

# Waterbeach Heritage and Character Assessment

July 2018







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## 1. Introduction

This report presents a summary of the history and character of Waterbeach, a large village which lies within the district of South Cambridgeshire. It has been prepared by consultants at AECOM on behalf of Locality, working closely with the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Group and is based on a detailed appraisal of the area carried out through desk study and fieldwork.

This report assesses both the heritage and landscape character of Waterbeach. Landscape character assessment is a process used to describe and articulate what is special and distinctive about a particular place by identifying recognisable patterns of elements or characteristics that make one landscape different from another. Landscape is defined by the European Landscape Convention as “..... *an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.*” This definition is broad and encompasses natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas.

The information generated through the process of characterisation can be used as evidence to support the planning and design process. This approach is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states that neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies based on an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics (DCLG, 2012). In doing so, policies can ensure that development responds to local character and history, and reflects the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.

## 2. Approach

The approach of this study follows well-established landscape character assessment techniques. A detailed desk study and fieldwork carried out to inform this assessment underpins the classification and description of character areas and broadly follows the process set out in the “Approach to Landscape Character Assessment” (Natural England, 2014). This approach has been tailored to meet the specific needs of the neighbourhood planning process and draws on further best practice guidance including:

- Using Historic Landscape Characterisation (Historic England 2004);
- Character and identity Townscape and heritage appraisals in housing market renewal areas (Historic England and CABE 2008);
- Understanding Place Historic Area Assessments: Principles and Practice (Historic England 2010);
- Townscape Character Assessment: Technical Advice Note 05/2017 (Landscape Institute, 2017); and
- Historic Environment: Good Practice in Planning Note 3 (Historic England, 2017).

Historic England, previously English Heritage has issued a number of guidance and best practice notes covering a range of issues in relation to the conservation and management of historic places and heritage assets all of which are available on the Historic England website (<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/>).

This study is the result of desk based research and field work carried out in March 2018. The study builds upon initial conversations carried out by the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan Group including outputs from a workshop and accessing a number of publicly available resources materials.

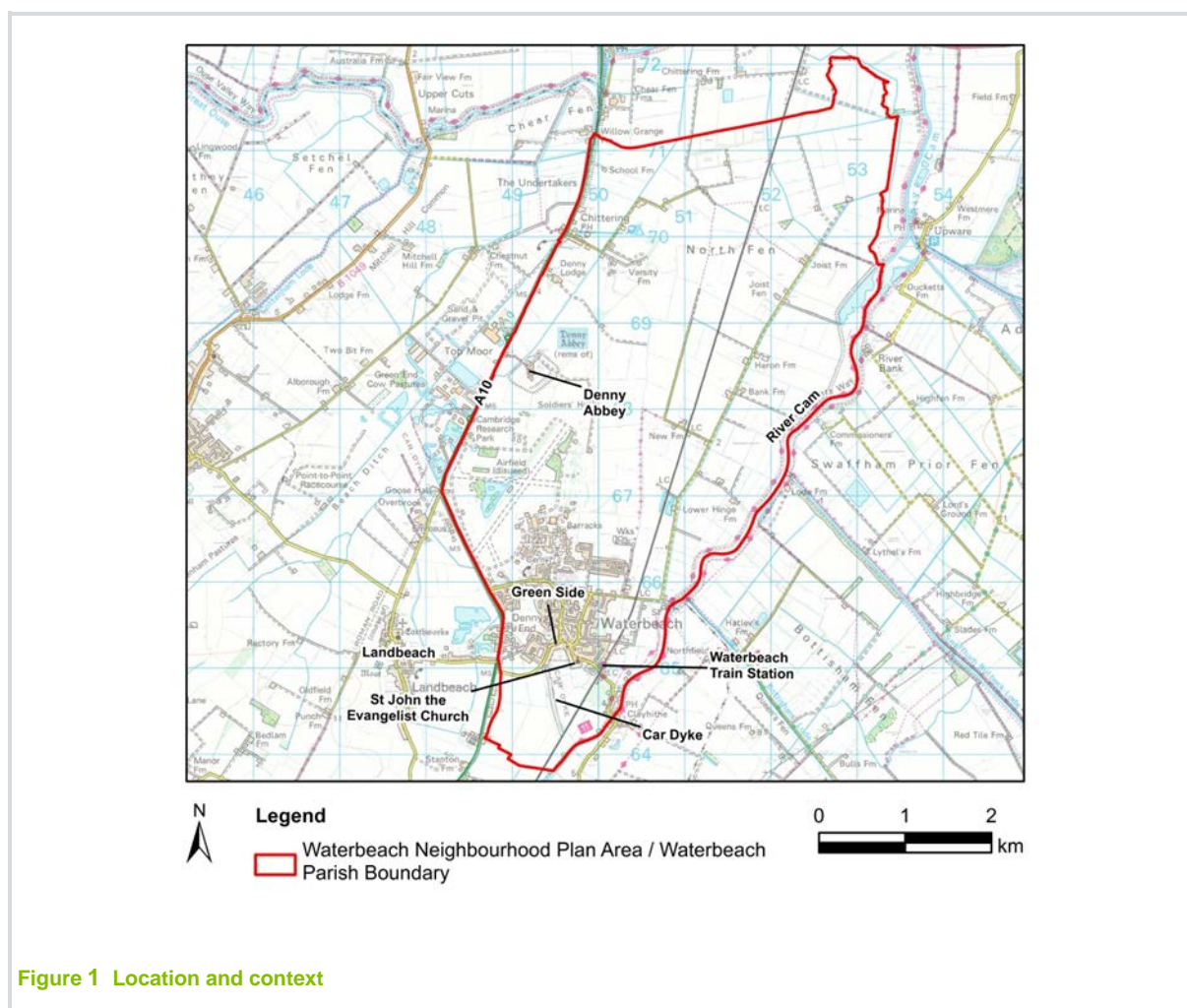
## 3. Context

This section of the report describes the location and context of Waterbeach and summarises current planning policies which are relevant to the study.

### 3.1 Location

The village of Waterbeach is located approximately 9.7km north of Cambridge city centre as shown in Figure 1. At the time of the last census in 2011 it had a resident population of 5,166 (ONS, 2011). The parish covers an

area of over 23.3km<sup>2</sup> and is bounded to the east by the River Cam and the A10 to the west. The village lies towards the south with the majority of the central and northern parts comprising open farmland, typically drained Fenland. This land separates Waterbeach from the neighbouring settlements of Landbeach (1.75km to the west) and Milton (3.5km to the south) and Upware (6km to the north). Waterbeach Barracks, formerly RAF Waterbeach, lies along the western boundary of the parish.



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## 3.2 Planning Policy Context

### 3.2.1 National Planning Policy

The current National Planning Policy Framework is under review and a draft has been issued for comment. At the time of writing the revised NPPF is expected to be adopted in summer of 2018. However until such time as its adoption the current NPPF 2012 will remain relevant.

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012

The NPPF requires local authorities to set out in their Local Plan a positive vision for the enhancement and enjoyment of heritage assets (DCLG, 2012). Part 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment clearly states that local authorities should recognise “*the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*” and should seek “*opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place*”. An understanding of history and heritage is therefore important in developing neighbourhood plans, but to the extent that it informs future development and the contribution this makes to local distinctiveness. These points are reinforced by a number of specific policies in the NPPF.



Paragraph 58 states that neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area, which are based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics.

Paragraphs 60 is clear that promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness is important, but that neighbourhood plans should not attempt to “*impose architectural styles or particular tastes*” or “*stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles*”. Paragraph 61 goes further, stating that “*although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations*”. It stresses that planning policies should “*address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.*”

The NPPF also includes guidance on developing policies to provide special protection for green areas through Local Green Space designations. Criteria for such designations are provided in paragraph 77.

Planning Practice Guidance, 2014

Planning Practice Guidance was reviewed, catalogued and published on the internet by the government in 2014 (DCLG, 2014). The section on design includes guidance on promoting landscape character (Paragraph: 007Reference ID: 26-007-20140306). It states that “*development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development*” and that the “*successful integration of new development with their surrounding context is an important design objective*”.

### 3.2.2 Local Planning Policy

South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy, 2007

The Core Strategy (adopted 2007) sets out the over-arching vision and policies which govern development across the district. The strategic vision recognises the need for the district to contribute to satisfying the development needs of the Cambridge Sub-Region, while preserving and enhancing its rich built and natural heritage and distinctive character.

Objective ST/e of the Core Strategy is to “*protect the varied character of the villages of South Cambridgeshire by ensuring that the scale and location of development in each village is in keeping with its size, character and function and that the buildings and open spaces which create their character are maintained and where possible enhanced.*” This is further supported by objective ST/j which states that the Core Strategy will “*ensure that the district’s built and natural heritage is protected and that new development protects and enhances cherished townscape assets of local urban design, cultural, and conservation importance, and character of the landscape.*”

The Core Strategy also includes a number of key policies which are directly relevant to heritage and character. These include:

- ST/1 Green Belt – relates to an area south of the village where development is restricted to protect the landscape setting of Cambridge; and
- ST/5 Minor Rural Centres – defines Waterbeach as a minor rural centre which provides services and facilities for the rural hinterland.

South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies, 2007

This document sets out policies relating to sustainable development, design quality and development principles. Those policies which are of most relevance to this heritage and character assessment include:

- DP/2 Design of New Development - which includes a requirement that all new development must preserve or enhance the character of the local area;
- DP/3 Development Criteria – states that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact on village character or on the countryside, and landscape character;
- DP/4 Infrastructure and New Developments – requires some new development to make contributions to the preservation or enhancement of the historic landscape or townscape;
- GB/1 Development in the Green Belt – includes an assumption against inappropriate development in the Cambridge Green Belt;

- GB/2 Mitigating the Impact of Development in the Green Belt – requires any development considered appropriate within the Green Belt to be *“located and designed so that it does not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt.”*
- GB/5 Recreation in the Green Belt – encourages proposals for the appropriate use of the Green Belt for increased or enhanced opportunities for access to the open countryside;
- HG/6 Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside – sets out criteria for the design of extensions to existing buildings;
- SF/9 provides protection of existing recreation areas;
- SF/10 includes a requirement for new outdoor play space, informal open space in new developments;
- SF/12 states that the District Council will only permit extensions to the curtilage of existing marinas or boatyards, or new marinas and boatyards if development would not have an adverse impact on the landscape and character of the River Cam corridor;
- NE/4 Landscape Character Areas - Development will only be permitted where it respects and retains or enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the individual Landscape Character Area in which it is located;
- NE/5 Countryside Enhancement Areas - Any development which would materially affect a Countryside Enhancement Area will be expected to mitigate its impact, or enhance the area, as part of the planning proposal.
- CH/1 Historic Landscapes - Planning permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect or lead to the loss of important areas and features of the historic landscape whether or not they are statutorily protected;
- CH/3 Listed Buildings - the District Council will adopt a presumption in favour of the retention and preservation of local materials and details on Listed Buildings in the district;
- CH/5 Conservation Areas – refers to guidance contained in specific Conservation Area Appraisals (where they exist) and the District Design Guide;
- CH/6 Protected Village Amenity Areas – states that development will not be permitted within or adjacent to Protected Village Amenity Areas if it would have an adverse impact on the character, amenity, tranquillity or function of the village. These areas are located within the Waterbeach conservation area and include public open space as well as private residential gardens;
- CH/7 Important Countryside Frontages - Important Countryside Frontages are defined where there is land with a strong countryside character;
- CH/9 Shop Fronts - The District Council will only grant planning permission for shop fronts and alterations to existing shop fronts which create a fascia and shop window which is in character with the building itself and the street scene.
- SS/5 In the emerging Local Plan (at examination stage at the time of writing) includes an allocation at the site of the former Waterbeach Barracks to allow for 8,000 to 9,000 dwellings and associated users.

A new Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire is currently in preparation, but has been delayed following an examination in public. This will eventually replace the 2007 Adopted Development Plan, covering the period until 2031.

This report builds on a number of studies and planning documents relevant to Waterbeach, as shown below:

#### Development Affecting Conservation Areas SPD, 2009

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) builds on policies set out within the Development Control Policies described above, including details on how they will be implemented. It covers extensions to existing buildings, infill sites where gap sites in villages may be large enough to accommodate some new development, and backland development, where land is proposed for development within existing plots. The document provides detail on how to consider appropriate scale, massing, form and detailing and the choice and use of materials. This SPD has been considered in preparing the principles for managing change described at the end of this report.

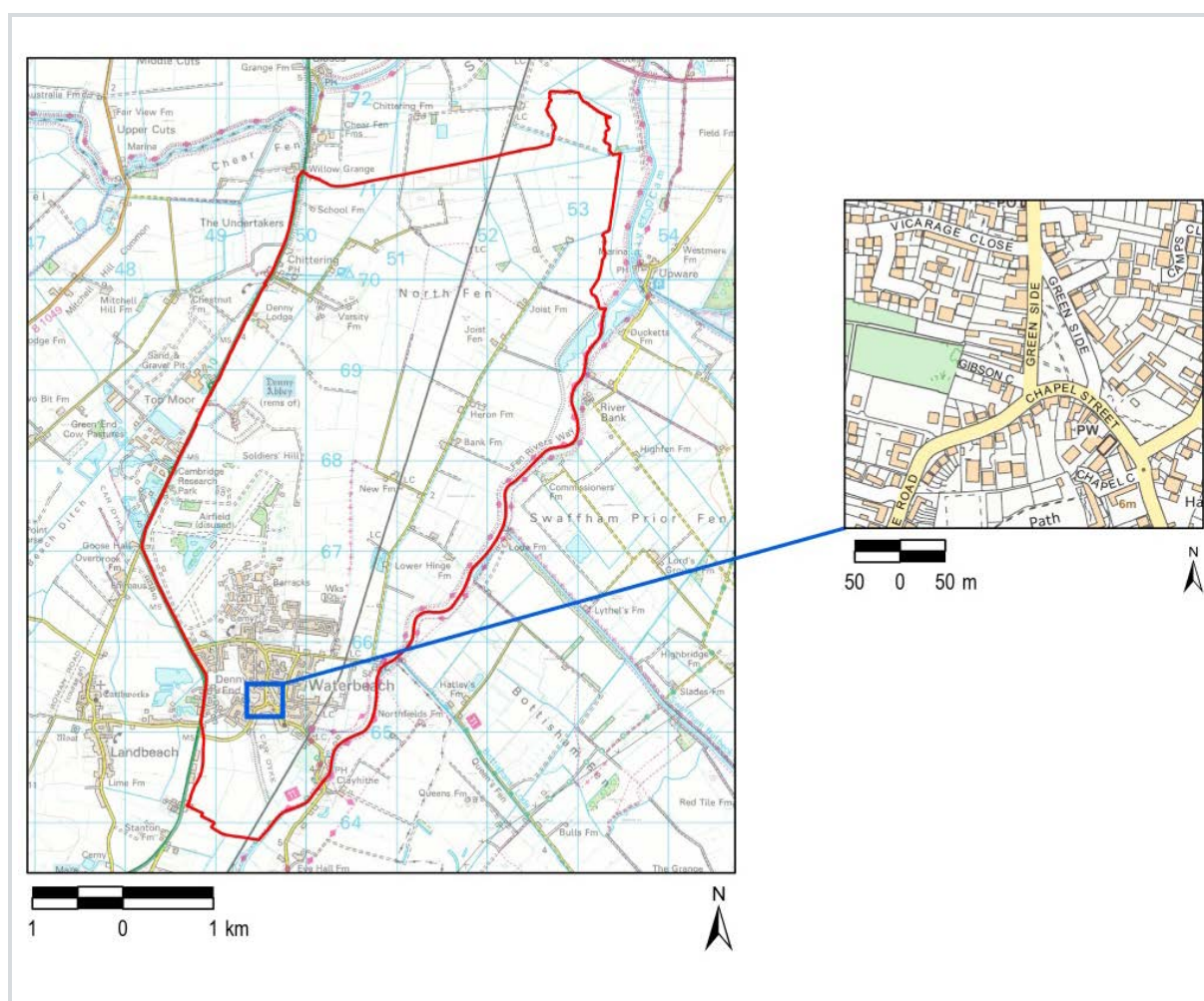
#### District Design Guide SPD, 2010

The District Design Guide is intended to ensure the delivery of sensitively and appropriately designed, sustainable developments. It provides further details and guidance to support the policies set out in the Development Control Policies document. The information which is directly relevant to this heritage and character assessment comprises the following:

- Village landscape and settlement analysis;
- Urban design principles
- Appreciating the context (including landscape setting); and
- Elements of design.

### 3.2.3 Historical Development

The marshes surrounding present day Waterbeach had been settled during the Roman period, and evidence of Anglo-Saxon pottery near the Car Dyke suggest settlement in the area during the early medieval period. The village of Waterbeach most likely originated late in the early medieval period, and was well established by the Domesday survey of 1086. Waterbeach derives its name from its location on a ridge or *beche*. Its name distinguishes it from its neighbouring settlement of Landbeach by its close proximity to the water of the River Cam. Recorded as *Bechia* before 1086, by the 13<sup>th</sup> century it was known as *Waterbeche*. For much of its history Waterbeach can be defined as a typical southern Fenland village, dominated by an agricultural character and way of life. Limited expansion and rebuilding during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while confined to the medieval and post-medieval street pattern, dominates the present day character and appearance of the historic core. The construction of an RAF airfield north of the settlement from 1939 offered new employment opportunities, and encouraged the growth of Waterbeach throughout the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This has been manifested in the development of residential estates on the periphery of the historic core.



## 2 Street Plan

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### 3.3 Timeline

#### 3.3.1 Medieval

- 1086 – Waterbeach is well established as a small agricultural settlement.
- 1150 – Benedictine monks establish an abbey at Denny (Danes' Isle), in the empty high ground north of Waterbeach, to become known as Denny Abbey.
- 1170 – Until 1308 Denny Abbey is occupied by the Knights Templar.
- 1200 – St John The Evangelist Church is established as a small aisled church, two arcade bays of which survive.
- 1279 – c.180 tenants and 68 messuages are recorded in the parish.
- 1293 – Common Fenland north of the village is formally divided between Waterbeach and Stretham.
- 1294 – A second abbey was established south of the village by nuns of the Second Order of St Francis, now known as Waterbeach Abbey.
- 1341 – Until the dissolution, Denny Abbey was occupied by Franciscan Nuns after abandoning their flood prone abbey located to the south of the village.
- 1350s – By the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century a number of streets are developed orientated east off of what is now the High Street forming the basic plan of the historic core of the village. Prior to changes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, houses in the village are largely laid out along the High Street, widening at the village green.
- 1377 – 205 adults are recorded as paying the Poll Tax.
- 1524 – Only 31 adults are recorded as paying the Poll Tax.

#### 3.3.2 Post-medieval

- 1686 – A single inn is recorded in the village.
- 1740 – A commission is set up for the levying of funds to drain the fens in the north of the parish. A windmill is built soon after to pump water from the Fenland.
- 1763 - Under the Cambridge-Ely Turnpike Act a new road is laid out along the Landbeach boundary. The Car Dyke becomes the primary route into the village.
- 1766 – A second windmill is established in the parish.
- 1779 – An annual village feast is recorded as being moved as to not interrupt with harvest. The feast is held until 1939 and then reduced in scale up until the 1960s.
- 1790s – Activities and sports are recorded as traditionally undertaken on the village green, however this has ceased by 1820.
- 1797 – The Sun and Whitehorse public houses are established by this time.
- 1797 - The Waterbeach Level Commissioners begin levying tolls on people using the Cam's flood banks for horses hauling barges.

#### 3.3.3 19<sup>th</sup> century

- 1800 – Fen pasture dominates the eastern half of the parish
- 1801 – Waterbeach's population is recorded as 553 in 129 households.
- 1814 – An Inclosure Act is passed, removing rights of access to formally common land and creating field boundaries. Before this time the only settlement in the parish outside of the village was at three farms at Denny Abbey, Causeway End Farm on Elmey Islet and North Hill Farm. Smallholders that prospered rebuilt their homes; replacing traditional timber framed and reed thatch with grey brick houses in square plan.
- 1814 – A public wharf is built near Bottisham Lock on the River Cam, for the use of local landowners.
- 1830s – Steam engines replace watermills used to drain the Fenland.
- 1831 – The population is recorded as c.1065.
- 1839 – A Parochial Village School is established at Greenside.
- 1840s-1870s – Emigration to America and Australia reduces the population?
- 1845 – The Great Eastern Railway constructs their main route through the Parish, establishing a station at Waterbeach by 1851. Water borne transport remained important into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.



1850 - Waterbeach has 10 inns and public houses.

1850s – Waterbeach's population is recorded as 1440, but was impacted by a typhoid outbreak in 1849 and cholera in 1854.

1860s – 65-70 houses are recorded in the former fens. 24 are farmhouses. Properties are laid on the straight roads through the Fenland which were developed after 1814.

1860s – Flower and vegetable shows are established in the village by the Waterbeach Horticultural Society.

1866 – The Waterbeach Gas Works are established, bringing in coal by rail.

1871 – For a time the population peaks at 1619 before declining.

1886 – The Waterbeach Baptist Chapel is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map.

1895 – Following cutting off of the village gas supply after being offended by a skimmington, the owner of the gas works loses his contract with the railway and the works subsequently closed.

### 3.3.4 20<sup>th</sup> century

1901 – The population is recorded as 1277.

1939 – Almost 700 acres of farmland north of the village is requisitioned by the RAF for the construction of an airfield.

1944 – At the height of the war, RAF Waterbeach housed 2600 people.

1951 – The arrival of RAF Waterbeach had encouraged the growth of the town, with 2630 inhabitants recorded in the census of 1951 with 1880 from the civil population.

1952 – Although density of the grain of development has increased, Waterbeach's street pattern has changed little since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and still reflects the medieval layout in the centre of the village.

1966 – RAF Waterbeach is transferred from the RAF to the Royal Engineers, to become known as Waterbeach Barracks.

1971 – The annual village feast is revived.

1970 – Historic maps show residential development has taken place to the north and east of the historic core, centred in Way lane and Denny end Road.

1975 – Waterbeach largely reaches its current size, with the exception of small number of residential developments since.

1981 – Of 3800 permanent residents in the village, 3551 are civil population.

2013 - Waterbeach Barracks is closed.

### 3.3.5 Present

Waterbeach today largely comprises modern housing estates, of mixed tenure including three or four bed detached, semi-detach and terrace properties, built from the post-war period to the present. Their architectural details show limited local influences preventing them from contributing to the distinctiveness of Waterbeach. These are distinct from the historic core of the village which is generally well preserved. With the closure of the Waterbeach Barracks in 2013 Waterbeach relies heavily on commuter employment, with the greatest employment opportunities found in Cambridge and some in the modern Denny Industrial Estate developed to the west of the village.

### 3.3.6 Scheduled Monuments

There are four scheduled monuments in the neighbourhood plan area; these include Denny Abbey (NHLE 1012770), Waterbeach Abbey (site of) (NHLE 1006888), Car Dyke (NHLE 1006930) and Romano-British Settlement at Chittering (NHLE 1012359).

### 3.3.7 Listed Buildings

A total of 19 listed buildings are located within the neighbourhood plan area (see Figure 6), of these a single example is considered of more than special interest and has been designated as grade II\* listed. This comprises the St John The Evangelist Church, built from c.1200 with later phases dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The tower and spire were rebuilt after collapse in 1821. Successive enlargement and restorations followed later in the century. The remaining 18 listed buildings are all of special interest and are designated as grade II. These largely reflect the rural domestic and agricultural character of the historic core of the village. Notable examples include:

The Hall (NHLE 1127364), a farmhouse dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> century; Barn to south-west of Orchard House (NHLE 1179631) is a timber framed and weather boarded barn dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> century; and Denny House, a timber framed former farmhouse with gault brick extensions, with origins in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.3.8 Conservation Areas

The historic core of Waterbeach is largely covered by the Waterbeach Conservation Area, originally registered in 1973 in recognition of the special architectural and historic interest of the area the character or appearance of which is to be preserved or enhanced. A conservation area appraisal was written in 1999, although never adopted. This interest is derived from the prevalence of historic fabric which survives in the core of the village, and the development of the village from the medieval period which is apparent in that fabric. A total of 15 of the Neighbourhood Plan Area's listed buildings are located within the conservation area including the Grade II\* listed St John The Evangelist Church, the remaining being Grade II. The conservation area covers the majority of the historic area of the village at the time of the 1901 Ordnance Survey map, with only five grade II listed buildings in the neighbourhood plan area are not included within the boundary of the area. Within the village these include 31 Burgess Road (NHLE 1331327) and Box Tree Cottage (NHLE 1179660), both of which are timber framed and dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries respectively.

### 3.3.9 Landscape Designations

Statutory and non-statutory landscape designations have been reviewed to determine the levels of protection currently given to the landscape within the Waterbeach study area.

The Waterbeach Conservation Area affords protection to buildings and the surrounding townscape (Policy CH/5). Protected Village Amenity Areas (Policy CH/6) are located throughout the centre of the Waterbeach along High Street, south towards the railway station along Station Road and for a small portion of Cambridge Road. A large part of the southern edge of Waterbeach is designated as Green Belt (Policies ST/1, GB/1, GB/2 and GB/3) restricting development and the expansion of the village south. In addition on the eastern boundary lies Cam Washes a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

### 3.3.10 Existing Landscape Character Assessment

Existing character assessments have been reviewed to provide some context to this more detailed assessment. The study area spans two National Character Areas (NCA), as defined by Natural England (Natural England, 2014). NCA 88: Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands covers a small area on the western edge of the parish, including much of the Waterbeach Barracks (See Figure 2). The majority of the parish is covered by NCA 46: The Fens, which extends across the northern and eastern areas of the parish. NCAs are broad but provide some context to the character of the study area.

Natural England defines key characteristics as “those combinations of elements which help to give an area its distinctive sense of place” that would result in significant consequences for the current character if they were changed or lost. As a result, they form important evidence to support the development of planning and management policies and a reference point against which to monitor change.

The key characteristics of NCA 88 which are of particular relevance to this assessment are:

- Predominantly open, arable landscape of planned and regular fields bounded by open ditches and trimmed, often species-poor hedgerows which contrast with those fields that are irregular and piecemeal;
- Diversity of building materials including brick, render, thatch and stone;
- Smaller towns, villages and linear settlements widely dispersed, giving a rural feel; fen-edge villages are often in a linear form along roads.

The key characteristics of NCA 46 which are of particular relevance to this assessment are:

- Expansive, flat, open, low-lying wetland landscape offering extensive vistas to level horizons and huge skies, providing a sense of rural remoteness and tranquillity;
- Woodland cover is sparse;
- The predominant land use is arable; and

- Open fields, bounded by a network of drains and the distinctive hierarchy of rivers (some embanked), have a strong influence on the geometric/rectilinear landscape pattern.

There is no published landscape character assessment for South Cambridgeshire District, although there are a number of documents at the local level which reference to landscape character.

The Cambridge Green Belt study, published in 2002, also includes the part of the study area covered by Green Belt. This is defined as Waterbeach-Lode Fen Edge (1A), a transitional landscape type situated between the Fens and the higher land beyond. It is relatively low-lying and appears generally flat with agricultural land uses, roads and settlements. Fen Edge has traditionally been an important location for settlement, above the floodplain. There is access to wetlands and higher land suitable for agriculture. Building materials in Fen Edge villages include gault brick, render and thatch.

The South Cambridgeshire District Design Guide SPD includes a landscape character overview. This identifies Waterbeach as lying within the Fen Edge, which is described as a mostly flat, low lying landscape with open views. Linear 'lodes', drains and droves running north-south form distinctive features of the character area. Large skies, a hierarchy of streams and ditches, rich and varied intensive agricultural land with a range of arable and horticultural crops are distinctive. Small scale medieval field patterns are still visible around the edge of the settlement. Low lying sand and gravel fen 'islands' rise above the surrounding flat landscape and have provided a historic focus for settlements.

Settlement Character is described as:

- Strong linear form, often developed outwards from crossroads along approach roads;
- Within historic cores narrow lanes with continuous street frontage are typical;
- Buildings are often set back with low lying walls and hedges fronting the streets;
- Long back gardens are a common feature;
- The rich and varied intensive agricultural land use includes a wide range of arable and horticultural crops and livestock;
- Large skies, which create drama; and
- Groups of buildings on or close to the back of the pavement in the village.

## 4. Character Assessment

### 4.1 Key Characteristics

Waterbeach predominantly falls into three distinct areas: Waterbeach Barracks, the rural central and northern area and the Waterbeach Village as defined below.

#### **Waterbeach Barracks**



**Photograph 1** Waterbeach Barracks

#### Waterbeach Barracks key characteristics:

- West of the former airfield lies flat, open and unmanaged rural-fringe landscape with a handful of small single storey buildings. A number of mixed woodland blocks and conifer plantations are located to the east of the former airfield, with more sporadic woodland cover in the west;
- A large, well-established lake with evidence of a diverse flora, including reed beds and woodland;
- Distinctive, tall bunds and tree belts line the western boundary, enclosing the Barracks and preventing views and access from the adjacent A10;
- Large trees within large areas of grass create an strong sense of being in an estate with the occasional ornamental shrub planting to building frontages;
- Buildings within the barracks are arranged on a geometric grid layout and large scale urban grain. Former aircraft hangers and three storey buildings used as barracks are set back within large plots, with large areas of amenity grassland to their frontages and the occasional individual trees;
- Individual and small groups of trees are dispersed throughout the amenity space within the south eastern corner. A large area of amenity green space defines the main entrance from Denny End Road and an avenue of cherry trees lines the drive

#### Waterbeach Village



**Photograph 2** – Waterbeach Green Side

#### Key characteristics:

- A rich quality of historic houses demonstrating a range of architectural styles, particularly along the long Green Side which encircles the central village green. This is also true of a number of buildings leading from Green Side to St John The Evangelist Church along Station Road;



- Attention to architectural detailing is common in older buildings, which is a reflection of the wealth of the area in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some styles and features have been replicated in more recent developments to reinforce the character of Waterbeach;
- Urban grain is finer in the centre where the buildings are generally more intricate and plots are narrow and long;
- A noticeable characteristic of older buildings is the presence of garden walls and hedges to the fronts of properties. This is replicated in only a few recent developments;
- Most buildings are two storeys in height, are detached or semi-detached and constructed in distinctive local buff gault brick with slate or tiled shallow pitched roofs. A small number of buildings have thatched roofs;
- The edges of the green at the centre of the village and conservation area is defined by an avenue of mature lime trees;
- Mature trees in rear gardens contribute strongly to the street scene, particularly in the absence of significant areas of public open space or street trees;
- Timber finger sign posts are used throughout the conservation area, which assists in wayfinding and reinforces the historic character of the village core;
- Waterbeach railway station is located to the south east of the village on a route which is known as the Fen Line. The railway provides connections to national rail services to London King's Cross to the south via Cambridge and to King's Lynn to the north. This has supported Waterbeach's growth as a commuter settlement.

### Central and Northern Rural Area



**Photograph 3** – From Long Drove showing the rural character of part of Waterbeach

Key characteristics:

- Flat, open, arable landscape surrounding the village to the north, with very little settlement;
- Strong sense of remoteness and isolation and huge open skies;
- Field boundaries and layout are defined by a network of deep agricultural drainage channels which link to the River Cam in the east. The boundaries contain occasional trees or short stretches of unmanaged hedgerow;

- To the east is a well vegetated riparian corridor, which follows the River Cam and forms a backdrop to the predominately agricultural landscape.

As set out above, the character of the landscape is the result of the action and interaction of a range of natural and / or human factors. These are considered in turn below in relation to the neighbourhood plan area.

## 4.2 Natural Factors

### 4.2.1 Geology and Soils

The underlying geology of an area is often largely hidden from view but has a strong influence on its character, having been shaped over by natural processes including erosion and sedimentation over millions of years. These processes help to define the landform, soils, vegetation, drainage and building materials which are common in an area.

Two distinct bands of bedrock underlie orientated broadly south-west to north-east (British Geographical Survey 2018)

- **Gault Formation** – Mudstone, Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 100 to 112 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. The local environment was previously dominated by shallow seas; and
- **Wobrun Sands Formation** – Sandstone, Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 100 to 125 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. The local environment was previously dominated by shallow seas. The majority of Waterbeach is located over this bedrock.

The underlying bedrock strongly influences the pattern of soils within the study area (Soilscape, 2018). There are five main soil types comprising:

- **Soilscape 5:** Freely draining lime rich loamy soils
- **Soilscape 9:** Lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage
- **Soilscape 20:** Loamy and clayey floodplain soils with naturally high groundwater
- **Soilscape 23:** Loamy and sandy soils with naturally occurring high ground water and peaty surface
- **Soilscape 27:** Fen peat soils with cultivated soils drained into ditches with shallow ground water

These biological qualities of soil structure its fertility coupled with the accessibility of the flat landform contribute to the extensive areas of agriculture which accounts for the majority of the land uses at Waterbeach.

### 4.2.2 Topography and Hydrology

The topography of the study area has a strong influence on the character and setting of the village of Waterbeach (See Figure 3). The majority of the land within the parish is low-lying. North of the village, most of the land is at or just above sea level at 2m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The land here is flat or very gently undulating as a result of the historic draining of the Fenland. This gives rise to huge open skies and long distance views in the rural landscape.

The village of Waterbeach sits upon an area of slightly higher ground, which lies between 8m and 11m AOD. This localised high point is not perceptible within the village or on the approach from neighbouring villages, including from the A10. The landform is consistent with the topography of the wider area, which rises in the south west towards Cambridge at 14m AOD and falls to the north east to 2m AOD at Upware.

The historic, man-made Car Dyke lies at the south western edge of the parish. This distinctive topographical feature is an eighty mile water channel, thought to have been constructed by the Romans from the first century AD. The Dyke runs along the western edge of the fens from River Cam near Cambridge all the way to River Witham, just south of Lincoln. It is evident in the landscape to the south of Car Dyke Road, but overwritten by development and modern agriculture to the north.

Agricultural field drains flow east towards the edge of the parish where they enter the River Cam, which meanders along the eastern boundary of the parish. The River Cam flows north where it meets the Great Ouse, which in turn flows into the North Sea at King's Lynn. In the rural central and northern areas of the parish the drains exert a strong influence on the structure of the landscape, evident in the field patterns and the network of roads and footpaths which traverse the area.

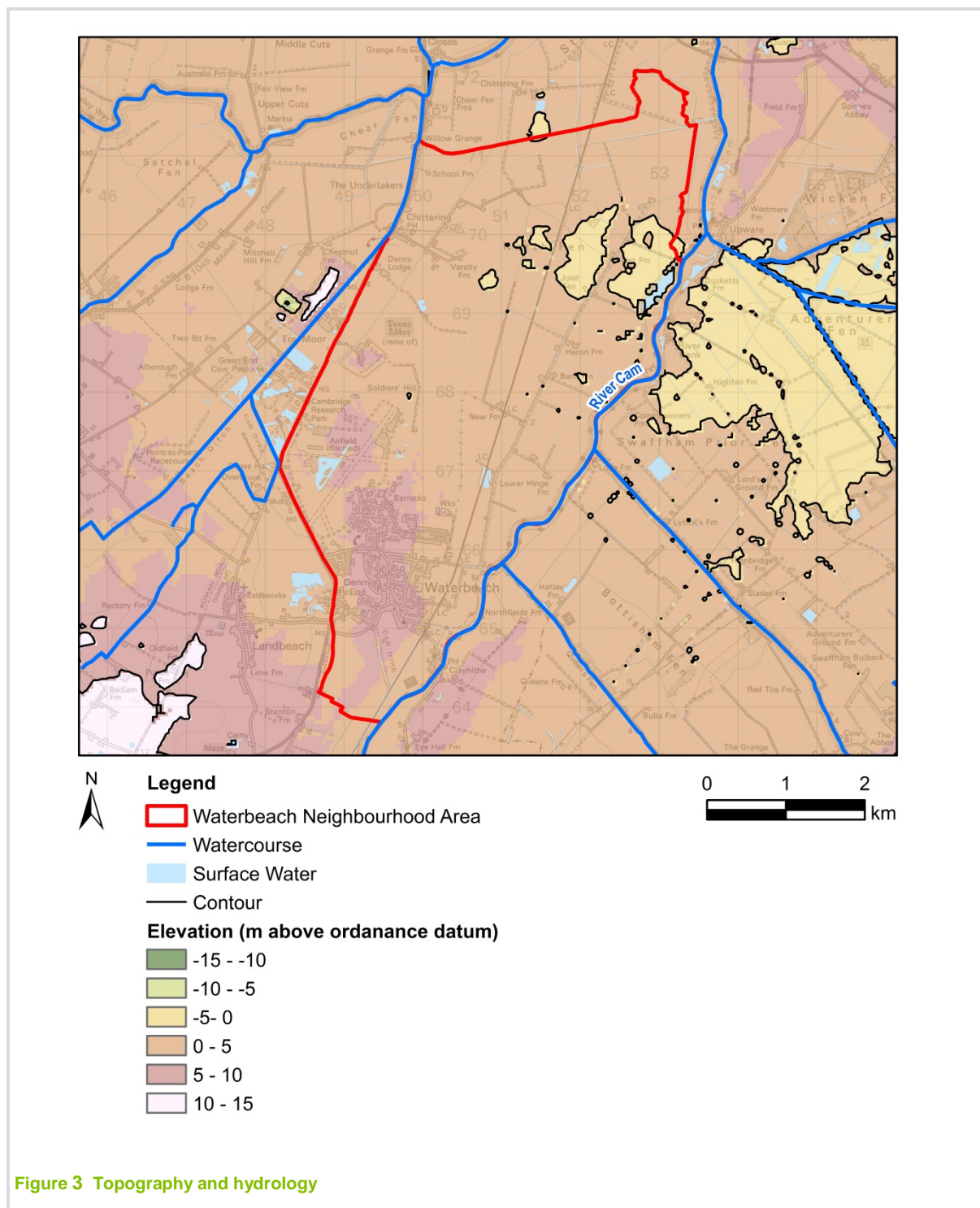


Figure 3 Topography and hydrology

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## 4.3 Cultural Factors

### 4.3.1 Land Use and land-cover

The dominant land use within the parish is principally agricultural. Large-scale arable fields are common, particularly in the drained Fenland in the north and east. Historic names, such as Fidwell Fen, North Fen and Fen Rivers Way have survived until the present day. Whilst hedgerows and trees often follow the routes of droves, they are generally absent along field boundaries and this increases the sense of openness, remoteness and



isolation. Remote, isolated farms and agricultural buildings are present within the rural northern and central parts for the parish set within large agricultural fields.

In the rural areas of the parish woodland is almost entirely absent and trees are sporadic. There are some small blocks of woodland within the Waterbeach Barracks, comprising mixed broadleaved woodland and coniferous plantations. Cow Hollow Wood is a small community woodland in the south east of the parish and makes the largest single contribution to woodland cover. Field drains and boundaries are largely devoid of vegetation with only small groups of shrubs, hedgerows or trees represented within the landscape. In contrast, the River Cam contains linear tree belts providing riparian vegetation, such as Willow, enclosing sections of the River Cam. Other land uses within the rural landscape include a disused golf course associated with the barracks to the north of the village.

Waterbeach contains a range of land uses, from predominantly residential in the village, with commercial areas military uses on the periphery of the settlement. Agricultural land uses making up the largest land use in the study area at the rural areas. Upware and Chittering lie north of Waterbeach and consist of a collection of a small number of residential buildings and farmsteads. Upware is located on the River Cam and has a marina and a loch. The River Cam is home to a number of water based clubs such as the Cambridge Motor Boat Club and Cam Sailing Club.

A Romano-British settlement at Chittering in the north of the study area hosts a series of earthworks representing remains of a substantial farming settlement dating back to the Roman period. The site lies south of the A10 and contains findings of pottery, house foundations and crop marks indicating the full extents of this settlement. This shows a strong historical reference to settlements in Waterbeach giving a rich built heritage to the parish.

Waterbeach Barracks would have added to the rich diversity of land uses at Waterbeach as a former military base. This characteristic in itself is typical of the region, as East of England was home to several airfields now largely retired or redeveloped. The airfield served as base command in the Second World War and offered community facilities to the local people of Waterbeach. Now the site is closed to the public with a small portion of the site still in use mainly to house military personnel. The majority of the site has been derelict since 2013 with the exception of squash courts, tennis courts and a small museum.



**Photograph 4** -The above image is from Waterbeach Barracks facing north-east at a point adjacent to the southern part of the runway.



In the village the majority of dwellings are in a well maintained condition, with few areas of the parish containing dwellings suffering from poor maintenance or neglect. The parish contains a range of residential estates with well-kept buildings including roofs, chimneys and facades. Front gardens are well maintained with mown grass and trimmed hedgerows. The public open space is clearly well used with no signs of littering and few examples of graffiti or vandalism.

The business park at Pembroke Avenue on the western edge of the village is occupied by a wide range of businesses, including a brewery, a taxi company, a sign builders, a laser cutting metal fabricators and many more. Some have global connections with companies such as Samsung and provide services to range of local and global markets giving a strong economy to Waterbeach.

Waterbeach Barracks is currently an ex-military site with only a small number of buildings on site still in use, to house military personnel. The site contains large number of aircraft hangers, golf course, swimming pool and warehouses as well as big areas of hard surfacing. The majority of the ex-military base has been left unmanaged since 2013.

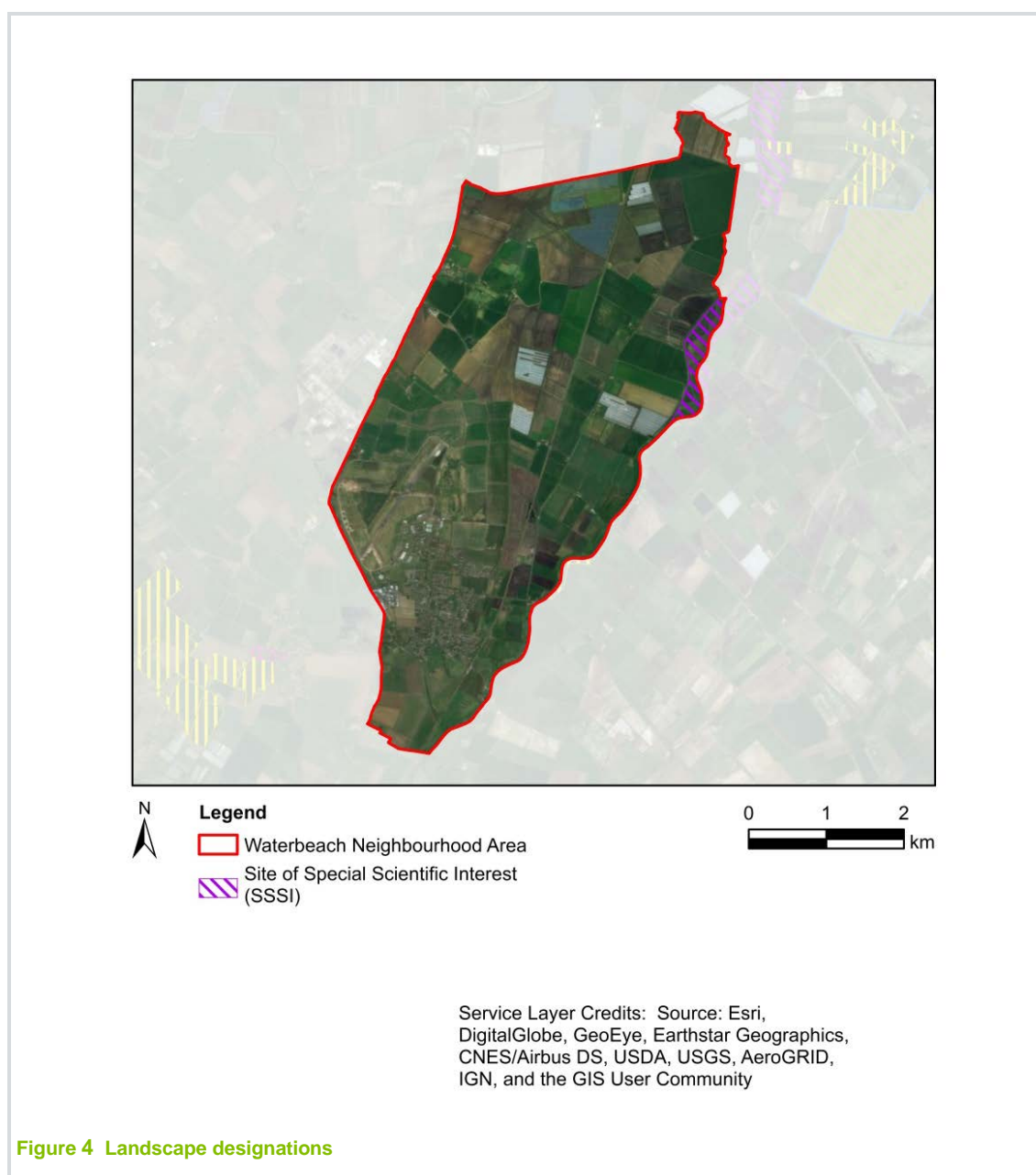


Figure 4 Landscape designations

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### 4.3.2 Movement and Connectivity

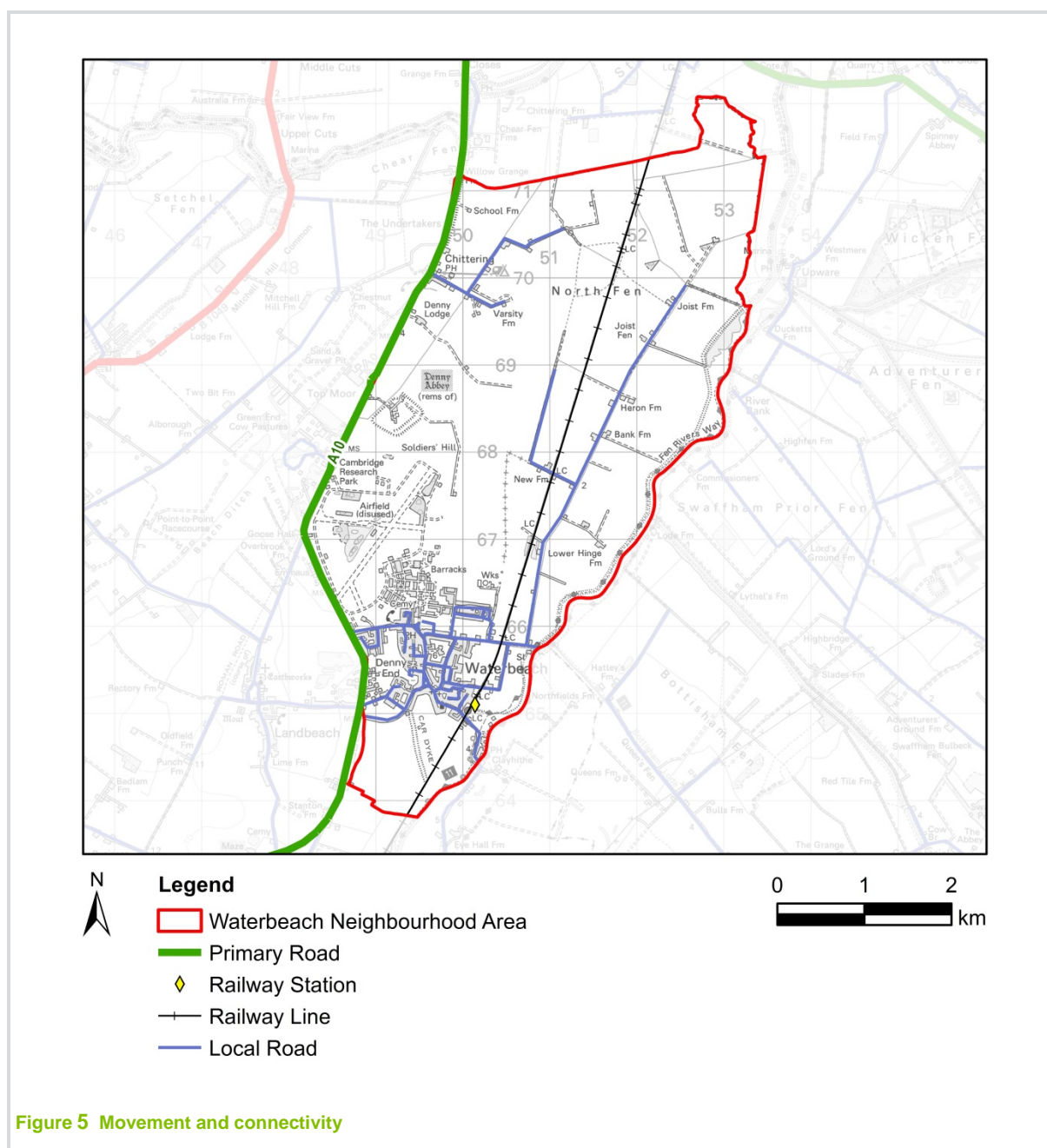
The primary route into Waterbeach is via the A10, which follows the full length of western boundary of the parish. This historic route, which is now a trunk road, links central London with King's Lynn on the north Norfolk coast.

There are two access points from the A10 into Waterbeach. There is a signalised junction where the single-carriageway A10 meets Denny End Road, which often causes congestion at peak times. Denny End Road enters the village at the northern end providing access to Waterbeach Barracks and the top of the High Street. Entering the village at the southern end is Car Dyke Road in the west and Clayhithe Road in the east forming a single road and passing Green Side at the centre of the village. Off-street parking is rare in the centre of the village, leading to an abundance of on-street parking, which slows traffic passing through the village. This is also true of Station Road, which is susceptible to long queues of traffic where cars are parked on the road forcing vehicles to wait and pass one at a time. A common feature of modern estates is cul-de-sacs, such as Hartley Close. There are few connections between neighbouring estates, which reduces legibility and permeability and discourages community interaction. A bus service operates from the centre of the village at Green Side to the centre of Cambridge as well as nearby settlements. Green Side is a focus of activity as the majority of traffic passes through this central point of village, where local services such as shops are located.

The rural roads are broadly straight and level with the surrounding landscape. Routes north of village through the open agricultural landscape are generally limited to narrow 'droves', such as Burgess's Drove, most of which are unmade private tracks which stop at isolated farms.

A small number of Public Rights of Way cross the conservation area and link Green Side to the rural landscape to the west and to the north, extending out into North Fen. Timber finger sign posts within the conservation area enhance wayfinding through the village. Fen Rivers Way and National Cycle Route 11 both follow the tow path of the River Cam, providing recreational routes to Cambridge and Ely. Public rights of way are otherwise scarce and large tracts of Fenland in the north and the former Barracks site are not publicly accessible for this reason.

Waterbeach railway station is located to the south east of the village on a route which is known as the Fen Line. This route provides connections to national rail services to London King's Cross to the south via Cambridge and to King's Lynn to the north, sustaining Waterbeach's as a commuter settlement. The railway line crosses three roads on the eastern edge of the village at Bannold Road, Burgess Road and Clayhithe Road. All have a heightened sense of departure from the village to rural countryside and forms gateways to Waterbeach.



**Figure 5 Movement and connectivity**

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### 4.3.3 Settlement and built form

Historical road layouts in the centre of the village have created a fine urban grain in contrast to the more coarse urban grain found at the barracks and the business park at Pembroke Avenue. Green Belt has curtailed expansion of residential development in the south. As a consequence, modern residential expansion is concentrated on the northern and eastern edge of the village.

Buildings throughout the village are mainly residential two storeys with occasional single storey buildings such as the bungalow on No. 35 Rosemary Road. There is a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraces houses which create a varied streetscape. Few larger buildings existing with the exception of religious buildings such as Waterbeach Baptist Church and St John The Evangelist Church, creates little variation of scale and massing to the village. Commonly voids are created between non-terraced houses often providing rear access and/or private driveways.

Buildings which line parts of the High Street in the north of the conservation area are set within large plots with front gardens and frontages setback from the road. In contrast buildings at the southern end of the High Street

were built on a plot by plot basis and set within narrower linear plots, most fronting directly on to the road with little or no front gardens. This tighter urban grain and the minor variations in architectural style give a richness to the character to the High Street and Green Side and forming part of Waterbeach's distinctive character. The buildings vernacular is mainly two or two and half storeys in height and typically constructed in buff Cambridgeshire gault brick with slate roofs and multiple chimneys. Chimneys are a key element of the character of the conservation area and add variety and interest to the roofscape. Houses with arched sash windows on the first floor and semi-circular gothic fan light window above the front door are typical of the historic houses along High Street, for example Number 30. Timber framed houses such as Denny House at High Street are less frequent but add to the rich character of the village. Shallow slate roofs and a subtle use of patterning in brick work is also typical. Red brick detailing over windows, in facades, and in quoining uses bespoke architectural detailing to enhance the local identity. Shallow eaves, sash windows and doors flanked by relief columns occur throughout the parish. Green Side creates a distinctive break from the urban context as residential buildings enclose the space creating a focal point and strong sense of place. In the rural parts the layout shows a more dispersed settlement pattern with clusters of farm houses linked by a network of small lanes and minor roads.



**Photograph 5** -The photograph above illustrates distinctive residential architectural design typical of Waterbeach and South Cambridgeshire.

Materials typically include red brick, in contrast the local buff brick and rendered finishes with colours not evident in the existing character of the village. Few recent developments improve the connectivity with limited links to the existing road network result in many cul-de-sacs. Occasional houses of black weather boarding (including modern buildings) coherently blending with the existing character of the village.

Car Dyke Road and Denny End Road create links east-west across the village linking with the historic High Street and forming the principle historic layout of the village. The village shows evidence of an historic urban grain central to the village green, of narrow plots with long gardens. The extent of the village has grown rapidly in the later twentieth and twenty-first centuries, evident by the range of plots sizes with more recent dwellings often centrally located within plots creating setback frontages. Modern housing estates on the periphery of the village contain a range of architectural style and materials, typically two storeys, with little reference to the setting and character of Waterbeach. The buildings contain modern windows of uPVC and red brick stone work with little craftsmanship of detailing. These estates are generic character and do not contribute to the distinctiveness of Waterbeach.

Cambridgeshire gault buff brick and white rendered facades are the most common materials and designs throughout the historic core of the settlement and are typical of Cambridgeshire vernacular. Occasionally modern buildings such as the Chung HWA takeaway shop that lie on the edge of Green Side show little evidence of local characteristics in the quality of materials or architectural detailing poorly reflecting its location in the conservation area.





**Photograph 6** - Residential estates (see photograph above), built in the late twentieth century, make up a large proportion of the village of Waterbeach built up area. These estates are typical of their era, with use of national building styles which pay little attention to the local character or attention to detail but contributing to the majority of the residential development.

In contrast to the houses of the village, at the business park on Pembroke Avenue and the Waterbeach Barracks a series of large warehouses and hangers are located with comparable size and form. Both locations contain buildings typically of three storeys or more with painted metal cladding and corrugated roofs. The facades are often featureless punctuated by a limited number of windows, if any, with the exception of a set of large doors providing access for large vehicles or machinery and a single door for access to warehouse office. These warehouses and aircraft hangers are normally set within larger plots with large areas of hard surfacing to the front to accommodate for parking and storage of materials or vehicles. These elements create isolated locations of modern coarse urban grain which contrasts with the finer historic urban grain located in the village.

In setback locations, off main roads or minor roads lie a couple of mobile home parks providing important variation to the housing type within the village. Their subtle locations behind existing building frontages and planted entrances impede intervisibility, preventing the disturbance of the existing surrounding character. This allows the parks to provide for a potentially underprovided sector of housing as a benefit to local residence without disturbing the existing urban setting.

Gardens range depending of the house type and the location of the building. Green Side houses consistently lack front gardens with buildings adjacent to the road or footpath, creating an almost continuous line of building frontages. By contrast planted front gardens further north up High Street, are houses with short brick walls and over reaching hedgerows and occasional trees, all well maintained. These elements add a verdant punctuation to the existing street scene through the village. A range of front garden spaces create a rich texture through the village.



**Photograph 7** - The above photograph demonstrates the architectural role of listed buildings along High Street at Waterbeach.

A number of modern housing estates have been created on the northern and eastern edges of the settlement, of higher densities than the more historic sections of the village. More recent development at Bannold Road of predominantly two and two and half storey buildings shows little evidence of local vernacular in the architecture of the buildings. Similarly, recent military residential estates such as those at Park Crescent and Kirby Road show few architectural features or materials typical of Waterbeach or the wider region of Cambridgeshire.

However, some twenty first century developments such as Cheason Walk do contain elements reflective of local vernacular and are successful in creating modern housing which enhances the sense of place by appropriately reflecting the existing character. This modern development outside the conservation area adopts high quality standards and contributes to the existing character of the village.



**Photograph 8** – New build properties on Levitt Lane

#### 4.3.4 Heritage Assets –

A total of 23 designated heritage assets are located within the neighbourhood plan area. These include 4 scheduled monuments and 19 listed buildings. A number of buildings have also been identified which are not designated, but which are considered to positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area and are of local interest.

##### **Locally listed Buildings**

Local lists form a vital element in the reinforcement of a sense of local character and distinctiveness in the historic environment. By identifying significant local heritage assets, they play an essential role in informing the development of local plans. No formal local list has been adopted for the neighbourhood plan area by South Cambridgeshire District Council; however a number of buildings and structures have been identified which positively contribute to the character and heritage of the area.

These are as follows:

A large number of 19<sup>th</sup> century houses, constructed of gault brick, survive in the historic core of the village and make a significant contribution of the character and appearance of the area due to their prevalence and generally high architectural quality. They reflect a time of population expansion in the village, and an increased density in the grain of development. These are of historic and architectural interest and would benefit from local designation. Notable example can be found at: Beach House, May Cottage, 25 and 33 High Street; 1, 30 and 32 Greenside; 16 Cambridge Road and 19 Station Road.

Waterbeach Baptist Church is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886, and is constructed of gault brick with red brick dressings in a typical non-conformist chapel style. Architectural interest is derived from its contribution to the diversity of historic building types within the historic core, and historic interest is derived from the evidence the building holds for non-conformist religious practices in Waterbeach from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to present.

The former Gas Works, now a domestic property, was built from 1866 and comprise a single storey range of buildings built of gault brick with red brick dressings. Historic interest is derived from the evidential value for energy production in the village. The building is typical of 19<sup>th</sup> century small scale energy production centres and is unique in the village; therefore it also is of architectural interest. The Old School Rooms were built in 1839 as a parochial school, and are now converted to domestic use. The building is attached to the rear of 9 Greenside and

comprises a single storey school room, with a retro fitted attic storey, constructed of gault brick with decorative barge boards. Historic interest is derived from the building's contribution to the history of education provisions in the village. Architectural interest is also derived from the contribution to the diversity of building types in the historic core.

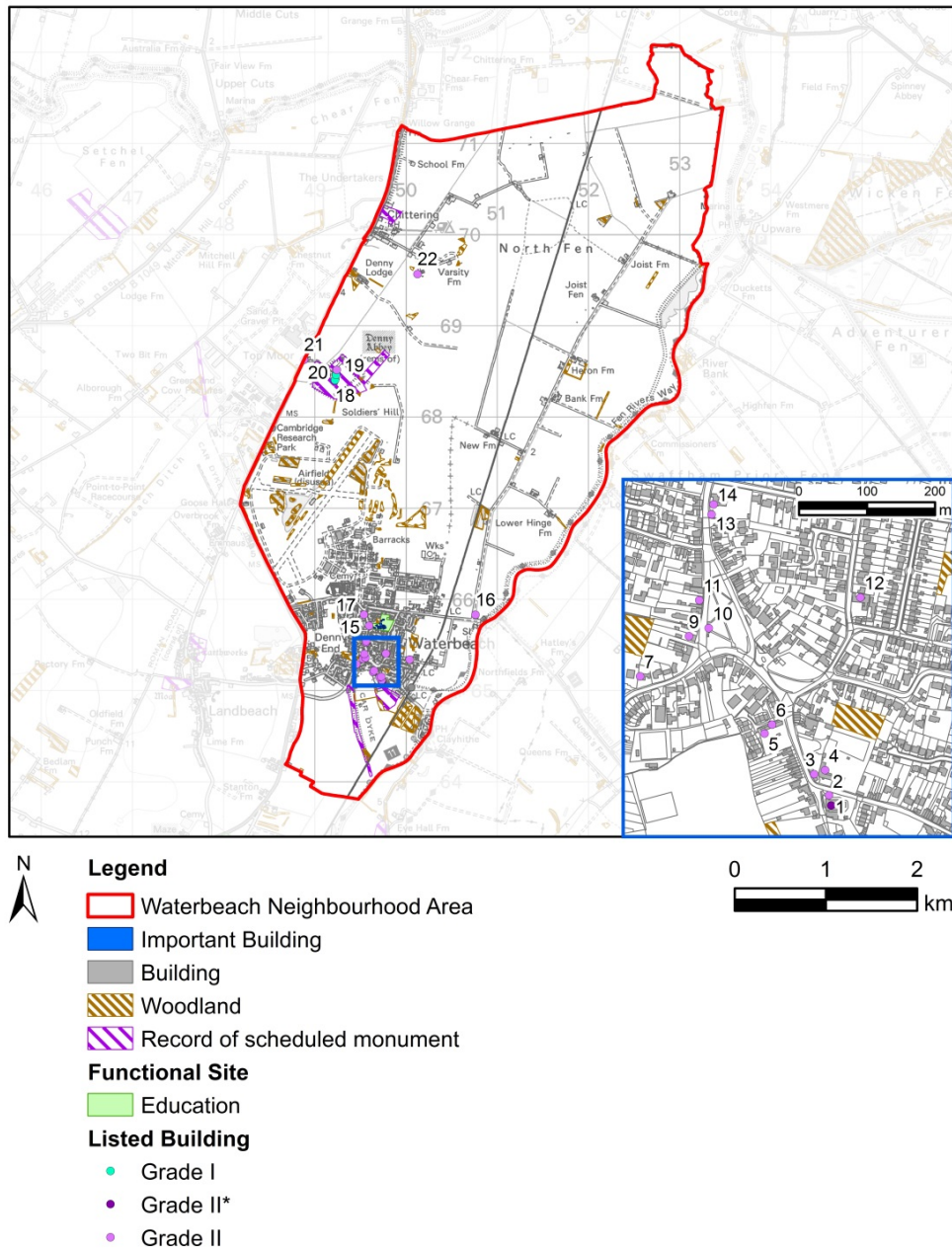
No.14 Cambridge Road comprises an infant's school and while having been built by the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 it is not annotated as a school until the second edition in 1901. It is built of gault brick and is most notable for its pedimented gables and eaves cornices, as well as large fanlights and segmented head windows. As well as deriving historic interest from its contribution to the history of educational provisions in the village, the building is of high architectural quality and creates a visual impact on entering the historic core on Cambridge Road from the south-east.

Three historic public houses survive in the neighbourhood plan area. These structures demonstrate building types and architectural styles in the village, as well as the historic social practices of the village's inhabitants. They therefore are of both architectural and historic interest.

They comprise:

- The Brewery Tap public house is of 19<sup>th</sup> century origin, shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887 as a Brewery. Of typical construction for the region, the pub is built of painted gault brick with a hipped roof and shallow eaves.
- The Sun Inn is of 18<sup>th</sup> century origin, built before 1797. It is built of brick, painted white, with a steeply pitched tiled roof. A modern ground storey extension projects from the front of the property and does not contribute to its significance.
- The White Horse public house is known to have been established before 1797 and is recorded on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886. The north range of the building is characterised by a gambrel roof with first storey dormers, while the south is of a lower height with fishscale tiled roof. Both ranges are two storeys.





**Figure 6 Land use, built form, heritage assets**

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### 4.3.5 Green space and public realm

Examples of public open space exist within the village, punctuating the surrounding built form with valuable areas of verdant planting which contrasts to the surrounding built form. Generally throughout the village there is a lack of accessible green space increasing the value on the small number of existing spaces. Those existing green spaces are designated meaning that development will not be permitted within or adjacent to these areas if it would have an adverse impact on their character, amenity, tranquillity or function of the village. These spaces are largely in the public realm, but also include the playing fields at Waterbeach Community Primary School and the St John Evangelist Church graveyard as well as private gardens. The gardens are designated for the amenity

value by landscape features including trees noting their contributions to the quality of the landscape in the village. Green Side is also designated and is the most prominent due to its central location. The tree lined central green provides a focal point and forms an important feature of Waterbeach as a settlement. The trees add height and stand much higher than the surrounding houses with wide canopies creating a series of intimate spaces around Green Side.

Denny Abbey is located in the northern rural area of Waterbeach with an Abbey set within a farmland museum, which is periodically open to the public. It is a well maintained historical museum which illustrates old farming techniques within the setting of the Abbey. Although isolated from the urban setting of the village this public open space is a valuable asset to the amount of publicly accessible open space.

Waterbeach Recreation Ground and the River Cam corridor are large contributors to the provision of recreational open space at Waterbeach. South of Car Dyke Road Waterbeach Recreation Ground comprises playing fields, a bowling green, a large children's playground and Skate Park all are maintained to a good standard. The River Cam is also home to a number of water based clubs such as the Cambridge Motor Boat Club and Cam Sailing Club providing sport and recreational facilities. Allotments are located at Glebe Road, on the western edge of the village and Burgess Road at the eastern edge. provide a valuable community resource. Cow Hollow Wood is also a community initiative north of the Clayhithe Road on the southern edge of the study area. It is a woodland trust wood and was planted by volunteers in 2000 and is open to the community. The woodland is 70% woodland cover with 30% open space and the features within the wood have been named by the pupils of the local school.



**Photograph 9** - The above picture is of Waterbeach Recreation Ground and is a large area of public open space in the south of Waterbeach and hosts a wide range of facilities.

A significant proportion of Waterbeach Barracks is open landscape including conifer plantation woodlands and woodland blocks. A wide variety of grasses and ruderal scrub form the unmanaged peripheral western and northern edges of the old airfield including a large lake provide a range of unique habitats adding to the local biodiversity. These elements are large contributors to the local green infrastructure.

Public realm is limited to asphalt pavements lining the streets and a number of incidental hard paved areas within the built up area of Waterbeach. These occasionally open up to create larger areas of asphalt for example at the junction of Chapel Street and Green Side on the western edge of the green. However these spaces offer little value, except for creating openness within the street. Similarly on the opposite side of the green poorly designed space outside Chung Hwa result in large areas of hard surfacing without maximising the potential of the space or adding to the attractiveness reflective of its high profile and prominent location within the conservation area.

### 4.3.6 Views

Views within the urban areas of Waterbeach are generally short, curtailed by the historical street layout and the density of the buildings. This, coupled with shallow plot frontages to houses in the conservation area, contribute to the intimate sense of place within the village. This characteristic prevents local landmarks, such as the tower of St John The Evangelist Church, from being viewed from any distance within the settlement. However views are possible of the church spire from a number of locations within the wider study area to the south. Views out of the central green at the Green Side are contained by the houses surrounding the green creating a sense of enclosure and enhancing the area as a focal point for the village.

Views from Waterbeach train station look south across the rural landscape beyond the parish boundary. Similar views are experienced from the train and form an important transition from leaving the city of Cambridge and entering the rural Fenlands. Narrow views of the built form of Cambridge are replaced with long distance uninterrupted views across features fields making for a dramatic landscape and creating a sense of arrival to the countryside.

Central and northern rural areas of Waterbeach give rise to large open views with big skies, which are typically characteristic of Cambridgeshire Fenland. These views are created by an absence of features associated with large settlements and the presence of dramatic flat agricultural fields which lack boundary vegetation creating a large scale setting. Routes along long straight droves leaving the settlement heading north give opportunities for such views. These views contribute to the sense of remoteness and tranquillity, typical characteristics of this part of the parish.



**Photograph 10** - The photograph above illustrates the views across the rural parts of Waterbeach.

Views within Waterbeach Barracks permeate through the built form as large scale buildings and old aircraft hangers sit within large plots set back behind large areas of grass reminiscent of an institutional setting. These views create the sense of being on a grand and well considered landscape. However, on the rural edged of the barracks open views of the landscape including woodlands and the lake, are possible. The northern rural edge of the barracks allows for views north across neighbouring agricultural land replicating those views experienced in the northern and central areas of the parish.



### 4.3.7 Cultural Associations

Denny Abbey and Waterbeach Abbey are open to the public and form prominent features within the cultural, religious and historical centre of Waterbeach. In more recent years the Waterbeach Barracks has been the focus of discussion regarding the creation of a new town, having historically contributed to the war efforts by housing the Royal Air Force and RAF Bomber Command in 1940. The village of Waterbeach has a strong connection with the barracks and the prominent role it played in contributing to the formation of the village and community.

Notably the Waterbeach Baptist church was famous for its close connections with Charles Haddon Spurgeon, a highly influential preacher also known as the “Prince of Preachers”. The church’s history makes reference to the presence of Spurgeon as the preacher at Waterbeach, where he began his ministry.

A prominent cultural event took place in Waterbeach in 2007, with Tom Hardy and Benedict Cumberbatch taking part in a televised dramatisation of the award winning book by Alexander Masters ‘Stuart: A Life Backwards’. The production was set in and around Waterbeach and was later nominated for a BAFTA in 2008. This prominent production elevated the profile of the village and is a cherished part of Waterbeach’s cultural history.

## 5. Managing Change

The character of Waterbeach described above is the result of a range of interactions between natural and human processes. This evolution is supported by the section on historical development, which describes how the structure and character of the area have changed over time. Together this provides a baseline against which change can be monitored and managed.

The evolution of the landscape will continue and therefore the management of change is essential to ensure that sustainable social, environmental and economic outcomes are achieved. This section, therefore, considers various factors which may influence change and inform the policies set out in the Waterbeach neighbourhood plan.

Pressure for change from Waterbeach new town at Waterbeach Barracks is the most significant pressure on the neighbourhood plan area. The emerging Local Plan (at examination at time of writing) includes a strategic site allocation for 8,000 to 9,000 new homes at the former Waterbeach Barracks and land to the east and north. In tandem to this, developers are progressing their proposals. An outline planning application was submitted in February 2017 for 6,500 by Urban and Civic plc (not yet determined) and RLW Estates are proposing an additional 4,000 new home

Potential relocation of the train station is being suggested north of the village. This will include new development proposals for housing and a number of other features and facilities. This is currently being consulted on and is subject to a formal application.

Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust was granted outline planning permission in 2013 for the 220 acres site south of Car Dyke Road at Waterbeach. These proposals rely, in part, on access to Waterbeach train station in its current location. This facility will include swimming, cycling, canoeing, angling and BMX biking centred around a 2km rowing lake. This large facility will create 150 acres of new woodland and wide range of new habitats for the benefit of the local wildlife and boosting biodiversity in the area. Currently a detailed planning submission is being submitted.

### 5.1 Positive aspects of character

There are a number of positive aspects of character which should be sustained, reinforced or enhanced. These relate to:

- Coherent use of materials and architectural styles including scale, density and building line typical of Cambridgeshire within the historical core of the village along the High Street;
- Roof lines, in particular along the Green Side, and the residential roads leading to the centre of the conservation area. Many retain their unique characteristic roof line including shallow pitches roofs and multiple chimney stacks;
- Simple materials palette, such as gault buff brick and shallow slate roofs and a limited use of patterning in brick work. Shallow eaves, sash windows and doors flanked by relief columns are typical of the parish. A



number of historic houses identified in the conservation area appraisal contribute to the distinctive historical core of the village;

- Historic droves and dykes are distinctive features in the flat agricultural landscape;
- The traditional timber finger posts signs in the conservation area, enhances the character of the village;
- Open space including the Green Side providing high quality public green space centrally located to the conservation area providing a focal point for the community and the setting for a range of historical buildings;
- Sense of departure from the village at the level crossing at Clayhithe Road, Burgess Road and Bannold Road,
- Gateways as the sense of departure from the village over level crossing into the rural Fenland beyond;
- Sense of remoteness and isolation, which contribute to the high levels of tranquillity in the open farmland and along the River Cam;
- Allotments and community woodland contribute to green infrastructure and provide amenity space on the edge of the village;
- Few derelict or vacant sites are evident through the study area indicates the high level of care taken by home owners and the community regarding the appearance and preservation of the built environment;
- Diverse mix of land uses within the village, including residential, recreational, educational, agricultural and commercial creates a vibrant community and a strong local economy.

In summary, a large number of historic buildings survive within the historic core of Waterbeach. These largely comprise polite 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, constructed of gault brick, although a small number of vernacular timber framed buildings survive. Open spaces dated to the medieval origins of the village remaining key focal points at heart of the settlement. The prevalence of tightly winding roads in the village's street pattern emphasised at road junctions deflect sight lines creating a type of closed vista drawing the eye forward onto unseen spaces creating visual interest and intrigue. Examples this can be found at the junction of Chapel Street and Greenside, and at the St John The Evangelist Church on Station Road. Building frontages project and recede along historic pavement edge, some with and some without front gardens and boundary treatments. These elements combine to provide an impression of intricacy in the built form, rather than a continuous fluid route passing through the settlement. The typical two storey height of buildings in the historic core enhances a sense of a human scale. However despite the narrow character of the streets and the close grain of development spaces do not feel enclosed or overcrowded.

## 5.2 Issues to be addressed

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management. These are principally related to

- A lack of green space within the built-up area of the village;
- Poor provision of public rights of way, especially connecting to existing public rights of way along the River Cam;
- A lack of landmark buildings reduces the legibility within the village;
- Low parking provision especially at the railway station leads to on-street parking, which creates bottlenecks and congestion, particularly at peak times. Cars parked around the eastern and western boundaries of the green at Green Side create a hard boundary which is incongruent with its historic character and setting;
- Poor connections between modern housing estates limiting movement and permeability;
- The signalised junction at Denny End Road causes congestion, particularly at peak times;
- Lack of space for new development within the current settlement boundary of Waterbeach;
- Dispersed retail units at the Green Side currently lack a focused area of retail provision which prevents a sense of destination being achieved;
- The Green Side lacks active frontages and could benefit from café and restaurants which spill out into the public realm. This under provision for restaurant and café outlets means the only alternative are limited to a small number of community venues and the occasional pub;

- The potential of the village green as a focal point of social activity is not properly realised. The hard boundary of parked cars mentioned above blocks views of the mature trees on the green, isolation the green and reducing the attractiveness of the central space.
- A number of recent rear garden developments have greatly increase the housing density;
- New developments along Bannold Road offer little useable open space. The development has only offered open space within the drainage basins at the front of the development which lack recreational usability. New developments at Waterbeach need to identify more practical and useable public open space;
- Lack of off street parking has resulted in on street parking along Station Road and around Green Side;
- Shops within the village centre show little consideration in their design, façades and signage;
- Historic shops on High Street are a great resource for the village and form part of the heritage but could be better promoted.
- Areas of modern residential development, such as on Station Road, attempt to replicate materials and styles of historic buildings, instead creating poor quality pastiches which lack aesthetic value. The lack of similarity of colour between modern areas of development and the historic core creates harsh visual distinctions between these areas.
- Public amenities at the centre of the village are not focused as to encourage social activity. For example the village notice board is directed into the busy junction of Cambridge Road and Greenside, closed off from the green in which it is located. In close proximity to the north, a bus stop appears inward looking and dark with a solid wall at its rear. This closes it off from the green and increases the physical distinction and distance between the streetscape on western Greenside and the green.

### 5.3 Sensitivity to change

There are also some elements of Waterbeach which are particularly sensitive to change. These relate principally to the visual exposure of the northern edge of the village and heritage assets (including non-listed historical assets) or buildings proposed beyond the conservation area.

- The northern edge of the village, with views over Waterbeach Barracks and the Fenland landscape;
- Buildings and other features of historical interest which are not listed or are outside the conservation area are particularly sensitive to change;
- The large wide open views experienced in the rural central and northern parts of Waterbeach are sensitive to new development which will impact on the views as development pressure increase in this part of Waterbeach;
- The sense of departure from the village when crossing the railways crossings at Clayhithe Road and Bannold Road;
- Green Belt designation to the south increases pressure on land at the north and east of Waterbeach for future development;
- The tranquillity of the rural landscape in the north and central parts of the parish, away from the village centre;
- Views from the station platform, south across the Fenlands;
- Large areas of hard surfacing around Green Side poorly reflect the true character of the village and have become detracting features in a high profile location where quality of the landscape should be paramount;
- Mobile home parks which currently contribute to the variety of housing types in the parish and will become under increasing pressure for redevelopment unless carefully considered and protected;
- Traditional timber fingerpost signs in the conservation area add a high quality element to the landscape and should be more widely used;
- New Town proposed at Waterbeach Barracks increases the sensitivity of the north western edge of the village. This is where the historical village will meet the proposed new development and will require appropriate design to allow for positive integration between the existing and the proposed settlements.

A small number of the historic buildings within the neighbourhood plan area are not protected by any designation. Therefore the majority of housing is susceptible to unsympathetic alterations to both their own fabric and that of their setting.

## 5.4 Character Management Principles

In order to address the issues highlighted above, principles for managing change in this area should focus on sustaining, reinforcing or enhancing those aspects which reinforce the local identity and sense of place within the village and protect its rural village character and setting. The following principles should be considered when defining policies with respect to heritage and character:

- New development and building alterations should use materials of a high quality, which respond to the character of the buildings in the area. They should have strong attention to architectural detailing typical of the distinctive character of Waterbeach;
- Retail opportunities central to the Green Side need to be unified, the village could benefit from a focused area of retail units such as the High Street;
- Infill development along the Green Side, High Street and where Cambridge Road connects with Station Road is likely to be less appropriate where it would result in an increase in density or the loss of gaps between buildings when viewed from the street;
- New development should respond to the village characteristics of Waterbeach, in particular plot widths and proportions, building lines, roof lines, heights, the scale of buildings, massing and boundary treatments;
- Alterations proposed to existing buildings including the adaption or replacement of external features should demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the history and design qualities evident. A clear rationale for how this is taken account of in the design of the alterations proposed should be provided;
- Buildings and features of historic interest or townscape interest identified in this assessment within and outside of the conservation area including their setting should be protected;
- The importance of trees in both public and private spaces needs to be addressed, as they are significant contributors to the character of Waterbeach. New development should not normally result in the loss of existing trees and tree groups and proposed trees should be incorporated into new development, increasingly so at the edge of the village;
- Proposed dwellings at the rural edge of the settlement should be set back from the street and boundary planting provided to maintain the distinction with the rural landscape as well as at a density reflective of the rural edge location;
- Discrete locations of mobile homes provide an important house type whilst retaining the character of Waterbeach;
- Informal recreational green space accompanied by appropriate planting should form the framework of new development;
- The rural landscape should be managed to retain its distinctive sense of remoteness and isolation.
- Limited examples of vandalism and graffiti enhances the quality of the experience felt traveling through the village and is a reflection of the enormous appreciation the community has for the character of its village.



**Photograph 11** - The photograph above shows the positive contribution mature trees and boundary brick walls make to the character of Waterbeach.

Modern development in close proximity to the historic core should be encouraged which is responsive to the historic character and appearance of the village.

The historic buildings which have been identified within this report as positively contributing to the character of the LCA should be considered in the production of any formally adopted list of non-designated heritage assets. Historic England has published 'Good Practice Guide for Local Heritage Listing' (HE, 2012), this should be used as a guide.

Equally Article 4 Directions under the General Permitted Development Order 2010 can be applied to individual buildings and are an appropriate measure in preventing incremental changes which may be of detriment to the character and appearance of the area.

Street furniture should be consistent, and of a type which is responsive to both the historic and modern areas of the village. This can enhance a sense of continuity in the village, and a shared sense of place across visually distinct and separate areas of the settlement.

The appropriate triangulation of public amenities at the green, and reduction of parked cars enclosing it, can enhance its function as a focal point for social activity. By locating the village notice board alongside the bus stop and telephone box, a connection between these will provide a linkage between activities and encourage a more active public space. Equally a bus stop which is open to the green at the rear can create a space for use by both people waiting for the bus and using the green. This will also serve to eliminate the truncation between the green and streetscape, restoring a key element of the traditional setting of the historic core.

In addition to policy protection, this assessment has identified projects or initiatives which could be financed through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (s106) contributions, or if the project is not eligible for these mechanisms, through other means of funding or delivery. CIL is a tool for local authorities to levy contributions from developers to help deliver infrastructure projects which benefit the local community – for more information, see <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/> community-infrastructure-levy/.

Section 106 agreements are site-specific and put in place to make it possible to approve a planning application that might not otherwise be acceptable in planning terms – for example, the provision of new green space. It is recommended to seek advice from the Local Planning Authority on what types of project can be funded through CIL and s106.



Projects and initiatives identified as having the potential to be brought forward by CIL, s106 or other means include:

- Traffic calming measures and provision of off-street car parking within the village centre;
- Improve the permeability and legibility of the route through Waterbeach when entering along Denny End Road;
- Waterbeach would benefit from improvements to public realm and an increased provision of public realm spaces;
- Provision of additional parking at the railway station to reduce the congestion caused by on-street parking on local roads;
- Improve public realm and provide more active frontages,
- Identify and pursue the designation of new public rights of way with the help of Cambridgeshire County Council and with the cooperation of landowners. This would improve sustainable access routes through the village and provide better access to countryside. This could include dedicated routes away from the existing busy roads.

## 6. Next steps and sources of further information

This study is intended to provide evidence to support the development of policies with respect to heritage and character for the Waterbeach Neighbourhood Plan. As such, it does not provide a comprehensive overview of the contribution of individual buildings, streets or spaces to the character of the area. It should be considered alongside other evidence gathered through the plan making process, such as detailed policy reviews, consultation responses and site options assessments and the evidence base of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

Other work which would strengthen the evidence base and provide a basis to monitor and manage future change includes:

- Carry out a more detailed study of the buildings and other features of historic or townscape interest identified in this report; and
- Develop design principles to provide a framework for future development in Waterbeach and create a basis for which detailed Design Codes for specific sites can be produced in line with the District Design Guide SPD;

A wealth of further information and support is available to assist Waterbeach Neighbourhood Group in applying the principles set out in this assessment. These principles form the basis of the production of the Waterbeach Design Principles, a document developed to inform land owners, developers and planners. The Waterbeach Design Principles are intended to be read alongside this document in order to achieve appropriate design in new developments. In identifying key characteristics and sensitive elements of Waterbeach's character these elements will be in the Waterbeach Design Principles to encourage houses builders and property owners to retain and enhance these elements in future developments. The Locality website is a useful starting point and is updated regularly. Current guidance which may be of interest includes:

- Community Rights and Heritage, July 2016: <http://mycommunity.org.uk/resources/community-rights-and-heritage/>
- Design in Neighbourhood Planning, July 2018: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/good-design-neighbourhood-planning/>

Further technical support is also available to priority neighbourhood planning groups and forums through Locality, funded by MHCLG. The other packages of support currently available are:

- Setting up a Neighbourhood Planning Group (in unparished areas only);
- Housing Needs Assessment (HNA);
- Site Options and Assessment;
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA);

- Evidence Base and Policy Development (EBPD);
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA);
- Masterplanning;
- Design including Design Codes;
- Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA); and
- Plan Health Check Review.

Further information is available in the Neighbourhood Planning Grant Guidance Notes produced by Locality:  
<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/>

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## Appendix A - Historic maps

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**Site Details:**  
1950-A3PDF-10000,


**Client Ref:** 43883  
**Report Ref:** CHAPS-CM-710047-43883-040518  
**Grid Ref:** 549498, 266334

**Map Name:** Provisional

**Map date:** 1958

**Scale:** 1:10,560

**Printed at:** 1:10,560



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 Revised 1957  
 Edition N/A  
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 Levelled N/A

Surveyed N/A  
 Revised 1957  
 Edition N/A  
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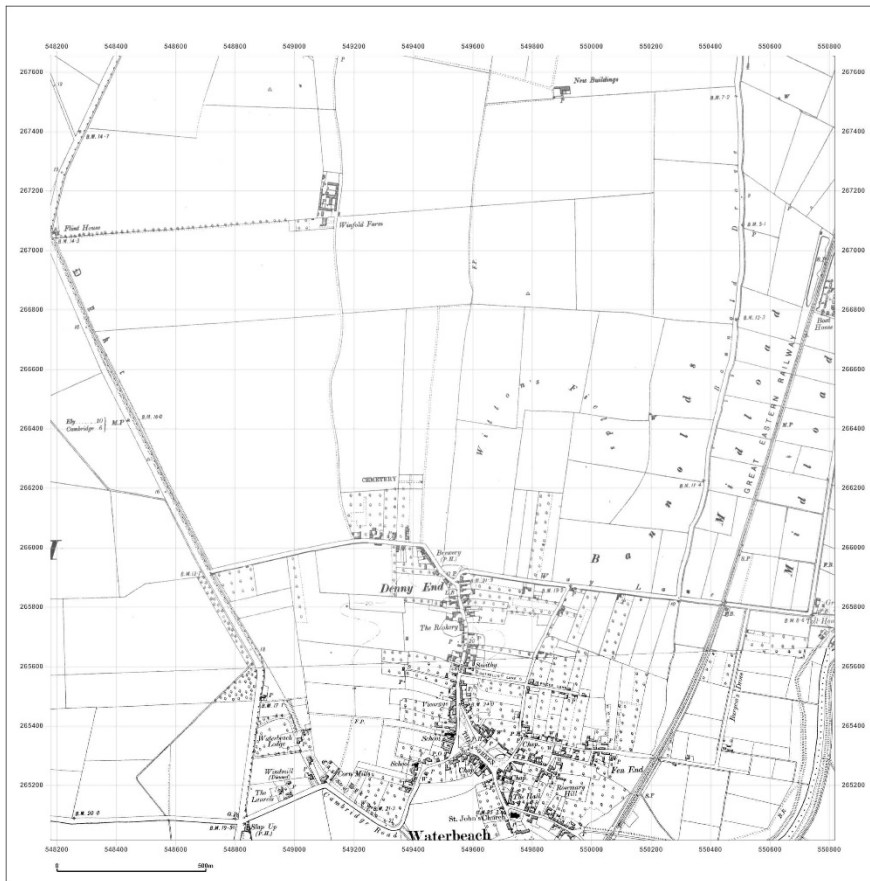
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[www.groundsure.com/sites/default/files/groundsure\\_legend.pdf](http://www.groundsure.com/sites/default/files/groundsure_legend.pdf)

Waterbeach Heritage and Character Assessment





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**Site Details:**  
1901 A3PDF-10000

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**Client Ref:** 43883  
**Report Ref:** CMAPS-CM-710048-43883-040518  
**Grid Ref:** 549498, 266334


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**Map Name:** County Series

**Map date:** 1901

**Scale:** 1:10,560

**Printed at:** 1:10,560



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Surveyed 1886  
Revised 1901  
Edition N/A  
Copyright N/A  
Levelled N/A

Surveyed N/A  
Revised N/A  
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Map legend available at:  
[www.groundsure.com/sites/default/files/groundsure\\_legend.pdf](http://www.groundsure.com/sites/default/files/groundsure_legend.pdf)

## Appendix B - Schedule of heritage assets

ID	LIST ENTRY	NAME	GRADE	EASTING	NORTHING	LIST DATE
1	50707	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II*	549737	265099.3608	31/08/1962
2		Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549733.83	265114.51	06/04/2017
3	50704	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549712	265145.3608	22/08/1984
4	50703	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549728	265151.3608	31/08/1962
5	50706	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549639	265205.3608	08/06/1984
6	50705	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549650	265218.3608	08/06/1984
7	50692	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549456	265289.3608	22/08/1984
8	50691	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	550039	265341.3608	15/09/1983
9	50697	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549528	265348.3608	22/08/1984
10	419419	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549557	265360.3608	21/07/1993
11	50698	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549543	265401.3608	22/08/1984
12	50708	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549780	265405.3608	06/07/1972
13	50700	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549561	265527.3608	22/08/1984
14	50699	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549564	265542.3608	31/08/1962
15	50701	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549596	265711.3608	22/08/1984
16	50690	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	550761	265831.3608	22/08/1984
17	50702	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549539	265833.3608	22/08/1984
18	50693	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	I	549221	268404.3608	31/08/1962
19	50694	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	I	549233	268460.3608	31/08/1962
20	50695	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	549240	268516.3608	31/08/1962

Cambridgeshire, CB25

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21	50696	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	548882	268628.3608	22/08/1984
22	50710	Waterbeach, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire, CB25	II	550125	269568.3608	12/06/1987



