

# Bury St Edmunds Town Trust

## Gazetteer of Non-Designated Heritage Assets in the Bury St Edmunds Medieval Grid

### An Introduction

This document was motivated by the Bury St Edmunds Town Trust (BTT) wishing to give support to West Suffolk Planning Authority by creating a document which all can access which will explain what are considered to be heritage assets which are important locally, although not formally protected by statutory 'listing'.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) explains in its appendix that:

*169. Local planning authorities should have up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and use it to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment. They should also use it to predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future. Local planning authorities should either maintain or have access to a historic environment record.*

As part of this exercise LPAs would normally prepare a catalogue of buildings which are of local interest and will often call these 'Locally Listed Buildings' (LLBs). This is encouraged by Historic England and otherwise in further policy guidance particularly in a useful document about such matters on their web site:

<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/heag018-local-heritage-listing.pdf/>

There is due to the nature of the policy and legislation a difference in how LLBs are protected. If an LLB is in a conservation area (CA) it would be considered necessary to make a positive contribution to that CA and, as such, normally total loss (demolition) would be resisted. Such a building would be classified as a 'non-designated heritage asset' (NHA) but because it is sited within a CA, which is a designated asset, then its contribution to that CA is protected statutorily. There are arcane arguments about what a contribution can amount to and there is case law which has established precedence on this matter but, suffice it to say, it is the external elements which contribute which are protected but the elements which don't aren't.

Just to clarify what LLBs/NHAs may be: Non-designated heritage assets are defined as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape 'identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest ... [including] assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)'.

And in terms of what protection they have: Where undesigned heritage assets are concerned, the NPPF states that '*a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset*' when change is proposed.

So it is important that NHAs are identified along with their significance and what their contribution is to the CA within which they are sited.

This document which covers the Medieval Grid which is a part of the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Conservation Area. The document, advised by the Historic England document mentioned above, is set out on a street by street basis. All of the buildings which are not listed have been appraised and the 'list' populated by the buildings, parts of buildings, townscape and other elements which contribute to the architectural, historic, or cultural 'special interest' of the conservation area.

The creation of the 'list' begins with an understanding of heritage value. To understand if a building or other artefact contributes to a conservation area requires understanding of the significance of the particular area or street in which the different buildings are located, including the history, townscape, and other features and their interaction and value as a whole. So, we undertook research and site-based surveys and analysis to enable us to reach this understanding. This allowed us to conclude what is important in heritage terms about the individual elements which make up the location and which make a positive contribution to it. So, the document initially describes the character of each street and the 'setting' of the buildings and then describes each building individually and explains if it makes a positive contribution to the CA or not.