

Gazetteer of the Non-Designated Heritage Assets in the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Conservation Area

Introduction to Part Two

The first part of the gazetteer of the Town Centre Conservation Area concentrated on the 'Medieval Grid', the parts of the town which were laid out by Abbot Baldwin in the 12th Century. This section completes the study of the conservation area by assessing the streets and areas which are outside of that close-knit urban centre and includes streets which predate those in the 'Grid'. These include the ancient routes through what later became Bury St Edmunds, such as Northgate Street, Eastgate Street and Southgate Street.

These areas have a broad mix of building types and dates but include areas which were developed as groups and estates during the 18th C in places like Well Street and around St John's Church, the building of which led to major changes to the urban fabric in the mid-19th C. So while the area has limited homogeneity there is much more than in the streets which make up 'the Grid' including, as well as grand 18th C mansions, several terraces of houses specifically built for working people. It is a rich and varied mix of urban development but with local common design and materials. Here the stucco and wooden framed buildings are rather less common than elsewhere in the conservation area but there are many more white brick buildings from the later 18th C through to the end of the 19th. The uses are far more commonly residential and the scale of building no taller than three storeys.

In these areas there is a wide variety of buildings which are significant in the conservation area and include several terraces of Victorian workers' cottages, which help us understand the history of the town and how it changed to provide decent housing for the poor in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is these houses which probably are the most susceptible to ill-considered changes - the widespread replacement of original joinery with modern plastic alternatives is perhaps the commonest issue related to the conservation area, an issue which is not just experienced in Bury but is commonplace across the country's conservation areas. Many buildings have been made the subject of an Article 1V Direction in an attempt to exercise some control over unsympathetic changes to elevations that are publicly visible, but despite this, works have still taken place that detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area.

This section is slightly different to the first section as here are, generally, only described the building which do (or, in some limited instances, could) make a positive contribution to the conservation area. As in Part One, the modern buildings have generally been left for a future generation to assess.