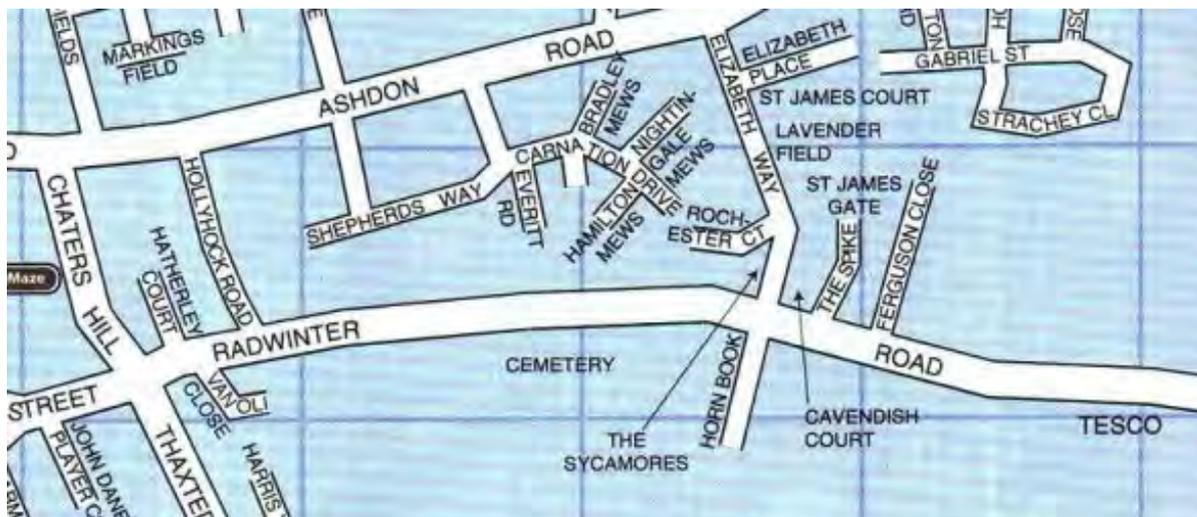


Heritage and Character Assessment

Character Area: Radwinter Road, Saffron Walden

Assessor: Peter Riding

January 2017



Topography

The area rises up gently from the Thaxted Road/Chaters Hill traffic lights to the edge of town. Beyond that it rises sharply up to Swards End.

Land use

Land use is principally residential but with a large factory, Veterinary Hospital, Cemetery, Community Hospital and a supermarket.

Layout

On the north side of the road it is all residential except for the Community Hospital.

On the south side the residential feel is broken up by the Veterinary Hospital, the town Cemetery, a large factory and a Tesco supermarket.

Roads, streets and routes

Radwinter Road is one of the busiest routes into the town centre. It is an access route for Ridgeons, Homebase and Tesco lorries and is also a bus route.

The traffic lights junction of Radwinter Road, Thaxted Road, Chaters Hill and East Street has the highest nitrogen dioxide air pollution figure for Saffron Walden.



The traffic lights with Thaxted Road/Chaters Hill are busy at many times of the day and queues can form a long way back into Radwinter Road on the south side.

Along a section of the north side the road is wide enough to allow two way traffic plus parking bays.



However, for about 200 yards leading up to the Elizabeth Way traffic lights on the north side the road narrows and vehicles park on the pavement. This is a hazard to pedestrians, particularly the elderly and parents with buggies and toddlers, and is made worst on dustbin collection days.

Leading off Radwinter Road are the quiet residential areas of Vanoli Close, Hollyhock Road and Horn Book plus the busy Elizabeth Way link road to Homebase, Ashdon Road and Ridgeons.

There are wide vehicular entrances to Hatherley Court sheltered housing, The Spike residential buildings, the Community Hospital, the Pulse Flexible Packaging factory and the Tesco supermarket.

Spaces



The town Cemetery provides by far the largest unbuilt space. However, the wooded area next to the Slade stream at the start of Radwinter Road as well as the wide verge opposite The Spike and Community Hospital also provide visual relief.

Buildings

The residential properties in Radwinter Road are mostly a mixture of 19th Century terraced houses and 20th Century former council housing. The non-residential properties are the Veterinary Hospital, the Pulse Flexible Packaging factory, the Community Hospital and the Tesco supermarket.



On the north side of Radwinter Road the housing nearest the town centre is mostly 20th Century semi-detached former council housing, rendered with concrete tiled roofs and with room for parking cars both off the road and in road parking bays.



On the north side, further away from the town centre, the housing is mostly 19th Century brick built terraced houses with slate tiled roofs, some with small front gardens mostly used for parking vehicles.



On the north side there are also a number of attractive 3 storey brick built terrace houses including Rose Villas (1880).



Just past the Elizabeth Way traffic lights on the north side is The Spike which is a development of flats converted from the former Workhouse which was built around 1835.



On the south side of Radwinter Road the residential housing is 20th Century built of brick on higher ground than the road and with concrete tiles.



The exception on the south side is the 21st Century Saffron Lodge with its attractive flint wall.



Joining Radwinter Road on the north side, Hollyhock Road was developed in the 1930's as semi-detached council houses.



Joining Radwinter Road on the north side, Elizabeth Way is a busy access road to Homebase, Ashdon Road and Ridgeons. The residential properties are 20th Century flats, semi-detached and terraced houses.



On the north side of Radwinter Road near the edge of town and next to the fuel dump is the 2016-2017 Mandeville Place development.



On the south side of Radwinter Road is the 21st Century development of Vanoli Close.



On the south side of Radwinter Road is the 21st Century development of Horn Book.

Landmarks

The main landmark is the Cemetery run by Saffron Walden Town Council. However, the water tower at the Community Hospital, the Spike residential buildings, Pulse Flexible Packaging factory and Tesco supermarket are also landmarks.





Green and natural features

There are a number of areas with trees and bushes including the Cemetery, the stretch of the Slade stream near the Thaxted Road traffic lights, the corner of Thaxted Road and Radwinter Road, the land outside the Pulse Flexible Packaging factory, the verge opposite The Spike and the Community Hospital and the area near to the pedestrian access to Tesco.



There are also a number of attractive large trees within residential areas.

Streetscape



There is iron railing at the start of Radwinter Road next to the Slade stream and at the front of the Cemetery. Also, there are flint walls outside Saffron Lodge and the Veterinary Hospital.



However, there are quite a number of grey, concrete front garden walls which do not enhance the area.

Also, the large green Anglian Water metal box on the corner of Radwinter Road and Horn Book is unsightly.

Views

The main views from parts of Radwinter Road are the wooded hills leading up to Swards End.

Locally important heritage

The railing next to the Slade stream at the start of Radwinter Road and the railing at the front of the Cemetery. The flint wall at the front of the Veterinary Hospital. The retaining wall of the old railway bridge.

Detracting elements



The poor condition of the old railway bridge retaining wall brickwork.



The unsightly Tesco banners next to the roadside.



The scrubland in front of Peace Lodge within the Cemetery.



The large green metal box owned by Anglian Water in a prominent position next to the Horn Book traffic lights.



The damaged brickwork under the railings near to the Thaxted Road/Chaters Hill traffic lights



The derelict equipment site at the end of Radwinter Road going towards Swards End.

Summary of key defining characteristics/other observations

Mainly residential area with the pleasant open space of the town Cemetery but suffering from heavy vehicular traffic and lack of parking places for residents and visitors.

Opportunities for development or other improvements

The large green metal box owned by Anglian Water in a prominent position next to the Horn Book traffic lights could be camouflaged with vegetation.

The old railway bridge retaining wall brickwork could be repaired in places.

The Tesco banners next to the roadside could be removed.

The scrubland in front of Peace Lodge within the Cemetery could be tidied up.

The damaged brickwork under the railings near to the Thaxted Road/Chaters Hill traffic lights could be repaired.

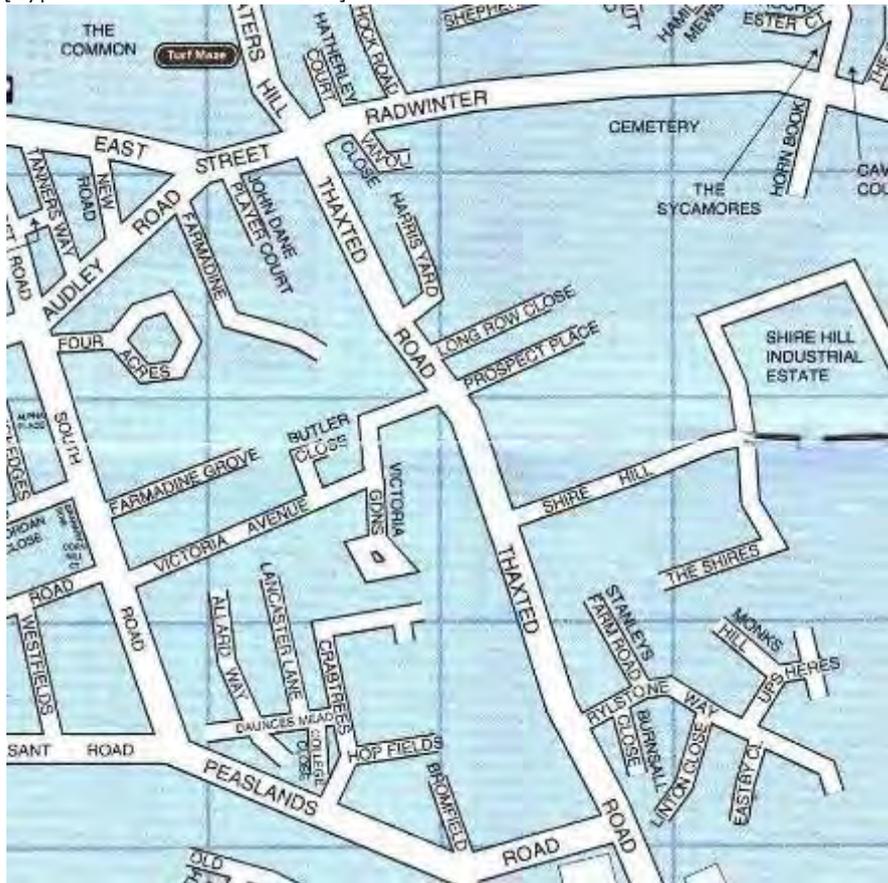
The bus stop opposite the Veterinary Hospital would benefit from having a bench next to it.

The derelict equipment site at the end of Radwinter Road going towards Swards End could be returned to nature.

Character assessment

Thaxted Road, with the Shires Housing Estate

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Anthony Skipper
4/2/2017

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Disclaimer: All notes in the following report are based on the observations and written by Anthony Skipper. This work has aims to supplement the larger project of assessing "Character" of specific areas of the Town of Saffron Walden-Essex

Topography:

Thaxted road runs in a southerly direction from the cross roads junction controlled by traffic lights. The roads link East Street , Chaters Hill Radwinter Road with Thaxted Road. The road is reasonably straight where it runs through the built up area of the town. It rises gradually in the south especially when it passes the roundabout which links it to Peaslands Road.

Note to avoid frequent repetition in the rest of this note, reference to the cross roads junction described above will be simply as the cross roads.

Land use:

The Thaxted Road area is a mix of residential and industrial buildings. Residential being the largest use. Recently a considerable number of residential properties have been constructed in the area several of which have yet to be completed. The majority of the industrial firms are situated in the Shire Hill estate but there are several more enterprises scattered over the area. There is a general store on the western edge of the cross roads. A motor car repair business is situated close to the entrance of the Shire Hill Industrial Estate. The Gate public house which has a good restaurant trade stands on the eastern side of the road almost opposite Victoria Avenue. There are also two large industrial buildings which are situated on the western side of the road opposite the entrance road to the industrial estate. A milk distribution company is located on the west side of the Thaxted road.

Layout:

Like most major roads in Saffron Walden the oldest houses are generally those nearest to the town centre. There appear to be very few houses dating from the eighteenth century or before in Thaxted road. The oldest appear to be two storey terraced dwelling houses on the eastern side of Thaxted road which may date from the late eighteenth century or early nineteenth century. Most of these houses now have their original windows replaced with ones of a different design. The former gas works situated on the eastern side of Thaxted road has at least two of the original buildings still standing one of which has the date 1836 cast in the render of the gable end. Part of what was probably the site of part of the former gas works has recently been redeveloped to form Vanoli Close. There remains considerable space in the old gasworks yard which may be developed in the future. There are also a number of mid nineteenth century houses of good quality situated on the west side of Thaxted road some terraced and others detached some have retained their original fenestration. These houses generally have good sized rear gardens although some have lost their

front gardens for car parking. The more southerly parts of the road have been progressively filled with more modern residential buildings mainly erected in the twentieth century, This pattern has recently changed by the introduction of new residential buildings on land close to the northern part of the road on plots of land which have become available for various reasons such as the redevelopment of the former garage and petrol station adjacent to Shire Hill road and other under used sites. New houses have also been built on individual plots where former gardens were large enough for this to be done.

Roads Streets and Routes:

All the streets which enter Thaxted Road with the exception of Victoria Avenue do so from the east, The first is Harris Yard which has been redeveloped in recent years, It is approached by a new roundabout in Thaxted Road. Harris Yard is a cul- de- sac and contains over sixty dwellings and therefore the population uses more than sixty vehicles. The next new street leading to Thaxted Road is Long Row Close This is a much smaller development than Harris Yard but it has a mixture of terraced houses and a number of substantial detached houses with double garages. Close by is Prospect Place an old narrow lane which has a few properties connected to it and a further small development in progress. Opposite Prospect Place but on the west side of Thaxted Road is the junction with Victoria Avenue. Continuing in a southerly direction on the east side of the road is the very busy Shire Hill which leads on to the Shire Hill Industrial Estate. Finally also on the east side of Thaxted Road is Rylstone Road which leads into the 'Shires' estate which divides into six roads which make up the 'Shires' estate. This development took place in the early nineteen seventy's

Spaces:

The area served by Thaxted Road has very few open spaces or car parks of any size. There are a number of car parks in the Harris Yard development but even so many residents have to park on the roads in the development, Some of the terraced houses have single garages.

At the end of Upshires Road which is part of 'The Shires' development is a good sized well tended grassed area, A plaque on the gate reads -: Queen Elizabeth 11 Field. Field in trust diamond jubilee 2012.The field which is close to the Shire Hill Industrial estate is bounded by a good tree hedge on both sides . 0623

It is worth noting that the road network forming the ' Shires' estate is well laid out and sufficient to cope reasonably with the parking demands made on it. This is helped by the provision of a garage for many of the semi detached houses which constitute the bulk of the estate.

Buildings:

Thaxted road does not have many old buildings dating from before the beginning of the nineteenth century. Most of the earlier residential buildings are two storey brick built dwellings often in the arrangement of two or more terraced houses.



This house is two storey with the insertion of later roof lights to the loft area. Some of the original sliding sash windows remain in place but most have been replaced with windows of much more recent style. This building is divided into three terraced dwellings. It is well constructed of pale grey brickwork relieved by a string of red brick defining the lower storey and repeated under the eaves. The roof is of slate. It probably dates from the mid nineteenth century. It does not appear to be listed and may be considered to be suitable for being so designated.



This image shows more examples of old terrace houses attached to the previous building. The walls are rendered and painted. The windows and doors facing the street are generally modern replacements with the exception of the ground floor window of the white painted cottage which appears to be an original sliding sash window with 12 lights. The roofs are tiled and the building appears to date from the first half of the nineteenth century.



This building on the eastern side of Thaxted road just south of the previous houses is the only example of a Mansard style roof seen in the road. The roof is hung with red peg tiles. It is constructed with Gault brickwork and is divided into two terraced dwellings. All windows and doors are of later design. This building probably dates from the early nineteenth century.



This recently constructed terrace of three houses is located on the east side of Thaxted road close to Harris yard. It is built to resemble one of the many terraced buildings found in towns which were built in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. Garages are located nearby. A twin building is in course of construction on the east of the Thaxted road a few meters to the south. It is equipped with metal railings which suit the style of the building



This image shows part of Prospect House a Victorian Villa which remains externally unchanged since its construction and gives its name to the lane running by its side.



The Gate Public House appears to have been built in the nineteenth century. The walls are constructed of brick and flint ,the roof is slate. The ground floor windows have original sliding sash windows but the windows on the first floor are modern replacements. The stylish roof covering is slate. The building has later additions to the rear and on the south side of the building.



On the west side of Thaxted road not far from Shire Hill road but on the opposite side there are a few early nineteenth century brick built houses some are detached others semi detached . The example shown here has a large Masonic device built into the facing brick work at first floor level. It also retains it front garden unlike most of the houses nearby which use their front garden for car parking. These houses have large rear gardens and it is noticeable that the build quality is high.

Further South:

On both sides of Thaxted road are a number are a number of semi detached houses set back from the carriageway with gardens front and rear. On the west side of the road some front gardens are large enough to provide room for parking and enough space for a border as well .On the east side of Thaxted Road the pattern is the same until the 'Shires' estate begins where cars are either parked in garages or on the estate roads.



This semi detached house is an example of several probably built between the wars a period when more space was available at an affordable price for a section of the population. The part of Thaxted road close to the Peaslands road roundabout has a number of former council houses built in the nineteen sixties which are smaller and closer to the road than the example above.

Landmarks:

Landmarks are not numerous in the area. The former Gas Works buildings could be described as a Landmark because of their size and proximity to the Thaxted road the building shown below is very prominent





The name and date on the gable end of the building is an interesting feature the date reads 1836



The other landmark is the old railway embankment with the brickwork and trees on top and sides