

FLEET AND CHURCH CROOKHAM


Character Assessment

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FLEET AND CHURCH CROOKHAM

Character Assessment

I OVERVIEW

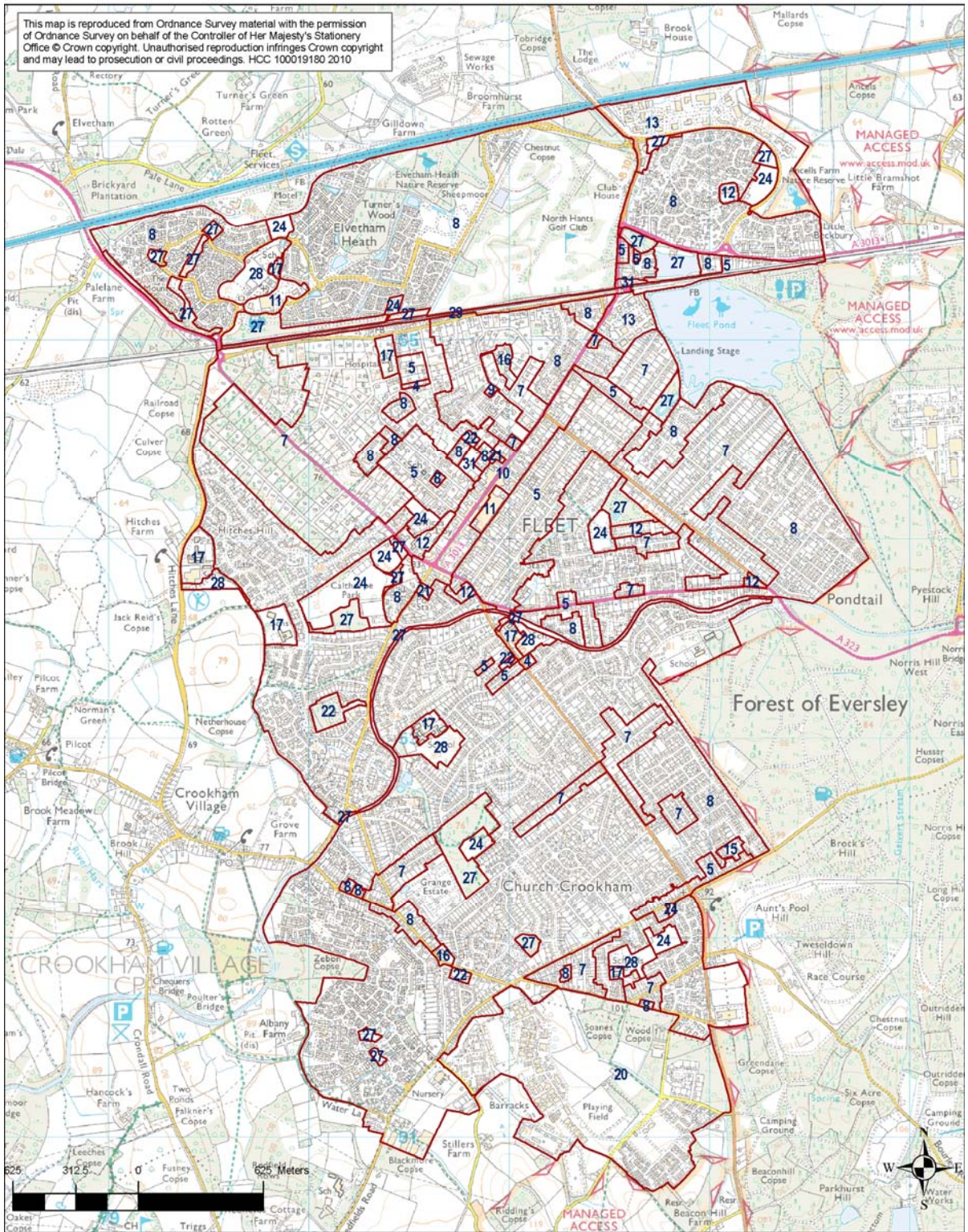
- I.1 Fleet and Church Crookham lie in north-east Hampshire to the west of Aldershot and Farnborough, the two conurbations being separated by the Forest of Eversley. To the north-eastern edge of Fleet the gap between Fleet and Farnborough is less than 1km. These areas of major urban development lie over former heathland. In the early-nineteenth century 3,600 acres of the heathland were enclosed, still leaving a relatively large area of poor sandy soils unenclosed, surrounded by small irregular fields on the better quality clays, and historic settlements including the village of Crookham and the hamlet of Gally Hill, later known as Church Crookham. The orientation of some of the new enclosures was later to influence the layout of new streets. The town has largely developed upon the heathland, only moving onto the agricultural land fringing the heath in small areas to the north, south and west where the pattern of small and medium-sized lowland mosaic fields survives.
- 
- I.2 The area of the later town was crossed by the Basingstoke Canal but this did not stimulate development in the area until the coming of the railway in 1840 brought visitors from London to skate on Fleet pond in the winter. The heathland was no longer seen as being barren waste but was beginning to be appreciated for its natural beauty. By the 1870s, development alongside roads crossing the heath was occurring but after 1878, when a large area of heath was bought by a local estate agent, Henry Brake, the settlement grew rapidly. Brake laid out new streets in a grid pattern, and Fleet claimed to be one of the first English towns to use an American town planning model. Fleet Road is the main street of the settlement, and building plots were often sold to gentlemen from London.
- I.3 By 1914, the original core of Fleet was expanding to the south along Reading Road South, Aldershot Road and in the area called Pondtail. To the north, the area north-east of Reading Road North was also laid out but there has only been sporadic development, with many empty plots. An army camp was built at Church Crookham at this time and continued to house soldiers after World War I.
- I.4 In the period after World War I, Fleet continued to grow, much of the development being within the vacant plots. The largest area of new development was at the northern end of Reading Road North as far as the railway line where detached houses, in relatively large plots, were built.

- I.5 After World War II the town grew rapidly, particularly to the south. Considerable development also occurred within the areas already developed; many of the large early houses were replaced and backland areas and gaps between properties were developed, increasing the urban grain of development. Almost all this development was residential; there is very little industrial development in the town and so many of the population commute to other industrial centres in the area or to London. In the late-twentieth century the extent of the town crossed over the railway line with large housing estates reaching the M3 motorway.
- I.6 The Fleet conurbation lies on the edge of the North East Hampshire Heaths landscape, dominated by coniferous plantations, broadleaved woodland, and heathlands. The landscape to the west of the town is more agricultural. The sandy acidic soils heavily influence the character of the town through planting and natural vegetation, with acid-loving shrubs and deciduous trees (oak, beech and sweet chestnut in particular) and conifers common throughout the settlement. Heathland habitats directly adjacent to the east of the town are part of the Thames Basin Heaths, internationally important for biodiversity, and protected as a Special Protection Area under European legislation. Several tributaries of the River Hart flow northwards through the town. The Basingstoke Canal runs broadly west to east.
- I.7 Hart District Council has produced a townscape assessment of Fleet which has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Hampshire Towns Character Assessment – Townscape Types

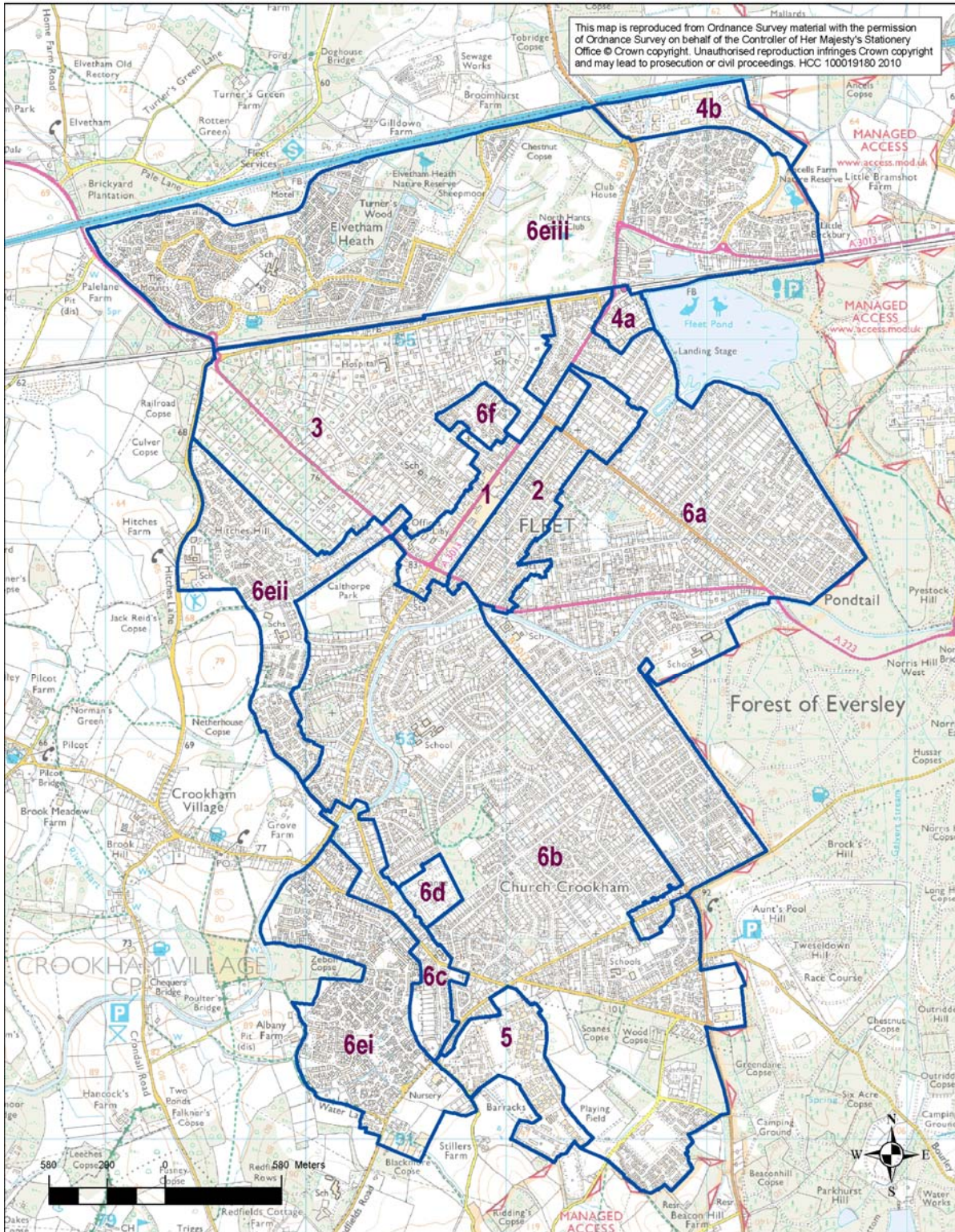
TCT	Description
01	Medieval Planned Urban Settlement
02	Rural Settlement
03	Post Medieval Development 1600–1819
04	Residential 1820–1869
05	Residential 1870–1914 (Terraces, Semi-detached, Small Detached Houses)
06	Residential 1870–1914 (Villas)
07	Residential 1915–1945
08	Residential Post 1945–Present (Houses and Bungalows)
09	Residential Post 1945–Present (Flats, 4 storey and above)
10	Commercial 1870–1945
11	Large Retail 1950–Present
12	Office/Commercial 1945–Present
13	Business Park 1945–Present
14	Traditional/Older Industrial
15	Industrial 1945–Present
16	Hospital/Education – Older Core
17	Hospital/Education – Modern
18	Defence Pre 1830
19	Defence 1830–1914
20	Defence 1915–Present
21	Civic
22	Religious/Churchyard/Precinct
23	Open Space (Public Park)
24	Open Space (Sports/Recreation)
25	Open Space (Allotments)
26	Open Space (Cemetery)
27	Open Space (Green Corridor)
28	Open Space (School Playing Field)
29	Transport Corridor
30	Civil Infrastructure – e.g. Sewage Works
31	Car Park
32	Mobile Home Park

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FLEET TOWNSCAPE TYPES





**FLEET AND CHURCH CROOKHAM
CHARACTER AREAS**



2 CHARACTER AREA DESCRIPTIONS

2.1 FLE01 Town centre



Fleet Rd. and Kings Rd. Junction (TCA 3 to south and TCA 2 to north) – © BLOM Urbex

2.1.1 Character Summary

This character area comprises the extent of the original town centre development, established in part by the 1870s and later Edwardian expansion, and is now the commercial core of the town. Hart Urban District Council was formed in 1904 and Fleet road was developed extensively in the early-twentieth century. There is mixed use, with a number of Edwardian and Victorian buildings. There are regular plots on a tight grid of streets to the centre, though there has been much amalgamation of plots, and late-twentieth-century redevelopment including the large Hart Centre shopping mall.

2.1.2 Key Characteristics

- The commercial heart of the town
- Generally flat topography with short fall at the south-west end of the area
- Historic (mostly Victorian) narrow plots set in a grid network of streets
- Building line is consistent throughout, back of pavement entrance to shops and other buildings from the street, some good quality corner buildings
- Red brick (much of which is now painted or rendered) and slate traditionally; modern brick and flat roofs and modern tiles to late-twentieth-century buildings
- A mix of traditional-scale and large-scale buildings
- A mixed scale and grain to principal commercial shopping streets
- A mix of uses but predominantly independent shops and corporate retailers and services
- Limited tree cover including street trees, and a hierarchy of streets of varying widths, a mixture of surface car parks and on-street parking
- Good access and connectivity

2.1.3 *Boundaries and setting*

The town centre is enclosed by development on all sides. To the north and west is the North Fleet Residential Suburbs character area (FLE03), interspersed with sections of other residential suburbs (FLE06). Running the length of its boundary to the south and east is the Edwardian expansion character area (FLE02). Calthorpe Park is at the south-western edge.

The setting of this character area is a mix of the enclosed tight urban grain of the Victorian streets to the south-east, the area of the tree-lined park to the south-west, and the more open Edwardian residential suburbs to the north and west.

2.1.4 *Designations*

The area adjoins North Fleet conservation area to the north-west. There is no designated conservation area within the character area.

2.1.5 *Townscape types present*

TCT07, 10, 11, 12, 21, 22, 31.

2.1.6 *Topography*

The character area is generally flat. There is a short sharp drop going north past Oak Sheath public house.

2.1.7 *Layout and Pattern*

This area is laid out on an historic grid pattern which largely remains intact and runs south-west to north-east (parallel with Albert Street) crossed by Victoria Road and Church Road. The alignment of Fleet Road marks the route of the lane that served the historic settlement. Side roads, perpendicular to the main streets, sub-divide the urban blocks serving as routes to other areas of the town or leading to car parks and residential closes.

The commercial/retail centre is dominated by medium-sized blocks with significant large-scale modern covered shopping malls, multi-storey car parks. Some medium-rise commercial and residential buildings dominate, particularly on the south side of Fleet Road. Travelling north-east along Fleet Road there is a transition from the commercial centre to residential suburbs. Albert Street, running parallel to Fleet Road, is a mixture of detached and semi-detached houses, large-scale complexes of flats and commercial buildings. The huge façade of the shopping mall dominates the streetscape.

2.1.8 *Buildings and materials*

There are a number of Victorian and Edwardian buildings, heavily eroded in places with late-twentieth-century developments. There are some important key corner sites where some buildings display good detailing (e.g. on the junction of Fleet Road and Upper Street). The commercial core exhibits a rich divergence of building types, with buildings typically of two and three storeys, traditionally with pitched roofs, now interspersed with flat-roofed modern infill. Buildings strongly define and enclose spaces due to their frontage on to pavements.

Walling materials are mostly red brickwork, and some painted brickwork or render. Features include some original window sashes, mock timber-framed gables, original slate roofs and chimneys. Ground floors to older buildings are largely replaced with later shop/office fronts but the historic grain of the original plots, where they survive, is largely intact.

2.1.9 *Predominant land use*

This character area is the historic focus of Fleet's commercial centre. Parts of the core comprise independent retailers but much of the area is post 1970s mono-use development i.e. covered shopping malls, multi-storey car parks, and medium- to high-rise residential blocks. There is some residential accommodation in the town itself, especially noted in the modern blocks of flats.

2.1.10 *Public realm*

The main shopping street, Fleet Road, is a busy thoroughfare with no pedestrianisation. The public realm is functional and appears well-maintained. There are tarmac roads and quite wide block paved footways with on-street parking bays and surface car parks to the rear. There are standard lamp columns. There are some small trees to the street frontages, and a small number of street trees in the main part of the area. To the north-east there are many mature trees on private land rather than on street. There are new street trees along Fleet road.

2.1.11 *Open space*

There is limited open space in the commercial centre, and no green public open spaces in this character area. There are substantial open spaces largely comprising hard-surfaced areas for parking.

2.1.12 *Biodiversity*

The area is densely developed with limited vegetation cover. Habitats are limited to tree-lined streets in the north-east of the area, together with a limited number of private gardens with mature trees.

2.1.13 *Access and connectivity*

There is good access to amenities with the commercial core being less than ten minutes walk from anywhere in the character area.

2.2 FLE02 Victorian Edwardian expansion



Clarence Rd. – © BLOM Urbex

2.2.1 Character Summary

This character area comprises the Victorian and mainly Edwardian (laid out by 1896 and developed soon after) development of Fleet. It is strongly defined by a regular Victorian grid of streets which makes for memorable and robust traditional townscape. The area is predominantly residential. Buildings along the streets are mostly semi-detached with grander buildings to Kings Road. It is the pattern of residential development which gives this area its distinctive character. The surrounding residential suburbs comprise detached or semi-detached brick houses with small front gardens, on regular plots. Houses are well articulated and read as good groups within streets.

2.2.2 Key Characteristics

- A good and distinctive mix of residential streets set out on a Victorian Street plan
- Generally flat, but there is a short drop to the east at Clarence road. The southern section of Church road climbs slightly
- Historic (many late-Victorian/Edwardian) narrow plots set in a grid network of streets
- Building line is mostly consistent throughout. Residential buildings have small gardens with boundary walls and/or hedges
- Red brick (a number of which have been painted or rendered) and slate traditionally, modern brick and modern concrete or clay interlocking tiles to twentieth-century buildings
- Predominant built form is two storey, some higher blocks of flats
- A mix of uses but predominantly residential
- Good tree cover, some street trees, many mature trees to private gardens
- A hierarchy of streets of varying widths, mostly on-street parking and good enclosure throughout
- Good access and connectivity

2.2.3 *Boundaries and setting*

The north-western boundary is shared with the town centre (FLE01). To the north and east the area is bounded by the residential suburbs of Kings Road and Reading Road East (FLE06a). To the south the area meets the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area.

The setting of the area is strongly influenced by the busy commercial town centre character area to the north-west (FLE01). The leafy twentieth-century suburbs to the south-east are markedly different. The Victorian expansion of the town acts as a transitional zone between the high urban grain of the town centre and the more open nature of the suburbs. The tree-lined canal to the south is well-screened from the area; only the belt of trees is a noticeable feature, rather than the canal itself.

2.2.4 *Designations*

There are no statutory listed buildings or designated conservation areas within the character area.

2.2.5 *Townscape types present*

TCT05.

2.2.6 *Topography*

The character area is almost entirely flat with only a few discernible changes in level.

2.2.7 *Layout and Pattern*

Still an area of farmland, gravel pits and conifer plantations in the 1870s, the streets and layout are part of the Victorian expansion of Fleet. The grid of Victorian Streets is still very clearly evident despite a new close (Bearwood Gardens) and amalgamation of plots (particularly towards the western end of Clarence Road). From the central Clarence Road runs a grid of streets running north–south and east–west, set out in blocks of medium to fine grain, rectilinear layout of semi-detached houses and private gardens backed onto the next block. To the north-east, Kings Road, and subsequently Dunmow Hill and Avondale Road, are orientated across Clarence Road north–south rather than east–west. Plots are generally narrow but relatively deep and each house has a good sized garden. Houses are set back from the pavement with a small front garden with a boundary wall or hedge. There has been some loss of front gardens for parking of cars, especially in the northern half of Clarence Road. There is some articulation and hierarchy within streets, with single and double height bays, chimneys and grouped windows providing the rhythm of the street facades, producing the townscape seen throughout the character area. There are consistent building lines and good enclosure to most sections of streets throughout.

2.2.8 *Buildings and materials*

The predominant survival of built form is that of a traditional two-storey scale with variation to roof form (good mix of gabled and hipped roofs) and orientation providing interesting townscape. There are some notable late Victorian and Edwardian buildings, such as the schools, which are of architectural and historic interest (although they are not statutory listed). Most buildings date from the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth century, and older built fabric and detailing makes for interesting townscape where it survives. There are areas of later-twentieth-century infill and redevelopment.

There is a wide variety of materials throughout the character area. There is a predominant use of brick, traditionally red/orange in colour for facades with many modern variations in terms of texture and colour. A lot of brick buildings have been painted and/or rendered and painted. Roofs traditionally were natural slate, with some use of clay tile. The slate has survived to some degree although some has been replaced with modern concrete interlocking tiles.

Semi-detached and some detached houses within the character area's residential streets are traditional two storey in height with very little use of the roofspace for additional accommodation. The uninterrupted roof slopes, with traditional chimneys, produce a pleasing rhythm to the roofscape. There is a modest domestic scale to the residential streets of the character area. Kings Road, Dunmow Hill and Avondale Road are on a grander scale in places, with some two-and-a-half and three-storey buildings mixed with two-storey.

There is some architectural and historic interest in the building types seen in the residential streets. Many have been developed speculatively as small groups with unifying characteristics such as distinctive bays.

The use of red brick is almost consistent and is a unifying characteristic throughout, although there is a high degree of painted or rendered houses (or former houses) to the residential streets.

The domestic scale of buildings in this character area is almost consistent throughout with little over-development. There are some later large-scale, three-storey developments (Swift Court and Argyll Court, Clarence Road). These blocks, however, have not particularly damaged the overall cohesion and consistency to the character of streets throughout the residential sections of the area.

2.2.9 *Predominant land use*

Most, if not all, streets are residential, with mostly private dwelling houses with some flats. Amongst the houses there are churches, halls, a bowling green and a builder's yard.

2.2.10 *Public realm*

To the residential areas within the character area, the public realm is functional and appears well maintained. There are tarmac roads and pavements with on-street parking. There are standard lamp columns. There are some street trees and some good-sized mature trees to rear gardens.

Between Kings Road and Avondale Road there are many mature trees.

2.2.11 *Open space*

There are no formal public open spaces. The bowling green is the only open space facility, other than private gardens. Amongst these is Ladybower, the remnant of a once-grand Edwardian house and garden, listed on the Hampshire Register of Parks and Gardens.

2.2.12 *Biodiversity*

The large mature gardens are often back to back within the grid pattern, forming wide urban habitat corridors through the character area. Many have small collections of trees, which create a leafy canopy cover in places.

2.2.13 *Access and connectivity*

Most of the character area is within easy walking distance of Fleet Road shops.

2.3 FLE03 North Fleet residential suburbs

2.3.1 Character Summary

This character area comprises the North Fleet Conservation Area. It is a largely Edwardian development of former heathland, which followed on from the growth of nearby Aldershot and Farnborough from the 1860s onwards. The conservation area provides contrasting areas of residential development, some of it laid out in a grid pattern and some set to either side of gently curving roads. The character of the area is defined by the spacious plots, with mainly detached houses set back from the road behind mature trees. The area has a sylvan quality, allied to some unmade roads, grass verges, and (in places) undulating topography.

2.3.2 Key characteristics

- Quiet residential estate largely developed from the 1880s onwards, with a few substantial houses remaining from the early-nineteenth century, but predominantly Edwardian houses. It is now a conservation area
- Generally flat to the extreme east and west of the character area, with a notable change to the topography created by a steep hill to the east of Reading Road North
- Buildings are detached family houses, set in spacious plots, and often hidden from view by the planting
- Grid pattern of streets to the south-west, and softer, curved streets with a less formal arrangement, to the north-east
- There is a mix of architectural styles; late Georgian, Victorian, Queen Anne Revival, Arts and Crafts, and 1920s vernacular. Buildings are red brick, smooth stuccoed, or pebble-dashed; with sash or casement windows and pitched, tiled or slated roofs
- Mainly two-storey, medium-sized, family homes
- Predominantly residential
- Abundance of trees and mature shrubbery (particularly rhododendrons)
- Mix of formal tarmac roads, unadopted roads, grass verges and footpaths
- Good access and connectivity throughout

2.3.3 *Boundaries and setting*

This large character area is bounded by the town centre to the south-west (FLE01), post-war suburban extensions to the north and south (FLE06e and FLE06f), the North Hants Golf Course to the north-east and open countryside west of Hitches Lane.

The setting of this character area is very varied. To the north, the South Western Main Line railway effectively divides the area off from the northern suburbs. To the south-east, the urban grain of town centre is clearly evident. The early development of this character area, near Fleet Road, shares some characteristics with the town centre character area (FLE01). To the west, the flat agricultural land is crossed by streams and interspersed with small plantations of trees.

2.3.4 *Designations*

The area lies wholly within the North Fleet Conservation Area. There is only one statutory listed building; the Grade II* All Saints Church, Church Road.

2.3.5 *Townscape types present*

TCT05, 07, 08, 09, 16, 29, 31.

2.3.6 *Topography*

Areas of undulating topography, most noticeable in the northern part of Church and Avenue roads and along Broomrigg Road, where the unmade road falls steeply towards Reading Road North. This hill is also evident in the northern section of Broomrigg Road, towards Elvetham Road. Other parts of the character area are much flatter, with some gentle undulations, such as Fitzroy Road to the west, or Waverley Road to the east.

2.3.7 *Layout and Pattern*

The North Fleet character area is made up of a number of contrasting streets, some of which are laid out in a straight line, such as Reading Road North and Fitzroy Road, and some of which are curved, such as Waverley Avenue and Gough Road. The northern part of the character area is defined by Elvetham Road, which is almost completely straight and runs parallel to the railway line.

2.3.8 *Buildings and materials*

Buildings date from between the 1840s (a handful of early houses) and the present day, but the majority are a mix of large Edwardian and inter-war (1920s and 1930s) houses. There has been much mid- to late-twentieth-century replacement and infilling. These buildings are almost exclusively in residential uses, and provide a mixture of mainly detached houses with the occasional more modest cottages or bungalows. Buildings are red brick, smooth stuccoed, or pebble-dashed, with sash or casement windows and pitched, tiled or slated roofs. Many inter-war houses have 'cottage' style details, such as casement windows, low eaves, and steeply pitched tiled roofs, with leaded light or steel Crittall windows.

2.3.9 *Predominant land use*

Most, if not all, streets are residential, with mostly private dwelling houses and very occasional flats. In addition to houses there is a church, a cottage hospital, care homes and a private school.

2.3.10 *Public realm*

Whilst some of the streets are surfaced, others are unadopted (such as Broomrigg Road) and are not much more than tracks, without pavements or other features. Most of the roads are surfaced and have pavements, with concrete kerbs or no kerbs at all. Street lighting is usually provided by medium-height modern steel standards, although many of the streets are not lit. The thick vegetation, especially rhododendrons to many of the front gardens, is a unifying characteristic of the area.

2.3.11 *Open space*

The character area has only a small number of 'planned' open spaces; Meadow Recreation Ground (a public park), the churchyard around All Saints Church and the Hope Cemetery, off Church Grove. However, some of the streets, such as Waverley Avenue, Gough Road, Herbert Road and Fitzroy Road, have very attractive deep grass verges, some edged by clipped hedging. Private gardens are often substantial, however, with many plots well over a hectare in size.

2.3.12 *Biodiversity*

There are no designations within the character area, although the large gardens interlink to form wider habitat patches through the area, which connect with woodland and other semi-natural habitats outside the settlement. Many of these gardens contain a range of coniferous and broadleaved trees, plants (especially Rhododendron) and other habitats, and together form distinct woodland belts. In addition, the Elvetham Heath Nature Reserve lies close to the M3, within walking distance of the area. Fleet Pond, also close to the character area, is an important centre for all kinds of wildlife, particularly wild fowl, and has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

2.3.13 *Access and connectivity*

The area has good access and connectivity due to the network of wide streets and lanes which link this area to the more commercial southern areas (FLE01). The commercial centre of Fleet Road is within easy walking distance. The railway line to the north is a barrier to connectivity with northern residential suburbs.

2.4 FLE04 Industrial estates

2.4.1 Character Summary

The commercial estates of Fleet, despite being geographically divorced from each other, share some common characteristics. They have a medium to fine grain, fairly closely spaced mix of small, medium-sized and large office units with occasional light industrial uses. Buildings are surrounded by large areas of hardstanding used for parking and/or storage. There is a predominant use of brick for plinths, walls and gables with concrete tiled or profiled metal roofs.

2.4.2 Key characteristics

Sub-areas of FLE04

04a. Waterfront Business Park

- Commercial estate/business park
- Predominantly flat
- Grid of plots of varying sizes, medium to coarse grain, moderate-sized units occupying a large proportion of the plot
- Building lines mostly parallel with the roads throughout
- Profile metal cladding, grey and brown tiles to steel frames, brick buildings, red brick is a common feature – some older units from previous development remain, with blue metal cladding and asbestos corrugated roofs on the southern edge of the estate
- Industrial shed-like structures and office blocks, many of three storeys. Some older buildings include sheds with north-light roofs
- Office use, industrial storage and distribution and associated ancillary uses
- Limited tree cover to sub-area, soft landscape design entrances to units and around parking areas – treed edge to south-western edge boundary with housing and Fleet Pond to the east which provides a tranquil setting
- Fleet station adjoins the area – car-dominated environment within the estate, pedestrian access to Fleet Pond edge

04b. Ancells Road Business Park

- Commercial estates/business park
- Predominantly flat
- Linear layout constrained by Ancells road and the M3 – feeder road with cul-de-sacs, coarse grain with building and car parking/service areas taking up roughly equal proportions of plots
- Building lines at right angles, not parallel with one another
- Profile metal cladding, grey and brown tiles to steel frames, brick buildings, red brick is a common feature
- Purpose-built office blocks, many three storey, often with pitched roofs
- Office use and distribution with associated ancillary uses
- Tree-lined carriageways and good tree screening to boundaries, especially the tree belt screening the area from Fleet Pond in the southern area

- Soft landscape design entrances to units and around parking areas – frequent use of block pavements within plots
- Car-dominated environment, pedestrian access along carriageway edge, no separate access routes, long distances for pedestrian access to the rest of amenities in the rest of Fleet

2.4.3 *Boundaries and setting*

These two industrial estate character areas are situated north-east of the town centre. The northern most estate (FLE04b) is bounded to the south by a post-war suburban extension (FLE06e), to the west by the North Hants Golf Course, to the north by the M3 and to the east by surrounding countryside and woodland. The smaller estate to the south (FLE04a) lies at the top end of the town centre, bounded by the railway to the north, suburbs to the south and west (FLE06e) and by the large Fleet Pond to the east.

These two distinct industrial estates have limited interaction with the residential suburbs in which they are situated. Despite both sites being located in sensitive areas, the industrial estates are not particularly visually intrusive. In the case of the northern estate a strong tree line acts as a buffer between it and the golf course to the west and a large copse to the east screens the site from the surrounding countryside. The southern estate is situated adjacent to Fleet Pond, but a narrow belt of trees softens the views which, in any case, are dominated by the railway line to the north.

2.4.4 *Designations*

There are no statutory listed buildings or designated conservation areas within the character area.

2.4.5 *Townscape types present*

TCT13.

2.4.6 *Topography*

The character area is almost entirely flat with no discernible change in level.

2.4.7 *Layout and Pattern*

There is a varying footprint of buildings (almost entirely rectangular in plan). Both sites have distinct 'closes' with individual or collective company units radiating from these, each with substantial surface car parks.

2.4.8 *Buildings and materials*

The area comprises small, medium, large and very large industrial units, comprising clear-span steel-framed sheds with various modern cladding materials, or brick office blocks/warehouses. Red brick is a common feature throughout. There are mainly low-pitched and flat roofs with profile metal cladding/corrugated asbestos sheeting or grey and brown tiles.

2.4.9 *Predominant land use*

Business, industrial with ancillary offices, warehouse and storage are the main uses.

2.4.10 *Public realm*

The public realm is of a low quality but adequate for the purposes of the range of uses seen within the character area. Grass verges are present to some pedestrian routes into the estate and there is more variety in soft landscaping in FLE04b, but there is generally limited provision for the pedestrian.

2.4.11 *Open space*

Open spaces within the character area mostly comprise hard surfaces such as employee and customer car-parking and goods/loading yards. There are some grass verges and mature trees in front of the industrial units. The boundary trees provide a good screen to neighbouring character areas.

2.4.12 *Biodiversity*

Vegetation and habitats are limited in the southern part of the character area, although the eastern boundary with Fleet Pond Site of Special Scientific Interest is well treed and provides a strong green corridor linked to (and buffering) the site. FLE04b is adjacent to a Hampshire Wildlife Trust Reserve, Foxlease Meadow, and mature trees and landscaping provide some urban habitats within the area itself.

2.4.13 *Access and connectivity*

The estate was designed for access by car and so provision for pedestrians is limited, but better in FLE04a, with the station and Fleet Pond close by.

2.5 FLE05 Queen Elizabeth Barracks

2.5.1 Character Summary

The character area comprises the Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Church Crookham. Established in 1971, it was, until recently, the headquarters for the 1st Battalion of the Gurkha Rifles. It comprises a series of well-ordered grids of barrack blocks and terraced family houses, all virtually identical. The strong building lines, regular plots and organisation of roads makes for a very regimented and unified character area. The area also contains large-scale open spaces including sports pitches, hardstanding pitches and parade grounds, some of which have become disused.

2.5.2 Key characteristics

- Military barracks established in 1971 and now unused
- Topography rising gradually to the south-east
- Regular plot sizes of terraces with gardens, regular grid pattern of barrack huts
- Strong building lines of identical plan buildings adjacent to roadways
- Wooden huts and red brick blocks of housing
- Two-storey terraces and single-storey barracks with larger communal buildings and stores
- Former military residential/training use
- Many mature trees scattered throughout the area, with small copses and larger areas of broadleaved woodland
- Mix of formal tarmac roads, grass verges, tracks and tarmac footpaths
- Limited access and connectivity

2.5.3 Boundaries and setting

Located at the southern end of the town, the character area is bounded to the north by the residential suburbs of Church Crookham (FLE06b) and to the west by post-war suburbs (FLE06e). To the south and west the area opens out to hedge and tree-lined fields, interspersed with small copses and sections of woodland.

The area, quite apart from the rest of the town, is broadly defined by three roads; Aldershot Road to the north, Ewshot Lane to the west and Sandy Lane to the east. Trees along Aldershot Road contain the character area, dividing it from the suburbs. The barracks on Ewshot Lane share some of the character of the post-war suburbs.

2.5.4 Designations

There are no statutory listed buildings or designated conservation areas within the character area.

2.5.5 Townscape types present

TCT20.

2.5.6 Topography

There is a small shallow rise that runs from the north-west to the south-east through the barracks. The parade grounds on the west are substantially lower than other areas.

2.5.7 *Layout and Pattern*

There is a varying footprint of buildings (almost entirely rectangular in plan). By the nature of the military site, the barrack buildings are arranged in regular grids of 'H' plan interconnected blocks, accessed off side roads leading from the gently curving main route way. There are larger units presumably housing the mess, kitchens, administration, recreation halls etc. To the west there are a collection of regular plan red brick terrace blocks arranged at angles around a central road network. Buildings are interspersed with a recreation ground, drill ground, and areas of hardstanding.

2.5.8 *Buildings and materials*

There are two main building types in the character area. On the eastern side there are standard barrack blocks; single-storey, long wooden huts with grey pitched roofs. On the western side there are very regular red brick two-storey family houses in short terrace blocks, each with a small rear garden. Those orientated north–south all have identical front porches. There are also larger 'warehouse-type' sheds; many of timber and corrugated asbestos.

2.5.9 *Predominant land use*

Military/residential/training are the main uses.

2.5.10 *Public realm*

The public realm is geared to its military purpose. Grass verges are present as are some pedestrian routes into the area of housing and in between the barrack blocks.

2.5.11 *Open space*

There are many areas of large open spaces including sports pitches, recreation grounds, very large areas of hardstanding, a children's playground, small areas of broadleaved woodland, and pasture fields. There are disused playing fields, some of which have become more naturalised, with heathland characteristics.

2.5.12 *Biodiversity*

The character area has a range of urban and semi-natural wildlife habitats due to the presence of agricultural fields and disused playing fields, which have reverted to heathland to various extents, and also a large proportion of mixed woodland. There are several Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), including Wakefords Copse, Soan's Copse and meadow near Soan's Copse.

2.5.13 *Access and connectivity*

By its very nature as a military site there is no public access; the site bounded by fencing. There is a public footpath which runs north–south through Soanes copse and several rural lanes which connect with Ewshot to the south.

2.6 FLE06 Residential suburbs

2.6.1 Character Summary

This is a large and diverse character area with a series of large residential areas mainly dating from the early- to the late-twentieth century. Most of the housing is at a medium-density grain, with some isolated coarse-grain development. The main roads and housing estates are predominantly formally laid out with varying degrees of allocation of public green space to the plans. Despite some significant differences (not least period of development) no areas are considered to be sufficiently unique or strongly defined as to be separate character areas within this character area. However, differences in terms of layout, presence and character of open space and period of development have necessitated the defining of five sub-areas.

2.6.2 Key characteristics

Sub-areas of FLE06

06a. Kings Road and east of Reading Road South environs

- Residential suburb comprising mix of periods, mostly early-twentieth-century and inter-war housing with later infill. Medium grain with rectilinear layout
- Mostly flat topography
- Semi-detached and detached houses set in medium-sized to large plots with gardens to the front and larger rear gardens
- Consistent building lines in streets, houses set back
- Mostly traditional red brick, render and pebbledash combinations with survival of clay tile roofs. Some replacement with concrete interlocking tiles
- Two-storey houses, with limited use of roofspace for additional accommodation
- Residential throughout – private dwelling houses
- Limited amount of public open green space with the exception of an area of playing fields and two substantial broadleaved woodland plantations. Many mature trees, both individual and in groups, contained within rear gardens
- A hierarchy to the roads with the side roads being narrower than the principal through routes. Narrow grass verges to some roads
- Good access and connectivity

06b. Church Crookham and environs

- Suburb, including former village, comprising mix of periods; some early-twentieth-century and inter-war housing with larger 1960s–1970s expansion. Medium grain, rectilinear and curvilinear layout; with a fairly open character created by the gaps between properties and incidental remnant woodland
- Predominantly flat
- Semi-detached and detached houses set in generous plots with gardens to the front (many given over to car parking), side access and rear gardens
- Mostly consistent building lines in streets, houses set back
- Mostly traditional red brick, render and pebbledash combinations with survival of clay tile roofs, some slate. Some replacement with concrete interlocking tiles

- Mainly two-storey houses with limited use of roofspace for additional accommodation, some bungalows and three-storey houses (e.g. Aldershot Road)
- Predominantly residential, with schools, churches etc.
- Large areas of public open green space including Calthorpe Park, sports pitches and recreation grounds. Other open areas include a bowling green, school playing fields, and a cemetery. There are two substantial broadleaved woodland plantations. Many mature trees, both individual and in groups, are contained within rear gardens, some forming wildlife corridors
- A hierarchy to the roads with the side roads being narrower than the principal through routes. Narrow grass verges to some roads, pavements throughout
- Good access in most areas to local recreation grounds. Easy access to Fleet Road shops in the northern half
- Very good connectivity

06c. Coxheath Road, Gally Hill Road and Gables Road

- Narrow ribbon development; roads laid out by 1870s and some development by the 1930s, but mostly post-war housing
- Undulating topography, rising to Gally Hill to the north-west and Church Crookham to the south-east
- Detached houses set in large plots with gardens to the front and larger, long rear gardens
- Consistent building lines in streets; houses set back some way off the roadside
- Predominantly red brick and white painted render with clay tile. Some concrete interlocking tiles
- Two-storey houses with limited use of roofspace for additional accommodation; occasional bungalows
- Residential, with private dwelling houses
- Some street trees, mature trees to gardens and corners of roads. Some wide grass verges. Open space is limited to the churchyard of Christ Church on Gally Hill Road. The church is listed grade II
- Good public realm with well-maintained boundaries, wide roads, occasional grass verges and sections of good street trees. Mainly off-road parking in front plots
- Busy through route with access to Basingstoke Canal corridor and nearby recreational spaces

06d. Grange Estate

- Mobile homes set in a 15 acre estate, comprising a grid pattern of interlinking roads and trees, laid out in the 1970s
- Predominantly flat topography, rising slightly to the north
- Detached mobile homes set in regular small plots with small gardens and side access
- Consistent building lines, homes set back
- Prefabricated mobile homes with clay tile, fibre cement slate or concrete tile roofs
- Single-storey, regular plan mobile homes
- Residential – permanent homes for retired people

- Tree-lined streets, trees in private gardens, all backing on to a copse of broadleaved trees to the east. One central open green space
- Well-maintained road network with pavements and green verges, boundary hedges a common feature. Well lit
- Secluded, favouring the car user. Easy access to woodland

06e. Late-post-war expansion and infill. 6ei south-west of Gally Hill Road 6eii Calthorpe western suburbs 6eiii Elvetham Heath and Ancells Farm

- Large post-war suburbs in several areas across Fleet, of fine-grain irregular layout with feeder road and branches ending in cul-de-sacs
- Undulating topography throughout, with Hitches Hill to the west
- Medium-sized plots with semi-detached and detached houses and some terraces. Some 'executive' housing in larger plots
- Mixed building lines due to number of different suburbs; some strong roadside building lines, others staggered. Many streets are laid out in grids, others in a network of curving closes and cul-de-sacs. Some attractive crescents
- Mix of modern materials. Characteristic red brick, some render. Concrete interlocking tiles, clay tiles and very occasional natural slate, otherwise fibre cement slates
- Mix of scales from modest two-storey houses to three-storey terraces and large executive-style houses
- Predominantly residential with service shops, many schools, leisure centres etc.
- Generally well-laid out landscaped modern estates with street trees, narrow belts of trees, small open green spaces, playgrounds etc. Large sports pitches associated with schools
- Estates built for the car user, but generally good pedestrian walkways, grass verges, well maintained paths etc. Standard street lighting
- Good road networks. The north-western area is within easy walking distance of the Elvetham Heath Nature Reserve: the north-eastern area of the Ancells Farm Nature Reserve

Area 6ei is well contained by mature trees on its north-western edge, and by a block of woodland that forms part of the western boundary. The extent of development is relieved by a number of mature hedgerows, blocks of mature trees and large areas of open space that permeate the area. 6eii also has a high number of mature trees, and the southern section is subdivided by open spaces. 6ei is separated from the rest of Fleet by the railway with Elvetham Heath being the most recent development. The two estate areas are separated by the North Hants Golf Course which is well-wooded and heathy in character. In common with other areas of 6e it is crossed by mature hedgerows but has less open space than other areas.

06f. Post-war residential redevelopment

- Formerly an area related to North Fleet residential suburb (FLE03), this area is much altered with the redevelopment of large plots to blocks of flats and small cul-de-sacs of private housing
- The area is flat
- Formerly large plots, reflecting the grain of adjacent North Fleet Conservation Area, now redeveloped with blocks of flats and small cul-de-sac infill developments
- Varied building line with some blocks respecting the roadside and others offset or set well back into the plot
- Red brick, render, clay tile and flat roofs
- Some large, grand, older, two- to two-and-a-half-storey houses survive, surrounded by modern redevelopment ranging from two to four storeys
- Almost entirely residential, but a mix of purpose built flats and houses
- Good survival of mature trees to private grounds, no public green space
- Generally wide roads and pavements and mature well-defined natural boundaries, limited on-street parking
- Reasonable access and connectivity adjacent to Fleet Road although, apart from the original laid out street grid, all other roads and lanes are short cul-de-sacs to private developments

2.6.3 Boundaries and setting

The eastern boundaries of FLE06a and FLE06b and the western boundaries of sub-areas FLE06c and FLE06e face open countryside. Sub-area FLE06a is to the west of the historic core and sub-areas FLE06b, FLE06c and FLE06d are south of the historic core, divided from it by the Basingstoke canal. Sub-area FLE06d is enclosed by surrounding housing. It is bounded by sub-area FLE06e to the west. Its eastern boundary backs on to a park and an area of trees in sub-area FLE06b. FLE06f is to the north-west of Fleet Road and is an isolated residential area, very different to the adjacent FLE03 and omitted from the North Fleet Conservation Area. Sub-area FLE06e is divided into four distinct areas to the north and west of the town.

The setting of this character area is mixed and complex, due to its size and diversity. There are obviously sensitive boundaries around the settlement edge, in the transitional zone between town and countryside. Sub-area FLE06e surrounds the North Fleet Conservation Area, and views into this area, from the conservation area, may have a significant impact on its setting. The same is true of the setting of the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area. However, the nature of this conservation area, weaving between the suburbs and heavily tree lined in places, means that there may potentially be less impact.

2.6.4 Designations

The character area contains six statutory listed buildings. The designated Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area crosses the centre of the character area from west to east.

2.6.5 Townscape types present

TCT04, 05, 07, 08, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29.

2.6.6 *Topography*

There is generally a gently undulating topography with some flatter areas.

2.6.7 *Layout and Pattern*

There is much variation in layout and pattern across the character area reflecting site constraints, urban grain of housing and period of development. There are some notable distinct phases of development which are reflected in the sub-areas identified within this character area. The following is a broad overview of the key layout patterns seen within FLE06.

Early-twentieth-century and inter-war suburbs (FLE06a) have a medium to fine grain, with two-storey detached and semi-detached dwellings set in medium-sized to large plots with small front and larger rear gardens. Boundaries have very few hedges, mostly wooden fences or open front plots for car parking.

There are areas of characteristic inter-war and post-war housing (FLE06b & FLE06c). These areas show a broad mix of housing styles. Building lines are consistent, with houses set back off the roadside. Roads are mainly laid out in grids with a hierarchy of sizes. Mainly two-storey houses, with occasional bungalows and later three-storey private dwellings/flats. Semi-detached and/or detached houses set in generous plots with front and rear gardens, some front plots given over to car parking.

Grange Estate (FLE06d) has a separate identity as a mobile home group. This 15 acre site is laid out to a grid pattern with single-storey prefabricated homes set in small plots.

Late-twentieth-century expansion and infill covers large areas of Fleet's periphery (FLE06e), especially north of the railway. These areas comprise a distinct pattern of streets and plots at a medium density. Plots are often medium-sized to small with some executive-type housing in larger plots. Houses are a mix of scales from two storeys to three storeys and large plan detached houses. Roads are laid out in crescents, cul-de-sacs and closes, with grass verges. Older estates are on more conventional grid patterns.

Most, if not all, houses in this character area are set back from the road in their own front gardens and follow consistent building lines, shared on stretches of roads. In many cases front gardens have been laid over to parking.

FLE06f is notable for its survival of a former street grid pattern (relating to adjacent development within the North Fleet Conservation Area and FLE03) but almost total erosion of the original layout of plots, these being subdivided, amalgamated and completely redeveloped with blocks of flats and infill cul-de-sac developments of indifferent quality.

2.6.8 *Buildings and materials*

Houses are predominantly two storey, with occasional groups of bungalows or larger three-storey houses. The vast majority are 'traditional build'; brick built with pitched roofs and chimneys. There are some flat-roofed buildings, occasional contemporary designs and staggered building lines.

Predominant building materials are red brick, and brick and render or pebbledash, with plain clay tile, natural slate or modern concrete interlocking tiles or fibre cement slates.

In the late-twentieth-century developments brick is the predominant walling material throughout. There are many different colours, textures and finishes, from red, orange and buff bricks. Roofs are mostly clay tile, machine-cut or concrete interlocking tiles of various styles. Houses have sometimes adopted traditional features such as decorative barge boards, timber porches and mock sash windows.

2.6.9 *Predominant land use*

Use is predominantly private residential dwellings, some purpose-built blocks of flats (particularly to FLE06f), some areas of shops, large numbers of schools and recreation grounds.

2.6.10 *Public realm*

The roads are generally wide throughout this character area, with narrow side streets. Some have grass verges with street trees, others just pavements. Boundaries and types of enclosure vary, with some estates having open boundaries to front gardens, some timber fencing, and limited use of hedging. There are some areas of on-street parking (FLE06a), but many houses have front of house parking, private driveways or in some cases private parking courts and garages.

2.6.11 *Open space*

The character area is well served by large areas of open space. Often these are combinations of playing fields, recreation grounds and informal green spaces, notably those in FLE06b.

There is a notable survival of trees and tree groups/broadleaved plantations to the centre and edges of the character area. It should also be noted that the eastern boundary of the character area is heavily wooded (much of this area, the Forest of Eversley, is managed access; Ministry of Defence land used for training purposes) and these woods often form the backdrop for built form.

Most houses have reasonably sized private garden spaces. Some estates have small to medium-sized greens and grassed areas distributed throughout the planned estates. Some wide verges also act as informal open spaces and add to the amenity of the area.

2.6.12 *Biodiversity*

A Special Protection Area (SPA), part of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, lies directly adjacent to FLE06a, a series of sites important for their heathland habitats and species. The Fleet SPA site is underpinned by the Bourley & Long Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which includes the Tweseldown Racecourse and extends north to Velmead Common and the Forest of Eversley and east to the Eelmoor Driver Training Area. There are concerns that recreation pressure, namely dog walking, from the Fleet–Farnborough area is damaging these SPA sites.

Basingstoke Canal is an SSSI, nationally important for aquatic plants and invertebrates, and acts as a green link throughout the area. Fleet Pond (SSSI and Local Nature Reserve) lies adjacent to FLE06a, and is also a popular recreation site for residents. Foxlease and Ancells Meadows SSSIs are adjacent to FLE06e, an acid grassland site. Two SINC's are designated within the character area (Basingbourne Road Heath and Oakley Wood), as well as several meadow and ancient semi-natural woodland sites adjacent to the character area. Elvetham Heath SINC and Local Nature Reserve is the remnant of a much larger woodland site partially developed by the housing estates now seen to dominate sub-area FLE06e.

Other habitats within the character area are large and medium-sized gardens which form wooded corridors in places, particularly in FLE06a and FLE06b, where mature gardens interlink with semi-natural woodland habitats.

2.6.13 *Access and connectivity*

The character area generally has good connectivity, with many areas having easy access to shops or recreation grounds. Some areas favour the car user.