

SWAVESEY

(Inset Proposals Map No. 88)

88.01 This section contains the detailed planning background, policies and proposals for this village. It must be read in conjunction with the general policies set out in Part I of the Local Plan and the accompanying village inset maps.

Location

88.02 Swavesey lies 11 miles north-west of Cambridge, about one and a half miles north of the A14T. The village lies on the Fen edge close to the River Great Ouse. The parish covers 1,611 hectares.

History and Settlement

88.03 The parish boundaries follow the former Huntingdonshire county boundary from the River Ouse to the north and the Roman, Cambridge-Huntingdon road in the south. The western Fen Drayton and south-east Longstanton boundaries follow field boundaries and drainage ditches.

88.04 An 11th century estate can still be identified by the castle and priory site replacing a pre-Conquest minster. The town had a river port and market, laid out in the 13th century, which were in use until the 19th century. The fens beside the river were enclosed in the 17th century and the open fields by 1840. Swavesey bridge spans the lode that carried river traffic into the town from the river; a new dock was built nearer the river between 1838 and 1840. The Cambridge-St Ives railway and station north-east of the church opened in 1847 and closed in 1966.

88.05 The church of the former priory lies on the "north island" with the manor house, the "south island", Middlewatch, and suburbs of the medieval estate were altered by the enclosure. The 19th century infilling of gault brick farmhouses and cottages follow the line of the new roads. The early timber- framed and plastered buildings with thatched or plain tiled roofs, and the red brick 18th century houses are sited in their original closes. Ryder's Farmhouse, a 13th century aisled hall, is of considerable historic interest, as is the Manor House which was remodelled by John Cutts in the early 17th century. The Quaker meeting hall in Blackhorse Lane was rebuilt in 1719 after a fire. Hale Mill replaced a post mill in 1866.

88.06 A recreation ground was allotted east of Middlewatch in 1840. Skating matches have been held on the "fens" from 1827 and continue today.

88.07 Swavesey Meadows (Grid Ref: 359693), Middle Fen (Grid Ref: 3570) and Mare Fen (Grid Ref: 3670) are County Wildlife Sites. Mare Fen is a Local Nature Reserve.

88.08 Castle Hill earthworks (Grid Ref: 358689) and Priory earthworks (Grid Ref: 361694) are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Recent Planning History

88.09 The village has developed from the original port area and around the parish church southwards in a strong linear pattern. The settlement is now around two miles long. This linear character is particularly marked at the southern end, where

there is very little depth to the development on either side of Boxworth End. Modern housing estates, dating mainly from the 1960's and 1970's have been built around the village college and northwards on the western side of the High Street and Middlewatch. A housing estate is under construction at School Lane.

88.10 In 1951 the population of Swavesey was 920. By mid 1991 this had risen to 1,860 and to 2,040 by mid 1996, an increase of 121% in the post-war period during which planning policies have applied, demonstrating the extent to which some villages around Cambridge have expanded.

Services and Facilities

88.11 At the time of the survey undertaken by the Parish Council, Swavesey has a reasonable level of services including one post office/shop, one hairdressers, one opticians, one general foodstore, one bakers and a one car sales / service garage. There is also 2 public houses, library, a primary school, the Village College and a surgery. The village recreation ground is adjacent to the primary school in Middlewatch.

88.12 At January 2001 there were 260 pupils on the primary school roll. It has permanent accommodation for 270 pupils and no temporary accommodation. The Village College has permanent accommodation for 1140 pupils and has 949 on its roll.

88.13 Swavesey's main sewerage system is connected to the sewage treatment works at Over.

Planning Constraints

88.14 The village lies within the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands Landscape Character Area and the West Anglian Plain Natural Area. Swavesey is surrounded by very open countryside, being close to the edge of the Fens. A major constraint is the linear nature of the settlement, particularly at the southern end of the village where there is virtually no development in depth. The northern part of the village is covered by a Conservation Area designated in 1975 and extended on 7 April 1992. Outside the built-up area to the north are important archaeological sites connected with Swavesey's commercial past and most of which are now Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Much of the land to the north is fenland and is important for nature conservation, such as Mare Fen and Middle Fen.

88.15 In the lists of Listed Buildings published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport there are two grade I, one grade II* and twenty three grade II buildings. These lists are not finite.

Planning Policies

88.16 Swavesey has been designated a Rural Growth Settlement. Residential development and redevelopment will be permitted on unallocated land within village frameworks of Rural Growth Settlements, subject to the criteria set out in policy SE2 and other policies of the plan.

88.17 The development of any site which will affect the Conservation Area and the setting of the Listed Buildings will be subject to the policies outlined in Part I of the Local Plan.

88.18 In view of the open nature of the surrounding countryside and the linear nature of the settlement there are only limited opportunities for further development

without materially harming the character of Swavesey. The northern part of the village, around and including the Conservation Area, represents Swavesey's historic past. The District Council will restrict development here and aim to enhance its character.

POLICY SWAVESEY 1: A site of approximately 1.96ha east of the green is allocated as an extension of the existing village recreation ground.

88.19 Recreation provision in Swavesey falls below the National Playing Fields Association standard of 2.43 hectares per 1,000 population. A recent extension to the recreation ground has brought some improvement, but full provision to the NPFA standard will require completion of a further extension on land to the north. The proposed residential development provides the opportunity to secure additional recreation open space which would otherwise be required within the development site as an extension the existing recreation ground. Extending the existing recreation ground has the advantage of making a single large site which will avoid duplicating facilities, be easier to maintain locally and be capable of more effective use than two smaller areas. Within the proposed housing development, there will be further open space for local play areas.

88.20 Planning permission, together with Scheduled Monument Consent, was granted in 1984 for tennis courts and a pavilion on the site of Swavesey Castle. English Heritage is concerned at the effect that this would have on the bank itself. The District Council will therefore seek, in collaboration with the landowner/developer, alternative sites for the proposed tennis courts and pavilion.