that the loss or planting of trees, both in the setting and within the Conservation Area, can have an effect on the character of the Conservation Area's designed and incidental views. The ongoing maintenance of tree growth is important to maintaining that character also.

### Open spaces

There is a variety of open spaces in the Conservation Area, ranging from the formal greens, cliff-top and private gardens to the informal commons and marshes; all positively contribute to the Conservation Area or its setting. Individually, the greens vary in their scale, shape and function. They range from land at the centre of road junctions to substantial public spaces; each has its own character and sensitivity to change that should be considered material where change is proposed. Consequently, the management and enhancement of green spaces should be developed on a site-specific basis. The open spaces should be protected from development and development that affects their positive characteristics, such as overshadowing and loss of landscape features; detrimental physical changes such as unplanned removal of trees should be managed.

In a settlement where there is high demand for residential or holiday accommodation there is likely to be pressure to redevelop larger gardens for residential units, or sub-divide houses. Each case should be judged on its merits, however, loss of garden spaces can potentially have cumulative negative effects on the character of the Conservation Area and undermine the optimum viable use of heritage asset's; as well as exacerbate other issues detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area, such as additional car parking.

Whilst each green may have a different layout and design, a planned planting palette of trees and shrubs could make them feel like a more coherent network of spaces and enhance the Conservation Area as a whole. This will also present an opportunity to develop parallel strategies, in green infrastructure for example that can help offset the effects of climate change.

The churchyard of St Edmund King and Martyr is one of the town's most important public green spaces, however, its long-term management should be given due regard. Whilst the churchyard's many trees positively contribute to the character of the churchyard, the Conservation Area and setting of the church there are numerous examples where they are also causing damage to headstones and other heritage assets. In addition, a dense tree belt has increased severance between the churchyard and Tibby's Green.

Removing vegetation in the churchyard will need to be carried out sensitively as it will change the 'romantic', overgrown, character of the churchyard.

## Trees and Hedgerows

The effect of development on trees, whether statutorily protected or not, is a material consideration for planning authorities assessing planning applications. Authorities should seek to protect trees, whether in groups or individually, where they have natural heritage or biodiversity value, cultural or historical significance, or contribute to the character or amenity of a particular locality.<sup>19</sup>

There is no legal definition of a tree and a recent High Court ruling established that a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) covers "*saplings and*

*trees at all stages of their development*".<sup>20</sup> The purpose of a TPO is to "*prevent the felling, mutilation and harming to the health of the tree or woodland covered by an order unless consent is obtained from the local authority*".

In conservation areas, trees protected by a TPO are subject to the normal controls. In addition, trees not protected have a special provision that anyone wishing to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or destroy a tree must give the local planning authority six weeks' notice of their intent. This applies to all trees, whether or not they are considered to contribute to the landscape character of the Conservation Area or setting of individual heritage assets.<sup>21</sup>

A public record of TPOs, covering Southwold, is available on East Suffolk Council's [Geographic Information System](#).

The oak tree on axis with Spinners Lane, in the middle of the Southwold golf course / Southwold Common, is an interesting landscape feature that helps to give interest and orientation to this part of the common.

Urban expansions of the late 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> century typically included street tree planting and there are some notable examples on North Road and Pier Avenue, suggesting this was the case here.

The Conservation Area has historically, like its landscape setting, been very lightly treed. In the Old Town, whilst there may be some individual tree planting opportunities, comprehensive planting schemes are potentially harmful to both the character and building fabric of the Conservation Area. By contrast, the Seaside Suburban Character Area is lower in density and would be more physically capable of accommodating landscape change. Notwithstanding physical capacity, appreciating the Character Area's

<sup>19</sup> Garmory, N, Tennant, R and Winsch, C, (2016) "*Professional Practice for Landscape Architects*", Routledge, Oxon, England

<sup>20</sup> Milne, R, (February 2009) Planning Portal

<sup>21</sup> Garmory, N, Tennant, R and Winsch, C, (2016) "*Professional Practice for Landscape Architects*", Routledge, Oxon, England

sensitivity to landscape and townscape change remains important. With increased planning for climate change, consideration might be given to the need for additional street trees, which can provide valuable cooling and air cleaning capacity.

Though many of the town's green contain mature trees there are few examples of particularly notable or interesting tree specimens. Some greens have 20<sup>th</sup> century hedgerows that are of limited historic provenance.

Many of the trees within the Conservation Area are now over 100 years old, and relatively little planting has been done in recent years to replace them. Some trees are having a negative impact on significant views, such as the framed axial view towards St Edmund King and Martyr from Victoria Street.



*Barnaby Green: Trees leaning where succession should be planned for to maintain the same canopy cover.*

Where space for larger trees is not available character can be achieved through other

species, climbers and locally distinctive shrubs. New boundary treatments, such as hedges to properties can also provide enhancement to the Conservation Area, where species selection and materials are in keeping with the prevailing character of the settlement.

## Planting

There is relatively little ornamental planting in the Conservation Area and this contributes to the town's prevailing townscape character. Similarly, there are few examples of substantial public shrub and perennial planting in public open spaces (only Bartholomew Green and the open space at the junction of High Street and Victoria Street have any notable planting beds). This again contributes to the town's simple planting character.

The green spaces on the cliff tops, parallel to North Parade form the interface between the beach and townscape. They have traditionally changed shape and size with the ingress of dune sand. In recent decades, the cliffs have been formalised as a green space. The gardens could be made more visually appealing by reinstating some of their informal character through a contemporary coastal planting scheme. The cliffs themselves would also benefit from a similar planting strategy: they are currently part eroded with limited colour, texture or interest. This would particularly benefit long, panoramic, views back to the cliffs from the pier.

As at the churchyard of St Edmund King and Martyr there is some planting that needs monitoring for its impact on historic structures. Whilst Ivy, for example, can positively contribute to the character of the Conservation Area and is not inevitably doing harm to structures, it needs positive maintenance. The boundary walls, such as those at Skillmans Hill / open space, east of Gardener Road are part covered in ivy and enhance the Conservation Area, however, the

impact of the vegetation is not obviously apparent.



*View of high quality brickwork wall with crenulations that positively contributes to the significance of the conservation, with large expanses of vegetation and poor repairs leading to irreversible harm to the brickwork at low level.*

## Streetscape

Historic England write that *'Protecting the distinctiveness of the public realm is a vital means of creating enjoyable places for people to live and work as well as to visit.'*<sup>22</sup>. Whilst streets in Southwold typically reflect the historic form and layout of the town, they lack the quality of materials or character to properly reflect the overall quality of the built environment in the Conservation Area.

## Floorscape

The quality of the street, and its materials, varies both within character areas and from character area to character area. Generally, the quality of street materials declines with distance from the town centre but in most places lacks coherence or local distinctiveness and is not well maintained.

Throughout most the area carriageways are bitumen macadam (sometimes referred to as tarmac) with a mix of *in situ* concrete, slabs, and bitumen macadam footways. The lanes

and alleys are more varied and frequently unmade.

There are limited, locally distinctive, historic streetscape materials, features or forms, however, notable elements include:

- historic kerb positions: many granite kerbs remain;
- highly variable footway widths and designs, reflecting the town's incremental development;
- some buildings are set against the back edge of footways. Where there is no footway buildings are set against the highway edge;
- secondary streets and back lanes are more likely to retain historic paving materials or be more informal in their finishes, such as loose stone; some retain granite setts or cobbles, such as at Bank Alley;
- Some junctions have granite setts at their connection with the main street. Small isolated areas of granite setts can be found across the Conservation Area; and
- York Road has a short length of 19<sup>th</sup> / early 20<sup>th</sup> century Staffordshire blue 'Diamond' pavers.
- Grass verges are prevalent streetscape features of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion areas.
- Historic floor bricks.

Throughout the Conservation Area, there are opportunities to improve the quality and condition of the floor scape materials, though some historic surfaces may be retained below

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<sup>22</sup> Historic England, Streets for All: Advice for Highway and Public Realm Works in Historic Places,

the wearing course and the potential for this should be investigated prior to implementing any enhancement scheme.

Understanding historic floorscape materials, and their local use is critical to establishing greater local distinctiveness. The first macadams date back to 1848 and hot tar used from 1820; by 1910, asphalt was the dominant material used so there is a long history of these materials that could now be considered of historic significance. Prior to this time, crushed stone would typically have been used for carriageways with more expensive materials used at high profile locations. The quality of the floorscape should therefore be inkeeping with the quality of the built environment and Conservation Area it serves.

There are some notable indicative local floorscape arrangements that should be managed, including:

- the minimal use of kerbs to greens;
- numerous unmade roads and tracks, such as those around the Wesleyan Chapel and East Green, where roads can be seen in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century images as being muddied;
- Higher quality materials around high profile locations, such as High Street where an image of 1948 appears to show the floorscape to comprise crushed stone with stone paved footways; and
- Buildings fronting directly onto the carriageway or with very narrow footways. This feature becomes less prevalent to the north of the town.

There are, however, some materials that are less appropriate and do not enhance the character of the Conservation Area. The High Street, for example, uses concrete setts at junctions with lanes / alleys with modern PCC slabs.

Whilst concrete setts are sufficient in less sensitive environments as a standard material they lack local distinctiveness; particularly

where in a Herringbone pattern (typically used for car parking areas). Consequently, the material is not suitable for historic areas and will not enhance the streetscene; they are rarely able to adequately mimic local clays.

Inspection covers should, where not replacing historic ironwork, be designed with recessed trays filled to match the adjacent hardstanding material.

Staffordshire Blues cubes were a cheaper substitute for granite cubes and used as a durable surface on heavily trafficked routes; consequently, the material provides a historic link to how the streets have been used in the past.

Historic floor bricks, or pammets, in clay are a local material, usually using local clays that ensure local colours. Whilst the clay for 'Suffolk Whites' is now exhausted these were once common floorscape materials and equivalent materials may be acceptable. These materials were typically used on forecourts, shops, houses, courtyards and alleys. Today there are few examples left and they should be protected; Victoria Street has a complete set. Traditionally, floor bricks were laid in rows or half-lap bond with a butt joint in pedestrian only areas. Mortar pointing is more common in vehicle trafficked areas.

*In situ* concrete is common floorscape material across the Conservation Area and frequently combined with PCC drain gullies, as on East Street. It should not automatically be regarded as an unsympathetic material, having a long history of use in coastal areas, however, the use of modern mastics can detract from the material's visual quality; timber boards provide a better, more sustainable, finish. Poorly tamped concrete is rarely convincing and is unlikely to enhance the character of the Conservation Area.





*Exposed aggregate concrete kerb edges at Constitution Hill.*



*'Unmade' gravel track, connecting Constitutional Hill and open space around Gardner Road. The informal edges allow planting to enliven the public realm.*



*North Road: 'Unmade', trafficked, gravel Road. The informal edges allow planting to enliven the public realm.*



*North Road: routine parking on grass verges is causing harm to this designed element of the floorscape, which may eventually lead to them being removed.*



*Bank Alley: Staffordshire Blue cubes / setts, laid in rows around a concrete drainage gully. Hard wearing floorscape materials, such as Staffordshire Blue cubes / setts, positively contribute to the character of the Conservation Area and identify the street as a route being used for heavier traffic, with an important connection to the church.*



*Granite Setts outside No. 2 Park Lane*



*Park Lane, prior to highway alterations show the streets edge-to-edge carriageway and crushed stone material.*



*Trinity Street: local streetscape feature, with buildings fronting directly onto the carriageway or with narrow footways.*



*In some instances, planters have been added to increase the sense of private defensible space, such as at East Green.*

There are several aspects of the existing streetscape that detract from the character of the Conservation Area:

- poorly patched or broken surfaces macadam surfaces;
- paving surfaces, such as poorly selected PCC slabs that lack local distinctiveness / historic provenance; and
- Car parking; and
- vehicle dominated streets



*Barnaby Green: Declining macadam carriageway surfaces and poor line marking detracts from the character of the Conservation Area, which is partly offset by the vegetated edges around Barnaby Green.*

Traditionally, as today, the highest quality materials were reserved for the most high-status places. today, the conservation areas hierarchy of places cannot easily be read through the quality of its floorscape materials or the general streetscape environment.

Market place has been the historic core of the town for a significant length of time and remains the location for the town's weekly market; it should have a public realm that reflects its position in the town's hierarchy of streets and spaces. The existing public space is dominated by vehicle infrastructure. Consequently, vehicle movements make it a poor pedestrian space and the listed buildings and grade II listed Town Pump are frequently masked in views by parked or moving cars.

The setting of Market Place's many historic buildings and structures, and character of the

Conservation Area, could be greatly enhanced by improving the quality of the public realm. Whilst some effort has been made to use more locally distinctive materials, such as the surface immediately around the Town Pump and parking spaces to the front of numbers 21 - 25 Market Place (stone cobbles), they are insufficient to give the space any discernible character. The existing paving slabs are satisfactory but fail to enhance the space. The expanse of Bitumen Macadam leaves the Town Pump with a diminutive presence on an island at the centre of the space.

The churchyard of St Edmund King and Martyr has many pedestrian routes that connect into the surrounding townscape and are an essential feature of the town's fine urban grain. However, the quality of pedestrian environment is generally poor, notwithstanding the use of some interesting materials. There is a mix of paving materials used, including exposed aggregate *In situ* concrete, in keeping with the seafront, but juxtaposed with the natural materials of the churchyard. There are *in situ* concrete repairs with a 'no cycling' footpath sign, painted in white. To the south of the church, there are Staffordshire blue setts, with patches of pea-gravel. A lack of path edging allows the grass to soften the materials used, however, the paths are narrow and not always fully accessible.

The poor materials extend beyond the churchyard around Bartholomew Green, where there are large expanses of rolled asphalt and, occasionally, poor repairs.

### Traffic Management

The negative impact of vehicle traffic within the Conservation Area is predominantly confined to the old town, seafront and harbour, though at peak times access roads to these locations can also be over capacity. Heavy traffic flows can make narrow streets difficult to use by pedestrians and cyclists, affect the character of the Conservation Area

and impact negatively on local townscape views. There is often indirect effect from increased traffic flows, such as additional highway signage, road markings and other infrastructure.



*Nos.12-18 (even) Victoria Street, from Bartholomew Green: street signage clutters and obscures the architectural detailing.*

Increased local development and tourism demand has led to greater pressure on the road network, including parking. Cars parked poorly in the town centre cause access issues and compromise enjoyment of the historic environment.

Sustainable transport measures, as far as they are not inherently harmful to the Conservation Area or its setting, should seek to reduce the demand for car use. Any growth in sustainable transport use will likely increase the demand for ancillary infrastructure, such as cycle parking and storage. This should be carefully integrated into the existing streetscene to ensure it does not visually detract from the Conservation Area's special character. Improved public transport provision between Reydon and Southwold (buses are currently every two hours) may help reduce local car use demand.

Around the pier-head is a large expanse of rolled asphalt, used for car parking that creates a sense of separation between the townscape and pier. This is exacerbated by the large car park to the north, used by coaches as well as cars during the holiday season, the latter visible in the wider landscape and Conservation Area.

As at York Road (below), the Godyll Road car park, whilst part screened by vegetation in long views, still has some negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area in short-to-medium length views. Despite screening, parking on Godyll Road, is visible in glimpsed views from areas of Blackshore and viewpoints on York Road; full views of the car park are available from most of Godyll Road. In full sun, windscreens glint and are a distracting feature in the landscape. Some effort has been made to provide a sensitive surface to the car parks; however, white painted lines undermine the work.

Strategies for managing parking are beyond the scope of this appraisal, however, there is a need for ongoing monitoring and intervention to enhance the Conservation Area.



*Car Parking on Southwold Common, on York Road, located within the Conservation Area's immediate setting and wider landscape setting, introducing visual severance.*

To date, Southwold has not required substantial physical measures to control on-street parking, however, this may become more necessary and will need to be carefully planned to ensure it is properly integrated with the streetscape

Improving the design and management of both on and off-street car parking, through the careful use of surface materials, screen planting and management can benefit the character of a conservation area, albeit each car park should be assessed and designed according to its merits.

Off-street parking has already had a detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area, identified in the appraisal. New technologies to manage parking, or in vehicle design, will come with new infrastructure requirements, such as electric car charging points; these should also be planned for by being integrated with the streetscene.

## Street Furniture

Street furniture includes the many different elements of the streetscape that contribute to the wider public realm. They include:

- Seating;
- Railings;
- Signage;
- Lighting;
- Public Art / sculptures; and
- Play Features



*Detail of the water clock, Southwold Pier as public art / sculpture.*

Generally, there is no coordinated approach to street furniture installation across the Conservation Area. For example, there are many benches in the Conservation Area, and these are clearly important in a coastal tourist

town, however, there are a several different bench styles, colours and finishes. Similarly, bins and bollards vary in style across the Conservation Area; some elements are lacking in design quality and local distinction, such as planters on Victoria Street that adopt a standard 'heritage' style.

The Conservation Area would benefit from a holistic review of the need and capacity for street furniture. Improvements should be planned for across the Conservation Area, but with reference to the defining characteristics of each character area. Where new street furniture is proposed, opportunities for combining uses should be sought, to reduce its presence in the streetscape and integrate features such as planters and seats. Suppliers can provide whole collections of furniture items that can be used to reinforce the sense of place and give a more coordinated visual appearance; new equipment should be simple, elegant and appropriate to context.

### Seating and Bins

Seating and bins are worth considering jointly, as they are so frequently paired together when installing street furniture. The styles used for street furniture varies greatly across the Conservation Area and is often not in harmony with the character areas. Generally, there is incoherence in the seat and bin selections, with different colours and qualities used. The High Street alone, for example, has three bin types: each moulded plastic unsympathetic to the Conservation Area. Throughout the Conservation Area, the number of bins is insufficient for peak visitor season and supplemented by plastic 'wheelie' bins, which are particularly incongruous with the objectives of the Conservation Area. Inconsistencies in street furniture can be found elsewhere: the use of blue bins in Bartholomew Green is particularly incongruous, again supplemented by wheelie bins, that can also be found in the churchyard,

one of the town's most significance open spaces.

There are character areas of the Conservation Area that are particularly sensitive to street furniture choices, including the Seafront Character Areas. Within this character area, there are a variety of bench styles, some timber, some part cast iron or steel; metal legs sometimes differ in colour from bench to bench - from black to green. Some bench designs are better than others: the use of all-timber commemorative style benches, with their high backs and strong angles appear at odds with the openness and more 'natural' character of the seafront. The curved iron work of other models is more in keeping with the environment and more akin to the early 20th century furniture visible in some historic images. Other examples where inconsistent furniture choices can be found include at the model boat lake, where on the same flank different models are used. Inconsistencies in furniture around a townscape feature exacerbate the impact of the discordance.

The seafront demonstrates well the opportunity to integrate seating and furniture into the streetscape: users can sit on the many levels formed by the sea defences and, whilst this may not be suitable for all, it is a design feature worth understanding and exploring further. Well thought-out integration would avoid the need for extraneous features, such as the paths leading to single benches in the cliff-top gardens on North Parade.

Where new seating is proposed, greater consideration should be given to its arrangement to maximise options for visitors and residents. Currently, almost all benches are arranged singly, in straight lines. Such as Bartholomew Green, where benches lined up along the green's perimeter. This will reduce its appeal to some.



*Varied seating details on North Parade and cliff top railings.*

## Railings

There are low quality, highway style, railings around some land uses, such as outside Southwold Primary School on Cumberland Road and Queen Street. Where these can be removed without compromising safety it would make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. This is similarly case to the west flank of north green.

For further details on the use of railings at the seafront refer to *'beach / coastal dunes'* and for railings associated with dwellings, *'inappropriate development'*.

The concrete steps, that comprise part of the sea defences, further separate the townscape from views of the beach and sea. The monotony of the materials is however relieved by locally distinctive seating booths.

## Signage

The Conservation Area includes temporary signage in several places, but it is particularly prevalent around the designation's parking areas and greenspaces, and typically displaying overnight parking messages. These are usually yellow, A-board style, steel signs weighed down with sandbags and detract from the quality of the public realm. Alternative behaviour management techniques should be explored.

Highway signage is kept to minimum within the Conservation Area, which is beneficial. However, there are some junctions where it begins to conflict with the character of the Conservation Area, such as Barnaby Green where coach parking and parking signs combine with telegraph poles to present a cluttered, modern, streetscene.

## Lighting and Telecoms

A variety of street lighting units have been installed across the town, dating from various periods in time. Where possible, the units are fixed to buildings and so columns are fewer than they could be; units are also frequently fixed to telegraph poles. The telegraph poles are at least as intrusive as lighting columns would be and, when combined with overhead wires and signage, detract from the character of the Conservation Area. The intrusion is commonplace across most character areas to some degree, however, there are some streets where it is particularly noticeable. The axial view towards St Edmunds Church Tower on York Road and Barnaby Green is one such view, similarly the view north-east along Constitutional Hill and Queens Road.

In some places, lighting is relatively modern and designed to complement the character of the character area. On North Parade, for example, 'globe' style luminaires on steel columns are used and they help to differentiate the character area from the

surrounding streetscape. More often, however, standard lighting columns and lamps are used, some finished in black and some left unfinished, such as those on Station Road. Whilst the simplicity of the lamp designs in themselves typically allows them recede into the streetscape, cumulatively, the variation in finishes and styles is detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area.

The harbour area is free of lighting columns. Where lighting exists, it is ad hoc and occasionally temporary in appearance, festoon lights for example.

The standard green telecoms boxes can be found at various locations across the Conservation Area; these have a negative effect on the character of the Conservation Area and require periodic review as to their need and rationalised where possible. These boxes add clutter to the streetscape and require concrete inspection covers set into the pavement that further degrade the streetscape.



*View back to Gardner Road from Southwold Common and the impact of telegraph poles and wires on the view.*



*North Green: impact of telegraph poles and wires on the view.*

## Public Art

Care should be taken to ensure public art features are well maintained and presented, especially where they are interacted with as *de facto* play features, such as the cannons located on several open spaces and safety is a consideration.

Features that contribute positively to the Conservation Area should be given an appropriate setting to ensure they can be enjoyed by all as best as possible. Some are also listed structures, such as the war memorial and town pump, and their setting is subject to statutory controls.

These materials frequently detract from the setting of historic structures, particularly in the town's few designed public open spaces, such as the war memorial and town pump.



*War memorial with well-made bitumen macadam surfacing and large pitted granite kerbs, although the chain and bollards lack any local distinctiveness.*

Some art features that contribute positively to the Conservation Area are in private ownership, such as the ship's figure head on bracket above the front door of Dolphin House and Douglas House, No.12 Stradbroke Road.



This is an unlisted building and so there is limited control over what happens to features such as these, however, is noted in the positive buildings index.

New pieces of public art should be well considered in their style and siting, to ensure they positively contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.



View of No.12 Stradbroke Road, Dolphin House and Douglas House, figure head on bracket above the front door.

### Play Features

The town's principal dedicated play spaces are on North Parade and Tibby's Green; the former includes skateboarding ramps and features. Both play spaces are generally well set back from historic buildings and are not intrusive.

Play equipment can be sizable features in the townscape and may come with requirements for safety surfacing and railings that will be less desirable in the Conservation Area. New play features should seek to reinforce a sense of local distinctness and positively contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.

### Street Furniture: Miscellaneous

There are many other street furniture elements in the Conservation Area that cumulatively contribute to its overall character

and can easily amount to streetscape clutter where not effectively managed, including:

- bollards;
- cycle parking;
- bus shelters; and
- planters

Wherever possible, new installations of items such as bollards and cycle parking stands should be discreetly placed and the minimum necessary to perform the role required. The design of these features should be in accordance with a design guide and appropriate to the character area and / or Conservation Area as a whole. The demand for demand for cycle parking may grow as interest in sustainable transport modes and cycling for leisure increases.

There are few bus shelters in the town. Where new shelters are proposed care should be taken to ensure that, as well as meeting all the other requirements for accessible transport, their positioning is sensitive to the historic environment.

Where well designed, and maintained, planters can add texture and variety to the townscape; however, where this is not the case planters can detract from the quality of the streetscape and become added clutter. The introduction of planters therefore needs to be well considered and their long-term benefit understood.

The need for streetscape features in the Conservation Area will evolve over time and where possible this need should be audited and understood in advance. There may be future demand for:

- drinking / dog water fountains;
- electric vehicle charging points;
- food and drink kiosks;
- additional public WCs;
- sculpture; and
- picnic tables.

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Advice and information regarding development management in Conservation Areas can be provided by the Planning Team of East Suffolk Council:

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Further information regarding the Suffolk Historic Environment Record can be found at

<https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/home> or by contacting 01284 741230 or emailing [archaeology@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@suffolk.gov.uk)

For further information regarding conservation areas and listed buildings please visit the Council's website

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/design-and-conservation/>

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