

POTTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Annex D Character Assessment

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Potton Town Council

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1 Introduction

A Neighbourhood Plan is a way of helping local communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live and work. It can be used to:

- Develop a shared vision for the neighbourhood
- Choose where new homes, shops, offices and other development should be built
- Identify and protect important local green spaces
- Influence what new buildings should look like



This Character Assessment is an important part of the last item.

The purpose of a Character Assessment is to understand and record the distinct features of a town, which combine to create its unique character. The approach we have used is to identify broad character areas using on-site fieldwork and record this on a pro-forma. This has then been used together with local knowledge to write up the text. We have then added photographs to illustrate the houses and other features described.

Within each of the character areas there are houses or other property not typical of the general character of the area. What we have done is to try and capture the general character of an area and ignore individual properties that are not typical. In the Conservation Area, on-site fieldwork has been supplemented by reference to a number of existing published works to assist us in heritage aspects but we have followed the same process as the other areas.

Members of the Potton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group carried out all the on-site fieldwork.

We hope this Character Assessment will help developers, designers and builders produce high quality designs of new houses and other buildings in accordance with our 'vision' for the future of the town. We also hope any new designs for development will build on, or reflect some of the identified character aspects of Potton that make Potton a unique market town and not just another place to build standard developer housing.



VISION

- Potton will retain its character as a small Georgian Market Town with a vibrant market square that has a variety of shops and services to meet the needs of the Town's residents.
- There will be a controlled, proportionate and uniform growth over the period of the Plan with sustainable developments that meet the needs of the town and its residents.
- Encourage and support growth and development of small businesses in the Town to promote local employment.
- Retain an infrastructure that meets the needs of the Town and has the capacity to support future growth.
- Provide good leisure facilities to meet the needs of the whole Town.
- Endorse policies that have a positive effect on the environment and provide a high quality natural environment that protects wildlife.
- Provide a network of footpaths and cycle-ways linking major areas of the Town to encourage pedestrians and cyclists with associated Environmental and Parking benefits.
- Ease parking congestion in the Market Square with provision made for the use of alternative transportation methods.



2 Historical Development of Potton

Potton's recorded history stretches back over a millennium. The first recorded mention of 'Potune' is in a grant of land to Ramsey Abbey by the Saxon Aelfhelm. In the Domesday Book in 1086 'Potone had 18 villagers, 2 freemen, 13 smallholders and 3 serfs'. This would suggest a total population of around 100.

A market was granted by King William II in 1094 which could have been held in the churchyard before moving to its present site in the early 13th century. This was to develop into one of the most important in Bedfordshire by the 18th century. It declined in Victorian times until only a Horse Fair was left in the 1930s.

The prosperity of Potton as a market town is reflected in its oldest houses on the south side of the Market Square and in Sun Street. These have timber frames which may have originated in late medieval or early Tudor times.

The Great Fire of Potton in 1783 destroyed King Street and around half of the Market Square as well as some of the Brook Street area. It was reputed to have burnt for a day and caused over £25,000 of damage. The rebuilding of this part of Potton has provided a rich inheritance of Georgian buildings.

The railway era began in 1857 when the Shannon steam engine started its journey between Sandy and Potton. Potton railway station opened on the Bedford to Cambridge railway a few years later on a new site on Sandy Road. The last train left Potton station on 30th December 1967. The railway era contributed to the decline of Potton market but enabled the development of market gardening by providing easy access to London markets.

The Board Schools opened in purpose built buildings in 1876, bringing Potton into the new era of National education for all. At this time there were around 2000 Pottonians. The schools went through a number of organisational changes until they were replaced by the Everton Road Schools and were demolished in 1982

A series of minor fires prompted the building of a fire station in 1887 and the formation of a Volunteer Fire Brigade. This building is now the Community Centre and Town Council Offices in Brook End.

Over 30 pubs and inns as well as two breweries were listed in 1903 giving 2,033 Pottonians plenty of choice for drinking!

The old Market Square Shambles building was replaced by the present Clock House in 1956 for a town whose population was still just over 2,000. The Tanyard closed in 1970 in a town whose population had risen to 3,026 with many more commuting rather than working locally. It had provided local employment in producing leather and parchment. A gradual infilling of land in Potton helped it to grow and enable local services to continue. By the 2011 census the town had steadily grown to 4,870.

Potton has developed more small businesses to take the place of larger employers. It has a wide range of social groups, including thriving sports and music groups and has strong Community organisations which put on events such as the annual Potton Show and the biennial Party on Potton.



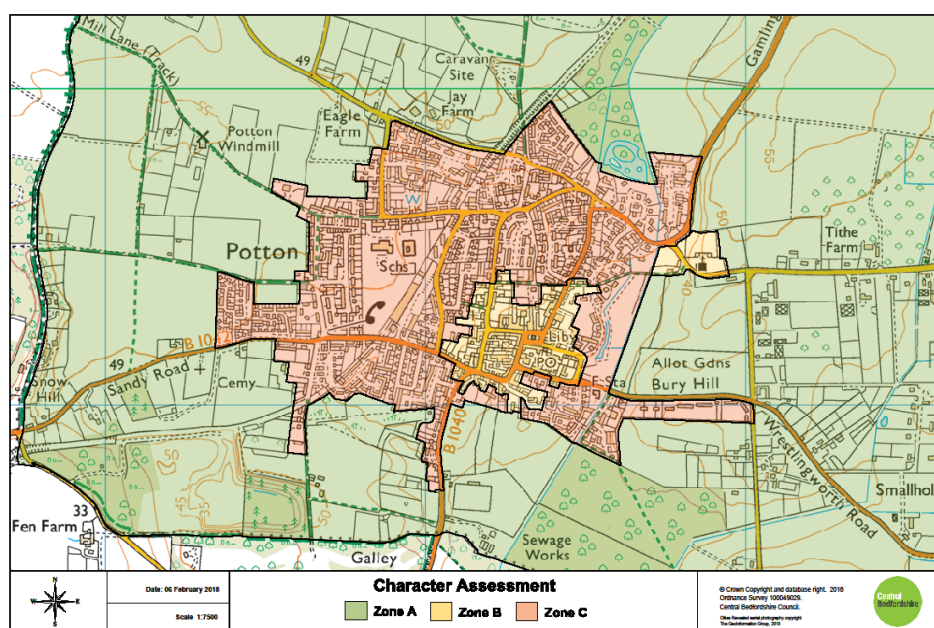
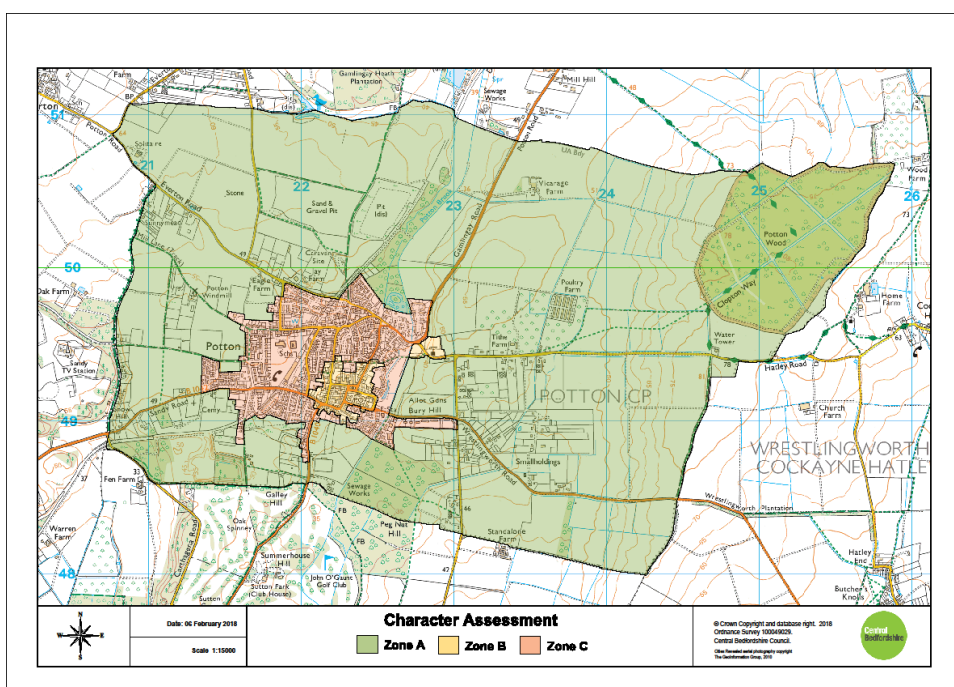
Potton has a unique history which is still being written today and which the archives of the history society will continue to record for future generations of Pottonians.



3 Character Area Assessments

In order to carry out this Character Assessment we have divided the town into 3 geographical areas shown on the plans below. The areas are:

- Zone A – Area outside the settlement area within the NP area. Principally rural and agricultural.
- Zone B – Conservation area.
- Zone C – Mixed residential and light industrial with views to Greensands Ridge to the North, West and East.





3.1 Zone A - Boundary of Neighbourhood Plan Area

3.1.1 Summary of key defining characteristics / other observations

Potton is situated at the edge of the south-east facing dip slope of the Greensand Ridge. The slope gradually falls away into the vales of Wrestlingworth and Biggleswade. The slope reaches a low point at Potton Brook and rises eastward to its highest elevation at Potton Wood. To the north-west, at Everton the plateau meets the steep scarp slope of the Ridge and drops steeply away into the Ouse valley.

Potton Brook flows through the parish and enters the town from Gamlingay to the north and flows out southward toward Sutton, finally entering the River Ivel in Biggleswade.

Potton settlement envelope is surrounded by a number of plantations and semi-natural ancient woodlands. Potton Wood is the largest area of woodland and is situated on the north east boundary of the zone. The principle land use outside the town is arable with a number of small horse paddocks on the edges around the town.

Zone A is the region within the Parish boundary but outside the settlement envelope. There are a few private residences in the zone but principally, the land is Rural/Agricultural in character. Structures on the land are mainly stables, barns or other agricultural buildings.

To the east of the town there is a Poultry Farm, Deepdale Trees tree nursery and also some smallholdings which were originally Land Settlement Areas. To the north of the town there is one working and one disused gravel pit. Another disused sand and gravel pit is situated to the south west of the town.



Figure 1 - View to the North-East over Potton showing horse paddocks and Potton Wood

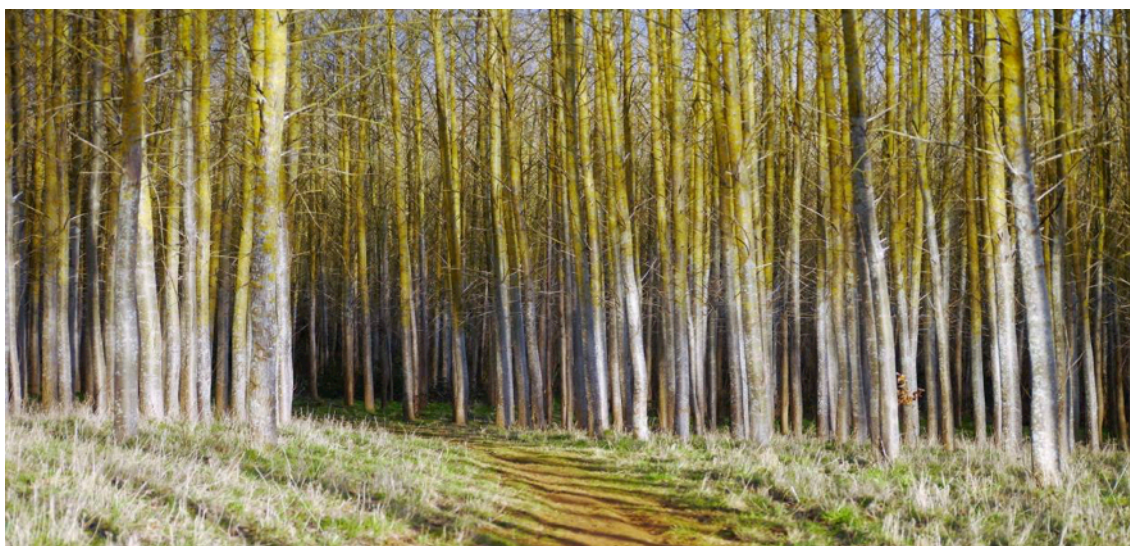


Figure 4 - Sheepbridge Wood situated to the north of Potton Town



Figure 4 - Cathegna quarry (disused) to the west of Potton



Figure 4 – Deepdale trees



3.1.2 Topography

The elevated landform where Potton is situated lies at the eastern extent of the Greensand Ridge which runs SW to NE across Central Bedfordshire. To the west of Potton the landscape is largely flat while to the east, it becomes a little more undulating.

Although Potton is on a hill, the town itself is nestled in a natural 'dip' in the topography which can be seen in the following pictures.



Figure 5 - View to the West from Sutton Road



Figure 6 - View to the West from Potton Wood



Figure 7 - View to the East from Sutton Mill Road



3.1.3 Land Use

3.1.3.1 Land use cover and classification

The principle land use of the area is arable and grassland, with land to the west of Potton Brook being less fertile on the sands than those to the east over the more fertile clays.

The Dudley Stamp Land Use Inventory identifies arable land either side of the town, with a belt of grassland passing through the centre approximately in line with Potton Brook. The post 1988 agriculture land classification identifies just 0.21ha of grade 3a and 3b land north of Potton.

3.1.3.2 Agri-environment schemes

There are three agreements in place. To the north-west of Potton an approximate 15ha area is under Entry Level Stewardship. To the east an area of approximately 73ha is under Entry Level plus Higher Level Stewardship. To the south, encompassing part of Pegnut Wood is an approximate 41ha area, also under Entry Level plus Higher Level Stewardship.

3.1.3.3 Grazing

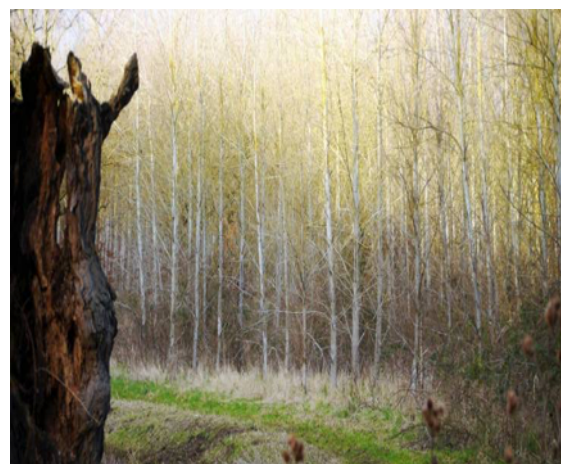
There is no agricultural livestock grazing in the area. However, a number of 'hobby' horse paddocks can be found around Potton, primarily to the west, south and north of the town's periphery.

3.1.3.4 Forestry

There are two felling agreements for unconditional selective thinning in Pegnut Wood and also in woodland off Myers Road to the north of Potton. There are three Woodland Grant Scheme 1 agreements (1988-1991) covering approximately 9ha. These are located at Deepdale Quarry to the west, off Myers Road in the north and Standalone Farm to the east. Pegnut Wood also has a Woodland Grant Scheme 2 agreement (1991-1994) covering 39.5ha while a smaller agreement of 1.1ha is held by Churchview Nurseries to the east of the town. A 0.67ha Woodland Grant Scheme 3 agreement (1994-2003) is in operation at the quarry site north of Potton.



Figure 8 - Pegnut wood



Sheepbridge wood



Figure 9 – Deepdale trees



Horse Paddock on Sutton Mill Road

3.1.4 Layout

The land cover is a diverse mosaic of deciduous and coniferous woodland of varying size and extent, open areas of arable cropping and pasture, primarily comprising horse paddocks and areas of rough unmanaged grassland. To the west and north of Potton quarrying and conifer removal is giving way to heathland restoration and creation.

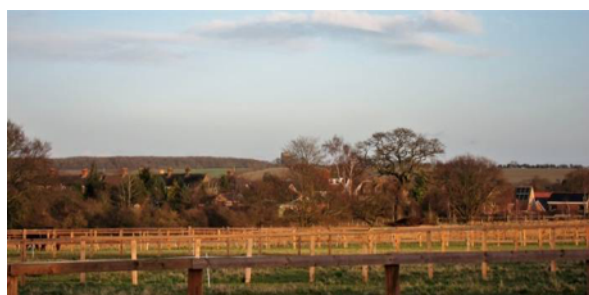
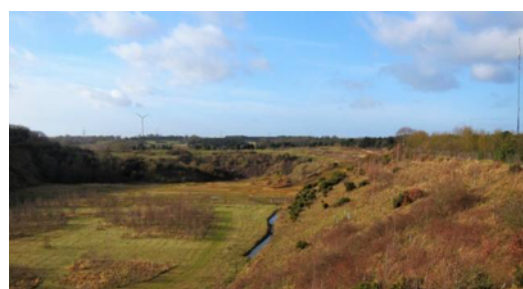


Figure 10 - Horse Paddocks – Sutton Mill Rd



Carthagen Quarry - Restored

3.1.5 Roads, Streets, Routes

The principal roads running through the zone are the B1040 coming from the north from Gamlingay and passing through the town centre and out to the south towards Biggleswade and also the B1042 coming from the west from Wrestlingworth and passing through the town centre and out to the west towards Sandy. Everton Road, The Heath, Sutton Road and Hatley Road are other country roads in the area.

In addition to this network of minor and B roads linking Potton to neighbouring towns and villages, there is an extensive network of paths and bridleways emanating from the town in all directions. They include the part of the Greensand Ridge walk and the ancient Clopton Way, which passes through Potton Wood.



Figure 11 – from top left

B1042 Wrestlingworth Road

B1040 Gamlingay Road entering Potton

B1040 South towards Biggleswade

Carthegena bridaleway

Sheepbridge Wood and Potton Brook

3.1.6 Spaces

By its very nature, this zone is principally open space with only a few residential properties and a selection of agricultural buildings. Potton Allotments are also in this zone.



Figure 12 - Potton allotments

A strong 'heathland character' prevails in the area noticeable in some of the vegetation types and historically through local area names such as 'Sandy Heath' and 'Potton Heath'.

The nature of field and road boundaries are quite variable, ranging from mature shelterbelts to gappy, short flailed boundaries to intact hedges. On the dip slope, medium sized arable fields and woodland feature. Some hedge and hedgerow tree removal has occurred, to create larger fields but insufficient enough to alter the characteristics compared to the surrounding Claylands.

There are a range of large deciduous and mixed woodlands those of note are Pegnut Wood which lies to the south of Potton and the ancient Potton Wood which can be seen on the skyline to the north east of the town. North of the town smaller blocks of woodland and wooded parkland, part of the private Everton Estate, form a backdrop to the open arable areas.



Figure 13 - Cherry plum hedge



View from Potton Wood looking west

The Hollow recreational area is also in Zone A. This open space is the home of Potton United Football Club, Potton Cricket Club and Potton Tennis Club. The Woodentops Preschool uses the Potton FC pavilion. The Boundary Cafe shares Potton Cricket Club's pavilion and is also the home of The Barns Fitness Studios.



Figure 14 - The Hollow recreation area

3.1.7 Landmarks

Principal landmarks in the area are The Mill just to the west of the settlement envelope, The Water Tower by Potton Wood on the eastern boundary of the area as well as Potton Wood itself.



Figure 15 - Potton windmill and the water tower at Potton wood



3.1.8 Green and natural features

The main natural features of the area are the woods and hedgerows.



Figure 16 – Characteristic elm hedge



Pegnut wood along Potton

3.1.9 Views

Views from Potton through a northerly arc from west to east are largely open across arable land bounded by distant woodlands. To the south, the views into the dip slope are more enclosed by woodland. It is in these directions that the most prominent features are visible on the skyline. To the west, nearer the town one can see the remains of an old windmill while further afield the Sandy Heath Transmitter dominates the sky along now with the recently erected wind turbine at the RSPB reserve. The western skyline is characterised closer to the town by St Marys Church built with local sandstones and beyond, the view of Potton Wood and its adjacent water tower.



Figure 17 - View of St. Mary's Church from Bury Hill



Figure 18 - Potton Windmill (remains) from Mill Lane



Figure 19 - View to the east from Sutton Mill Rd. showing Potton Wood and the Water Tower. St. Mary's Church can also be seen



Figure 20 - View to the west over Potton showing the Sandy Heath Transmitter mast and RSPB Wind Turbine



3.2 Zone B – Conservation area

3.2.1 Summary of key defining characteristics / other observations

This assessment of the Conservation area (zone B) is largely taken from the Central Bedfordshire Council appraisal dated 2009, updated as appropriate.

Most of the buildings in Potton are residential and it is clear that the town now serves larger settlements in commuting distance more than it does local agriculture. Indeed, many farm buildings and workshops have been converted to domestic use and other uses. Home Farm in Horne Lane, for instance, is no longer in farming use.

The Market Square and King Street are the focus for small businesses and shopping. There are also several public houses, notably the George and Dragon on the east side of Market Square and the Royal Oak.

In addition to St Mary's Church, there is the chapel on Horslow Street and the former chapel behind Sun Street. For secular assembly, the community centre in Brook End has been converted out of the former fire station.

The conservation area is isolated from the open countryside to the north and west by modern development. Fields to the south are not readily apparent, but the playing fields to the east are a significant resource for the town, which is generally devoid of green open spaces except in the area of St Mary's Church. Elsewhere, there are 'borrowed' views of trees and planting in the private gardens of Granville House in Royston Street.

The Market Square is, of course, the main space and focus for the town. It is described by Pevsner as "specially attractive...". The formality of this rectangular space has an underlying organic feel as the routes running from it lead obliquely from the corners.



There are further generous spaces at the junctions to either end of Blackbird Street defined by rounded corners and giving views towards notable buildings, such as the Royal Oak on Biggleswade Road. However, at times, constant traffic can detract from the appreciation of space.



Figure 21 - Market square, clock house and mosaics

The town centre is very self-contained and the continuous frontages give a strong sense of enclosure. Views are generally internal, therefore, including those on Blackbird Street and from streets leading into the Market Square. The notable

exception is the dramatic panorama of open countryside seen from the elevated churchyard of St Mary's Church.

The quality of the town centre is confirmed by the consistency of buildings that make a positive contribution, including the statutory listing of almost all the buildings in the Market Square. The 20th century has been least kind to Potton at Royston Court and, to a lesser extent, at Nos.1-3



Figure 22 - East side of the market square

Market Square. New development continues on back land off King Street and Horslow Street and there is a strong case for avoiding intensification to the point where the qualities for which the conservation area has been designated are diminished.

3.2.1.1 Appearance

In the middle ages, the local material for most buildings was timber. Evidence of timber framing can be seen at Sun House in Sun Street and it also survives under plastered finishes at 26-28 Market Square. Indeed, much of the south side of Market Square is timber framed albeit behind later brick frontages. At No.6



Figure 23 - Sun House

Market Square, the timber frame is clad with timber planks cut to look like masonry.

Stone was used for higher status buildings. St Mary's Church is built variously of cobblestones, ironstone and ashlar. Ironstone is an iron-bearing sandstone that weathers to a rusty brown colour as the iron salts oxidise. It is also seen as 'slips' often laid in a decorative herringbone pattern as, for instance, at the Church Hall or No.22 Chapel Street.

The Gault clays of the Ivel valley are particularly suited to the production of cream and pale yellow bricks, which are used to good effect on the later terraces. In the 19th century, red and blue bricks were used to decorative effect with the Gault bricks, a notable example being the houses of the Potter's Charity on Horslow Street.

Bricks are generally laid in Flemish Bond — alternating stretchers and headers and, at No.33 Horslow Street, there is an interesting example of tuck pointing where a narrow band of lime putty gives a refined appearance to an otherwise coarse joint. There are also rounded corners that show off the bricklayer's art as at No.28 King Street where it turns into Church Causeway. Lime used to conceal inferior walling materials or to protect timber frames, as may be the case at Lodge Farm.

Early roofs were thatched and an example survives at No.2 Biggleswade Road. However, clay tiles were introduced with brick making and, following Potton's connection to the railway network, blue Welsh slates were imported.



Figure 24 - No 2 Biggleswade road

Side-opening casement windows were generally used in earlier vernacular buildings, while vertically sliding sashes were introduced for higher status houses in the 18th century after which they became more fashionable. Window frames were always made of timber except in rare cases where iron framed casements provide the opening windows for the leaded lights in timber-framed buildings or cast-iron windows are used to add a Gothic effect. Many of the historical windows in Potton have been replaced with less traditional designs and materials, such as plastics. These changes are always to the detriment of the historic character of the town.

In the past, street surfaces would have been lithe more than rammed earth and stone until tarmac provided a more durable successor from the early 20th century. The main survival in the streets is of granite kerbs. Street furniture is sparingly used as befits a functional rural town. Street lights with a traditional flavour have been introduced throughout the conservation area. However there are also telephone wires distributed on wooden poles in Blackbird Street and Biggleswade Road. Boundary walls make an important contribution to the definition of streets particularly around the gardens of Chigwell House, Granville House and in Horne Lane.

3.2.1.2 Market Square

This highly significant and dignified space is defined by its listed buildings. The rectangle has the library as its focal point flanked by specimen trees on an apron of modern paving. The access points are not axial to the formal layout. Instead they approach each corner obliquely so that the appearance unfolds as one approaches.



Figure 25 - Market square



The buildings are of two to three storey with eaves or parapet frontages, the exception being No's.24-28, where gables provide immediate evidence of medieval origins, and No.7 where the Victorian bank returns to the gabled form.

The earlier history is also evident in the long narrow plots that extend to north and south suggesting a deliberately planned layout. These plots accommodated working premises behind the principal frontage buildings and the vehicle entrance between Nos.10 and 11 demonstrates the need to service such uses. Indeed, the provision of vehicle entrances is a theme that adds distinctiveness throughout the conservation area.

3.2.1.3 King Street

Rebuilding after the Great Fire has left a fine legacy of Georgian buildings. On the west side Nos.3-9 are listed buildings. Further south, the Co-op store has a mildly Art Deco frontage to a complete range of service building round a courtyard behind. South of this, the open space gives a fine view of the subsidiary range running back from the Old Coach House Hotel, but this is unintended and some form of enclosure might be an improvement.



On the east side, the site of the former Hollies, a large house demolished in the 1960s, has been developed with housing and a supermarket. The latter has re-established a street frontage that joins the range of listed buildings, including the George and Dragon, linking back to the Market Place.

For a through route, King Street is relatively narrow and is often restricted by service vehicles. It tends, therefore, to suffer from congestion that detracts from its historic qualities.

3.2.1.4 St Mary's Church

King Street is connected to the church area by a causeway that once crossed water-meadows either side of the Potton Brook. It is well-used, but poorly surfaced and lit. St Mary's Church is sited to take advantage of higher ground on a sandstone bluff.

The church area, once isolated from the town centre is now connected by subsequent development to the north of Church Causeway. The churchyard with extensive views to the south has an open aspect punctuated by trees and the characteristic standing tombstones.



Figure 26 - St Mary's church



Adjacent to St Mary's Church there is a large red brick Georgian house that was once the vicarage. Beyond this is the modern vicarage largely hidden in trees. Opposite is the church hall of 1845 built of ironstone slips with a fish scale tile roof. Behind an open field in recreational use surrounded by trees, indeed, this area is characterised by trees and open spaces in a complete contrast with the more urban quality of the town centre.

3.2.1.5 *West of Market Square*

The area to the west of Market Square forms an approximate grid and the long plots on Bull Street and Sun Street suggest further planning in their layout. Bull Street is narrow with a range of historic buildings on the north side and the relatively discreet infill of Burdett's Court to the south.

Sweeping corners at the west end lead into Horslow Street and Chapel Street, the former with the high brick wall to the gardens of Chigwell House.

The slight curve of Horslow Street provides an unfolding townscape of largely continuous frontages ranging from the late Georgian of No's 31-35 to later 19th century artisan houses and also the polychrome brickwork and cast-iron latticed windows of the potter's Charity houses.

Chapel Street starts with the Salvation Army Hall. Although built of red brick in 1931, the hall took the historical style of its predecessor, an ironstone Methodist chapel of 1851. It has muscular cast-iron railings in front of the associated house, which is set back from the street. Also set back is No.22 opposite, one of the few houses to be built of ironstone.

The rest of Chapel Street comprises short terraces with important glimpses between. These reveal the chapel in the backland between Chapel Street and Sun Street and, behind No.9, a large timber workshop.

South of Market Square

The plots leading south from Market Square have been truncated by the development of Royston Court and only one service building of any size survives. On Sun Street, the dramatic timber framing of Sun House, the former Sun Inn, is complemented by Nos.2-5 opposite giving a hint of the 16th century Street. Behind is the large bulk of the Sun Street Chapel (now converted into housing) and, to the south, Georgian building gives way to the 19th century housing on a smaller scale that curves into Blackbird Street. Here, one range has an unusual band of red and blue ceramic tiles set into the Gault brick façade.

Royston Street leads east with a row of late 19th century houses on its north side – No. 25 has a date stone of 1883. Brook House and Granville House are late Georgian properties on what were once the outskirts of the town. Royston Street doubles back as Brook End past the open space of the Henry Smith Playing Fields and the former fire station to join the south east corner of the Market Square.



Figure 28 - Blackbird Street shopfront

Blackbird Street completes the grid. Here, the houses are generally mid-to-late 19th century. No.15, Homehurst, is notable for its brick banding and woodgrain painting, while there is a well-preserved shopfront on the return elevation to No.2 Chapel Street. At the east end, Horne Lane has a more rural character as it curves to Home Farm. At the west end is the spacious junction of Moon's Corner.



Figure 27 - Home Farm, Horne Lane



Figure 29 - Home Farm H

There are picturesque views across the junction to the Royal Oak public house and No.2 Biggleswade Road, the only remaining thatched house in the conservation area. The curve into Biggleswade Road is lined with a late 19th century terrace at the town end of which is an unsightly billboard. Station Road leads west from Moon's Corner between an ironstone outbuilding behind the thatched house and the steeply pitched roof of the former school. Late 19th century red and yellow brick houses continue on the north side of Station road culminating in the eccentric battlements of No.26.



Figure 30 - No 26 Station Road

3.3 Zone C – Settlement area

3.3.1 Summary of key defining characteristics / other observations

A wide range of housing types and styles reflect the outward development of the town between 1900 and today. There are green spaces, but some 30% is likely to be lost within the next few years to development. The area provides an attractive approach for visitors to the town along the B1042 / B1040 and despite the increasing development much of the zone has a rural feel; albeit under threat. Good street design is marred by limited vehicle parking and the presence of wheelie bins.

In some areas the pleasantly undulating topography affords good views to the north, east and west over the Greensand Ridge.



The area around the school is open and dominated by the Playing fields with the majority two storey housing that is well spaced to the eye from the main routes through and with views out of the town to open fields and down over the “conservation area”, church and playing fields.

In general the views over the town have a range of roof heights and building styles and colours so does not give the appearance of a “monoculture” of identical properties.



Figure 31 - Housing variation to the North

3.3.2 Topography

Generally undulating with land rising to the North along Everton Rd. and Jays Farm. The land is on the reverse slope of the Greensand ridge, highest in the west and gently sloping eastwards towards the centre of the town. Within the zone to the west of the town the land is generally flat, with just slight undulations. The former GNR Railway has had a significant shaping effect on development.

Within the zone to the east of the town there is a stream valley from the northern end of the area (Judith Gardens) broadly south to Sleepwalk Close. The land to the west rises very gently with an approximate average gradient of 1:25. The land to the east rises more sharply with gradients between 1:10 at the northern end of the area through to 1:20 at the southern end of the area up to the eastern boundary defined by Sutton Road. Further afield the land rises to a height of 81m near the Water tower visible from the town.



Figure 32 - Views over towards Greensand ridge from the zone

3.3.3 Land Use

Land use is largely residential, although there are some farms, paddocks, industrial areas and one area dedicated to leisure. There is also the main Potton telephone exchange and Fire Station.

The largest industrial area is laid out in the former goods yard adjacent to the former Potton railway station, consisting of small businesses, including glazing and vehicle servicing on the east side and on the west side is a larger more modern meat processing plant.



Figure 33 - Shannon Place industrial area (old railway yards)

Closer to the town centre off Willow Road, is a smaller business area used for haulage and small businesses:



Figure 34 - Willow Road industrial site

The Zone also contains the town cemetery.

There are two areas of green space, one to the west of the cemetery and the other to the south of Mill Lane which will eventually disappear due to approved housing development.



Figure 35 - Land west of the cemetery



Land south of Mill Lane

There are no retail outlets in this Zone. There is one pub, The Rising Sun, and a former school, which is now used as the Potton and District Working Men's Club:



Figure 36 - Potton and District Working Men's Club

3.3.4 Layout

This is largely mixed residential, having grown in phases from 1900, starting with railway related buildings; developing outwards through the decades of the 20th Century.

It contains housing ranging from single bedroom Housing Association flats in Sheffield Close and affordable housing in Wingfield Drive to 4/5 bedroom houses in newer developments.



In the west and south of the zone the area is dominated by the main through routes B1040 and B1042. The main residential streets are predominantly situated in no through roads accessed from these main routes.

Buildings along the eastern side of King Street vary between those set in relatively close proximity to the road (older c1900's property) and those set back with front gardens/driveways.

Housing set in The Manor, Horne Lane, Brookfields and Bury Hill is on well-spaced individual plots ranging from $\approx \frac{1}{5}$ to $\approx \frac{1}{2}$ an acre in size with front and rear gardens and off street parking for multiple vehicles. Judith gardens is also on well-spaced plots with large verge areas and trees.

Manor Way, Aldgate Close, Braybrooks Drive, Sheep walk and Yew Tree Close are higher density housing situated on predominantly rectangular plots with parking adjacent/to the front of property or in some cases garages in-block.

New housing developments from 1980's onwards have good mix of house designs.

Yew Tree Close, is the most recent housing development where they are three storey Brick and render concrete tile roofed terrace construction. They are a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached town houses which are out of character with those around them. There is a mix of red and buff brick used with and without render and with and without decorative brick detailing.

The houses in Sheepwalk Close are a mix of 1990s detached and semi-detached houses built in red brick or red brick and render with concrete tile pitched roofs. Some have alternate colour detailing on the corners. Window openings have been detailed through the use of alternating brick patterns.

The Manor and Brookfields comprise "Potton timber" traditional chalet style houses characterised by extensive use of wood, render and red/buff brick with the second storey windows set in the pitched concrete tile roof line, or brick/render "Georgian Rectory" style that also have pitched concrete tiled roofs and traditional detailing of "stone" corners.

Judith Gardens comprises late 1960s early 1970s detached chalet style bungalows constructed of brick, brick/render, completely rendered with pitched concrete tile roofs with dormer and Velux windows. Many of these still retain the era's large picture windows to the front and rear leading to an "open" feeling when coupled with the wide verges.

Manor way, Aldgate close and Braybrooks drive comprises 1970s detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. They are brick construction with a variety of brick colours used. In Manor way and Aldgate close this is predominantly light "buff" in colour. In Braybrooks drive it is red brick. The window styles are commensurate with the era but many have been changed for a variety of UPC styles, however many still retain the "picture windows" of the time.

Horne Lane outside the conservation mainly comprises late 1970s two storey detached houses constructed out of red brick and render with steeply pitched

concrete tiled roofs. Some have a chalet style aspect with dormer windows on the second floor and the windows were sash but have been in many cases replaced by UPC. The houses are well spaced and there is a feeling of openness. The newer properties 2014ish are red/buff brick with some detailing and containing some “Georgian features” but are more in keeping with those in Yew tree close.

The houses up Bury Hill are a mix of semi-detached 1950’ ex-housing authority rendered and roughcast with concrete tiled roofs. Subsequent infill of mixed styles, including Potton timber “chalet style”, and 1980’s detached mixed brick, render and wood.



Figure 37 -Examples of housing variety



3.3.5 Roads, Streets and Routes

There are two main roads that run through Potton the B1042 and B1040. The B1042 is a through route east west from Sandy/Biggleswade to Cambridge. The B1040 is a through route from south to north, Biggleswade to Huntingdon/St Ives. Both of these are busy roads at peak times, especially B1042, and are used by large HGV's (40+ tonnes) transiting the town or delivering to/collecting from York House, Tesco and McColls. In the core town area covered by this assessment both roads are characterized by on street parking and are relatively narrow especially the B1040. The roads in the residential "estates" vary between very narrow (Horne lane/The Manor) to spacious in Judith Gardens.

There is a free car park adjacent to the Henry Smith Playing fields for the use of those visiting the town.

All of the main and estate roads have adjacent footways and there are two footpaths crossing the area, Church causeway which runs from Kings Street to St Mary's church. This is bisected by the millennium pathway that runs through the Henry Smith Playing fields to Brook End. There are a number of interconnecting paths from Manor Way and Aldgate Close to the Church Causeway. There is also a footpath that runs adjacent to the Potton Brook through Sheepwalk close to Pegnut Wood.

Some (but unfortunately not all) newer residential developments have purpose-built connecting alleyways and footpaths to allow easy access to neighbouring areas and the town centre.



Figure 38 - Alleyway in Tall Trees



Figure 39 - Church causeway



Millennium path

In more rural parts of the Zone, unpaved roads and tracks (some of which are public footpaths and bridleways) provide access to farm and rural leisure areas, such as Old Bedford Road:



Figure 41 - Old Bedford Road

Many of the streets lack proper parking and are congested with parked vehicles. In some areas, such as Newtown, gardens have been concreted over to accommodate the surplus of cars:



Figure 40 - Newtown showing gardens converted to parking areas

Good street design in some estates is blighted by the presence of parked cars.



3.3.6 Spaces

The main open space in the eastern area of the zone is the Henry Smith Playing fields including a park with play equipment, a bespoke skate park and an adult gym.



Figure 42 - Henry Smith playing fields

Sheepwalk close has a Local Play Area for younger children, and open ground adjacent to the brook along the footpath to Pegnut wood.

Wingfield Drive has a good sized recreational area.



Figure 43 - Wingfield Drive LEAP

The Potton Federation schools have a large playing field.



Figure 44 -Potton Federation schools playing fields

A further, smaller, green space lies at the back of Ibbett lane, used for agricultural purposes, such as vegetable cultivation:



Figure 45 - Ibbet Lane agricultural area

Mill Lane Community Centre has a large open area containing football pitches as well as a well-appointed play area for children.



Figure 46 - Mill Lane recreation ground pavilion and play area

3.3.7 Buildings

The buildings throughout this area of the town are predominantly two storey residential properties and in reasonable condition commensurate with their age and having been maintained, it seems, to a reasonable standard. There are no areas that look run down or ill kempt. There are some bungalows and some instances of two storey blocks of flats. There are no high rise buildings.

Building style is very varied and in many cases extensions and upgrades have altered the original design. In some cases construction is sympathetic towards some of the older design used in Potton in both style and material.



Figure 47 - Fire station

Apart from the two small industrial areas, there are very few buildings which are not residential properties. One of these is the Potton and District Working Men's Club as already mentioned. Other non-residential buildings include the Potton Fire Station, Mill Lane Community Centre, Potton Bowls Club, Potton Federation Schools, The Rising Sun public house, Brook End Doctors' Surgery and Potton Telephone Exchange.



Figure 48 - Mill Lane pavillion

Figure 49 - Potton Bowls Club



Potton Federation Schools



Figure 50 - Greensands surgery



The Rising Sun public house





Residential buildings are characterised by the wide range of different types, sizes, ages and designs which have evolved throughout the last 100 years of growth of the town.



Figure 51 - Late 19th/early 20th century workers cottages

Throughout succeeding decades construction expanded outwards. Working westwards and to the north, the early and mid 20th century saw the construction of larger estates that include single story dwellings and former social housing

With the modern housing in the more recent developments, there is a notable lack of footpaths and off-road parking.



Figure 52 - 20th century housing / social housing



Figure 53 - Modern estate with lack of footways and parking

A common feature of buildings in Potton is the use of yellow brick, with decorative red brick highlights, as can be seen in the 19th century terraced housing below.



Figure 54 - Characteristic yellow brick with red highlight construction

This style is reflected in the design of some of the more recent housing an example is show below of a house that was built in 2003

Figure 55 -Modern examples of characteristic building style





3.3.8 Landmarks

Approaching the town on B1040 from the north there is a white Gateway feature and then a Bridge that has recently been rebuilt in traditional Cambridgeshire white style brick. On entry to town. There is an area of green space in the form of a triangle forming the junction of Everton Road, Gamlingay road and Kings Street which has a large mature chestnut tree.

Leaving the town on the B1042, across the bridge over Potton brook by fire station, up Bury hill there are views north across open fields to St Mary's church and north east to the water tower and Potton Woods.

Entering the Town along the B1042 down Bury hill the same views can be seen along with a view across the Town Centre, the Sandy Heath transmitter mast, Henry Smith playing fields, Potton brook and a substantial old property (Gransden House).

Within the Henry Smith Playing Fields there are a number of large mature trees and two water courses, the western most adjacent to Brookfields, which at the southern end was formerly used as a Horse / Carrot wash. A concrete rill that connects this to the Potton Brook to the east of the playing field.

In Henry Smith Playing Field is also the 'Spread Your Wings' sculpture which was created by local artist, Paul Pibworth.



Figure 56 - Sculpture in Henry Smith playing fields

The former Potton railway station, now a dwelling, stands out as does the chapel of rest within the cemetery:



Figure 57 -Old railway station



Potton cemetery

The Potton Federation School Complex and the old Railway Shed just west of Biggleswade Road are also notable landmarks.



Figure 58 -Potton Federation schools Old railway shed

3.3.9 Green and Natural Features

The main natural features are:

- Potton Brook to the east of Henry Smith Playing fields
- The Horse wash/brook to the west of the Henry Smith Playing fields
- Mature trees in the Henry Smith playing fields
- Mature trees at the junction of Everton Road, Gamlingay road and Kings Street
- Mature trees and woodland in and around the Manor and Judith Gardens
- Mature trees and an open space forming the St Mary's Church field
- Mature trees in gardens in and around Horne Lane
- Naturalised stream banks along Potton Brook towards Pegnut wood.
- Green space with feature tree at the junction of Everton Rd. and Horslow St.
- Towards the western and southern reaches of the Zone there are extensive open spaces, with hedgerows and trees providing borders.

- Tall coniferous trees bound the cemetery, and the area of Maystone Close along the B1042, has a row of very attractive tall lime trees



Figure 59 - Lime trees bordering B1042

3.3.10 Streetscape

Welcome to Potton sign at settlement boundary on Everton Rd. with white-painted fence. Roads predominantly tarmac but some more recent cul-de-sacs have block paving roads.

All main roads and estate roads are surfaced with tarmacadam as are the adjacent footways. The Church Causeway and the Millennium path through the Henry Smith Playing Field are also tarmacadam. The footpath from the B1042 by the fire station through to Pegnut wood is hard surfaced with Gravel/Mot stone.

Roads generally have lighting throughout. All streets have standard signage black text on white background. Both The Manor and Brookfields have brick gateway features with inset “stone” estate names.

Benches are provided in the Henry Smith Playing Field providing views over fields, Potton Brook, St Mary’s Church and the fields rising up towards Sutton road in the east.

A large variety of street furniture is evident, from mid 20th century metal lampposts and concrete bollards to more modern steel constructions. Areas heavily used by dog walkers have bins for excrement collection. Bus stop signs are displayed at regular intervals on through streets throughout the area



Figure 60 - Examples of "street furniture"

In outlying areas of the zone, power is delivered via overhead cables on wooden poles. In older housing areas telephone services are provided by overhead wires, with multiple cables coming from a tall wooden pole



Figure 61 - Powers supply cables and telephone service poles



3.3.11 Views

The key views are from:

- Bury Hill/Sutton Road junction looking west across the town (Townscape and roof line, community centre area, Transmitter mast in distance)
- North to St Mary's church over open fields
- South east towards Eyeworth over open fields
- From Henry Smith playing fields east up to open fields
- From Henry Smith playing fields north east to St Mary's church through foliage
- Bridge over the B1042 north across playground/playing fields and along Potton Brook
- Bridge over the B1042 south along Potton Brook towards what will be the community hall.
- To the north from Myers Rd. and Downside Gardens onto rising land to Greensand Ridge
- North-west border of Wingfield drive has attractive wooded land views
- Sandy Road has north and west views across arable landscape towards the Greensands ridge, The television mast and RSPB wind turbine can be clearly seen, and the open areas to the south offer views over a disused quarry, out as far as the Ivel valley.
- From Sandy Road, Potton windmill can be seen out to the north.





Figure 62 - Views over the town and countryside



Figure 63 - Features and Greensand ridge



Figure 64 - St Mary's church