

STRENSALL WITH TOWTHORPE CHARACTER APPRAISAL

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CONTENTS

	Page
Character Assessment	
1.00 Introduction	2
2.00 Location & Setting	3
3.00 Spatial Analysis	4
4.00 Character Areas	8
5.00 Built Form	15
6.00 Materials	17
7.00 Architectural Features	18
 Figure 1 Spatial Analysis	
Figure 2 Character Areas	

I.00 INTRODUCTION

- I.01 This report provides a brief character assessment of the character of the land and buildings within the Strensall with Towthorpe Neighbourhood Plan area. The report focuses on an analysis of the basic built form and focuses on the residential areas that generate the overall character of the area. It also identifies the local building materials and architectural features.
- I.02 The second section of this report suggests design policies to reinforce local distinctiveness in new residential development.

2.00 LOCATION AND SETTING

2.01 Strensall village and Towthorpe hamlet lie approximately 5 kilometres north of York city centre. The wider landscape comprises the Vale of York which is a largely open, flat and low-lying landscape between the higher land of the Southern Magnesian Limestone ridge to the west, the Howardian Hills to the north and the Yorkshire Wolds to the east. The core of the village is on the south side of the River Foss and is positioned between the B1363 and A64.



Photo 1 View of surrounding landscape from Lords Moor Lane

2.02 Strensall village occupies part of a flat open area to the south of the River Foss. The village itself is surrounded by agricultural fields to the north, east and west (see Photos. 1 & 2). These areas of open ground enable long distance views towards the village from the north. To the south and east of the village is Strensall Common and the Queen Elizabeth Barracks.

2.03 Towthorpe is a small hamlet located to the south-west of Strensall and sits to the east of the River Foss and is also surrounded by agricultural land. To the south-west beyond the River Foss is the built up area of Haxby.



Photo 2 View of agricultural land from Strensall New Bridge

3.00 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

- 3.01 The character of Strensall with Towthorpe is established by several key factors. These factors are described below and illustrated on Fig. 1.

Transport Corridors and Pedestrian routes

- 3.02 Within the area there are several distinctive movement corridors. The primary vehicle routes run in a north/south direction through the area. The routes comprise Strensall Road, York Road, the western end of The Village and Sheriff Hutton Road, and is heavily trafficked particularly during the rush hour periods. There are a number of secondary roads within the area Ox Carr Lane, Flaxton Road, Lord Moors Lane runs between the railway line and Strensall Common to Flaxton and beyond. Towthorpe Road/Towthorpe Moor Lane is a secondary road that runs along the southern boundary of the study area and provides access to the A64 to the south-east.

- 3.03 The railway line cuts through the study area and travels in south-west/north-east direction (see Photo. 3). Whilst there is no longer a station stop in the study area, a significant number of train movements throughout the day results in the level crossing barriers in three location closing to prevent vehicles crossing the train line.

- 3.04 Within the western and northern part of the study area there are a number of public footpaths. A public footpath follows the line of the River Foss (see Photo. 4) and there are a number footpaths across farmland in the north-west corner of the study area that connect to the footpath along the River Foss. Within the historic core of Strensall there are three short sections of footpaths or snickets that run in a north/south direction. Two are located between Southfields Road and the Village (see Photo. 5) whilst the other footpath is situated between West End and Church Lane.

- 3.05 The River Foss is an historic route that is no longer navigable. However, it is still considered to be an important feature within the area.



Photo 3 View the railway line



Photo 4 Footpath along River Foss



Photo 5 Snicket from Southfield Road

Nodes

- 3.06 Nodes are places where people meet or gather on a regular basis and the area has several nodes.
- 3.07 The main activity within Strensall is generated by the small collection of retail uses and public houses along The Village (see Photo. 6). These different uses attract people during the day in addition to the evenings.
- 3.08 The Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy is a large primary school that serves the study area. During term time it is a hub of activity, particularly at school pick up and drop off.
- 3.09 Sport is an important element of the area and there are a number of facilities that attract large numbers of people. The Strensall Community and Youth Sports Association at Durston Drive provides grass football pitches together with floodlit tennis courts and all-weather pitch, which generates activity at the weekends and weeknights. Other facilities include the golf club and bowling club.
- 3.10 The Village Hall is located on Northfields (see Photo. 7) and Hurst Hall Community Centre is located off Ox Carr Lane adjacent to the barracks have many local groups utilising the facilities in the evenings and at weekends. The Library is located off the north side of The Village and the Medical Centre on the south side of Southfields Road which also generate a significant amount of pedestrian and vehicle movements.

Local Landmarks

- 3.11 Queen Elizabeth Barracks are considered to be a local landmark. Whilst there are no individual buildings of landmark quality visible from the public domain, the size and presence of the barracks result in a landmark quality.



Photo 6 Retail uses on The Village



Photo 7 View of the Village Hall



Photo 8 View of St. Mary's Church

3.12 The spire of St Mary's Church (a Grade II listed building) is a dominant feature and serves as a local landmark (see Photo. 8). Views to the spire are possible from within the village itself and from the surrounding countryside to the north.

3.13 Within the study area there are two Grade II listed historic bridges that cross the River Foss. These are Strensall Bridge on Sheriff Hutton Road and Strensall New Bridge on Haxby Moor Road. Both bridges have a distinctive hump design that mark historic routes into the village from the north. In addition, the recently constructed pedestrian footbridge adjacent Strensall Bridge is a distinctive feature with its arched design that compliments the form of the adjacent historic bridge.



Photo 9 Strensall New Bridge

Gateways

3.14 Along the highway network are a number of significant entrance points which are referred to as 'Gateways'. There are several gateways within the Strensall area, with some more pronounced than others due to their location and the type of highway they sit on. It should be noted that the boundary of the study area define the arrival points in to the area and therefore a number of the gateways listed below are less obvious than others;



Photo 10 Level crossing at Lords Moor Lane

- Level crossing along Lords Moor Lane– strong sense of arrival into the area due to the level crossing and barriers (see Photo 10).
- Road Bridges across the River - sense of arrival into the urban area from the north (see Photo. 9)
- Roundabout at Strensall Road/York Road— provides a visual clue to arrival into the area.
- Towthorpe - grassed triangular shaped open space, with mature tree and finger post at the road junction with Strensall Road.

Views

3.15 Due to relatively level ground views within the built up area of the study area views are generally restricted to those along the highways. There are however,



Photo 11 View from Flaxton Road towards Strensall

opportunities for views across agricultural land from Flaxton Road towards the rooftops of buildings within the historic core of the village, beyond the railway line (see Photo. 11). In addition there are open views across the military training area of Strensall Common from Lords Moor Lane. There are also views out of the built up area to the surrounding countryside from highway to north of the River Foss.

Greenery and Open Spaces

3.16 Within the area there is a variety of greenery and open spaces. Some residential properties have mature trees in their front gardens which provides a soft landscape edge to the urban form, and many of the twentieth century housing estates include formal open spaces with groups of trees or pocket children playgrounds. Strensall Park, located to the south of the barracks, has a distinctive central open space that is grassed with mature trees around its edge that make a positive contribution to Strensall Road (see Photo. 12).

3.17 Within the main urban area the principal open spaces are the maintained public recreation facilities such as the area adjacent to the Village Hall on Northfields. In contrast to the formal area and gardens, there are more natural landscapes around the River Foss. There are also areas of agricultural land that sit between railway line and Flaxton Road. Surrounding the study area on all sides, the agricultural use of the land creates a more rural appearance in contrast to the built up settlement. The enclosed fields were predominantly used for grazing animals.

3.18 Strensall Common located in the east of the study area, dominates the area and is currently used as a military training area (see Photo. 13). It is a rich and varied environment with a wealth of wildlife. It is one of only two extensive lowland heaths remaining in the Vale of York and contains rare species of flora and fauna, including moths, flowers and ferns. The land is farmed and the grazing of cattle and sheep is restricted in accordance with the Natural England Stewardship Award in order to protect its status as a SSSI. The common has a distinctive character, including evergreen trees, that is very different from the surrounding enclosed farmland.



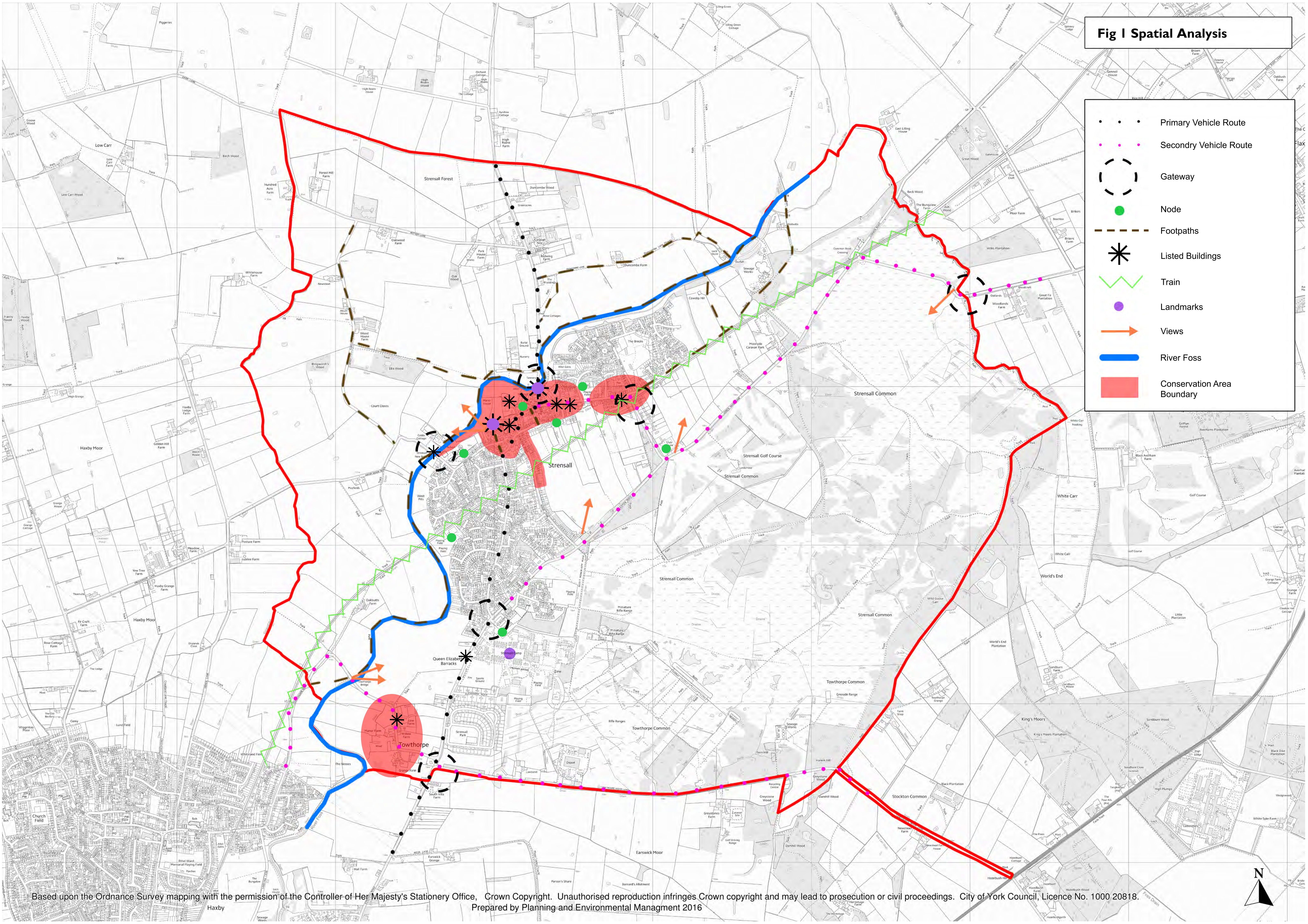
Photo 12 View of Strensall Park



Photo 13 View across Strensall Common

Fig I Spatial Analysis

- • • Primary Vehicle Route
- • • • • Secondary Vehicle Route
- ⊘ Gateway
- Node
- Footpaths
- * Listed Buildings
- ⚡ Train
- Landmarks
- ➡ Views
- River Foss
- Conservation Area Boundary



4.00 CHARACTER AREAS

4.01 Within the study area it is possible to identify 20 building character areas. The character of these areas relates to the use of the land, the form of the buildings, the spaces between the buildings and the level of activity within an area. The character areas are as follows and are identified in Fig. 2.

1. Towthorpe Conservation Area
2. Strensall Park
3. Alexandra Road
4. Queen Elizabeth Barracks
5. St Wilfrid's Road
6. Howard Road
7. Ox Carr Lane
8. Pasture Close
9. Oak Tree Close
10. York Road west side
11. York Road east side
12. Princess Road/ Moor Lane
13. Southfields Road
14. Strensall Conservation Area
15. Fossvie Close
16. Northfields
17. Strensall Railway Conservation Area
18. Lords Moor Lane
19. Park Gate/Redmayne Square/ Swallows
20. Thompson Drive/Heath Ride
21. Surrounding Countryside

4.02 The boundaries of these areas sometimes overlap and as a result have blurred edges. A brief description of each area is set out in the following paragraphs.

1. Towthorpe

Small former agricultural hamlet with historic farmhouses and outbuildings that are grouped to form small yards. The farmhouses are two storeys in height, whilst the outbuildings are generally a single storey in height. The buildings are constructed in red brick with pitched pantiled roofs (See Photo. 14).

2. Strensall Park

This is a mid-twentieth century housing estate laid out around a large tree lined open space. The detached houses are set in generous grounds, they are two storeys in height and are rendered with



Photo 14 Housing in Towthorpe



Photo 15 View of Strensall Park



Photo 16 View of housing on south side of Alexandra Road

pitched pantile roofs (see Photo. 15). It is understood they were built as married officers quarters. The majority of the houses have flanking walls that incorporate garages whilst other have garages that project forward of the building line. All of the houses are set behind a low brick wall with metal entrance gates. The estate is laid out around a narrow highway with grass verges and trees from the front gardens overspill onto the streetscene. At the northern end of the central open space are tennis courts surrounded by a mature hedge.

3. Alexandra Road

This is a leafy residential street, with two storey semi-detached houses set in generous gardens. The houses are set behind a post and wire fence or hedge. The majority of the houses on the south side of the street were built during the early twentieth century and constructed with a glazed red brick with a hipped roof covered in modern concrete tiles. The principal elevation of these houses is located on the south façade away from the street and the rear elevation faces Alexandra Road. The street is punctuated at its end by a detached Commanding Officers residence of a similar age to the buildings on the south side of the street. The houses on the north side are also two storey semi-detached houses built in the mid-twentieth century with principal elevations that face Alexandra Road. They have side entrances and detached garages to the side of the units (see Photo 17).

4. Queen Elizabeth Barracks

This area contains the operational Army Barracks set behind a wire fence that includes a variety of historic and modern buildings laid out around parade grounds. The historic buildings are constructed in brick with hipped roofs covered in slate or tiles.



Photo 17 Housing on the north side of Alexandra Road



Photo 18 Housing along St Wilfrid's Road



Photo 19 Housing to the north of Howard Road

5. St Wilfrid's Road

This area comprises mid-twentieth century semi-detached two storey houses, that are constructed with red brick and have pitched concrete pantiled roofs (see Photo 18). The houses are set back from the highway behind open grassed areas and vehicle parked is provided in parking courts. This area also contains St Wilfrid's Garrison Church, which dates from 1934 and makes a positive contribution to the streetscene.

6. Howard Road

On the south side of Howard Road is a late twentieth century two storey housing estate that contains a variety of detached, semi-detached and short terraces arranged around a small central grassed area with a small children's playground. They are constructed in red brick with shallow pitched pantiled roofs and set behind a grass verge with tree and shrub planting. To the north of Howard Road is a similar housing estate that comprises short terraces laid out in a "Radburn" style with highways and pavements segregated. They are two storeys in height constructed in brown or buff brick with shallow pitched pantiled roofs (see Photo. 19). The layout comprises parking courts and garage blocks and pockets of green space with isolated trees. Rear gardens that overlook streetscene are defined by tall timber fencing or brick walls.

7. Ox Carr Lane

This area has a mixed character with a variety of historic and modern developments that are also two storeys in height and are generally constructed in a red brick with pitched pantile roofs (see Photo. 20). The houses are generally set back from the highway and sit behind brick walls or hedges.

8. Pasture Close

This area is predominantly a late twentieth century residential area with houses laid out around a traditional highway with pavements on either side of the highway. There area mixture of bungalows and chalet style houses that are constructed in a brown or buff brick with a pitched pantiled roof (see Photo. 21). There are no boundary walls or hedges that define the curtilage to the houses and there are also small areas of landscaping with isolated trees.



Photo 20 Housing on Ox Carr Lane



Photo 21 Housing on Pasture Close



Photo 22 Housing on OakTree Close

9. Oak Tree Close

This area is characterised by predominantly two storey detached housing, although there are examples of some bungalows, that were built during the mid to late twentieth century. The houses are set behind low brick walls or hedges and are laid out along an estate road with pavements on either side of the highway. Some of the dwellings have detached garages, whilst others are incorporated within the house. Given the range in the date of the construction of the houses they use a variety of materials; stone, red or brown brick which results in varied but somewhat haphazard appearance (see Photo. 22)



Photo 23 Housing in character area 10

10. York Road - west side

This area is characterised by a variety of residential areas that were constructed during the late twentieth century. The area contains a variety of detached and semi-detached two storey houses and a number of detached bungalows (see Photo. 23). Houses constructed in a red brick with a pitched pantiled roof. Some of the bungalows have brick infill panels, stone elements and false timber paneling. The houses are laid out along typical estate roads with pavements to either side of the highway. The area also includes a short parades of shops on the north side of Barley Rise.



Photo 24 Housing in character area 11

11. York Road - east side

This area is characterised by a variety of residential areas that were constructed during the late twentieth century. The area contains a variety of detached and semi-detached two storey houses and a number of detached bungalows (see Photo 24). The houses are constructed in a variety of red brick with a pitched pantiled roof. The houses are laid out along typical estate roads with pavements to either side of the highway. The estates are laid out with small communal open grassed areas that are often punctuated by groups of trees.



Photo 25 Housing on Moor Lane

12. Princess Road/Moor Lane

This character area excludes the housing located within the Strensall Conservation Area. The area comprises mixed mid-late twentieth century houses that are predominantly two storeys in height, although there are some examples of bungalows. The houses are generally detached or semi-detached houses that sit behind small front gardens (see Photo. 25). They are constructed with brick and have pitched pantile roofs. On the west side of Moor Lane they are examples of cul-de-sac developments (such as Orchard Way) that are laid out around a traditional highway or a mews court arrangement.

13. Southfields Road

Single storey housing located on the south side of Southfields Road (see Photo. 26) Set around a grassed area with isolated trees. Constructed in red brick with render infill panels and a pitched slate roof. At the eastern end of the road are a number of two storey dwellings constructed in red brick with pitched pantile roofs.

14. Strensall Conservation Area

This character area comprises historic buildings located along Church Lane and the western end of The Village, together with late nineteenth and early twentieth century development along Princess Road/Moor Lane. The area contains a variety of retail and leisure uses together with many houses. The majority of the buildings are two storey storeys in height, constructed in brick with a pitched pantile roof. The buildings face the street and sit at the back edge of the pavement or are positioned behind small front gardens defined by low brick walls (see Photo 27).

15. Fossview Close

This area contains twenty first century residential development on the site of a former tannery. The houses are two storeys in height (although some have rooms in the roof space expressed by the use



Photo 26 Housing on Southfields Road



Photo 27 Housing within Character Area 14



Photo 28 Housing in Fossview Close

of dormers) and are constructed in red brick with pitched pantiled roofs (see Photo. 28). There are examples of the use of render as the primary facing material. The road layout follows a mews court arrangement with a tight knit layout with houses set close to the highway. Parking is provided by detached garaging or parking areas to front of the houses.

16. Northfields

This area is predominantly a mid-late twentieth century residential area. The houses are predominantly two storeys in height and are semi-detached units (see Photo. 29). They are constructed in red brick with hipped pantiled roofs and sit back from the highway behind timber fencing or hedges.

17. Strensall Railway Buildings Conservation Area

This area contains housing associated with the arrival of the railway in the mid-late nineteenth century. The area predominantly contains semi-detached villas facing the highway, but there is an example of a short terrace on the north side of The Village. The houses are two storeys in height, constructed in red brick with pitched slate roofs and set behind a small front garden defined by a low brick wall (see Photo. 30).

18. Lords Moor Lane

This is characterized by mid to late twentieth century detached housing set back from the highway behind large front gardens (see Photo 31). The houses are predominantly bungalows but there are examples of two storey houses. They are constructed in a variety of brick with pitched roofs covered in tiles or concrete tiles. This area also includes a small pocket of large detached houses off the north side of Flaxton Road that are accessed via an unmade track.



Photo 29 Housing on Northfields



Photo 30 Housing in Character Area 17



Photo 31 Housing on Lords Moor Lane

19. Park Gate/Redmayne Square/Swallows

This character area predominantly contains a variety of housing estates constructed during the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century. The houses are predominantly two-storeys in height (although some have rooms in the roof space expressed by the use of dormers) and are constructed in red brick or they are rendered with a pitched pantile roof (see Photo. 32) The majority of the houses have garages incorporated into the house and in places the houses are set behind metal railings. Within this area there are examples of the use of setts as a surface material which adds variety to the appearance of the area.



Photo 32 Housing in Character Area 19

20. Thompson Drive/Heath Ride

This character area predominantly contains a variety of housing estates constructed during the late twentieth century. The houses are laid out around a traditional highway and are predominantly two-storeys in height, constructed in red brick with a pitched pantile roof (see Photo. 33).



Photo 33 Housing within Character Area 20

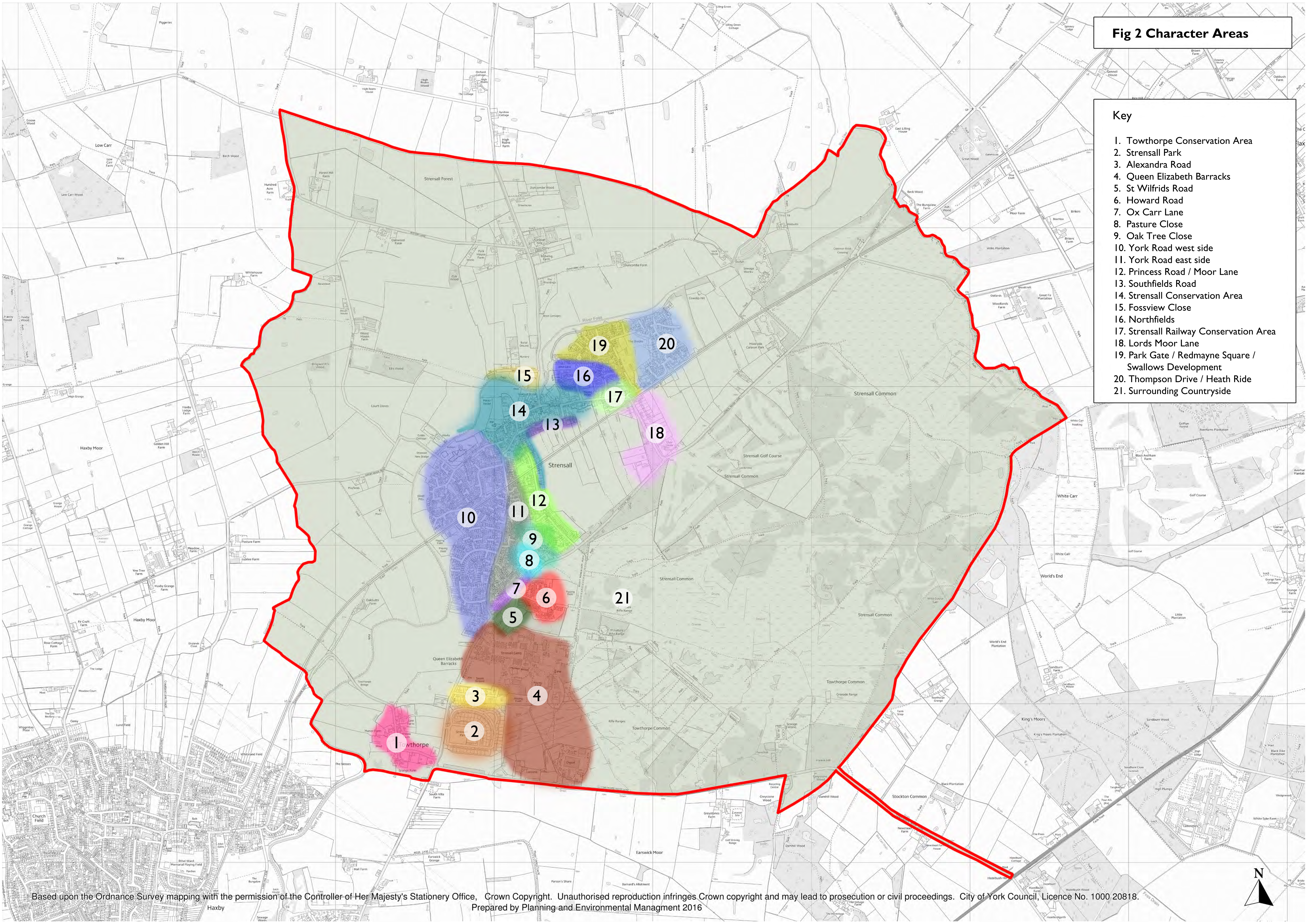
21. Surrounding Countryside

Beyond the built form within the village envelope, the surrounding landscape is defined by agricultural fields and Strensall Common, which is located to the south-east of Strensall. The common comprises a large area of open ground, with isolated groups of trees and is used a military training area. The remainder of surrounding countryside, apart from York Golf Club, comprises an agricultural landscape defined by a series of fields enclosed by hedgerows and isolated trees.

Fig 2 Character Areas

Key

1. Towthorpe Conservation Area
2. Strensall Park
3. Alexandra Road
4. Queen Elizabeth Barracks
5. St Wilfrids Road
6. Howard Road
7. Ox Carr Lane
8. Pasture Close
9. Oak Tree Close
10. York Road west side
11. York Road east side
12. Princess Road / Moor Lane
13. Southfields Road
14. Strensall Conservation Area
15. Fossview Close
16. Northfields
17. Strensall Railway Conservation Area
18. Lords Moor Lane
19. Park Gate / Redmayne Square / Swallows Development
20. Thompson Drive / Heath Ride
21. Surrounding Countryside



5.00 BUILT FORM

- 5.01 This section will describe the different types of built form located within the study area. For the purposes of this report only the residential building types have been analysed and have been split into the following categories:

18th & 19th century agricultural cottages and workshops

- 5.02 The agricultural origins of the village results in a typical domestic scale of buildings set back behind low brick garden walls, topped with metal railings or hedges. The buildings are detached or semi-detached, two storeys in height, with vertically proportioned openings. Some buildings have single storey wings that were previously used as workshops but are now also in residential use (see Photo. 34). In some instances the buildings have a shallow floor plan.

18th & 19th century farmhouses and outbuildings

- 5.03 Within the area there are a number of farm complexes particularly within Towthorpe (see Photo 35). The farmhouses are two storeys in height with vertically proportioned window openings, a pitched roof and are surrounded by a variety of outbuildings set back from the road and are generally arranged around a yard.

19th century two-storey terraces

- 5.04 The terraces are generally two storeys in height, with vertically proportioned window openings and have a small front garden area defined by a low boundary wall. They are generally of a simple form although some properties are more elaborate in appearance often with ground floor bay windows and some have gabled roof elements that accommodate additional rooms within the roof space (see Photo. 36)

19th century two storey detached and semi-detached villas

- 5.05 There are also a number of examples of traditional two storey detached villas and villa pairs which are set behind small front gardens defined by low brick walls. These also have vertically proportioned



Photo 34 Example of detached house with rear wing



Photo 35 Example of farm complex in Towthorpe



Photo 36 Terrace development with additional rooms accommodated within the roof space

openings and have a more elaborate form with ground floor bay windows timber canopies (see Photo. 37).

20th century two-storey detached and semi-detached houses

- 5.04 Another residential type is the twentieth century detached and semi-detached estate style of development. Within the area there are examples from different eras, ranging from interwar period to the mid to late twentieth century housing and the more recent infill developments (see Photo 38). The buildings follow the basic design principles of detached or semi-detached pairs, with horizontally proportioned window openings. They are set back from the street with small front gardens and an open frontage. The estates are generally laid out with integrated areas of open spaces. The later housing includes driveways and garaging and some of the more recent developments have integral garaging.

Twentieth-century bungalows

- 5.05 Within the area there are a number of late twentieth-century bungalow developments, with horizontally proportioned openings. These buildings are generally detached properties that have open front gardens, with no separating fence or boundary wall and a private driveway with an integral or detached garage (see Photo. 39).



Photo 37 Example of nineteenth century semi-detached housing



Photo 38 Twentieth century two storey housing



Photo 39 Twentieth century bungalows

6.00 MATERIALS

6.01 Within the Strensall area the predominant external walling material is red brick. In the study area there are two principal historic brick types: a smoother brick and a red clamp brick (see Photos. 40 & 41) which are laid on relatively thin mortar bed, typically in an English Garden Wall or Stretcher bond. The character and appearance of the brickwork varies dependent on the age of the property. There are also examples of buildings which utilise render.



Photo 40 Example of a red clamp brick

6.02 The historic buildings have slate, plain clay tiles or pantile roofs with metal rainwater goods. Some buildings retain their timber framed vertical sliding sash windows and paneled timber doors.

6.03 The modern buildings in the area utilise a different palette of materials with external walls constructed of red brick, concrete pantiles and often uPVC rainwater goods, window frames and doors (see Photo. 42).



Photo 41 Example of single colour smooth red brick



Photo 42 Example of the use of modern materials

7.00 ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

7.01 The majority of the buildings are designed with traditional details that relate to the period when they were constructed rather than being specific to this area.

7.02 The earlier buildings within the area have simple architectural detailing that includes brick cambered or flat arched lintels, a dentiled eaves course and some buildings have brick tumbling on the gables (see Photo 43).

7.03 A feature of some of the later terraced and semi-detached properties is the use of a string course of white contrasting brickwork and the use of single storey canted bay windows with hipped roofs. In addition, projecting brickwork used to form a cornice to the chimney stacks (see Photo 44) and the front doors are covered with decorative timber porches that have elaborate carved panels and brackets (see Photo.45)



Photo 43 Brick tumbling



Photo 44 Brickwork details



Photo 45 View of decorative detailing