Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future

Historic England

Post-medieval cottage

Crowland Abbey

LINCOLNSHIRE EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

Crowland—2022

North Street viewed from Trinity Bridge

The Project

The primary objective of the Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) is to create a record of the development and historic character of Lincolnshire's towns. It is anticipated that the survey will be of use and interest within the planning system and to the public, particularly those living within or visiting the towns. It should be noted that although every effort has been made to be thorough, the reports are not completely comprehensive and should not be expected to cover all that is known about a place.

The project consists of a written report, detailing the archaeological and historical background and development of the town. The character of the town will also be discussed within the report within specific Historical Urban Character Area (HUCA) assessments, which indicate the heritage value of each area based upon the four values identified within Historic England's 2008 Conservation Principles: Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic, and Communal; these are also compared to values seen in the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF).

The Extensive Urban Survey provides a 'snap shot' of the development of the towns of Lincolnshire taken at the time of survey; as such it is one of many data sets which could and should be consulted prior to development proposals within the towns. The Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record (HER) maintains an up to date record of all historical and archaeological data that is known within the county, and should be consulted as part of planning applications (NPPF21 para194).

Location

Crowland is located in the district of South Holland. The town falls within Natural England's National Character Area 46 The Fens. It is described as *a distinctive, historic and human influenced wetland landscape lying to the west of the Wash estuary, which formerly constituted the largest wetland area in England… It is a large, low-lying, flat landscape with many drainage ditches, dykes and rivers that slowly drain towards the Wash, England's largest tidal estuary…The level horizons and the huge scale of the landscape create a strong sense of isolation and tranquillity, and a distinctive sense of place… Four major rivers drain into the Wash: the Witham, Welland, Nene and Great Ouse. All rivers now have artificial canalised courses that run straight for long distances and are bounded by high banks to contain the watercourse from the lower adjacent fields… The Fens are the bread basket of Britain. The drainage of this area from the 17th century onwards presented valuable soils which provide excellent conditions for large-scale cultivation of arable and horticultural crops…* The Lincolnshire Historic Landscape Characterisation includes Crowland in Character Area 9 The Fens. The landscape history of this character area is described as: *before drainage, the landscape of the fens was one of rivers, meres and seasonally inundated land… Fishing and wildfowl hunting would have provided a good source of food, while the inundated fens would have provided excellent grazing for sheep and cattle in the summer months. The natural growth of reeds and the ready availability of thick mud provided the raw material for house building. This way of life probably existed before the Roman conquest, and continued until the mid eighteenth century… The earliest attempts to drain the landscape were in the Roman period, when a small area was drained by the construction of the Car Dyke... To the south of Spalding the place-names, such as Holbeach Drove, indicate that this engineering work was undertaken in order to provide access to grazing land for cattle. Once the initial stages of drainage had been completed, the parallel lines of drains, dykes and drove roads were infilled by many perpendicular drains, creating numerous small thin fields, known as dylings. Although these fields have been subject to a great deal of consolidation over the past fifty years, the essential pattern remains intact to this day…*

The British Geological Survey records the bedrock within the survey boundary as Oxford Clay Formation. Superficial deposits comprise Abbey Sands and Gravel to the north and peat in the southern part of the survey area.

The survey area is based upon the local plan boundary.
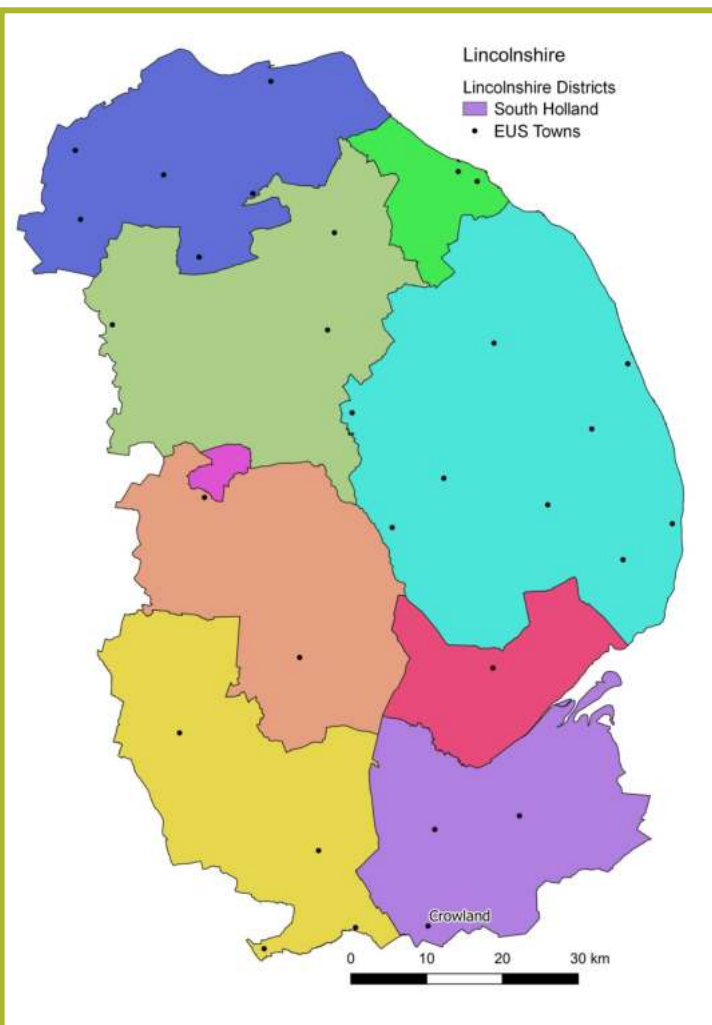
Summary

Crowland has a unique history. Located on a gravel outcrop of the edge of fens, it was surrounded by peat and later tidal marshes during much of the prehistoric period. Its environment provided a variety of resource opportunities for prehistoric peoples. Axes and tools from this period indicate that there was some landscape management taking place in the area during the period. By the Bronze Age, funerary monuments were being constructed including a barrow cemetery which was extant across what later became the town. Archaeological investigation on some of these sites has produced Bronze Age pottery. Roman activity is also recorded within the survey area, suggestive of a possible high status building within the vicinity of the Anchor Church Field. Crowland's origin largely began in the early medieval period, when a monastic house was established here in the 7th century, by the hermit Guthlac. In the 8th century, it became a larger shrine and monastery under the instigation of King Aethlebald. In the late 9th century, the monastery was destroyed by Viking raids and it was refounded in the mid 10th century as Crowland Abbey, closer to what later became the town centre. The abbey's presence was pivotal in the town's development throughout the medieval period. During this time, a series of water channels were constructed. Trinity Bridge, with its 3-way plan crossed the confluence of these channels. Long thin burgage plots extending from the main routes were established during this period and occupied by local people. In the 16th century, the abbey was dissolved as part of the religious reformation which had a huge impact on the way of life for the town, much of which revolved around the abbey and its functions. Over the post-medieval period, the town continued as a small agricultural settlement based around its medieval layout. By the early modern period, the waterways which had been constructed through the centre of Crowland in the earlier period were culverted or filled in. The town remained largely unchanged until the late 20th century, from which point residential development has taken place.
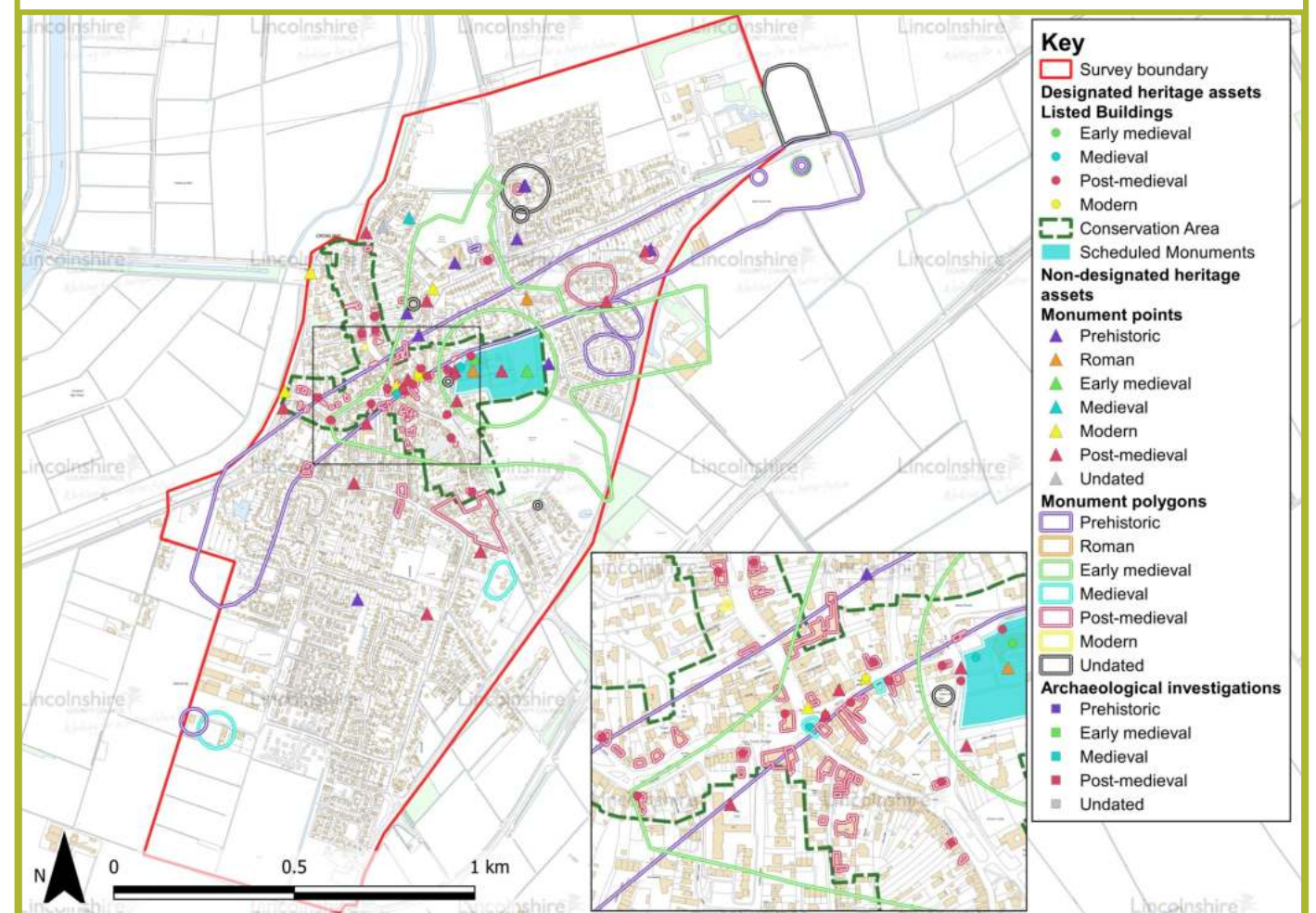
1. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 PREHISTORIC

There are a number of finds from the prehistoric period recorded by the Historic Environment Record (HER) across the survey area. These include axes (HER: MLI22004, MLI22005), flint tools (HER: MLI80612), a serrated Neolithic blade (HER: MLI85778), a Bronze Age scraper (HER: MLI85779), a pin from the same period (HER: MLI22018) and flint scatters (HER: MLI22980, MLI22014). During the Neolithic period the rise in sea levels hindered the natural drainage of the local rivers, consequently the accumulation of stagnant water allowed for the formation of peat. Crowland is located on a gravel outcrop of the edge of fens, which was surrounded by peat and later tidal marshes to its north, east and south (Buckley, 1992). This outcrop became the location of a Bronze Age barrow cemetery, from which people could look out to the inhospitable marshes (HER: MLI20265). Other barrows are also recorded, in the town, including one in Anchor Church Field, to the north-east of the town centre; slightly outside of the survey area. Archaeological investigation of the site produced Bronze Age pottery, although there is uncertainty about the true nature of the features encountered (HER: MLI23230). By the Iron Age the tidal marshes of the Crowland area had become freshwater fens, except for the area of Little Postland approximately 8km north-east of Crowland. At the edge of this area of tidal marsh there was Iron Age settlement and salt production (Buckley, 1992).

1.2 ROMAN

Roman activity is recorded within the vicinity of the Anchor Church Field; here tesserae and sections of floor were recorded indicating the possible presence of a high status building, perhaps a bath house (HER: MLI20250). Rooftile and brick were also recorded on the site and a coin which dates it to the 4th century. Outside of this site only a small number of scattered finds have been recorded including pottery, an intaglio and a coin (HER: MLI22011, MLI22017, MLI22049).

1.3 EARLY MEDIEVAL AND ANGLO-SAXON

The early medieval landscape of Crowland and its surrounding area would have consisted of low-lying freshwater fens. This marshland would have been dotted by areas of higher and dryer ground. As has been previously mentioned, the modern town of Crowland is located on a gravel island surrounded by marshland.

The origins of Crowland can be traced back to the turn of the 8th century when a monk, named Guthlac, decided to live in the area as a hermit. The marshy and isolated location would have provided the ideal position for a hermit's life (although to what degree it was isolated can be argued). Guthlac was a member of the Mercian royal family, who had been a monk at Repton Monastery, which was located approximately 95km northwest of Crowland and just south of Derby. He withdrew to the vicinity of Crowland around 699 to become a hermit; he was later venerated as a saint (Sawyer, 1998). It is possible that his monastic cell was located upon the site of a Bronze Age Barrow in Anchor Church Field. One indicator for the location of his cell is that the word 'anchor' in the place name probably comes from anchorite, a term for a religious recluse. The future king of Mercia, Aethelbald visited Guthlac at Crowland when he was an exile during Ceolred's reign (709-716). Aethelbald visited Guthlac's grave after his death in 715 and supposedly had a vision of Guthlac prophesising that he would become king within the year. After this came true, Aethelbald *put up wonderful structures and ornamentations round the grave (of Guthlac) in honour of the divine power'* (Sawyer, 1998). As such the religious community which had been founded by Guthlac was probably embellished by contributions made by Aethlebald, sparking the foundation of a larger monastery here in the early 8th century. In 870, the monastery was destroyed by raiding Vikings/Danes. The numerous water channels around Crowland providing easy access by boat for raiding parties. The monastery was refounded as a Benedictine Abbey in the 10th century, to the east of what has since become the town centre (HER: MLI20551).

Archaeological excavation in the Anchor Church Field in 2021 revealed a stone structure which could possibly be associated with a medieval religious cell. The stone structure appears to have been built upon the site of a prehistoric barrow and was made up of a small building with internal rooms, surrounded by an enclosing ditch (HER: MLI22029). The building also reused Roman building materials possibly reused from another site (Current Archaeology, 2022).

It is likely that there was an abbey building at Crowland before the 10th century probably located in the same place as the current structure; however, it is recorded that in 1091 it was destroyed by fire. With the founding of the abbey, probably in the 10th century, Crowland became an important religious, political and economic centre. Michael Chisholm (Chisholm, 2010) theorises that it is during this period that the landscape and layout of the town would have been modified by the religious community. Much of the modern street layout would be a consequence of waterways which were constructed during this period; which were, in turn, built following sinuous silted-over cracks in the gravel island that had formed 18,000 years prior (Chisholm,

2010).

1.3.1 PLACE-NAME EVIDENCE

The first element of the place name Crowland, crow-, derives from the Old English *crūw* or *crūg* meaning 'a bend'. The name therefore means 'land' at a bend, possibly implying a bend in the River Welland (Cameron, 1998).

1.3.2 DOMESDAY SURVEY

In the 8th and 9th centuries, charters demonstrate that land was given to the Abbot of Crowland in other settlements such as Spalding and Holbeach. These landholdings remained as part of the abbey's estate for the next two centuries and are recorded as still belonging to the abbey by the Domesday survey of 1086. Further land was gifted by Thorald Bucknall to the Abbey of Crowland in Spalding to found a religious cell there in 1051. Following the Norman Conquest, the daughter cell in Spalding was refounded as a daughter of a religious order in Angers, France. This was at the instigation of Ivo Tallboys who had ill feelings towards the monks of Crowland Abbey (Page, 1906).

There is no information in the Domesday Book regarding Crowland Abbey's estates and land resources in Crowland. Although as mentioned, there is information about the other estates belonging to Crowland Abbey. This was the case with other religious houses recorded in the Domesday Book. It does not necessarily mean that a settlement did not exist around the abbey at the time of the 1086 survey, only

Green West Street

that it its land and resources were not recorded. By the Domesday survey Crowland Abbey had 24 holdings in other areas , some of which it held in its own right and some which it held directly from the crown.

1.4 MEDIEVAL

1.4.1 LANDSCAPE

The landscape of Crowland continued to be one of a gravel island surrounded by peaty clay marshland in the medieval period. Whilst some parts of the wider fens began a process of some degree of fen drainage, Crowland did not (Buckley, 1992). The area to the east and north-east of the town is known as Postland and derives from the Middle English word 'purceint', meaning an enclosed space. During the medieval period this area would have mainly been used for sheep grazing (Chisholm, 2013). During the medieval period, there were a number of documented land disputes between Crowland Abbey and other landholders, including Spalding Priory, which had once had connections with Crowland Abbey (see paragraph 1.3.2). In 1189 a dispute between Crowland Abbey and the surrounding villages broke out at the the instigation of Nicolas, Prior of Spalding, who formed an opposition group to Crowland to seize some of the fenland for grazing cattle; the group are recorded to have met in Holbeach church to discuss the issue. An uneasy relationship ensued between Spalding Abbey and Crowland Abbey over the early centuries of the medieval period. It should be noted, however, that the source for this material was written by Ingulf of Crowland Chronical and is assumed to be heavily biased (Page, 1906).

Crowland Abbey continued to hold land in other areas during the medieval period and was also granted some land reclaimed during the 13th century (Hallam, 1954).

1.4.2 STREET PATTERN AND DEVELOPMENT

North, East, South and West Streets would have been waterways during the medieval period. The medieval street plan of Crowland was defined by the waterways which had been created in the mid to late 10th century. The layout would have centred around the confluence of these main waterways which met at Trinity Bridge, which connected three roads. The current Trinity Bridge was constructed in the late 14th century, however, there was probably an equivalent wooden bridge from as early as the 10th century, when the waterways were first constructed (Chisholm, 2013). The roads beside the main waterways would have been interrupted by smaller channels running off them; dividing yards or burgage plots. The layout of North and West Street show that the current road widens greatly further away from the town centre, it is possible that these were originally created as turning basins for barges (Chisholm, 2013). The abbey is located to the east, on East Street. Burgage plots extended from the town's main streets and waterways, the pattern of which is still highly discernible in the modern layout.

1.4.3 ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY

The artificial waterways of Crowland played an important part in the abbey and town's trade and economy, allowing for communication between the abbey's properties and communication with other religious houses. One important waterway was the Crowland Cut, which connected the Welland and Nene Valley river systems. This allowed Crowland, the northern-most abbey of the Fens to connect with other Benedictine religious houses across the region. Despite various rivalries and boundary disputes which occurred through the centuries with other houses, there was an important degree of cooperation, with commodities, building materials and manpower being shared (Chisholm, 2013). For example, Barnack Oolitic Limestone was accessible to the fenland abbeys via the Crowland Cut and Crowland Abbey, which had been granted the rights to Barnack quarry in 1061 by Earl Waltheof (Bond, 2010).

The resources of Crowland abbey's immediate estate would have been defined by the marshy landscape. The fens would have provided reeds, sedge, osiers and turf for uses such as thatching or basket weaving. Fisheries and fowl would also have been present (Oosthuizen, 2017). The Domesday book records that the Abbey of Crowland had three fishermen at Wisbech, which produced 4000 eels. There were many fisheries recorded across the fen region during this period (Bond, 2010). The main economic activity for the abbey must have been however, pastoral husbandry. The demesne herds of Ely and Crowland abbeys could produce between 317kg and 363kg of cheese a year in the 12th and 13th centuries (Oosthuizen, 2017). In the 14th century Crowland abbey had a central flock which would receive up to 1800 sheep annually from manorial flocks (Bond, 2010).

1.4.4 MARKETS AND FAIRS

A market charter was granted by King Henry III to the abbot and convent of Crowland on the 24th of October 1257. It is likely that the market was being held before this, when the abbey was probably established in the 10th century. In 1136 King Stephen granted a fair to the monks of Crowland. The grant was for a fair three days before St Bartholomew's day (24th August) and three days after. St Bartholomew's day itself was probably not included because a prescriptive fair was held on that day. In 1281, the fair began eight days before St Bartholomew's day and continued for eight days after. Consequently, the fair had clearly gained importance over these two centuries.

Crowland no longer has a surviving marketplace, neither in form nor placename evidence; there is no clear sign of a fair ground or fair field either. The earliest detailed plan of Crowland is the 1888 OS map and there is no evidence there for an open market space. Chisholm proposes that the location for the original market may have been in the land between Albion Street and Hereward Way, as the plots do not have the same sinuous shape as the surrounding burgage plots. Chilsholm argues that the angular nature of the plot boundaries would mean that they were formed in the post-medieval period, and that it was previously open space where a market and fair could have been held. Hereward Way, the eastern boundary of this marketplace, would have been a water channel providing communication to the rest of Crowland's waterways. Chisholm also suggests that, as the market and fair grew, it may have been moved to a larger plot of land surrounded by waterways. He proposes the area of land circled by Hall Street to the west, Postland Road to the north and Church Lane to the south and east (Chisholm, 2013). The author bases the presence of watercourses at the location of the second market on the proposed late Saxon watercourses by Hayes and Lane. If these watercourses existed in the late Saxon period, before the presence of a second larger market, then what were they originally used for? It may be that the market was at neither of these locations.

Markets associated with monasteries or abbeys tended to be located adjacent to the religious house. This can be seen, for example, in the surviving marketplaces of Peterborough and Ely, two comparable fenland Benedictine religious houses. These medieval marketplaces are smaller in size than the plots of land proposed by Chisholm. Consequently, it is possible that the market was located closer to the abbey entrance, off East Street, and the open space has since been built over. Another

Crowland Abbey

argument in favour of this location is the fact that the post-dissolution manorial residence in Crowland was constructed on East Street. When the manor passed to secular hands, the manor house was probably built close to the market. This would have meant keeping the new secular seat of local power close to the commercial centre, such as the abbey would have been before the dissolution. Trinity Bridge is located at the western end of East Street with the abbey located on the eastern end of the street. It has been suggested by Gough that a cross would have been placed at the top of the bridge, acting as a market cross and for religious ceremonies. Religious parades may have gone along East Street from the Abbey to the bridge (Gough, 1816). The author may have felt that the existence of a market cross was possible if during the time he was writing, or in the immediate past, there was a market in that location. There are two possible locations for the market if the Trinity Bridge and East Street area is considered the most likely option. One on the northern side of East Street and one on the southern side. The possible location of the northern side would correspond to the plot of land which surrounds the open space where Crowland War Memorial is located. The boundaries of this plot do not follow any obvious burgage plot boundaries. The possible location on the southern side of East Street would be located on the plot of land between Trinity Bridge and the Manor House. In a 1676 anonymous map of Crowland, and the alderlands to its south, an area which might correspond with this proposed plot of land seems to be undeveloped and is bypassed by the droves that are marked in the map. If it was an open space as is marked in this 17th century map, it may have been where the market was located, adjacent to the bridge and off East Street. The plot currently contains buildings which are very close to the bridge, another indicator that the plot may have been built on after the bridge and channels fell out of use.

Trinity bridge

Statue of Christ

1.4.5 RELIGION AND EDUCATION

Crowland Abbey was an important monastic house in the Fens and south Lincolnshire, throughout the medieval period. It is the only known religious institution or place of worship in Crowland for this period. It is also here where an important medieval primary source was written, The Croyland Chronicle. The abbey was enlarged throughout the medieval period and ceased being an abbey during the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 16th century.

1.4.6 CHARACTERISTIC BUILDINGS

Crowland Abbey (HER: MLI20551, NHLE: 1064550)

Crowland abbey is a Grade I listed building and a Scheduled Monument of which only the abbey church remains. It is mostly constructed of limestone ashlar and rubble. The northern aisle of the church is now the parish church and has been since the dissolution of the monastery. The nave is in ruins but retains its western front and contributes greatly to the character of the religious complex and the town. The west front of the nave has a lower 13th century part and a upper 15th century part. They are both decorated with arcading and statues, one of which is of St Guthlac stepping on a devil. The 13th century doorway to the nave has a quatrefoil above it, it is composed of four circles with images representing the life of St Guthlac. A fragment of the western façade of the southern aisle also remains.

Holy Trinity Bridge (HER: MLI20552, NHLE: 1064508)

Trinity Bridge is Grade I listed and a Scheduled Monument which was constructed in the late 14th century; between 1360-90. It is built of limestone ashlar and rubble, with three pointed archways which are joined by 120-degree angles forming a triangular plan. Before this bridge was constructed it is probable that it was preceded by a series of wooden bridges. A triangular bridge was
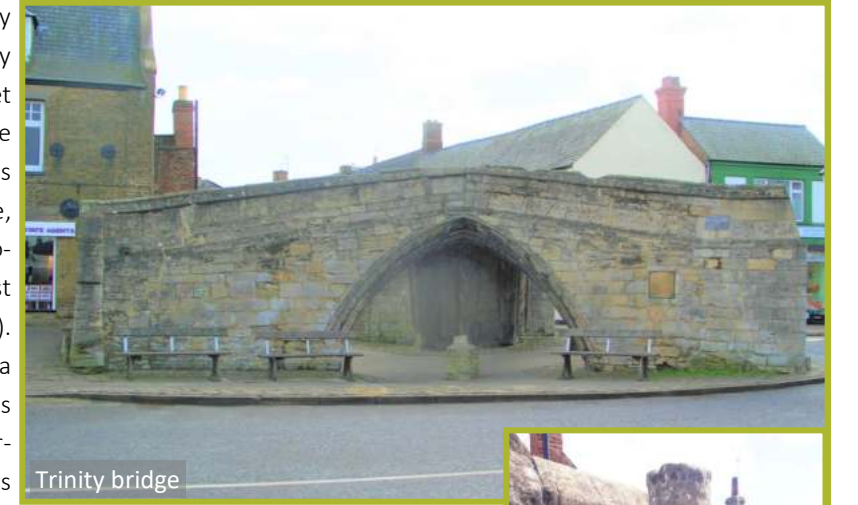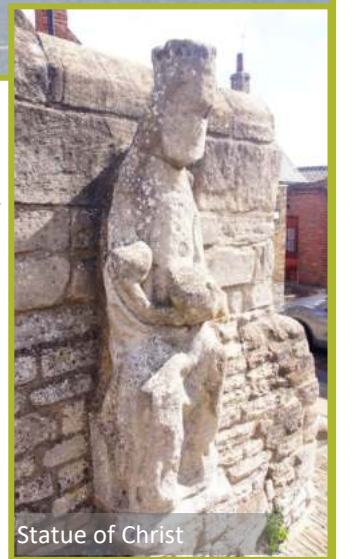
East Street

known to have existed on the same site by 943AD. At the foot of the south side of the bridge there is a statue of Christ holding an orb. It dates to approximately a century before the bridge and probably came from the apex of the west façade of the abbey.
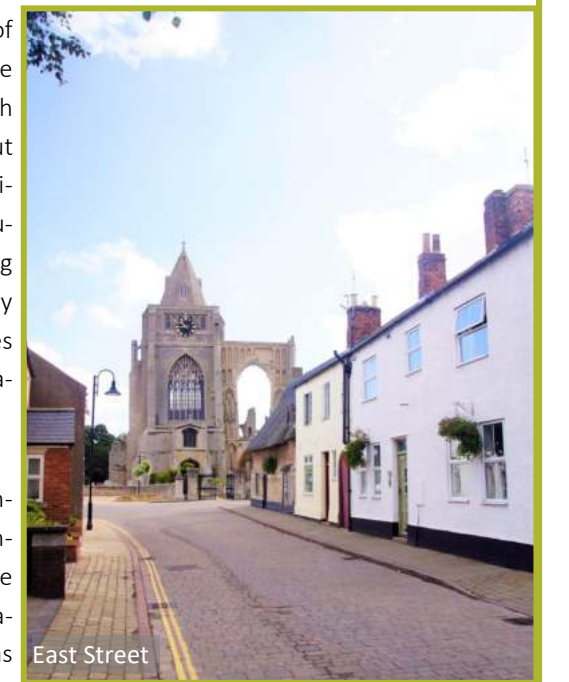
1.5 POST-MEDIEVAL

1.5.1 STREET PATTERN AND DEVELOPMENT

The street layout of Crowland and burgage plot boundaries remained largely the same in the post-medieval period, although there were some important changes. Navigation in Crowland had become difficult in the 16th century and had stopped by 1650. Trinity Bridge's ramps were shortened probably at some point before 1676. A progressive conversion of waterways to roads began after they fell out of use. West Street was not completely converted until 1847, North Street followed in 1860 and South Street was not converted until the 20th century. The dykes which ran off the main waterways were also culverted in stages (Chisholm, 2013). Another change to the town's layout may have occurred in the late 17th century or early 18th century when the land off Albion Street was bequeathed for the benefit of the poor by a member of the Bothway family. The Bothways were a prominent family in early 18th century Crowland. Albion Street was previously known as Poorhouse Lane, with the housing built along the street being held under keyhold tenure. The houses did not pass on to the heirs of the dwellers and they did not pay rent to the lord of the manor (Chisholm, 2013). These houses were possibly the terraced housing on the western side of Albion Street that can be seen in the 1887 OS map. By the mid and late 20th century they had been demolished. Another example of possible modification of the street layout can be seen at Crawford House, located at the end of South Street (HER: MLI94423). It was built at the end of the 17th century and may have cut off and redirected the channel which ran along South Street; as it was no longer needed for navigation. The house gets its name from John Crawford, bailiff of Crowland manor who bought the house in 1744 (Chisholm, 2013).

1.5.2 LANDSCAPE

The early post-medieval landscape of Crowland's surrounding area remained broadly similar to that of previous centuries. There were attempts at draining in the 17th century and early 18th century. It was not until 1753 that drainage had been completed successfully. In this year, an Act of Parliament known as the First North Level Act was passed; with it Crowland Manor joined the North Level Division of the Bedford Level. By the late 18th century most of the grazing land had been converted to arable. Estate gross income also began to rise after this period probably due to the newly cultivated arable land (Chisholm, 2013). The area of the Crowland Wash and Crowland Common, to the west and north-west of the town respectively, were enclosed in the early 19th century after an Act of Parliament was passed.

1.5.3 ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY

After the dissolution of the abbey during the 16th century, the economy of the town would have seen a large impact, as many of the abbey's functions would have contributed significantly to the local economy and it probably went into a decline. The pastoral husbandry economy which had dominated Crowland started to shift. By the 17th century the main land resources in Crowland were fishing fields and pasture. These were held by a small number of people who relied on wage labourers. Wildfowling and swan keeping would have also played a part in the town's economy (Chisholm, 2013).

Despite the decline in the towns' economy the population trebled between 1563 and 1723, probably fuelled in part by the need for wage labourers. The population would have lived in more confined conditions as the town's limits did not change. There would, however, have been the newly constructed keyhold tenure housing on Poorhouse Lane, now Albion Street (Chisholm, 2013). There was no known workhouse in the town, Crowland being part of the Peterborough Poor Law Union. The Union was formed on 3rd December 1835 and Crowland was the only Lincolnshire parish to be a part of it.

Despite descriptions by some contemporary authors, late 17th and early 18th century Crowland had signs of some degree of prosperity, as can be seen by Crawford House, East Street manse and the adaptation of street frontages within the town centre (Chisholm, 2013). Arable farming began

Crowland Abbey

to gain importance in the second half of the 18th century after the inclusion of Crowland Manor in the Bedford Level and the progressive improvement of the land's drainage (Chisholm, 2013). By the early 19th century, the market, which had once thrived from the pastoral economy, had nearly disappeared. In the 19th century it continued to operate on Thursdays, selling mainly pigs. A fair was also held on the 4th of September according to White's Directory (White, 1856).

1.5.4 RELIGION AND EDUCATION

Crowland Abbey was dissolved 4th December 1539 and was probably the last religious house in Lincolnshire to be closed (Hodgett, 1975). The abbey's buildings were demolished except for the abbey church's nave and aisles which were then used as the parish church (HER: MLI20551). In the early 17th century, the northern aisle reportedly had its lead stripped and was then thatched (Brears, 1940). During the English Civil War, the abbey was fortified with earthen defences constructed by Mr Welby of Gedney and his men. It was a royalist stronghold until Cromwell's forces captured it on the 9th of May 1643. In the 18th century the nave and south aisle had become so damaged that use of the parish church was restricted to the northern aisle (HER: MLI22051). It would not be until the early 19th century when a place of worship, other than the parish church, was constructed in Crowland. A Methodist church was built at Reform Street in 1831, with an associated Sunday School (HER: MLI91708). A Primitive Methodist Chapel may have also existed on Broadway from 1838 on the site of a later Primitive Methodist Chapel which was built in 1862 (HER: MLI97686). In 1856 a National School was built at Postland Road (HER: MLI94368, NHRE:1064514).

National School building

1.5.5 TRANSPORT

As stated, navigation in Crowland had become difficult in the 16th century and had ceased before the mid-17th century. There was, however, still navigable water to the west of the town in River Welland and New River. These were connected via a canal called 'The Lake' in the early 19th century. These waterways allowed for freight to be taken to Bank Brewery and coal for the gasworks in Broadway. Passengers would also be able to board barges at the staithe at the northern end of West Bank, which would take them to Spalding (Chisholm, 2013).

In 1817 Crowland was connected to Peterborough via a turnpike road from Crowland to Eye. This connected to the earlier 1792 Thorney to Peterborough turnpike road. The 1817 turnpike road also connected Crowland to an earlier 1793 turnpike road from Cowbit Bank to Spalding. It took 24 years for Crowland to have a turnpiked road, despite having two turnpike roads within an approximate 7km radius. Despite Crowland's eventual connection to Peterborough and Spalding through turnpike roads, the railway never arrived. The railway network bypassed Crowland on all its fronts, and it became surrounded by a 'triangle' of railway tracks; the Peterborough to Spalding line going south-west to north-east, the Peterborough to Wisbech line going east-west and the Spalding to March line north-west to south-east. The closest railway stations to Crowland were Postland Railway Station (approximately 5.5 km north-east of Crowland), St James Deeping railway station (approximately 6.5 km south-west of Crowland) and Eye Green railway station (approximately 7 km south of Crowland).

Even before 1848, when the Peterborough to Spalding railway line opened, Crowland's carriage and horseback traffic would probably have been limited. Piggot and Co's directory of 1828-1829 records very few carrier services to Peterborough and Spalding and no coach services passing through Crowland. The directory does however record three saddlers and harness makers and three wheelwrights in the town.

1.5.6 RECREATION

The main amenities recorded in 19th century Crowland are public houses, of which there were up to 21 of by the mid-19th century. Two remaining examples of 18th century public houses are The George and Angel (HER: MLI94367) and The Crown (HER: MLI91784).

1.5.7 CHARACTERISTIC BUILDINGS

Manor House (HER: MLI94607, NHLE: 1359273)

The Grade II* manor house dates to 1690, although it probably has earlier origins. It was extended in the late 18th century and altered in the 20th century. The north front is built of limestone ashlar, the south front is built of red brick with ashlar dressings.

Manor House

National School (HER: MLI94368, NHLE: 1064514)

The Grade II listed school was built in 1856. It is a red brick building with limestone ashlar dressings and slate roofs. There is a central section with two storeys and a spire or bell tower, this is flanked by two single storey wings.

1.6 MODERN AND 21st CENTURY

1.6.1 STREET PATTERN AND DEVELOPMENT

Urban development in Crowland remained stagnant until the mid-late 20th century, which has resulted in a well preserved street and property layout, which date to the medieval and post-medieval periods. Some infilling has taken place to the rear of some older burgage properties. During the modern period, residential development occurred to the north-east and south of the town centre, a trend which continued into the 21st century. To the south of the town centre, along Crease Drove, industrial units were also built in the late 20th century.

1.6.2 TRADE AND INDUSTRY

In the late 20th century, the limited industry of the town has concentrated to the south, while builder's yards are also located on Broadway Street. A large garden centre was also constructed in the late 20th century in the north-east of the survey area.

1.6.3 RELIGION AND EDUCATION

The only remaining places of worship in Crowland are the abbey church and the Methodist church on Reform Street. The former Primitive Methodist Chapel on Broadway became a British Legion Hall around the turn of the 21st century.

The school on Postland Road was enlarged in the mid-20th century and included secondary education. The secondary school closed in 2011 with only South View Community Primary School remaining. The nearest secondary schools to Crowland are located at Thorney,

Crowland Abbey cemetery with Snowden Sports Field beyond

Peterborough and Spalding. The Grade II listed National School building has very recently been converted into housing.

1.6.4 RECREATION

The largest recreational facility in Crowland is the Snowden Sports Field, which was established in the mid-late 20th century and has been enlarged since. It has several football fields and adjacent to these are tennis courts, a children's playpark and a skatepark. To the south of Snowdon Sports Field there were mid-20th century allotments which were closed in 2019 to make way for residential development. At the location of South View Community Primary School there is a leisure and wellbeing centre. In the centre of the town there are some public houses, cafes and restaurants.

1.6.5 CHARACTERISTIC BUILDINGS

War Memorial (HER: MLI94608, NHLE: 1359274)

The Grade II war memorial dates from 1918. Two rectangular steps lead to a rectangular base which has a marble inscription plaque to its south. The memorial commemorates the fallen of the First World War, the Second World War and the Malayan Emergency.

War Memorial

CROWLAND

Crowland Common

Crowland Low Wash

Crowland High Wash

Wheat Sheaf
F.H.
F.P.
F.B.

Smithy

Well

Foresters' Hall
702
·625

Rectory

Police Station

HIGH STREET

EAST STREET

Hotel

St. Barthol
& St.

Bridge
Works

Manor
House

Holy Trinity Bridge
B.M. 16·4

WEST STREET

ALBION STREET

REFORM STREET

School

15 Sluice G.P.

Sluice

12

13

N

0   0.5   1 km

OS c1905

Gravel Causeway

The Lake

Bank House
B.M.16.7

School

King's Head
Smy

Allotment Garden

Wheat Sheaf

Foresters' Hall

Rectory

Church

St. Bartholomew, St. Guthlac
& St. Mary's Abbey
(Benedictine)
(Remains of)

Grove Yard

Abbey Farm

Manor House

Bridge Works

Holy Trinity Bridge
B.M.16.4

East Street

West Street

Westbank House

The Ship

Sluices

Chapel

Smithy

Well

Windmill
Corn

School

New Road

Long Drove

Allotment Gardens

Methodist Chapel
(Primitive)

Crawford House

Salem Place

Grove Terrace

Drove Cottage

Corporation Bank

North Drove

East Street

Hotel

P.O.

North Bank

West Bank

N

0   0.5   1 km

HISTORIC URBAN CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Summary

The Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs) have been based on the Historic Urban Character Types (HUCTs). The HUCT maps are available separately to this document. The HUCTs highlight patterns of development through areas which have originated at a similar time, are comparable in how they have developed or demonstrate a similar character or land use. The identification of HUCTs with these similarities allows groups (HUCAs) to be formed and analysed as a wider area.

The HUCTs are divided into 14 periods table opposite; these have been narrowed from the periods in the archaeological and historical background to provide a more detailed picture of the development and character of a place, incorporating the Industrial Revolution and the fast pace of development throughout the 20th century.

The character areas are discussed in terms of heritage value, based upon Historic England's 2008 'Conservation Principles', these include: Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic, and Communal. *'Conservation Principles' sets out a method for thinking systematically and consistently about the heritage values that can be attributed to a place. People value historic places in many different ways; 'Conservation Principles shows how they can be grouped into four categories.* A concordance table has been produced to compare the values taken from the 'Conservation Principles' with the NPPF21, in terms of significance.
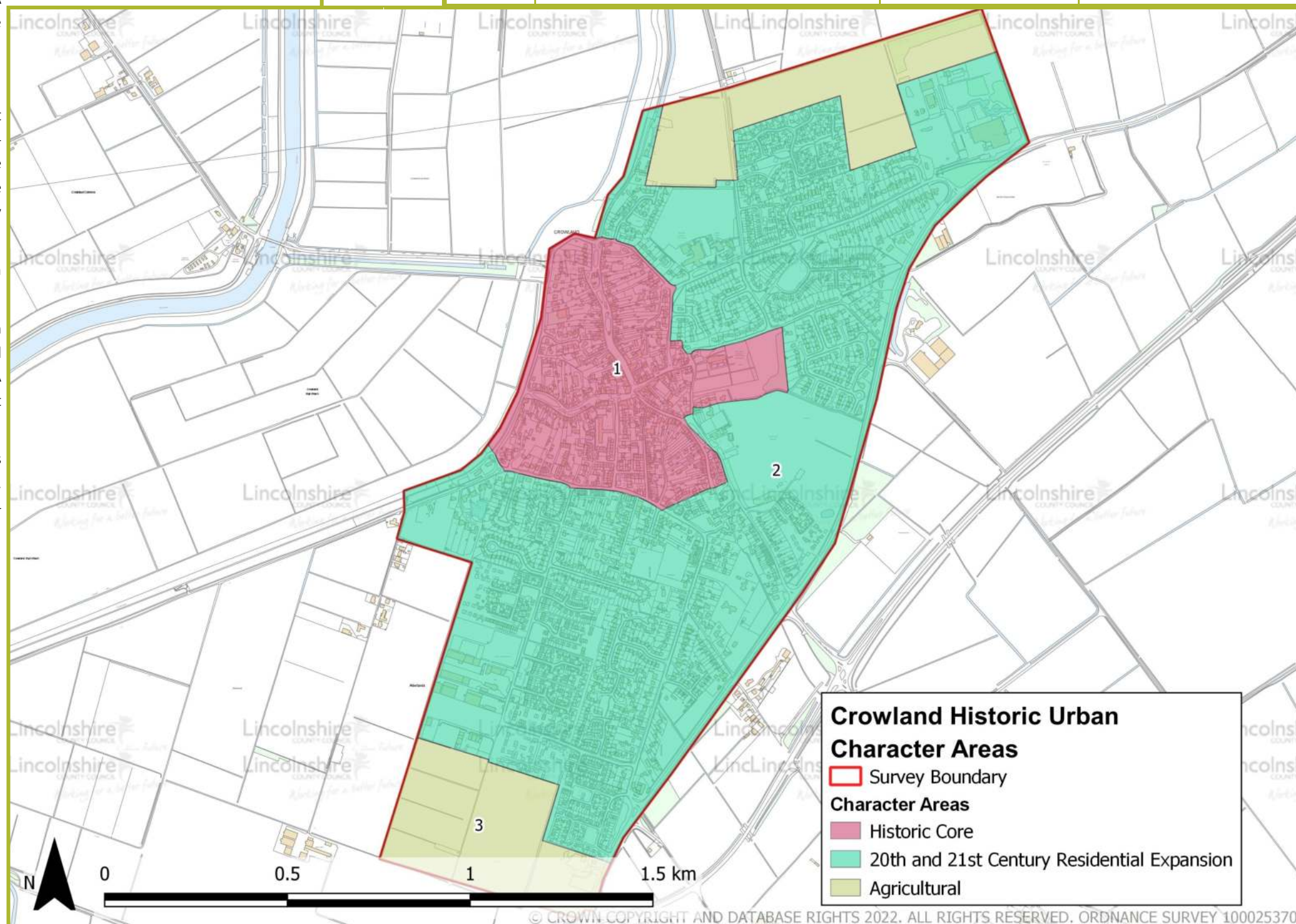
The values are as follows:

Evidential: the potential of what is present within the HUCA to tell us more about past human activity if investigated. This might relate to a national story of archaeological knowledge or architectural history. One factor which will affect the value is the integrity of what the HUCA contains. Archaeological deposits may be compromised by later development or buildings may be significantly altered by later, unsympathetic extensions and alterations.

Historical: the potential of the HUCA overall to illustrate the story of the town. In some circumstances the story may be of national importance.

Aesthetic: the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from the HUCA, principally its appearance. This may be derived from a designed element like a 20th century council housing estate, or from the way the HUCA has evolved over time. Unattractive elements, such as neglected sites, might reduce the aesthetic value.

Communal: the values the local community attach to the HUCA - what it means to the local population, including commemorative, symbolic and social values. Also to what extent the HUCA has the potential to increase public sensitivity towards the historic environment.

	Period	Date Ranges	Abbreviations
1	Prehistoric	10000-43	Pre-H
2	Roman	43-409	Rom
3	Early Medieval	410-1065	E-Med
4	Medieval	1066-1539	Med
5	Post Medieval	1540-1759	P-Med
6	Late 18th Century	1760-1799	Late 18thC
7	Early 19th Century	1800-1832	Early 19thC
8	Mid 19th Century	1833-1865	Mid 19thC
9	Late 19th Century	1866-1899	Late 19thC
10	Early 20th Century	1900-1924	Early 20thC
11	Early Mid 20th Century	1925-1949	Early-mid 20thC
12	Late Mid 20th Century	1950-1974	Late-mid 20thC
13	Late 20th Century	1975-1999	Late 20thC
14	21st Century	2000-Present	21stC

Crowland Historic Urban Character Areas

Survey Boundary

Character Areas
- Historic Core
- 20th and 21st Century Residential Expansion
- Agricultural

The Conservation Principles values

This can be used to understand how value has been assigned in the value tables which can be found in the Historic Urban Characterisation Area Assessments (HUCAs).

Evidential value

High	There is a high potential for the heritage assets within the HUCA to contribute to an understanding of the history of the town. Archaeological sites are likely to survive (both below ground and above ground fossilised within the townscape) and for new research relating to the nature and origins of the built heritage to enhance the understanding of the development of the town. New insights into the history of the town can contribute to an understanding of the development of towns from the medieval period onwards both within Lincolnshire and more widely.
Medium	There is the potential for heritage assets to contribute to an understanding of the history of the town, but there may be fewer opportunities for new insights to be deduced due to the nature of the heritage assets in question or subsequent changes to the historic character of the HUCA. The potential for archaeological deposits to contribute to an understanding of the development of the town may currently be unclear due to the current level of understanding of the origins of the HUCA. The potential may also be impacted by levels of development.
Low	There are no or very few known heritage assets. The understanding for the potential for above and below ground archaeological deposits to survive may be affected by the current lack of research within the wider area. Mitigation may still be required dependent upon an assessment of both the nature of any prospective new development and the potential of the individual sites being developed.

Historical value

High	The legible heritage assets either dominate or significantly contribute to the historic character of each HUCA. There are strong associations between the heritage assets (both tangible and intangible) within the HUCA that are potentially demonstrable and/or the heritage assets make an important contribution to the history of the wider area. There are often designated sites within or lying adjacent to the HUCA and in some cases these may comprise or include portions of Conservation Areas. The high value is not precluded by some degree of 20th/21st century alterations to the historic character.
Medium	Legible heritage assets are present within the HUCA, but are not necessarily predominant or they have undergone some form of alteration. Their presence, however, may contribute to an understanding of the development of the character area and/or there are potential associations between assets. Further research may clarify these associations and elucidate the contribution of these assets to the history of the wider area. Even in their present form they do enable the public and community to visualise the development of the area over time.
Low	There are no or very few known legible heritage assets; where they exist their associations are not clearly understood.

Aesthetic value

High	The completeness or integrity of the extant heritage townscape and its contribution to the aesthetics of the zone is significant. There are opportunities to enhance or restore the historic fabric of the HUCA. The HUCAs will often form part of or form the setting to Conservation Areas.
Medium	The components of the townscape are legible, but there may have been considerable impact by 20th or 21st century re-development of elements of the historic character. It is not possible within this project to discuss whether the modern alterations have positive, neutral or negative impacts upon overall aesthetics.
Low	The aesthetics of the historic character have been significantly impacted by 20th or 21st century development. It is not within the scope of this project to discuss whether their contributions are positive, neutral or negative within the wider townscape.

Communal value

High	Contains numerous heritage assets which could be used to engage the community through interpretation. The heritage assets clearly form part of a wider history of an area which can be drawn into a narrative. There may already have been a degree of interpretation and/or the community/public already has access to at least some of the heritage assets within the zone.
Medium	The ability for the heritage assets to contribute to the history of the town may be limited by the current understanding, their legibility within the townscape or through limited access.
Low	There are few known heritage assets which make it difficult to elucidate their history or apply it to a wider interpretation. There is no access or the legibility of the heritage assets is negligible.

Concordance Table between Historic England Conservation Principles and the NPPF
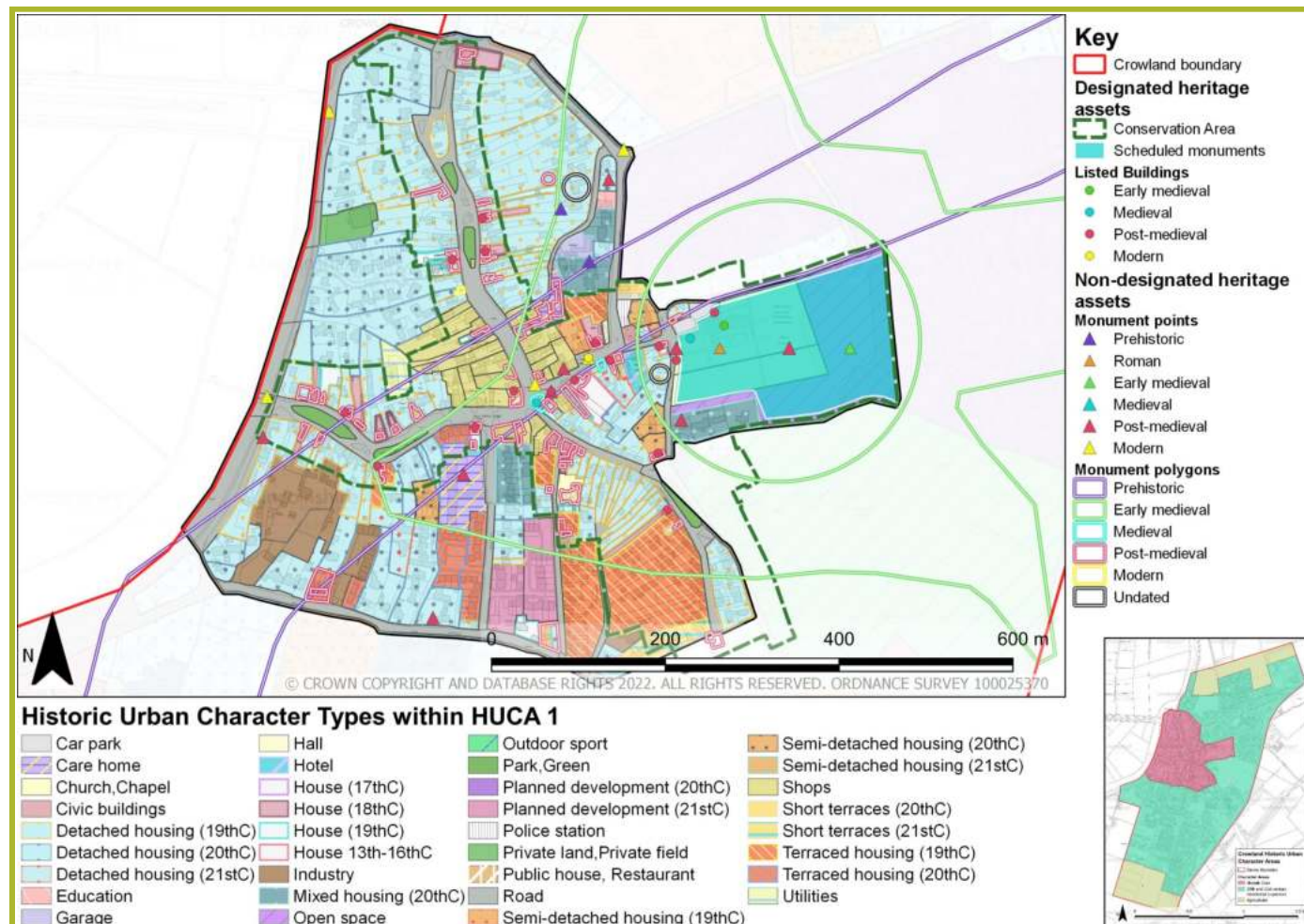
NPPF Significance	Conservation Principles	Conservation Principles Scope Note	NPPF Scope Note
Archaeological	Evidential	"the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity."	"There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point."
Historic	Historical	"the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present - it tends to be illustrative or associative."	"An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity."
Architectural/ Aesthetic	Aesthetic	"the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place."	"These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture."
*See Paragraphs 190 (b) and (c), 193, 197 (b) and (c), 205, 206.	Communal	"the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory"	N/A see relevant paragraphs

EUS in planning

It is anticipated that the EUS will be used to support appropriate application of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in the future development of Lincolnshire's towns. The EUS is directly applicable to the aims set out in the 2021 NPPF, particularly in Chapter 3 'Plan Making', Chapter 12 'Achieving well-designed places' and Chapter 16 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'. Chapter 3 states that *Strategic policies should... make sufficient provision for: conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment... Plans are 'sound' if they are: Justified... based on proportionate evidence.* For both objectives the EUS can provide a thorough evidence base which can assist in the production of plans. Chapter 12 states that Planning policies and decisions *should ensure that developments... are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting... establish or maintain a strong sense of place using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.*

The EUS discusses local character, including built character and landscape setting, the evidence provided in the character assessments can be used to aid in the creation of 'well-designed places' through supporting an understanding and appreciation (from a heritage perspective) of the history and character of a town. The EUS contributes to the application of Chapter 16 of the NPPF by providing another evidence source on which to base development applications. The discussion of the character within the town can also be used to assist in the reappraisal and designation of new conservation areas.

Recent design-related guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code, explicitly reference the significance and value of understanding the historic character of a place. Well-designed places are: based on a sound understanding of the features of the site and the surrounding context, using baseline studies as a starting point for design; integrated into their surroundings so they relate well to them; influenced by and influence their context positively; and responsive to local history, culture and heritage. In all cases the EUS programme, and its products, are directly aligned with the aspirations in these key planning guidance advice notes and emerging legislation.

Key

Crowland boundary

Designated heritage assets
Conservation Area
Scheduled monuments

Listed Buildings
● Early medieval
● Medieval
● Post-medieval
● Modern

Non-designated heritage assets
Monument points
▲ Prehistoric
▲ Roman
▲ Early medieval
▲ Medieval
▲ Post-medieval
▲ Modern

Monument polygons
Prehistoric
Early medieval
Medieval
Post-medieval
Modern
Undated

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Historic Urban Character Types within HUCA 1

Car park	Hall	Outdoor sport	Semi-detached housing (20thC)
Care home	Hotel	Park,Green	Semi-detached housing (21stC)
Church,Chapel	House (17thC)	Planned development (20thC)	Shops
Civic buildings	House (18thC)	Planned development (21stC)	Short terraces (20thC)
Detached housing (19thC)	House (19thC)	Police station	Short terraces (21stC)
Detached housing (20thC)	House 13th-16thC	Private land,Private field	Terraced housing (19thC)
Detached housing (21stC)	Industry	Public house, Restaurant	Terraced housing (20thC)
Education	Mixed housing (20thC)	Road	Utilities
Garage	Open space	Semi-detached housing (19thC)	

HUCA 1— Historic Core

Key characteristics
♦ Medieval town core,
♦ Central five way street, with on-street parking
♦ Strong medieval irregular character of the layout,
♦ Abbey church and ruins,
♦ Trinity Bridge,
♦ Commercial and residential character,
♦ Red and buff brick, some buildings have white render, some stone,
♦ Mixture of clay tile roofing and concrete tile roofing, timber windows, some uPVC inserts,
♦ Mixture of post-medieval housing and modern housing within medieval burgage plot boundaries,
♦ Some thatched buildings, some with originally thatched roofs which have been replaced,
♦ North and West streets are particularly wide, with green spaces in the middle of the roads,
♦ Wide roads also allow for ample parking spaces.

Landscape History
During the prehistoric period there may have been a barrow cemetery across the character area, with a north-east to south-west orientation. The HUCA was located on a gravel island on the edge of the fens, an inhospitable marshland. The character area would have remained much the same during the Roman period. The landscape would have changed drastically after Crowland Abbey was established and waterways were excavated to form what are today North, East, South and West Streets, along with some other secondary streets. This would have led to the need for bridges, including the Trinity Bridge, which dates to the 14th century, although it would have had wooden predecessors. The waterways probably became unnavigable by the mid 17th century, leading to their gradual conversion to roads. In the late 17th or early 18th century Albion Street, then Poorhouse Lane, became the location for housing to accommodate the poor in the town. The town centre has not seen much change to its layout, although there has been construction of modern residential buildings within some of the medieval burgage plot boundaries.
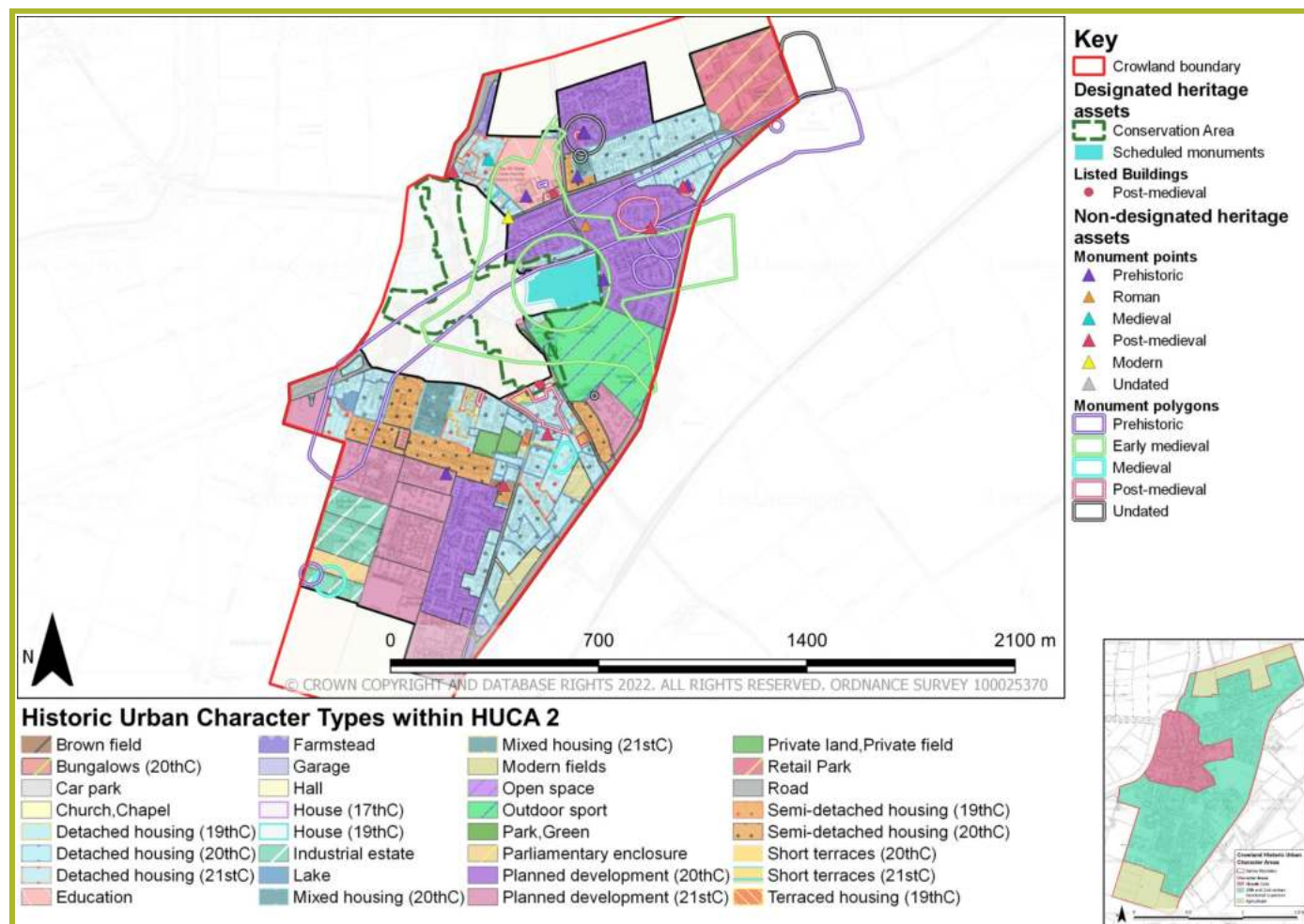

North Street

North Street

East Street

Manor House

South Street from Trinity Bridge

North Street from Trinity Bridge

Evidential Value: There is much evidential value in the character area from the prehistoric through to the post-medieval period which are imperative to the historical narrative of Crowland. Crowland Abbey is central to the town's foundation and organisation through the medieval period. Trinity Bridge also demonstrates the former watercourses which are no longer extant in the town and provides insight into how people would have travelled to and from the town. The sinuous course of the waterways is still highly legible in the town layout. The boundaries of burgage plots can also still be seen and add to the town's character.

Historical Value: The character area is central to understanding the history of the town. The heritage assets such as the medieval remains, street pattern and burgage plots are all important to understanding the town's early history, which is inextricably linked to the rise of Crowland Abbey. The preservation of the burgage layout, illustrates the town's small scale growth over the post-medieval period, which allowed a great deal of the pattern to be preserved into the modern period.

Aesthetic Value: The character of the HUCA, although rooted in the medieval period, is mixed. The medieval burgage plot boundaries are infilled with post-medieval and modern housing which has created a varied architectural appearance. The growth of the character area is therefore highly legible. The former waterways have also created a unique road pattern which is recognisable within the town. A number of listed buildings and thatched properties provide interest within the street-scape. Crowland's central layout would be highly sensitive to change.

Communal Value: There are many assets within the character area which could be, and are, used to engage the public. There is a large amount of interest and connectivity created by the obvious landmarks including the abbey and Trinity Bridge, however, the road layout, buildings and burgage plots also make a large contribution to the local public interest and town history.

Key

Crowland boundary

Designated heritage assets
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled monuments

Listed Buildings
- Post-medieval

Non-designated heritage assets

Monument points
- Prehistoric
- Roman
- Medieval
- Post-medieval
- Modern
- Undated

Monument polygons
- Prehistoric
- Early medieval
- Medieval
- Post-medieval
- Undated

0   700   1400   2100 m

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Historic Urban Character Types within HUCA 2

Brown field	Farmstead	Mixed housing (21stC)	Private land, Private field
Bungalows (20thC)	Garage	Modern fields	Retail Park
Car park	Hall	Open space	Road
Church, Chapel	House (17thC)	Outdoor sport	Semi-detached housing (19thC)
Detached housing (19thC)	House (19thC)	Park, Green	Semi-detached housing (20thC)
Detached housing (20thC)	Industrial estate	Parliamentary enclosure	Short terraces (20thC)
Detached housing (21stC)	Lake	Planned development (20thC)	Short terraces (21stC)
Education	Mixed housing (20thC)	Planned development (21stC)	Terraced housing (19thC)

HUCA 2— 20th and 21st Century Development

Key characteristics
- 20th and 21st century planned residential developments,
- Mixture of styles dependent on time of construction,
- Small industrial estate,
- Snowden Sports Fields,
- Red and buff brick,
- Detached, semi-detached, short terraces and bungalows,
- uPVC windows and concrete tile roofing,
- Wide roads and driveways. Car orientated design,
- Main roads defined by what were once livestock droves.

Landscape History
The character area was possibly traversed by a north-east to south-west aligned barrow cemetery in the prehistoric period. This area appears to have contained a series of tumuli, which is a common feature across the fen margin (HER: MLI20265). The environment of the character area outside of the gravel island would have been marshland. In the medieval period, the environment of the HUCA would have been affected by the water management introduced by the monks at the newly founded Crowland Abbey. Crowland Cut would have crossed the character area to the south, joining the Welland and Nene Valley river systems. It was also during this period that the HUCA was probably mostly used for sheep grazing or fisheries. Crowland Cut silted up and became unnavigable, probably in the mid-17th century. From the mid-18th century the land around Crowland began to be drained on a larger scale. This would have probably turned the area into arable land with corresponding farmsteads (HER: MLI123909, MLI123910). South Street was cut off in the early 19th century by Crawford House (HER: MLI92292) and was probably one with Thorney Road. The character area remained largely unchanged until the mid-20th century when residential development began. Snowden Sports field was established in the mid-20th century as a recreational area for the growing town. Over the late 20th and early 21st centuries, this has continued, with the construction of a number of medium sized planned developments. A small industrial estate was also built to the south of the character area in the late 20th century.
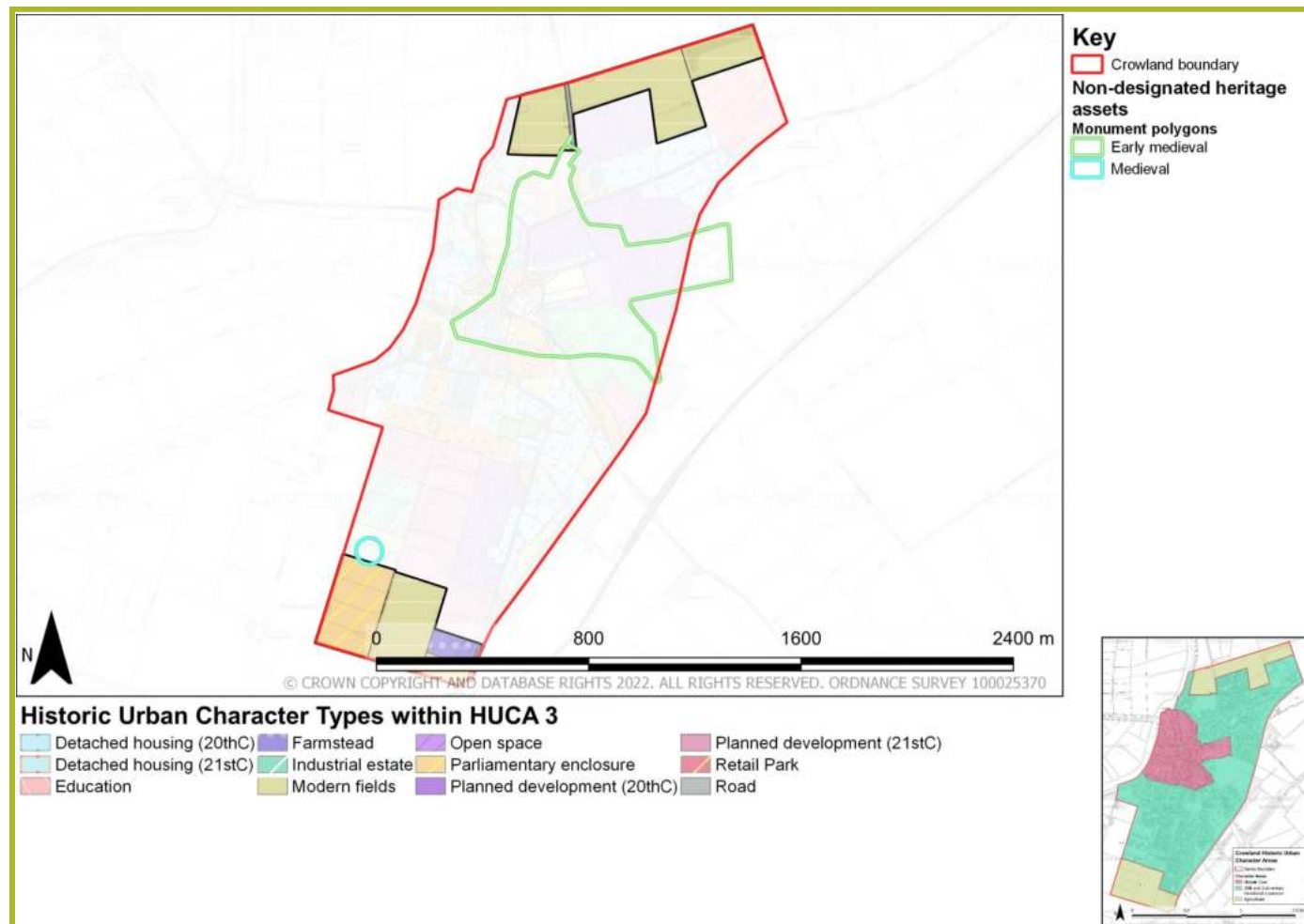

Detached 20th century housing

21st century planned development

21st century planned development

20th century planned development

Bungalows 20th century

20th century planned development

Evidential Value: The HUCA contains a number of assets, particularly from the prehistoric and medieval to modern periods, which provide a great amount of information on the town over these periods. Evidence of prehistoric pits, and burial monuments are recorded across the survey area. Further to this, medieval pottery indicates local farming activity from that period. Post-medieval farming activity is shown by the mill mound in the north of the HUCA.

Historical Value: The assets within the HUCA demonstrate the changing use of the area around Crowland by the people who have lived here. During the prehistoric period, the area appears to have had more of a funerary use, although pits and flints also show other activities. From the medieval period, the area was part of the agricultural landscape of the town. In the modern period the character area is important for understanding the developmental and demographic pressures in the town.

Aesthetic Value: The character of the HUCA is mainly that of mid-20th to 21st century residential planned developments. This demonstrates the changing styles of structures over this period, however earlier remains are largely obscured by later developments.

Communal Value: The main element of communal value in the character area is the Snowden Sports Fields and associated playgrounds and skatepark. Some of the archaeology could be used to engage the public, however, it would need interpretation.

Key

Crowland boundary

Non-designated heritage assets
Monument polygons
Early medieval
Medieval

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Historic Urban Character Types within HUCA 3

Detached housing (20thC) | Farmstead | Open space | Planned development (21stC)
Detached housing (21stC) | Industrial estate | Parliamentary enclosure | Retail Park
Education | Modern fields | Planned development (20thC) | Road

HUCA 3—Agricultural

Key characteristics

♦ Small agricultural character area.

♦ Arable fields.

♦ Field boundaries, scrub and hedgerow or drains,

♦ Topographically flat, apart from where the landscape has been clearly managed,

Landscape History

Archaeologically, the earliest remains within the character area are medieval. Prior to this, the land within the HUCA would have been part of the marshland which surrounded Crowland. The remains indicate that by the medieval period, the land to the south was part of an arable agricultural system (HER: MLI98187). It is likely that the area to the north was also under some form of cultivation at this point. The landscape remained agricultural throughout the post-medieval and modern periods. In the 18th and 19th centuries there was increasing enclosure of the landscape and this pattern partially remains today, although the removal of field boundaries and the amalgamation of existing fields has resulted in some more modern fields being created.

Traditional sign post

Agriculture

Surrounding fields and drainage

Evidential Value: There is a small amount of evidential value within the character area, this largely relates to the agricultural history of Crowland from the medieval to the modern periods.

Historical Value: The boundaries and drainage ditches provide an insight into landscape management within Crowland and also contextualise the historic agricultural management of the area over time.

Aesthetic Value: The landscape topography and ditches demonstrate the historic landscape management which has been on-going in the area for many centuries, however, without interpretation, their connection is not obvious.

Communal Value: There are few assets which can be used to engage the public on the heritage of Crowland.

DISCUSSION

Historic background

Crowland is located on a gravel outcrop on the edge of fens, which was surrounded by peat and later tidal marshes to its north, east and south. During the Neolithic period the rise in sea levels hindered the natural drainage of the local rivers, which resulted in the accumulation of stagnant water which allowed for the formation of peat. This created a unique environment for prehistoric peoples, finds from this period demonstrate the ways in which people were interacting and managing their environment. Axes, flint tools, a serrated Neolithic blade, a Bronze Age scraper, and a pin from the same period are all included in the archaeological record of Crowland. During the Bronze Age a barrow cemetery was extant across the area that later became the town. Archaeological investigation on some of these sites has produced Bronze Age pottery. There is less known about the Roman period within the survey area. Some Roman activity is recorded, which indicates the possible presence of a high status building within the vicinity of the Anchor Church Field. Rooftile, tesserae and brick as well as a coin which dates to the 4th century have also been recorded. Crowland's origin largely began in the early medieval period, when a monastic house was established here in the 8th century, by Saint Guthlac. In 870, the monastery was destroyed by Viking raids and it was refounded to the south-west in the mid 10th century as Crowland Abbey. This location was much closer to what has since become the town centre and its presence would have played the central role in the town's development throughout the medieval period. By the Norman conquest it was the oldest monastery in Lincolnshire. During the medieval period, a series of water channels which met in the centre of the town were constructed. Trinity Bridge, with its 3 way plan crossed the confluence of these rivers. In the medieval period, long thin burgage plots were established extending from the main routes, these provided accommodation and land on which local people could grow produce and keep livestock. In the 16th century, the abbey was dissolved as part of the religious reformation. This would have had a huge impact on the way of life for the town, much of which would have revolved around the abbey and its functions. Over the post-medieval period, the town continued as a small agricultural settlement and market town based around a medieval layout. The waterways which had been constructed through the centre of Crowland in the earlier period were culverted or filled in by the early modern period. Growth in the town was slow until the late 20th century, since when some residential development has taken place. Crowland is close to a number of larger settlement centres including Peterborough, Spalding and Stamford, and as such, there is some development which caters to commuting employees.

Character summary

Crowland has distinctive character areas, including the town centre which is represented by HUCA 1, the 20th and 21st century growth, which is discussed in HUCA 2 and agricultural land in HUCA 3. HUCA 1 is unique, its layout being the product of planned construction during the medieval period. The waterways which were the forerunners of the modern roads were sinuous, with wider areas in the outer town which are suggested to have been turning basins, this has created almost a 'star shape' in the town's layout which is still extant in the present day. The town centre property boundaries also largely date to the medieval period and have been incredibly well preserved due to the town's decline in prosperity over the post-medieval period. It was not until the 20th century that infilling began to take place which had more of an impact on the layout. Despite this there is a good level of preservation in the town centre. The buildings within the HUCA date to between the medieval and modern periods, the latter the result of infilling. There is also a good preservation of traditional building styles across the area and some more modern development has been sympathetic to older character. HUCA 2 is largely indistinct and contains residential development of national styles rather than local vernacular, although it does demonstrate the changing needs of the town and the changing styles of housing across the 20th and early 21st centuries. The remaining area within the survey boundary is agricultural. This land shows largely modern field patterns; however, there are some older boundaries still extant that survive from the parliamentary enclosure of the early 19th century.

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