

Cambridge Suburbs and Approaches

Newmarket Road

Cambridge Suburbs and Approaches: Newmarket Road

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For

Cambridge City Council

October 2011

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1. Character Summary

Newmarket Road is an ancient road, first established by the Romans, and was a principal medieval road known as the Bury road and later, in parts, as The Barnwell Causeway. Today, it remains the main eastern gateway into the city, one of eight primary routes into and out of the City Centre. It is classed as an A-road and provides access to Cambridge from Junctions 34 (via B1047) and 35 (A1303) of the A14, the major east-west route in the Cambridge area.

Approached from the east, Newmarket Road (as the A1303) passes through Green Belt, although it is not particularly rural in character as Cambridge Airport and the Park and Ride site are both within it. The City boundary (since 1934) is crossed upon reaching Meadowlands Road and the cemetery, from where the early-mid 20th century Ditton Fields development begins. The road is wide, with a bus lane in the west-bound carriageway, and tree-lined with grass verges behind which, on the south side, inter-war semi-detached houses sit back from the road and the cemetery stretches out on the north side.

Upon reaching the Ditton Lane junction, a more industrial character prevails with the busy junction generally surrounded by institutional and commercial



premises. The road is wide (dualled) and very busy with traffic between this junction and the Wadloes / Barnwell Road roundabout which are all part of Cambridge's ring road. Continuing west, the suburban character of the Ditton Fields development returns, although a

scattering of earlier ribbon development sits amongst the largely post-War and mostly semi-detached dwellings. There are only a few street trees in this

stretch, and as a result the road is quite open until Coldham's Common is reached.



Coldham's Common, the Barnwell Lake (or Pit) and the trees and open space by the Papermills and the Leper Chapel building group, provide a green buffer between the suburban character of the road to the east and the railway line and retail-led

character of the road as it turns towards the City Centre. The character is distinctly rural, despite the presence of the railway and the utilitarian appearance of the football stadium, the floodlights of which are visible in the skyline from the Barnwell Road to Barnwell Railway Junction. The pastoral scene around the Leper



Chapel is enhanced by the informal landscaping and substantial trees in the area.

West of the railway line, the character and grain of the area changes dramatically with the fragmentary remains of Cambridge's early ribbon development along the road intermingling with huge 20th century warehouse and commercial developments. The historic grain of the north side which is lined by 19th century terraces, largely survives along the road frontage, although there are some significant modern intrusions and much alteration

and rebuilding has occurred. The south side, however, is starkly modern and of an entirely different grain with large retail 'sheds' and swathes of car parking. The area is unified by the commercial character of both the 19th



century and 20th century buildings, the tree planting which softens the wide (dual carriageway) highway, and the street signage that pervades the area. The chimney of the Museum of Technology provides skyline interest in views across the

rooftops on the north side of the road.

The western end of the study area contains the earliest development with the remains of the Barnwell Priory, including the Church of St Andrew the Less and the Cellarer's Chequer, on the north side of the road. It ends disappointingly at the Elizabeth Way roundabout, which severs the road from its historic continuation westwards along Maid's Causeway, and then Jesus Lane.

At present, no part of the assessment area is covered by Conservation Area designation, but the accompanying Conservation Area Appraisal for the Riverside and Stourbridge Common area of the Central Cambridge Conservation Area suggests that two small sections of this assessment area be included. It is recommended that the north side of Newmarket Road between Elizabeth Way and Coldham's Lane be brought within the Conservation Area along with the area around and including the Leper Chapel and Papermills group of traditional buildings. Part of the area is within the floodplain.

2. Introduction

1.1 Background

Beacon Planning Ltd was commissioned in July 2010 by Cambridge City Council to prepare a rapid assessment of Newmarket Road, from the Cambridge City boundary to the Elizabeth Way roundabout. The aim is to provide an assessment and understanding of this undervalued route's "local distinctiveness" in order to inform enhancement through new development and/or improvements to the public realm.

The City Council has a programme of 'Suburbs and Approaches Assessments' and this Newmarket Road rapid appraisal is one of four in the second tranche of the programme. These projects form part of the Council's pro-active Conservation programme, which also includes Conservation Area Appraisals. The Newmarket Road assessment has been commissioned concurrently with a Conservation Area Appraisal for the Riverside and Stourbridge Common area of the Central Cambridge Conservation Area (No.1).

2.2 Methodology

The assessment involved fieldwork, some desk based research and analysis. Research was carried out at the County Record Office and in the building control records of the City Council. It consisted of a review of historic maps, and a more general review of works on the history of Cambridge, its architecture and development. Newmarket Road was physically assessed on foot in July 2010. The assessment is based on what could be seen from the public highway.

2.3 Limitations

An assessment was made of the architectural and historic character of Newmarket Road as part of a characterisation assessment, including the heritage significance of the area. The assessment is not in sufficient depth to support potential Conservation Area designation, although this assessment was commissioned alongside a review of the Riverside and Stourbridge Common area of the Central Cambridge Conservation Area and parts of the study area are proposed for inclusion within the Conservation Area. This

assessment may also provide a useful basis for consideration for further designations.

There are a number of additional lines of research which might produce additional historical information on the history and development of Newmarket Road such as rate books, insurance and building plan records. Further research would provide greater detail and depth to an understanding of the development of the area.

3. Historical Development

1.2 Brief overview of the development of Cambridge

The City of Cambridge lies at the intersection of four Roman roads, and the Roman settlement developed on the west side of the River Cam in the present Castle Hill area. In Saxon times there was further settlement south of the river. After the Norman Conquest a castle was built north of the river and several churches and monastic foundations were in existence by the mid-13th century. The major growth of the town dates from the establishment of the University from the 13th century, and at the time of the Reformation there were 15 colleges.

With the exception of some minor suburban development, Cambridge did not significantly develop beyond its medieval bounds until the early 1800s, following the Acts of Enclosure. New housing began to appear on the roads leading out of town, including Barton Road. With the arrival of the railway in the 1840s the town expanded as a market town and agricultural centre. Large new areas of housing were built throughout the second half of the 19th century, building off and connecting the historic routes radiating out from the centre. In the first half of the 20th century the town's population grew from 40,000 to 90,000; outlying villages were connected and absorbed as ribbon development spread out from the centre.

Early resistance to this growth and the loss of village character in outlying areas was manifested in the establishment of the Cambridge Preservation Society in 1928, now Cambridge Past, Present and Future, and the protection given to the Gog Magog Hills, Grantchester, Coton and Madingley. After the Second World War, Sir William (later Lord) Holford and H. Myles Wright's *Cambridge Survey and Plan* of 1950 formed the basis of the 1952 County Development Plan, defining the Green Belt and proposing new housing growth on the northern and south-eastern fringes of the town (which became a City in 1951). Population was to be capped at 100,000.

Holford's policy of containment proved unsustainable, and the post-war period has seen continuing pressure for, and accommodation of, development in and

around the City. The coming years will see significant development in the City, with new housing, associated community facilities, as well as development of land for employment, medical and higher education expansion.

Newmarket Road is affected by major development proposals at each end, although proposals for the site of Cambridge Airport are now in abeyance because the owners of the land, Marshall Aerospace, have decided not to move. However, given the retail led nature of the central and western lengths of the road, the area will continue to be subject to development pressure, and the Council wishes to ensure that future development and enhancement is accommodated in the most appropriate way. This assessment will provide the strategic and historic environment analysis required to inform the preparation of more detailed policies and guidance, taking account of the sustainability, mixed use, conservation and design objectives set out elsewhere in documents including the Eastern Gate studies.

3.2. The development of Newmarket Road

Newmarket Road was a principal medieval road, often referred to as the Bury road as it follows the high ground to Bury St Edmunds. It was reputedly used by the Romans to bring produce to the Cambridge based garrison from the large estates at Fen Ditton and Horningsea, and was later known (in some parts) as the Barnwell Causeway and continued into the city as St Radegund's or Nun's Lane (now Jesus Lane).

The first settlement outside the *burh* (Anglo-Saxon defended settlement) of Cambridge occurred in the 5th and 6th centuries on dry river-terrace gravels, including around Barnwell where a priory was founded on one-time royal land in the fields within the 'Liberty' of Cambridge (the extent of the town's jurisdiction). The house for 6 augustinian canons (originally founded in 1092 by Cambridge's first Sheriff, Picot) was moved from its site at St Giles Church adjacent to the Castle, to the right bank of the River Cam in 1112 by the second Sheriff, Pain Peverel.

Barnwell (or *Barnewelle*) apparently means Children's Well, so called because every year, at Midsummer's Eve, children gathered there for games attracting traders (although other possible derivations have been put forward including Warrior's Well). A hermitage and ancient oratory of St Andrew had already appeared in the area, next to this source of springs in the common fields. Barnwell Priory became the largest religious foundation in the town (covering 10 acres), although founded on common lands, and was granted a charter in 1211 by King John formalising the holding of an annual Fair on Midsummer Common roughly in the area of the modern Elizabeth Way. In 1505 the right was transferred to the town Corporation for an annual fee. This fair has today become a large fun fair.

Further east, beyond Barnwell, the St Mary Magdalene Leper Hospital was founded by 1169 (the Chapel associated with the hospital appears to date from the mid 12th century) to care for the influx of poor and destitute attracted by Cambridge's wealth and piety. The hospital stood close to the site of the Stourbridge Fair which, after 1400, took the place of the four great fairs of the early Middle Ages and had become the largest in England by Henry VIII's time. The first documentary reference to a fair in the neighbourhood is believed to be a grant of King John to the hospital in 1210-11 and this probably implies the grant of a going concern.

The Barnwell Priory site ran from Newmarket Road down to the river, east of what is now Elizabeth Way and its establishment led to considerable suburban development in this direction and growth around the priory was rapid. Early in the 13th century, the Church of St Andrew the Less was built, probably to serve the needs of the hamlet that had grown up around the priory. Around 100 messuages (a very large number even for a Cambridgeshire village) are recorded in the parish in 1279. Most of the Priory's tenants were probably peasants working on the land, but many must have been craftsmen, supplying the villagers' day-to-day needs and very probably selling their products at Stourbridge Fair. Innkeepers in particular, benefited from the ever-increasing importance of Stourbridge Fair.

Barnwell Priory was surrendered in 1538 with the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the site was being used as a quarry towards the end of the 16th century; some of the stone for the new chapel of Corpus Christi was from here. Although the village that had grown up here was probably one of the more populous of the Cambridge suburbs, it does not appear on any 16th century maps and there is little detailed knowledge.

The Stourbridge Fair, in contrast, is well documented because of its local and even national importance. By the mid-16th century, Rows (of stalls) were being laid out annually, and by the beginning of the 17th century, the 5-week fair was becoming as densely crowded as when Bunyan described it (as 'Vanity Fair') in *The Pilgrim's Progress* in 1678. In the 1640s (during the Civil War) it was said to be 'the most plentiful of wares in all England, most fares in other parts being but markets in comparison'. Defoe's famous account of it in 1723 called 'the fair the greatest in the world', but by 1749, its great days were over, and in 1762 it lasted no more than a fortnight. The fair is now 800 years old and is celebrated as such at the Leper Chapel with an annual re-enactment organised by Cambridge Past, Present and Future. Newmarket Road, however, remained a principal route and was turnpiked in 1745.

The Inclosure Act of 1807 and the Award of 1811 resulted in the first extensive building development in the area. Before c1800, development had been mainly in the historic centre of Cambridge, but with a cluster of streets off Newmarket Road in the 'Barnwell' area. The original award and map shows Barnwell as a village with houses bordering the main street (now Newmarket Road) east and west of the church. There was also some ribbon development east of Coldham's Lane extending, with interruptions, to near the Leper Chapel; the road east of this was in the Fen Ditton parish until 1938. Few of these buildings could have pre-dated the fire of 1731 which destroyed 50 dwellings in the area. Notices in the Cambridge Chronicle confirm that houses were built soon after inclosure. Their position is not exactly determinable, but some were beside or near Newmarket Road and Baker's Map of 1830 shows some of this early development.

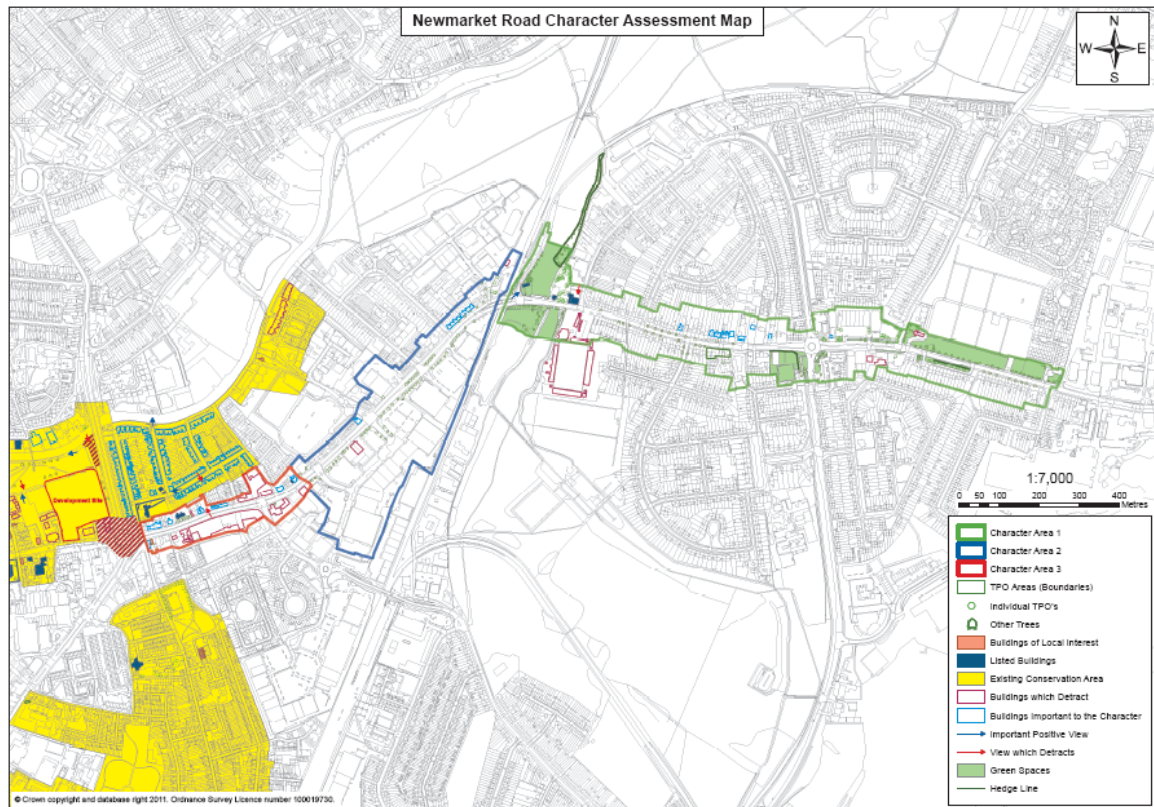
In 1810-12, the site of Barnwell Priory was levelled and only the rebuilt Abbey House and a fragment of the Priory survived (now known as the Cellarer's Chequer) alongside the Church of St Andrew the Less. In Victorian times, the area filled with brickworks and heavy industry, acquiring a considerable reputation for crime and contained the majority of the town's brothels (along with Castle End). Speculative building interest in the mid-19th century shifted to other parts of the town, notably to the Mill Road and railway station areas. Extensive development north of Newmarket Road (in the Abbey area) did not occur until after 1850, with much of it occurring at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The eastern stretch of Newmarket Road (to the modern city boundary) remained virtually undeveloped until the turn of the 20th century with the exception of some outlying farms and Elfleda House which were all in the Fen Ditton parish until 1938. In the first decades of the 20th century, Cambridge's ribbon development spread past the railway line which was built in 1845 (the Leper Chapel was used for services for the railway labourers) and a few houses sprang up along the north side, opposite Elfleda House. Nearer the Leper Chapel, were the Toll House, the papermills (alongside Coldham's Brook) and The Globe PH, which together formed a small cluster of development from the early 18th to early 19th century. With the exception of the small group near the railway bridge, the eastern stretch of road remained little developed until the Ditton Fields development of between 1938 and 1951 when much of the area was developed for local authority housing. Cambridge United's Abbey Stadium was opened August 31st 1931.

In the 20th century, the heavy industry and brick making, which was prevalent west of the railway bridge, was gradually replaced with light-industrial units and retail outlets. The gasworks, which had for almost two centuries been located behind the northern frontage of Newmarket Road, was developed and the Tesco supermarket building erected in the late 1990s. On the other side of the road, the Cambridge Retail Park was developed on the site of various brick-making sites and clay pits. Perhaps the biggest change, however, was the development of an inner ring road for Cambridge, which resulted in

numerous highway alterations, including the construction of Elizabeth Way Bridge, in 1971, and the roundabout at the junction with East Road.

4. Character Assessment



4.1. The Assessment Area

The area covered by the assessment is shown in Appendix 1. It encompasses Newmarket Road from the City boundary in the east to the Elizabeth Way roundabout at the junction with East Road. It includes the properties with frontages to the road and landscape areas with relationships to the road. The assessment area can be broadly divided into three Character Areas shown in Appendix 1:

- **Character Area 1** (green) encompasses the eastern stretch of the road from the City boundary to the railway line and consists of mainly mid-20th century development with a small historic building group near Coldham's Common;
- **Character Area 2** (blue) encompasses the central stretch of the road between the railway line and Coldham's Lane and consists mainly of the late 20th century Cambridge Retail Park led development with some fragmentary 19th and early 20th century development; and

- **Character Area 3** (red) encompasses the western stretch of the road from Coldham's Lane to Elizabeth Way and consists of a mixture of pre-c1800 and late 20th century development.

The assessment area contains very few Listed Buildings or Buildings of Local Interest (BLIs) and a small area on the south side including the Rose and Crown. It is proposed that the north side of Character Area 3 be included within an expanded Riverside and Stourbridge Common Conservation Area, along with the small historic group near Coldham's Common. The accompanying Riverside and Stourbridge Common Conservation Area Appraisal assesses these areas in more detail and provides justification for their inclusion.

4.2. Overall Character and Appearance

Newmarket Road is a long, gently curving road which rises slightly from the railway line eastwards where it probably follows the line of the Barnwell Causeway, at least in part. The form, age and density of the built development varies significantly along its length as does the width of the road, reflecting the significant changes in land ownership over its history.

Approaching the City boundary from the east, Newmarket Road is relatively open and green, albeit with a distinctly urban feel with the airport runway to



the south and fields with airport paraphernalia to the north. Within the City boundary, the enormous hangers of Marshall Aerospace loom above the rooftops of the post-War buildings that line the south side of the road. The avenue of trees draws the eye westwards

towards the Ditton Lane junction and beyond. There is an issue with street clutter, especially signage and advertising. Simplification would be welcome.

Although the road is predominantly lined by buildings, there is a definitive break in development at the railway line where Coldham's Common and the surviving meadows around the Leper Chapel create an almost rural feel. This is the western end of Character Area 1 and where the original limits of Cambridge 'Liberty' ended, reflected in the largely 20th century development that characterises the road from this point eastwards.

From the railway line westwards, retail led development prevails, with vast shed-type units dominating the townscape, although fragmentary groups of earlier development survives, notably along the north side of the road. The road is dualled from this point onwards and is often heavily congested and cluttered with street signage and other items of street furniture. Cambridge Retail Park and some of the later retail development are, however, screened by plane trees, which, together with the mature trees in the central



reservation, provide the start of a green avenue into the City Centre. Glimpses of the Museum of Technology's landmark chimney are gained from within this Character Area, between and above buildings, and particularly from around Tesco's open car park.

West of the Retail Park, there is a change in character and Character Area 3 is entered. Despite still being predominantly commercial, the finer grain of the surviving historic buildings relates this part of the road more to the historic City Centre rather than the modern retail environment further east. The Church of St Andrew the Less retains a link to the historic origins of the Barnwell area and provides a community focus to this stretch of Newmarket Road.

The nature of the area means that it is not appealing for cyclists or pedestrians as it is dominated by cars and commercial vehicles.

4.3. Character Area 1

The approach to the City boundary along Newmarket Road is flanked by Marshall Aerospace and its associated commercial activities which gives way to residential development upon entering the City limits. From the City boundary to Coldham's Brook, is the Ditton Fields Development which largely occurred 1900 – 51. This part of the City was only transferred to Cambridge in 1938; prior to that it was part of the Fen Ditton Parish, although Cambridge-related development had occurred from the 19th century onwards.

The south side of the road until the Ditton Lane junction is lined by post-War semi-detached pairs of houses, including the unusual stone-fronted pair (Nos. 700 – 702). Marshalls' aircraft hangers loom large above the rooftops and the



view down Meadowlands Road is directly towards an emergency gate access to the airport. The north-side of this part of Newmarket Road is entirely taken up by the Cambridge Cemetery which was opened in 1901 and is screened from the road behind simple railings and a strong

line of trees. The leafy character of this stretch of road is accentuated by the street trees on the south side of the road, the set back crescent behind a hedge and the trees within gardens and the cemetery itself. The only buildings on the north side are the recent block of flats (built on the site of allotment gardens on the City boundary) and the Cemetery Lodge and Chapel (both BLIs).



The road opens up towards the Ditton Lane junction which is usually busy with traffic and has the usual congregation of street signs, traffic lights and associated bollards, etc. The junction is softened by three mature trees on the corner of Ditton Lane, by Rothbury House, whilst the view along the lane itself is framed by trees in the cemetery and those along the boundary of Rothbury House; these soften the rather industrial railings that enclose the building's car park.

Beyond Ditton Lane to the Barnwell Road roundabout is an odd assortment of mid-late 20th century industrial and institutional buildings including Cambridge Technopark on the north side and a Methodist Church on the south side. Much of this



development occurred as a direct result of the plans for the Cambridge Ring Road which was to run along Barnwell Road, Wadloes Road and out across Ditton Meadows. The full plans for this road were never implemented, but it has resulted in very wide road junctions at the roundabout in this location and large set back buildings which do not contribute to the streetscene. The road is also dualled between Barnwell Road and Ditton Lane.



The sole surviving historic building in this area is Farrance House, a small, early 20th century, two storey gault brick property which is now attached to a more recent shop unit (recently reopened as a takeaway). It appears to

have been associated with a commercial use for some time and has the remains of a Homepride painted advert on its blank west side wall. It is now completely isolated, flanked by McDonalds and Cambridge Technopark. Opposite are the 1960s Barnwell Road shops with flats above and behind with a modern block recently built. The view down Barnwell Road is relatively pleasant as it is lined by a double row of trees on its west side. On the other side of the roundabout, Wadloes Road is also wide and lined by trees.

Continuing west from the Barnwell Road roundabout, Newmarket Road narrows again to single carriageway, but remains relatively wide with buildings set back from the highway which is edged with grass verges on which sporadic trees are planted. The corner with Barnwell Road is especially open with a bowling green and tennis courts hidden behind a strong hedgeline.

The opposite side of the junction has a row of local authority houses which are part of the estate off Wadloes Road. The next landmark along Newmarket Road can already be glimpsed – the floodlights of Cambridge United Football Club's Abbey Stadium; these are



visible above the rooftops of the properties along the south side of this stretch of the road.

The road continues westwards with a very gentle curve to the north and has a largely suburban character with earlier ribbon development on the north side and generally later estate-led development on the south side. Malden Close on the south side is a modern development of commercial premises on the Newmarket Road frontage with residential units behind. Next west, Rawlyn Court is a Cambridge City Council owned sheltered housing development, which turns its back on the street and is largely hidden behind a brick wall.

This is followed by Quanton Close, a small modern residential cul-de-sac built on the site of 19th century (or earlier) Elfleda House (renamed Aviation Hall before being demolished in the 1960s); the mature trees of its grounds are all that remain



and serve to screen the modern cul-de-sac. Further west, some 1930s pairs of houses flank the entrance to the Whitehill Road estate, so named after Whitehill Farm that once stood in the area.

The north side of the road is more interesting and contains a small group of historic buildings built in the first couple of decades of the 20th century including the turn of the 20th century Nos. 603-607 and the attractive 'Portofino' (No. 601). These buildings, between No. 595 and No. 625 and including Ivett & Reed Stonemasons (established 1896), with a few



exceptions, form a good group of traditional buildings which indicate the later ribbon development along Newmarket Road, before the mass post-War development of Ditton Fields. The earlier (1930s) phase of the Ditton Fields development continues the

north side of the road until the junction with Ditton Walk. On the south side of the road are Elfleda Cottages (built in the early part of the 20th century, possibly as estate cottages for Elfleda House) and some c1930s houses, which flank the locally renowned Cut Throat Lane (a dirt track leading to Elfleda Road) before Cambridge United's Abbey Stadium is reached.

The large-scale industrialized character of the football stadium and its associated facilities and open grounds are completely alien in the suburban townscape from which it is approached to the east. However, it is indicative of the form and scale of development that follows beyond the railway bridge and which falls into Character Area 2. Approaching from the east, however, the utilitarian, shabby and unattractive buildings in the forecourt of the football stadium and the adjacent car rental company premises are a very poor contrast with the small collection of historic buildings on the other side of the road.

The Globe PH (now Pipasha, China Chef and Coral) is a Grade II Listed Building (No. 529 Newmarket Road) attached to the former papermills building (now extended and converted to residential use) and sits on the corner of Ditton Lane



and Newmarket Road. West of a good brick wall enclosing the grounds of the Papermills is The Round House which was formerly a toll-house on the Newmarket Turnpike. It marks Cambridge's boundary before the Ditton Fields development was

transferred to the City in 1938.

The Papermills building is a rare survival of Cambridge's industrial past (there was a malthouse further along Ditton Lane and saw mills on the other side of



the road), whilst the other buildings indicate the importance of Newmarket Road as a principle approach route into the City. Their position by Coldham's Brook was functional in the case of the Papermills, but has also meant that the area to

the west has remained open and their setting here provides a glimpse of the former rural landscape, complemented by Coldham's Common and Barnwell Lake on the other side of the road.

The trees in the grounds of the former Papermills and those at the pedestrian entrance to Coldham's Common signal a change in character at this point. Immediately beyond The Round House views open up of the Chapel of St Mary Magdalene (also known as the Leper Chapel) and the surviving meadows around it. Despite the presence of the heavily engineered railway bridge and its accompanying traffic, the view is distinctly rural. Even the immediate presence of the railway, indicated by the Barnwell Station building (a BLI) beyond the chapel does not detract from this pastoral view. The road is raised at this point over the railway bridge and this, together with the trees of



Coldham's Common, helps to screen the football stadium in views from the chapel, although inevitably the floodlights remain visible.

The Leper Chapel, owned and managed by Cambridge Past, Present and Future, is the only surviving part of the Hospital of St Mary Magdalene which was founded in the 12th century, but reported empty already by 1279. Its significance is, however, connected to the Stourbridge Fair which was granted to the Hospital by King John in 1210-11. Stourbridge Fair was an extremely important local and national event, lasting for 5 weeks at its peak and which had become the largest in England by Henry VIII's time. The survival of the Chapel has been attributed to secular uses connected with the Fair – it was reportedly used as an inn and a stable! – and it is for this reason, a highly significant reminder of the medieval history of the area, as well as being an interesting survival of smaller 12th century chapel connected with a leper hospital. It is listed as grade I.

Brick and tile works in the 19th century on the other side of the road to the Leper Chapel left a large pit in the ground which later formed a lake and views across this area are green and pleasant; a refreshing antidote to the industrial character of the adjacent railway line and football stadium. Barnwell Lake (or Pit) is well used by anglers and continues the rural character around the Leper Chapel.



The railway line forms a distinct boundary between this section of the road which is largely residential and the rest of the study area which is predominantly commercial in nature.

The majority of the buildings along this stretch are set back from the road with small front gardens. The enhancement of these areas, along with street tree planting, would improve its character.

4.4. Character Area 2

North side

There was little development in this part of Newmarket Road before c1800 when the first ribbon development occurred. This was mostly of poor type that extended, in a fragmentary fashion, mostly along the north side of the road to the line of the railway. Baker's Map of 1830 shows some buildings at the western end of the character area which are probably those built soon after Inclosure in 1811. Most building along this side of the road occurred in the first couple of decades of the 20th century, but gaps remained because of the preponderance of brick and tile works that had sprung up in the 19th century.

The prevailing character is much more urban than that to the east on the other side of the railway line. The road is two lanes wide on each side of a central reservation which creates a strong barrier between the two sides of the road. Although some of the original ribbon development is still in residential use, the disjointed nature of these fragments and the intrusion of modern development instil a commercial character in keeping with the industrial past of the area and the modern retail development on the south side of the road.

The former industrial nature of the area is remembered in the scrap yard, which greets the traveller immediately upon crossing the railway bridge. Fortunately, a number of large trees with Tree Preservation Orders partially conceal the untidy site and help to screen the large Renault garage along Swann Road. Large plane trees continue around the corner of Swann Road, past the modern Signet Court office development and along Newmarket Road in front of the early 20th century terrace (Nos. 465 – 495). The line of trees is continued in the



Swann Road. Large plane trees continue around the corner of Swann Road, past the modern Signet Court office development and along Newmarket Road in front of the early 20th century terrace (Nos. 465 – 495). The line of trees is continued in the

central reservation either side of the Stanley Road junction. This avenue of trees continues intermittently for much of this length of Newmarket Road, although largely along the south side of the road. It is an important part of its character and helps to green this busy area and the approach towards the City Centre, creating a boulevard effect.



The early 20th century terrace ends at Garlic Row, a reminder of the Stourbridge Fair where stalls were laid out in 'Rows'. The next group of buildings includes the former Dog and Pheasant PH (No. 451) and another couple of earlier 19th century

buildings (Nos. 437-439), all of which have been thoroughly modernised. Two short terraces were built either side of Stanley Road when it was laid out in the late 19th century.

There is then a large gap in the streetscene where the second modern intrusion into the townscape occurs. A large brick box containing the Staples and Comet stores with its associated car park sits at odds with the tight grain of the surviving ribbon development. However, this break does allow a view of the Museum of Technology's chimney which is a local and citywide landmark. Glimpses of the chimney continue to be gained moving westwards along the road through gaps between buildings and where modern development has created large breaks in the building line.

Much of the land behind the frontage buildings along Newmarket Road was in industrial uses before it began to be developed in the 20th century. One of these industries was the gasworks, the site of



which is now occupied by Tesco supermarket. Its construction in the 1990s significantly altered the character of Cheddar's Lane (formerly known as Brick Kiln Lane) which was widened to accommodate delivery and customer vehicles

and isolated the largely early 19th century development that lined Newmarket Road.

This run of buildings is bookended at its eastern end by the solidly constructed 1940s rebuilt Wrestlers Arms PH. At the other end, is a small public square at the main pedestrian entrance to the Tesco site behind; this space includes a war memorial and two trees



which help to soften its rather bleak appearance. The attractive war memorial, although not connected, is an appropriate reminder of the gas works that once stood on the site. In between the Wrestlers and public square, the quality, age and form of the buildings vary, but are divided by the take-away and car/van hire rental office. To the east of these premises is a row of small two storey late 19th century cottages; to the west a mixture of small 19th century dwellings, some of which have been converted/alterd to form retail units.

Along here, the houses have either very small front gardens, or are back of pavement, which gives a very different character to this area when compared with Character Area 1. The central planters in the road appear to be somewhat neglected and the local community have been looking after them to improve the character.

South side

The south side of this character area is entirely comprised of large scale 20th century retail development, much of it forming the Cambridge Retail Park. Its unifying feature is the large number of trees that have been planted along the road



edge which continues the intermittent tree planting on the other side of the road and unites the two sides of the road. Despite this, the area is not appealing to many and enhancements, in the form of appropriate planting to soften the buildings, would be welcome,

Most of the buildings along this side of the road are huge warehouse sized metal framed and clad structures with little architectural pretence, although the more recent developments, notably the Retail Park itself have more design intent than the earlier 'boxes'. Only B&Q, KwikFit/Europcar and Pizza Hut could be considered to front the road as they are set closer to the

pavement edge, although their street presence is very limited. The majority of the roadside is taken up by car parking, albeit reasonably well landscaped car parking, and the trees at the back of the footpath help to



draw the eye city-ward and away from the expanses of tarmac.

4.5. Character Area 3

This character area encompasses the site of the original Barnwell hamlet or suburb that grew up outside the medieval town of Cambridge following the establishment of Barnwell Priory, although archaeological evidence indicates settlement in the area from the 5th and 6th centuries. The area contains some of the oldest and some of the most recent development along Newmarket Road and the prevailing character is commercial, signifying the approach to the City Centre. The Elizabeth Way roundabout at the western end of the

study area is a major City junction and the traffic and highway is correspondingly dominant at this point.



Here all the buildings are back of pavement and do not have any private space to the front. This increases the dense, urban feel of this Character Area.

North side

The north side of this stretch of road begins after

the War Memorial public square, with the Seven Stars PH which has an attractive projecting ground floor. This row of buildings up to the River Lane junction is bookended by another public house, The Corner House which was rebuilt in the c1940s (replacing the Butchers' Arms PH) and has half-timbering on the upper floor and a slightly projecting gabled front entrance section. In between are a mid-19th century terrace (Newmarket Terrace on the 1888 OS map) and the early 19th century grade II listed No.247 with a mansard tiled roof which now has plastic windows as opposed to the 6/6 sashes in the list description.



The section of road between River Lane and Godesdone Road (laid out at the end of the 19th century) was entirely redeveloped in the mid-20th century and now contains West's Renault garage and Cooper's furniture showrooms which

replaced some of the earliest ribbon development along Newmarket Road. Continuing west from Godesdone Road is a range of mostly mid-late 19th century properties, altered to fit their predominantly commercial use. This range is followed by a car sales lot which breaks the building line and which allows views through to Beche Court, a modern infill



development.

A pair of early 20th century cottages with interesting shaped parapets sits adjacent to the disfigured Post Office and then the late 20th century Cambridge Seminars College, an unattractive late 20th century three storey office block on 'stilts' with parking underneath. It is an unfortunate contrast to the well-treed and pleasant churchyard adjacent in which the Church of St Andrew the Less sits. The strong line of mature trees creates a positive break in the building line as this stretch of the road is otherwise devoid of greenery in contrast to the tree-lined stretches further east.

The Church of St Andrew the Less is an important survival of the earliest development in the area and is one of the very few surviving



elements of the Barnwell Priory which was established in the common land of Barnwell Fields in 1112 and surrendered in 1538 with the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The establishment of the Priory led to considerable growth in this area and St Andrew the Less was built in the early 13th century to serve the needs of the Barnwell hamlet which was centred on the church with a small cluster of streets off Newmarket Road. Alongside Abbey House and the Cellarer's Chequer behind Newmarket Road, the church is the only surviving element of the pre-Inclosure development and an important green space in the prevailing urban environment. The majority of the Priory site was levelled in 1810 – 12.

The next group of properties all date from the end of the 19th century and were built in the gardens of Abbey House (just behind). They include No. 141, a large two and a half storey house, now divided into flats (and previously in office use) and which is perhaps of interest for its more recent

history – a plaque at the entrance to the rear yard notes that it was it was in ‘Casey’s Yard’ that Donn Casey, an Australian population control expert, invented the Filchie Clip, an internationally important contraceptive device. Further along this group of buildings is No. 123 which has a good traditional shopfront; unfortunately the adjoining buildings to the west have been significantly altered.



The road ends disappointingly at the Elizabeth Way roundabout, which severs the majority of Newmarket Road from its continuation into the historic core of Cambridge, both visually and physically. This junction is

surrounded by poor quality developments, which do not enclose the space and allow traffic to dominate. Newmarket Road is very hostile at this point as it is dualled with a central reservation, which forms a strong barrier between the two sides of the road, segregating the Abbey / Riverside community behind the north side of Newmarket Road from the Petersfield community behind the south side.

South side

Looking across Elizabeth Way roundabout back into the study area, the former Rose and Crown is an important building, now in residential use, which turns the corner successfully and draws the eye along Newmarket Road. To the east are the remains of some of the houses that were built soon after



inclosure of the Barnwell Fields in 1811, including Nos. 114 – 116, which are BLIs. Flanking the junction of Abbey Street is a boarded up public house, The Five Bells, one of a large number of public houses that

once lined Newmarket Road – innkeepers benefited from the importance of the Stourbridge Fair.

After Abbey Street, all the development on this side of the road is later 20th century industrial development which destroyed the previous network of small streets, passages and yards which are evident on ordnance survey maps



until the 1967 edition. They are decidedly unattractive and create a desolate townscape with few windows or openings onto the street. On the east side of the Coldham's Lane junction, a large glassy box office building lies derelict whilst adjacent is Sliderobes, another unattractive commercial building which stands on the site of the William IV PH which was Grade II Listed.

5. Significance Assessment

The relative significance of buildings and landscape features in the study area has been assessed according to the following five categories (to be read in conjunction with the coloured map at Appendix 1):

- **Protected:** buildings and trees that are protected by listing or Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Listed buildings in the assessment areas are listed below. Buildings protected by listing are outlined in dark blue on the map at appendix 1, and TPOs and TPO areas are also indicated.
- **Building of Local Interest (BLI):** although not afforded statutory protection, these make a positive contribution to the street scene, and are listed below. They are outlined in red on the map at Appendix 1.
- **Positive:** buildings of clear local interest, but not yet included as a Building of Local Interest, or of lesser quality than Buildings of Local Interest, or altered superficially. They are outlined in light blue on the map in appendix 1 and those suggested for BLI status are listed below.
- **Neutral:** buildings which although of little individual merit (sometimes on account of unsympathetic alteration) nevertheless combine with other buildings and spaces to create a townscape of value, or at least do not detract. These are left uncoloured on the map at Appendix 1.
- **Negative:** buildings which have an adverse impact. These are identified in pink on the map at Appendix 1.

In addition to these categories, significant but not formally protected green spaces, including roadside verges and major open spaces, are also indicated on the map at Appendix 1.

Listed Buildings

Church of St Andrew the Less, NEWMARKET ROAD, Grade II

Small church of early 13th century date consisting of chancel and nave. Rubble with some dressed stone. Built by Barnwell Priory. The church was restored 1854 – 6, the vestry and Organ-chamber added in the late 19th century. (RCHM 47).

No.247 Newmarket Road, Grade II

House. Early 19th century. Gault brick with plain-tile mansard roof and brick left end stack. 2 storeys and attic; single-window range of 6/6 sashes – now plastic. Door to right. Dentilled eaves and 2-light dormer.

Chapel of St Mary Magdalene (Stourbridge Chapel), Newmarket Road, Grade I

Complete and little altered chapel of mid 12th century date, consisting of chancel and nave only. Roof of 1400. West wall altered 1867. Ashlar, flint and brick with tiled roof. Unusual architectural and carved decoration of tile period. (RCHM 62).

The Round House, Newmarket Road, Grade II

Circa 1830. Formerly a toll-house on the Newmarket Turnpike. Grey gault brick. Single storey rectangular block with semi-octagonal bay projecting on the road front. Modern 2 storey addition on the north-east. Sash windows, some with glazing bars. Low-pitched hipped slate roofs, with bracketed boxed eaves supported on slender free-standing cast-iron columns. Central brick chimney. (RCHM 322).

Papermills, Newmarket Road, Grade II

Early C18. Buff brick. 2 storeys and attic; 6 windows sashes with glazing bars, 2 attic dormers with 19th century bargeboards. Early 19th century trellis-work porch with slated roof, external shutters. Continuous band at 1st floor level, brick dentil eaves cornice, old tile roof. Good chimney at south gable end.

Some chamfered beams. The mill on the north is dated 1871; a rebuilding of an older mill. 2 storeys and loft weatherboarded and gault brick. Timber vent on roof and sack hoist at rear. Slate roof. Now with a large weather-boarded extension and in residential use (RCHM 323).

The Globe (Public House) Newmarket Road, Grade II

Early 19th century. Brick, rendered. 20th century public house treatment below, 3 19th century sash windows above. Canted bay rising through both floors. Modern tiled roof. Now divided into three commercial units at ground floor (Pipasha restaurant, China Chef take-away and Coral betting shop) with residential above.

Existing Buildings of Local Interest

Nos. 114 – 116 (evens) Newmarket Road

Circa 1820. A pair of small two-storey houses sharing a central stack. They have been altered during conversion to shops, and in the late C20, when they were converted back to houses. The entire rear wall has been rebuilt and first floor glazed doors inserted. There have been lean-to additions at the back, and the space between the kitchen wings of both houses filled by a single storey entrance lobby, with two half-glazed doors. As a result of these alterations, the internal plan has been lost. The windows in the front door have been altered.

Barnwell Junction Station Platform Building

Small mid-19th century gault brick platform building with chimney stack.

Cemetery Lodge and Chapel

The Lodge and the Chapel form a pair and were built at the same time. The cemetery was opened in 1901.

Lodge

Built on a cross plan, the Lodge is constructed from red brick with stone detailing, including a platband between the ground and first floor. The fine mortar is a similar colour to the stone. The metal framed windows have stone mullions and leaded lights in some of the panes of glass.

Chapel

The Chapel is constructed from the same materials as the Lodge but on a simple, rectangular footprint. It has the addition of stained glass above the entrance door and the windows. Inside the building is very simple in architectural terms with the addition of a stone fireplace and mantel. There have been extensions and alterations to this building over the years.

The two buildings are now linked by an extension which forms the entrance to the Chapel. The boundary walls, railings and gates are also important to the setting of these buildings.

Proposed Buildings of Local Interest

First World War Memorial, Tesco public square (to east of Seven Stars PH)

Stone memorial to workers of Gasworks (on Tesco site) who died in the First World War. Hexagonal 'cupola' topped with cross standing on square stone plinth with rose relief in band above engraved list of names. It stands in front of metal gates which are Art Deco in style.

Portofino, No. 601 Newmarket Road

Turn of the 19th/20th century 2-storey gault brick villa. 2-storey square bay window with gable. Slate roof with end stack. Stone detailing and plate glass sash windows.

Rocksand Villas, Nos. 595 – 597 (odds) Newmarket Road

Pair of turn of the 19th/20th century 2-storey gault brick villas. Projecting slate-roofed porch supported on timber brackets over ground floor bay windows.

Arched sash windows 6/1 with 4/1 to side sashes in bay window. Slate roof with end stacks.

6. Enhancement Opportunities

6.1 Improvements to the Public Realm

Character Area 1

The tree planting in the stretch of the road between Ditton Lane and the railway line is sporadic and could be strengthened to create a continuous tree-lined approach into the City. The existing flowering cherries and purple plum trees in the grass verges (typical of interwar housing) appear to have been supplemented in recent years with lime trees, and birches are seen in the residential streets leading off the main road. The opportunity to plant trees of sufficient townscape value should be taken where grass verges are empty. This would unite the avenue of trees at the City Boundary and the boulevard effect that is being created in the commercial western half of the road (see below).

The approach to the railway from the east, between the old Papermills and the Leper Chapel, could be planted with a line of plane trees, which would mirror those on the other side of the railway (see below) and announce the start of the plane tree avenue.

Character Area 2

West of the railway, the planting strategy of the recent retail developments has continued the historic precedent of the remaining fragment of the plane tree avenue outside Nos. 465-495 Newmarket Road. Although some are young specimens, their townscape importance is significant and will become stronger as they mature. It is recommended that those outside the control of the City Council are made the subject of Tree Preservation Orders as soon as possible. The central verge could be enhanced with an appropriate landscape design.

Character Area 3

At the western end, the road is devoid of trees and landscaping with the exception of the significant group of trees in the churchyard of the Abbey Church. Some attempt at 'greening' the area has been made previously with the installation of planting beds in the central reservation near the Coldham's Lane junction; however, these are unkempt and insignificant. The opportunity

to continue the avenue of plane trees along the central reservation here should be taken, as the roadsides offer little scope. The group of trees at the Stanley Road junction further east demonstrates that it should be possible with the right type of root protection. The central verge could be enhanced with an appropriate landscape design.

All Areas

The pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure could be enhanced along the length of Newmarket Road to make it more appealing and reduce the number of vehicular movements. The amount of street furniture could be increased to aid those who are disabled or frail so that they can use the road. The linkages between the different sides of the roads should be re-established and improved.

6.2 New Development

The City Council's Eastern Gate Visioning Document proposes various development opportunities between and including Elizabeth Way and Coldham's Lane. Any development proposals that come forward should be informed by the remaining traditional buildings in the area and acknowledge the importance of the historical context of Newmarket Road. The opportunity to redevelop the south side of the road in particular in a finer grain should be taken, perhaps re-establishing some of the lost streets and lanes of the 19th century.

Similarly, the proposals to provide better enclosure to the Elizabeth Way roundabout, also apply to the roundabout at the junction of Wadloes Road and Barnwell Road. The present McDonalds and Barnwell Road shops and library do not create a positive frontage. The opportunity to integrate Farrance House, adjacent to McDonalds, into a wider redevelopment of the Technopark and East Barnwell Centre area could also be considered in order to provide a more a positive townscape in this area.

Near the railway bridge, midway along Newmarket Road, the Abbey Stadium has been at the centre of redevelopment proposals for some time subject to other national and local policy documents.

7. References

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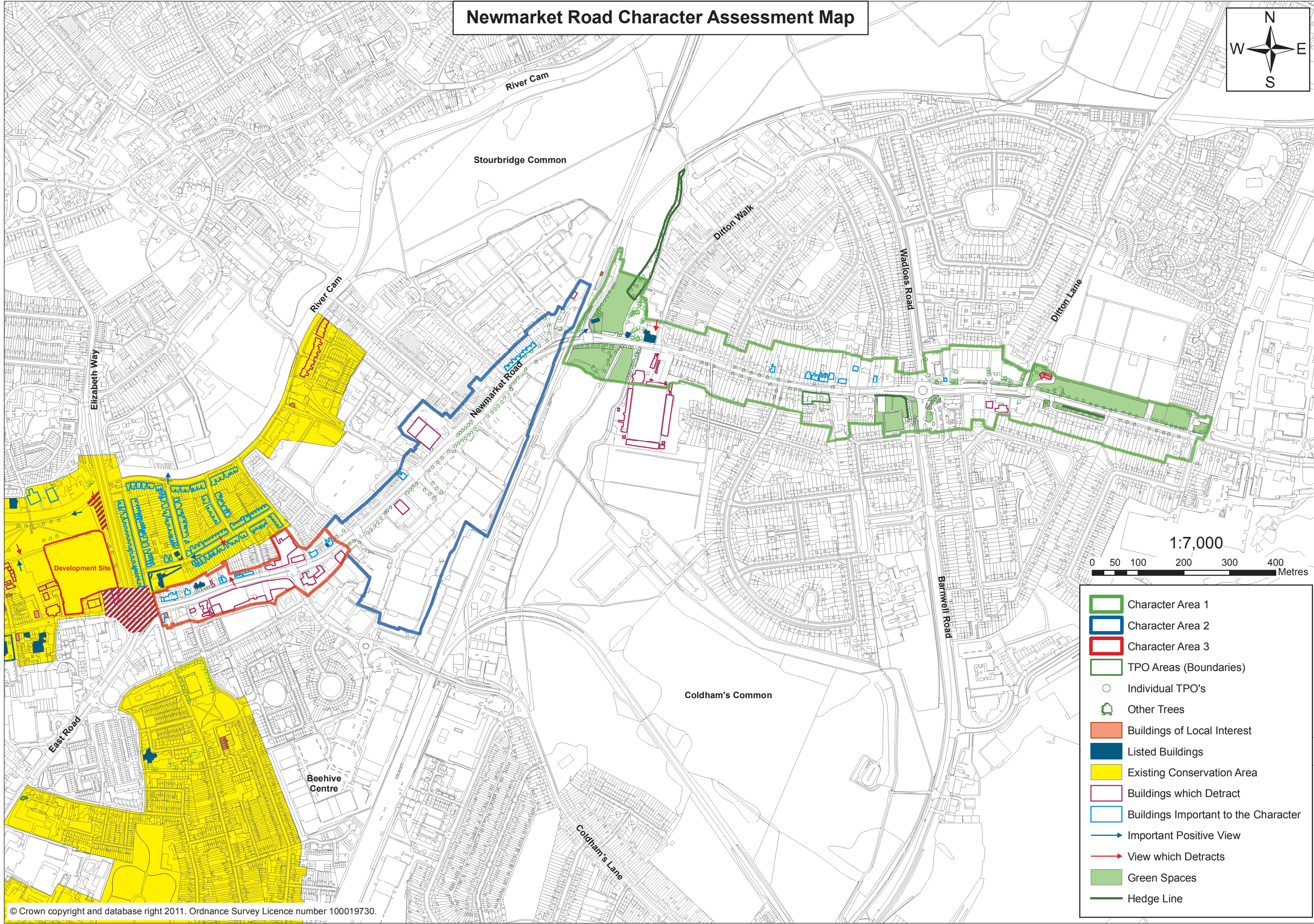
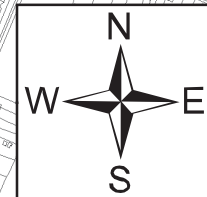
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Eastern Gate Visioning Document (July 2010) Cambridge City Council – Joint Urban Design Team

8. Map

Newmarket Road Character Assessment Map



- Character Area 1
- Character Area 2
- Character Area 3
- TPO Areas (Boundaries)
- Individual TPO's
- Other Trees
- Buildings of Local Interest
- Listed Buildings
- Existing Conservation Area
- Buildings which Detract
- Buildings Important to the Character
- ➔ Important Positive View
- ➔ View which Detracts
- Green Spaces
- Hedge Line