

LAND AT COMBERTON,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Green Belt Strategic Site Landscape Appraisal

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Aspect Landscape Planning is instructed by Hopkins Homes Ltd to assess land known as Land at Comberton, Cambridgeshire, hereafter referred to as the Site, against the key purposes of the Green Belt and review the possible landscape and visual matters relating to the Sites potential for residential development. The Site is illustrated on Plan ASP1.
- 1.2. The purpose of this Green Belt Strategic Site Landscape Appraisal is to provide an appraisal of the existing baseline conditions for the Site, including an assessment of the landscape character setting and localised visual environment. The appraisal will assess the Site against the key purposes of the Green Belt (NPPF paragraphs 134-135) and will assist the identification of the suitability and capacity of the Site with regards the Green Belt criteria and will briefly assess the ability of the landscape & visual setting of the Site to accommodate development.
- 1.3. This appraisal will take the following format:
 - Review of baseline conditions;
 - Assess the Site against the key purposes of the Green Belt (NPPF paragraphs 134-135)
 - Identification of potential landscape and visual effects, with suggested approach to mitigation; and
 - Conclusions will be drawn
- 1.4. This appraisal does not represent a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) but has been prepared in line with guidance set out within GLVIA3, the industry best practice guidance. It is considered that if the Site is allocated a detailed LVIA would be prepared as part of any planning application for development on this site.

2. BASELINE ASSESSMENT

- 2.1. The Site is located adjacent to the existing south eastern settlement edge of Comberton village, South Cambridgeshire. It lies on relatively flat landform and adjacent to the existing settlement edge and within the Cambridgeshire Green Belt. The location of the Site is illustrated on **Plan ASP1**.
- 2.2. The Site itself is a roughly rectangular parcel of land that is currently under grassland, the rear boundaries of residential properties off Swaynes Lane and Bush Close form the Site boundaries to the north and west respectively. A mature outgrown hedgerow defines the eastern boundary, adjacent to which runs Byway 52/7, this route is bound to the west by further mature vegetation. The southern boundary is defined by a mature hedgerow with occasional hedgerow trees beyond which lies Tit Brook.
- 2.3. There is currently access to the Site, via a field gateway, off the adjacent byway 52/7 to the north eastern and south eastern corners, with the Site being located outside the defined settlement boundary and within the Cambridgeshire Green Belt; however, it immediately abuts the built-up area.
- 2.4. The wider settlement of Comberton, to the north and east of the Site, consists of a historic core around the crossroads of the B1046, Green End and South Street, approximately 515m to the north west of the Site. The village expanded considerable during the 1960 / 70's, most notably to the north east along Long Road, approximately 300m to the north of the Site, and the residential development to the northern Site boundary of Swaynes Way and Bush Close to the western Site boundaries. The development within these areas, consists of typical 2 storey semidetached / detached residential properties, with a more modern 'infill' development off Thornbury, accessed via Byway 52/7, approximately 30m to the north of the Site.
- 2.5. The local landscape to the east and south consists of gently undulating large arable fields which are bound for the majority by mature hedgerows. There are some notable vegetation belts within the local landscape, to include the mature outgrown hedgerows that bound both sides of the Byway 52/7, adjacent to the eastern Site boundary, and a linear woodland belt that runs west / east from the south eastern corner of the Site. Within the wider landscape there are a number of small villages /

hamlets, those of note are; Toft lies approximately 2.5km to the west of the Site and Barton, approximately 1.9km to the east.

- 2.6. The landform within the wider area rises up to approximately 51m AOD to the north, this area forms a small plateau, from which, there are views over the lower lying landscape to the south. The local and wider topography consists of gently undulating landform to the east, south and west ranging from between approximately 18m and 35m AOD. The Site itself lies on relatively flat landform, with the landform gently falling from a high point of approximately 26m AOD, at the mid point of the eastern Site boundary, to 24m AOD at the southern boundary. The Site is illustrated within its immediate landscape context on **Plan ASP2**.
- 2.7. The Site is not subject to any qualitative landscape designations at a national or local level and is not publicly accessible. There is a very limited Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network within the local area, the most notable routes being, Byway 52/7 adjacent to the eastern boundary and footpath 52/6 that follows Swaynes Way for the length of the northern boundary. Further to this there is a permissive route that runs adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site, to the southern edge of Tit Brook, and follows the field boundary, providing a small circular route that connects Byway 52/7 and the footpath routes near Saint Mary's Church, approximately 480m to the south west of the Site. The PRoW network is illustrated on the OS plan that forms the base on **Plan ASP1** and the permissive route is illustrate at **Appendix 1 – Plan of Permissive Route**.

Landscape Related Policy

National Planning Policy

- 2.8. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – revised 19 February 2019, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and provides a framework within which the appropriate local authority can produce local and neighbourhood plans; the NPPF is a material consideration in making planning decisions.
- 2.9. The NPPF sets out three overarching objectives in achieving sustainable development, these are interdependent and need to be considered in mutually supportive ways. Economic, social and environmental objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and application of the

policies within the NPPF. The NPPF also notes the importance that planning policies and decisions should play in providing an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, which should also respond to local circumstances, reflecting local character and the needs and opportunities of each area. Key parts of the NPPF of relevance to this LVIA are:

- Chapter 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 13 Protecting the Green Belt Land
- Chapter 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Local Planning Policy

- 2.10. The Adopted Development Plan for South Cambridgeshire District Council sets out planning policies and proposals that guide the development and use of land in the district. All planning decisions are made in accordance with the planning policies included in the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.11. The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (adopted September 2018) sets out the planning policies and land allocations to guide the future development of the district up to 2031. The policies of relevance to this assessment are;

Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character

Development will only be permitted where it respects and retains, or enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape and of the individual National Character Area in which is it located.

Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure

1. The Council will aim to conserve and enhance green infrastructure within the district. Proposals that cause loss or harm to this network will not be permitted unless the need for and benefits of the development demonstrably and substantially outweigh any adverse impacts on the district's green infrastructure network.

2. The Council will encourage proposals which: a. Reinforce, link, buffer and create new green infrastructure; and b. Promote, manage and interpret green infrastructure and enhance public enjoyment of it.

3. The Council will support proposals which deliver the strategic green infrastructure network and priorities set out in the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, and which deliver local green infrastructure.

4. All new developments will be required to contribute towards the enhancement of the green infrastructure network within the district. These contributions will include the establishment, enhancement and the on-going management costs

Policy NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development In and Adjoining the Green Belt

1. Any development proposals within the Green Belt must be located and designed so that they do not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt.

2. Where development is permitted, landscaping conditions, together with a requirement that any planting is adequately maintained, will be attached to any planning permission in order to ensure that the impact on the Green Belt is mitigated.

3. Development on the edges of settlements which are surrounded by the Green Belt must include careful landscaping and design measures of a high quality

Policy NH/13: Important Countryside Frontage

1. Important Countryside Frontages are defined where land with a strong countryside character either: a. Penetrates or sweeps into the built-up area providing a significant connection between the street scene and the surrounding rural area; or b. Provides an important rural break between two nearby but detached parts of a development framework.

2. Planning permission for development will be refused if it would compromise these purposes.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

2.12. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) forms part of the evidence base and supporting studies produced or commissioned by the Council to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan. The SHLAA is a technical assessment of the potential suitability, availability and achievability of sites for housing development. The sites assessed through the SHLAA were those submitted to the Council through:

- the Call for Sites undertaken in Summer 2011;
- the Local Plan Issues & Options Report in Summer 2012;
- the Local Plan Issues & Options 2 Report in early 2013.

2.13. The SHLAA was first published in July 2012, with an update version (August 2013) replacing all the previous versions of the SHLAA.

2.14. The Site is identified as Site 255 – Land East of Bush Close with the Site having the capacity for up to 73 dwellings – **see Appendix 2**. The assessment states that there is the potential to mitigate effects arising from proposals on heritage by restricting development to the northern part of the Site and on the landscape by the retention of the robust hedgerows and tree belts.

The South Cambridgeshire Village Capacity Study (1998)

2.15. The study provides a description of the landscape setting to the Comberton as;

“The landscape setting of the village is characterised by large fields, with smaller enclosed fields and paddocks nearer the village edge to its northern and southern boundaries. The village is on a low lying ground, and to the north the land rises and is characterised by large arable fields with good hedgerows dividing them. The slopes continues further north undulating until it reaches the ridge long which the St Neots Road runs.

The land immediately to the south of the village slopes down to Tit Brook and then rises to an east-west ridge, created by St Mary’s Church and adjacent buildings. The arable landscape then slopes down to Bourn Brook/.

The land structure of Comberton comprises three main sections, the old crossroads, the south Street/Swaynes Lane area and the modern post-war development east, north-east and south-west of the village.

The village edges around the substantial historic core provide soft boundaries, with mature trees and hedgerows providing a real sense of enclosure to the low-lying settlement. The only straight harsh edge is the eastern boundary, along Long Lane, where the open arable fields abut the linear housing.

The approaches to Comberton from the west and south provide wide views, although the buildings of the village can only be glimpsed through mature tree belts and hedgerows. Even from the east, views to the village south of Barton Road are screened by a very strong tree belt. From the north along Long Road, there is a strong avenue feel to the approach, with hedgerows and hedgerow trees bordering the road, together with well-trimmed grass verges focusing the views towards the village.”

Landscape Character

National

- 2.16. The Natural England Character Map of England illustrates that the Site is located within the *Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands* NCA (88). It is considered that, whilst the character assessments provided at a national level inform the context for regional, county and local character assessments, they do not provide a sufficient level of detail appropriate to the nature of effects likely to arise at a local level as a result of the scale and size of the Proposed Development.

Regional

- 2.17. At a regional level, the East of England Landscape Character Assessment, identifies the Site as being within the *Lowland Village Farmlands* Landscape Character Type (LCT). The assessment provides an overall description of the landscape and visual character as;

“This is a well settled, low lying landscape which is often crossed by major river corridors. The high density of settlement, intensive agriculture and major transport infrastructure mean that this is often a busy, rural landscape”.

County

2.18. At a county level there are two landscape character assessments that cover the Site, these are;

- **Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines - 1991**
- **Cambridgeshire Green Belt Study - 2002**

2.19. The ‘Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines - 1991’ provides a county wide landscape character assessment, with the landscape divided into character areas on the basis of existing distinctive landscape character. The assessment provides an understanding of the overall character and sets out principles for landscape improvement and management.

2.20. The Site falls wholly within Western Claylands Landscape Character Area (LCA) – see **Appendix 3** - Extract from Cambridgeshire Landscape guidelines – Western Claylands LCA. The key characteristics and distinctive features exhibited by the Site and adjacent study area are;

- **Sparsely populated landscape with tiny hamlets, single farms and numerous moated sites**
- **Gentle undulating landscape**
- **Large scale arable farmland with open fields and sparse trimmed hedgerows**
- **Scattered woodlands, approximately half being ancient semi natural woodlands**
- **Isolated individual woods dominated by arable farmland**
- **Removal of hedgerows and amalgamation of fields**
- **Gappy hedgerows, trimmed almost out of existence**
- **Larger farm buildings can be prominent in the landscape**
- **Church spires and towers enliven the skyline**
- **Former wartime airfields at Alconbury, amongst others have a significant effect upon the area.**

Principles for landscape improvement and management

2.21. Improvements to the structure of the landscape should be guided by the following principles:

- **Management of existing woodlands – careful management of ancient seminatural woodlands and selective re-stocking and creation of ‘edge areas’**
- **Creation of new woodlands – at least 2ha in size and suitably located**
- **Planting of woodland belts – based on existing hedgerows and linking woodland blocks, used to reinforce landforms and enclose large areas of rolling landform.**
- **Hedgerows – reinforce and managed for visual and wildlife potential**
- **Road margins – increase floral diversity**
- **Footpath corridors improvements – increased network to include landscape improvements**
- **Village approaches - increased tree cover with trees along road margins, woodland belts alongside roads, planting at edges of villages and hedgerow planting.**
- **Old Airfields – fresh landscape treatment to unsightly buildings**
- **Urban Fringes – substantially increase tree and hedge cover through trees along road margins, and woodland belts alongside roads and edges of development.**

2.22. The Cambridgeshire Green Belt Study, carried out by Landscape Design Associates (LDA) identifies the Site as being within the River Valleys (4) Landscape Character Type (LCT), the LCT is divided into three Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), the Site is located within the northern part of 4C.Rhee and Bourn Valleys LCA.

2.23. The assessment provides an overall description of the landscape and visual character of the Rhee and Bourn Valleys as;

“These valleys form the landscape to the south west of Cambridge. The landscape is comprised of a repeating pattern of subtle ridges and dips which reflect the drainage pattern. However, their overall appearance is relatively flat. Views are long, and framed by the wooded ridges of the western claylands to north and the Wimpole Chalk ridge to the south. The Rhee and

Bourn Brook valleys have an open and tranquil character. The low density of settlement and the relatively quiet roads give them a strongly rural feel, although the lines of radio telescopes are highly distinctive features which contribute positively to the character of the landscape. The majority of land is in arable production, although pastures are common alongside streams. Stream corridors are often visible within the landscape as lines of willow trees.

Villages are generally small, and separated by extensive tracts of countryside. There are small areas of modern housing on the edges of some villages, but generally the villages have retained their small scale and historic character, and are key features within the landscape. There is a distinctive line of villages (including Haslingfield and Harlton), which follow the line of the Icknield Way (an ancient trackway) along the base of the chalk ridge at the south-western edge of the landscape character area. They have developed where the Icknield Way crossed streams or springs.

The key views to Cambridge within this character area are seen from the M11. The landmarks of the historic core are clearly visible and form skyline elements. Low lying countryside forms the foreground to these views, and the high quality green edge of the city means that the city appears to merge gradually with the countryside.

Aspect Landscape Assessment

- 2.24. The assessment does not include an assessment of sensitivity or value in terms of the individual LCAs but provides a useful introduction to the wider landscape setting of the Site.
- 2.25. Aspect has undertaken an assessment of the Site and its localised setting in relation to the criteria set out within Box 5.1 of GLVIA3.

Landscape Designations:

- 2.26. The Site and the immediate landscape are not subject to any national, local or other landscape designations; however, it is located within the Cambridgeshire Green Belt.

Landscape Quality (Condition):

- 2.27. The Site comprises a small scale arable field currently under grassland, which is typical of the wider landscape, the field is defined by a combination of mature outgrown hedgerow and settlement edge. Due to the limited vegetation and features on Site, the landscape is considered to be of low quality.

Scenic Quality

- 2.28. The Site lies on relatively flat topography with mature vegetation adjacent to two sides of a small scale arable field. Due to the combination of the flat landform and mature vegetation views are restricted to the immediate vicinity, with views over the Site towards the existing settlement edge, with the Site experienced as part of the urban fringe setting and not the wider landscape. The result is that the Site is located in a peri urban context with a low level of intervisibility between the Site and the wider arable landscape to the east and south. In conclusion the Site has a limited scenic quality due to the existing mature vegetation and topography enclosing the Site, thereby limiting its contribution to the wider landscape character and views.

Rarity and Representativeness

- 2.29. The Site does not contain any particular characteristics or features that are considered to be rare or distinctive. The Site is a small arable field that itself is bound by mature hedgerow to two sides. Although the Sites boundary mature hedgerow and mature hedgerow trees have some local value in landscape and ecological terms, they are commonplace elements within the surrounding landscape. Overall the Site is considered to be typical of the surrounding landscape character which is dominated by gently undulating flat arable fields bound by mature hedgerows.

Conservation Interest

- 2.30. The habitat within the Site comprises entirely of grassland which itself has limited conservation interest. The Site is bound by mature hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees to the eastern and southern boundaries, these are the most noticeable feature of the Site; however, these are common features in the wider landscape.

Recreational Value

- 2.31. There is no public access to the Site.

Perceptual Aspects

- 2.32. There are no notable perceptual qualities to the Site, even at a localised scale. The Site is typical of the wider landscape found within the area and is influenced by the adjacent residential development to the north and west of the Site.

Associations

- 2.33. There are no known historic or artistic associations within the Site or its immediate setting.
- 2.34. As noted above, it is acknowledged that the Site is currently undeveloped, however, the proximity of the Site to the existing settlement edge and the scale of the Site reduces its susceptibility to accepting a carefully designed, residential development. Therefore, it is considered that the susceptibility of the Site is low.
- 2.35. Overall the Site and its immediate setting do not represent a “valued landscape” with reference to para 170 of the NPPF. Given the assessment of value above, it is considered that the Site is of low sensitivity.

Visual Environment

- 2.36. It is acknowledged that there are partial / glimpsed views into and across the Site from Byway 52/7 adjacent to the eastern boundary and the permissive route to the south of the Site. Beyond these the combination of established vegetation structure, landform and existing built development heavily restricts views for pedestrians, residents and motorists within the localised and wider landscape.
- 2.37. During the Site visit a photographic record was taken to illustrate the visibility of the Site within its immediate context and these are included within **Appendix 4 – Photographic Record**.
- 2.38. Viewpoints 1 – 2 are taken from the Byway 52/7 adjacent to the eastern Site boundary. The route runs south from Barton Road / B1046, approximately 190m to the north (viewpoint 5), along the existing settlement edge to the north east, passing adjacent to the eastern Site boundary, from here views are glimpsed over the Site from the existing gateways or through gaps in the mature Site boundary vegetation. The route continues south past the Site, over Tit Brook and out to the wider arable

landscape (viewpoint 3), Approximately 675m to the south of the Site the route meets Bridleway 52/10 which runs on a west / east axis from Royston Lane.

- 2.39. Viewpoints 4 is taken from the Permissive route adjacent to St Mary's Church, approximately 385m to the south west of the Site. The view looks across the relatively flat landform towards the Site which is seen in context of the existing residential development off Bush close, which forms the existing settlement edge of Comberton.
- 2.40. Viewpoints 6 & 7 are taken from the settlement edge of Barton, located approximately 1.3km and 2.09km to the south east respectively. From here the combination of the relatively flat landform and intervening mature vegetation screens views of the Site.
- 2.41. Viewpoint 8 is taken from the higher ground to the north, along Bridleway 20/4. From here there are elevated views of the wider lower lying landform to the south. The tower of St Mary's Church is partially visible in the long distance, set within mature vegetation. The combination of the landform and mature vegetation heavily screen views of the Site and the wider settlement of Comberton.

3. GREEN BELT REVIEW

- 3.1. Cambridgeshire Green Belt Study was undertaken by LDA, the brief was shaped by RPG6, which requires that ***“A review of the Cambridge Green Belt should be carried out and any proposals for changes to its boundaries included in development plans. The review should start from a vision of the city and of the qualities to be safeguarded.”*** (DETR and Government Office for the East of England 2000, Policy 24).
- 3.2. The assessment describes and illustrates the factors that contribute to the setting and special character of Cambridge. It then focuses on the qualities to be safeguarded to preserve this setting and special character, before setting out a vision of the city. The vision is a strategy for safeguarding and enhancing the setting and special character of Cambridge while recognising that there is likely to be a need for some urban expansion, through Green Belt releases, in order to contribute to the development targets of RPG6.
- 3.3. Within the study, the Site and wider settlement setting of Comberton are located within the rural setting with scattered villages – See **Appendix 5** – Cambridge Green Belt Study – Visual Assessment, within this no key views towards Cambridge are illustrated or distinctive or memorable features within the setting of Cambridge being present within the Site and local landscape.

Aspect Green Belt Assessment

- 3.4. This section provides an explanation as to the approach and methodology followed in assessing the contribution made by the Site to the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out in Para 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

“Para 134: Green Belt serves 5 purposes:

- 1. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;**
- 2. to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;**
- 3. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;**
- 4. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and**
- 5. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.”**

Approach

- 3.5. The approach to the appraisal comprises;
- Reviewing proposed development of the Site against Green Belt purposes;
 - Judgements on the fit with existing developments (i.e. Existing built edge of the settlement) and overall impact on openness of the Green Belt;
 - Identifying opportunities for positive use of the Green Belt in the vicinity of the Site; and
 - Reviewing potential opportunities for Proposals.
- 3.6. This approach allows for the rounded consideration of how development might be accommodated within the Site and as part of a Green Belt release within the wider context and not simply site specific character.
- 3.7. The following sets out the assessment criteria used to guide the evaluation of the likely effects of development within the Green Belt. The Green Belt purposes relating to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns and whether it assists in the regeneration of urban areas do not apply and are therefore not appraised.

Site Analysis

- 3.8. The results of the Site appraisal are set out in Table 1. None of the judgements on the relative contribution of the parcel to Green Belt purposes are scored or weighted and the overall assessment reflects professional judgement on the contribution of the Site to Green Belt purposes as a whole. Thus, a Significant Contribution in respect of separation for example, and a Limited Contribution in all other respects, can lead to an overall Significant Contribution. Equally, contributions across a number of purposes may still only lead to a judgement of a Contribution overall.

Significant Contribution

- 3.9. The parcel makes a Significant contribution to Green Belt purposes and release, either part or whole, would be considered where exceptional circumstances exist to justify this.

Contribution

- 3.10. The parcel makes a Contribution to Green Belt purposes and release, either part or whole, would need to be balanced against various planning considerations.

Limited Contribution

- 3.11. The parcel makes a Limited Contribution to Green Belt purposes and release, either part or whole, could be considered in the context of other material planning considerations.
- 3.12. The appraisal also includes comment on the likely effects that development would have on the openness (absence of built development) of the Green Belt in the vicinity of the Site. This reflects the importance of openness as a particular quality of the Green Belt and how the introduction of built development to a parcel can influence the character of the wider Green Belt. As with the determination of the contribution of land parcels to Green Belt purposes, the observations reflect professional judgement.
- 3.13. Aspect undertook an initial site visit during which a photographic record was taken - **Appendix 4** – Photographic Record. The viewpoints illustrate the visual prominence of the existing settlement edge and wider settlement setting of Comberton within the immediate context of the Site. The viewpoints clearly illustrate the enclosure of the Site from the wider landscape provided by the mature vegetation and the relationship between the Site and existing settlement edge (viewpoints 3 & 4). These illustrate that the Site itself has a stronger connection with the settlement edge than the wider countryside.

Table 1: Assessment of Landscape Value of the Site

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment Criteria	Contributions to Green Belt Purposes Analysis
<p>To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would potential development represent an outward extension of the urban area, resulting in a physical connection between urban areas, or lead to the danger of a subsequent coalescence between such settlements? • If released from Green Belt could enduring long-term settlement boundaries be established? • Does the proposed site sensibly round off an existing built up area to help create good built form? 	<p>Development within the Site would extend the development in a south easterly direction. The extension would round off development, which at present bounds the Site to the north and west. With the western development itself consisting of an isolated linear parcel off the southern extent of the village.</p> <p>LIMITED CONTRIBUTION</p>
<p>To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would development of the proposed site appear to result in the merging of towns or compromise the separation of towns physically? • Would potential development of the proposed site be a significant step leading towards coalescence of two settlements? 	<p>Due to the existing mature belts of vegetation and the distance from the existing settlement edge of Barton, being over 1km further to the east, there would be no coalescence of settlements.</p> <p>LIMITED CONTRIBUTION</p>
<p>To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there clear strong and robust boundaries to contain development encroachment and prevent encroachment in the long term? 	<p>Mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees bound the Site, with further mature vegetation adjacent to the eastern boundary of Byway 52/7. Further to this Tit Brook to the south forms a strong barrier between the Site and wider countryside.</p> <p>LIMITED CONTRIBUTION</p>
<p>Overall Assessment of contribution to Green Belt purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In light of the assessment of the individual purposes, what is the overall contribution of the proposed site to the Green Belt, both individually and in terms of the wider context? 	<p>The combination of relatively flat landform, mature vegetated boundaries, byway and watercourse to the Site boundaries form robust strong boundaries and provide a strong degree of separation from the local countryside to the east and south.</p> <p>LIMITED CONTRIBUTION</p>

- 3.14. The Site is contained by existing residential development and mature vegetation, as such it is considered that the development of the Site would not constitute unrestricted urban sprawl. Furthermore, existing urbanising components which bound the Site reduce the perceived remoteness and tranquillity of the immediate landscape setting, enforcing a settlement fringe character.
- 3.15. Development of the Site would extend the settlement edge in a south easterly direction, with the closest settlement of Barton, approximately 1.3km to the east at the closest point. The combination of landform and mature vegetation provide a strong degree of separation between the Site and the immediate landscape, with the distance between the Site to Barton resulting in there being no potential for merging.
- 3.16. In considering the openness of the Green Belt (absence of built form) there is an existing limited level of development within the local area, most notable the existing commercial development and scattered residential development along the B1046 to the north east of the Site (viewpoints 4 and 8). It is acknowledged that development within the Site would have an affect the openness of the Green Belt with regard to the site itself and the immediate setting to the south. However, it is considered that the proposals would provide a more robust and sensitive edge between the settlement and the wider Green Belt than the present treatment consisting of residential rear garden boundaries. Furthermore, as a result of the enclosure provided by the existing robust mature vegetation within the immediate setting and nature of the surrounding landform any development within the Site would have no effect on the openness of the wider Green Belt.
- 3.17. As identified, the Site is already defined by strong defensible boundaries to the east and south. Any development of the Site should seek to retain and enhance the existing boundary vegetation, where appropriate, reinforcing the existing vegetation structure with additional native tree, shrub and hedgerow planting in order to provide an enhanced degree of containment. The reinforced boundaries would provide robust green edges to the Site, ensuring that the introduction of built form is not readily perceived within the local or wider rural area.
- 3.18. Suitable development offsets should also be implemented from the southern Site boundary, comprising areas of open space and structural planting. This will result in a suitable and defensible redefined edge to the Green Belt which would assist in the successful integration of Proposed Development and provide a more sympathetic

settlement edge to Comberton and that perceived from the local receiving landscape.

- 3.19. It is therefore considered that the Site could be released from the Green Belt and that a sensitively designed residential development can be successfully integrated into the Site without resulting in unrestricted sprawl or significant encroachment into the wider Green Belt with the enclosure provided by the existing robust mature vegetation and nature of the landform any development within the Site would have no effect on the openness of the wider Green Belt

4. POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

- 4.1. The Landscape and Visual Appraisal does not include a detailed assessment of effects but seeks to assess the principle of introducing residential development into the Site within the context of the receiving landscape and visual environment as identified within the baseline assessment.
- 4.2. This section will provide an overview of the possible effects in terms of landscape character and visibility if the Site were to be developed in an unsympathetic, non-landscape led way. The assessment then includes a series of recommendations for development to avoid or mitigate for the potential identified harm.

Potential Landscape Effects

- 4.3. To avoid potential adverse effects, it is recommended that the proposals adopt a sensitive approach to the design of the layout and appearance of the scheme. It is acknowledged that the Site is located within countryside, adjacent to the existing settlement edge, present to the north and west. However, there is an opportunity to create a high quality residential development that creates a sympathetic transition between the existing development, which currently provides an abrupt settlement edge, and the more rural landscapes to the east and south. The retention of the established vegetated eastern and southern boundaries within landscape buffers, which would be strengthened with additional planting, would soften views of the Proposed Development and the existing urban fringe.
- 4.4. The creation of landscape buffers and public open space also presents a number of opportunities for the creation of new formal and informal recreation facilities which would benefit both new and existing residents and establishment of new habitats. At present, the arable land which covers the Site is considered to be of limited ecological merit. Within these areas there is the potential to establish native wildflower grassland, shrub planting and trees, that would include the use of locally prevalent species. This would not only ensure that the vegetated boundaries are retained and enhanced but would also represent a positive contribution to local biodiversity.

- 4.5. In terms of the perceived tranquillity of the Site, this is reduced as a result of existing adjacent development that lies to the north and west, together with the wider suburban areas to the north and A1046. Ensuring an appropriate offset from the Sites boundaries, together with the retention and establishment of a vegetation structure within internal open spaces and to the Site boundaries would ensure that the perceived tranquillity of the wider landscape is retained and that a more sympathetic settlement boundary is established than at present.
- 4.6. The regional landscape character assessment identifies a number of characteristics associated with the localised landscape setting of the Site. As set out above, it is considered that the incorporation of a sensitive, landscape-led approach to the Proposed Development would minimise the potential landscape effects arising upon the receiving landscape. That a carefully considered layout could incorporate a sympathetic design that compliments the localised landscape setting and addresses the 'principles for landscape improvement and management' in the Western Claylands set out within the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (refer extract within **Appendix 3**).
- 4.7. In conclusion, it is considered that, subject to the incorporation of the recommendations set out above, residential development can be integrated within the Site without significant adverse effects upon the localised or wider landscape receptor.

Potential Visual Effects

- 4.8. In terms of potential visual effects, these would be localised as a result of the combination of flat landform and mature vegetation structure providing a high level of enclosure and a degree of separation of the Site from the wider landscape. However, unsympathetic development could give rise to adverse visual effects, by creating a hard built edge and extending the perceived presence of development into the countryside.
- 4.9. As identified within Section 2, and illustrated on the photographic record within **Appendix 4**, views of the Site are highly localised with the combination of flat landform and mature vegetation heavily limiting views. The implementation of native boundary planting would reflect that of the Site and local arable landscape and would ensure that a soft edge to any development and wider settlement is achieved.

This would further filter any views of the proposals from the local and wider landscape once mature. The establishment of boundary planting would not only assist in visually screening the proposals but would maintain the vegetated character of the Site and existing southern settlement edge to Comberton.

- 4.10. The careful masterplanning of the Site would not harm views across, or people's appreciation of, the wider countryside setting from the receptors to the south. Where visible, the adoption of a high quality palette of materials and a design language that compliments the local character would ensure that the proposals do not appear at odds or prominent within the localised setting.
- 4.11. It is considered that, subject to the incorporation of the recommendations set out above, namely adopting a landscape-led approach to masterplanning, which includes creation of soft landscape boundaries, the proposed residential development can be integrated within this Site without significant, long term harm.

Potential Effects Upon Landscape Related Policy

- 4.12. The Site is not subject to any qualitative landscape designations at a national or local level and, as set out above, is not considered to represent a "valued" landscape with reference to para 170 of the NPPF.
- 4.13. It is also noted that a careful and considered approach to the masterplanning of the layout, built form and landscaping would ensure that the proposals comply with the landscape and visual related policies, within the District planning documents and the strategies within the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines.
- 4.14. With regards to *Policy NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development In and Adjoining the Green Belt* – the implementation of the recommendations set out above, such as the retention and enhancement of the existing boundary vegetation, would mitigate any adverse effects on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. Aspect Landscape Planning is instructed by Hopkins Homes Ltd to assess land known as Land at Comberton, Cambridgeshire, against the key purposes of the Green Belt and review the possible landscape and visual matters relating to the potential development for the provision of residential development.
- 5.2. The Site is not subject to any qualitative landscape designations at a national or local level and, as set out above, is not considered to represent a “valued” landscape with reference to para 170 of the NPPF.

Green Belt

- 5.3. The Site is located within the Cambridgeshire Green Belt immediate adjacent to the settlement edge of Comberton to the north and west, with the Site is already defined by strong defensible boundaries to the east and south. Any development of the Site should seek to retain and enhance the existing boundary vegetation, where appropriate, reinforcing the existing vegetation structure with additional native tree, shrub and hedgerow planting in order to provide an enhanced degree of containment. The reinforced boundaries would provide robust green edges to the Site, ensuring that the introduction of built form is not readily perceived from the wider rural character of the Green Belt to the east and south.
- 5.4. Suitable development offsets should also be implemented from the southern Site boundary, comprising areas of open space and structural planting. This will result in a suitable and defensible redefined edge to the Green Belt which would assist in the successful integration of Proposed Development within the Site and wider receiving landscape.
- 5.5. It is therefore considered that the Site could be released from the Green Belt and that a sensitively designed residential development can be successfully integrated into the Site without resulting in unrestricted sprawl or significant encroachment into the wider Green Belt with the enclosure provided by the existing robust mature vegetation and nature of the landform any development within the Site would have no effect on the openness of the wider Green Belt.

Landscape Character

- 5.6. It is acknowledged that the development of the Site would change the character of the Site itself. Any greenfield development would give rise to a degree of harm from a landscape perspective. However, it is considered that this Site has capacity to accommodate sensitively designed, residential development. As identified within the character assessment, the proximity of the Site to the settlement edge of Comberton reduces the perceived tranquillity and character of this enclosed Site.
- 5.7. The combination of mature vegetation, byway, watercourse and woodland to the Sites boundaries and immediate setting provide robust boundaries between the Site and the wider landscape to the east and south. The creation of landscape buffers and public open space within the proposals would also present a number of opportunities for the creation of new formal and informal recreation facilities which would benefit both new and existing residents and establishment of new habitats. At present, the arable land which covers the Site is considered to be of limited ecological merit. Within these areas there is the potential to establish native wildflower grassland, shrub planting and trees, that would not only ensure that the vegetated boundaries are retained but enhanced and would also represent a positive contribution to local biodiversity.
- 5.8. In conclusion, it is considered that the incorporation of a sensitive, landscape-led approach to any Proposed Development would minimise the potential landscape effects on the receiving landscape. Therefore, subject to the incorporation of the recommendations set out above, the Site has the ability to accommodate residential development that can be integrated within the Site without significant adverse effects upon the localised or wider landscape receptor.

Visual Amenity

- 5.9. Any development should retain the existing vegetation structure within a Site wide green infrastructure network, to maintain the robust soft landscaped boundaries, especially to the eastern and southern boundaries. Planting to include native hedgerow with native hedgerow trees to create a landscape setting for the new development that reflects the local character and setting. This would provide a more

sustainable and sympathetic boundary to the Site and the overall Settlement edge of Comberton at this location and in views from the local visual environment.

5.10. Overall, any masterplan should adopt a sensitive, landscape-led approach. Subject to the development of a sympathetic, high-quality layout with complementary landscape scheme, it is considered that the Site could accommodate residential development without significant harm to the wider receiving landscape receptor and visual environment.

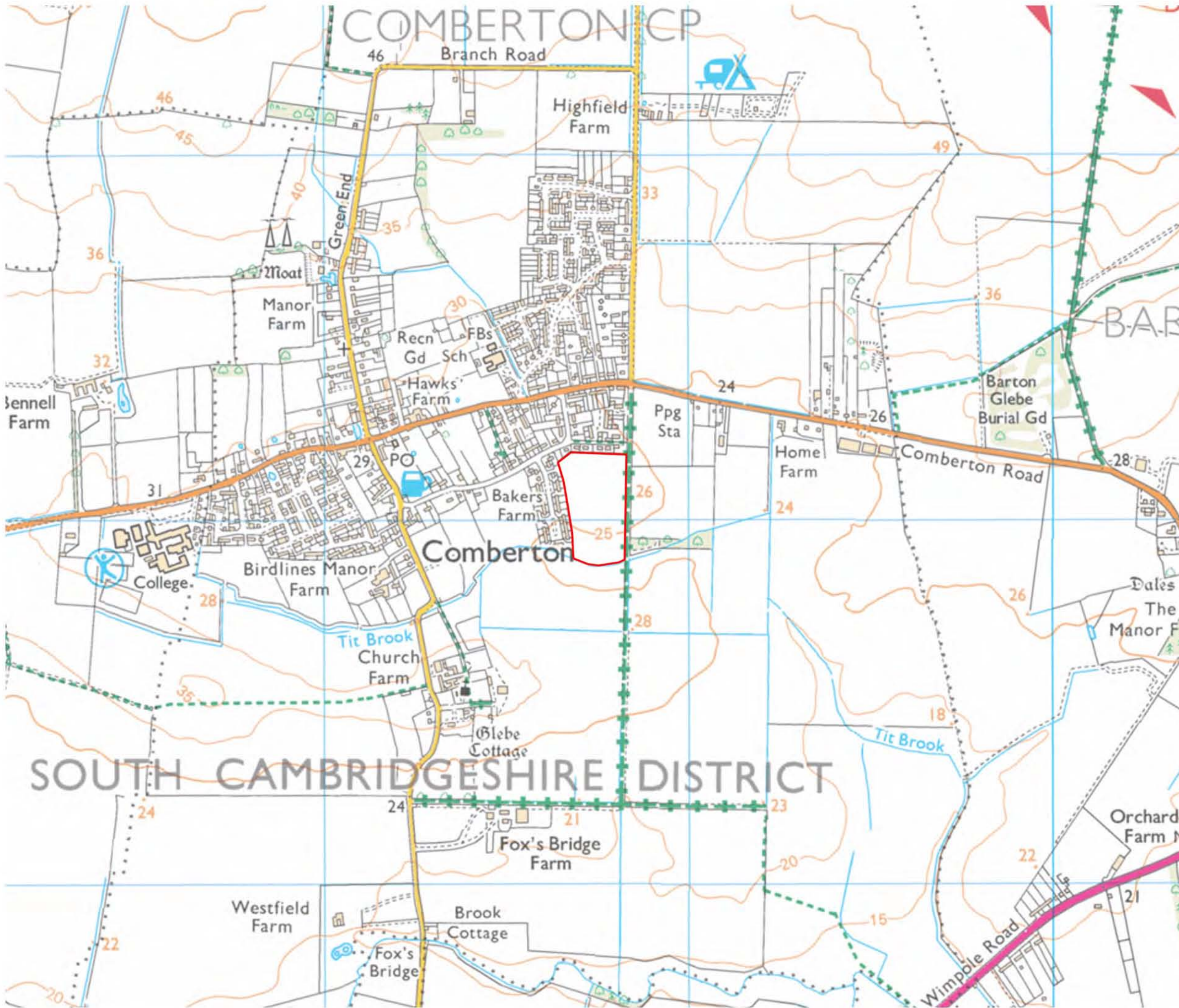
5.11. Any Proposed Development within the Site should incorporate the following elements:

- Retain and reinforce the existing mature vegetation structure to the Site boundaries, where possible, enhance through additional planting to create soft landscape buffers to the Site boundaries and create a verdant landscape setting for any new development;
- Incorporate a comprehensive scheme of landscaping utilising locally native species. Offsets to be established along the eastern and southern Site boundaries to provide a robust landscaped boundary and creating a degree of separation between the Site and the wider landscape.
- Create new, varied habitats that are characteristic of this landscape setting. In particular, hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting should be incorporated into the landscaping scheme to reinforce the presence of this characteristic local landscape feature;
- Incorporate a network of publicly accessible open spaces within the Site. This would not only assist in provision of formal and informal recreation facilities but break up the built environment and assist in placemaking;
- Create opportunities to enhance public access to the countryside, which at present is limited;
- Adopt a positive outward looking layout to ensure that the proposals do not appear to be turning their back on the wider setting and create an appropriate transition settlement edge;
- Incorporate a simple palette of materials and architectural detailing that reflect the local vernacular.

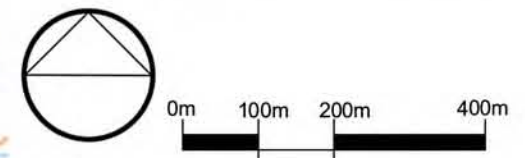
5.12. It is concluded that the Site has the capacity to accommodate a sensitively designed residential development which would not give rise to significant landscape or visual

effects and is in line with adopted planning policy and the 'principles for landscape improvement and management' in the Western Claylands set out within the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines. The proposals would not represent uncharacteristic expansion of the urban extent and presents a number of opportunities to enhance local access to the countryside and recreational facilities, as well as habitat creation.

ASPECT PLANS



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Key:
 Application Site Boundary

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT

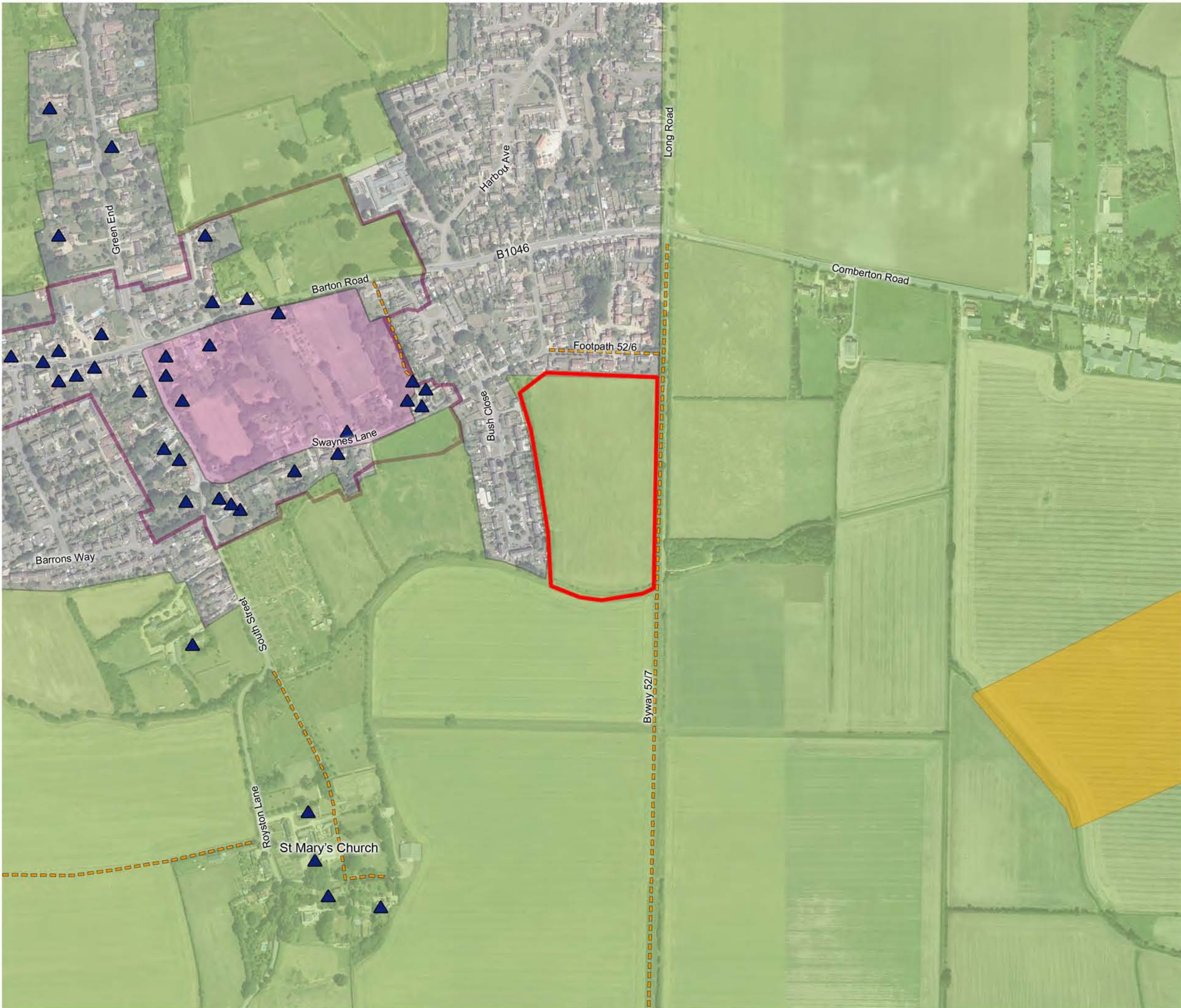
REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				

aspect landscape planning

TITLE
 Comberton
 Site Location Plan

CLIENT
 Hopkins Homes

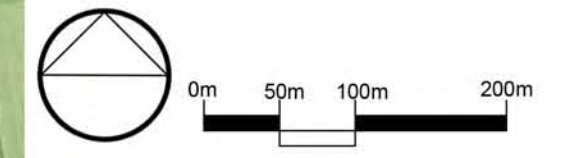
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- Key:
-  Application Site Boundary
 -  Green Belt
 -  Protected Village Amenity Area
 -  Listed Building
 -  Scheduled Monument
(Settlement site W of Town's End Farm-1006879)
 -  Public Right of Way
 -  Conservation Area

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				

aspect landscape planning

TITLE
Comberton Site & Setting Plan

CLIENT
Hopkins Homes

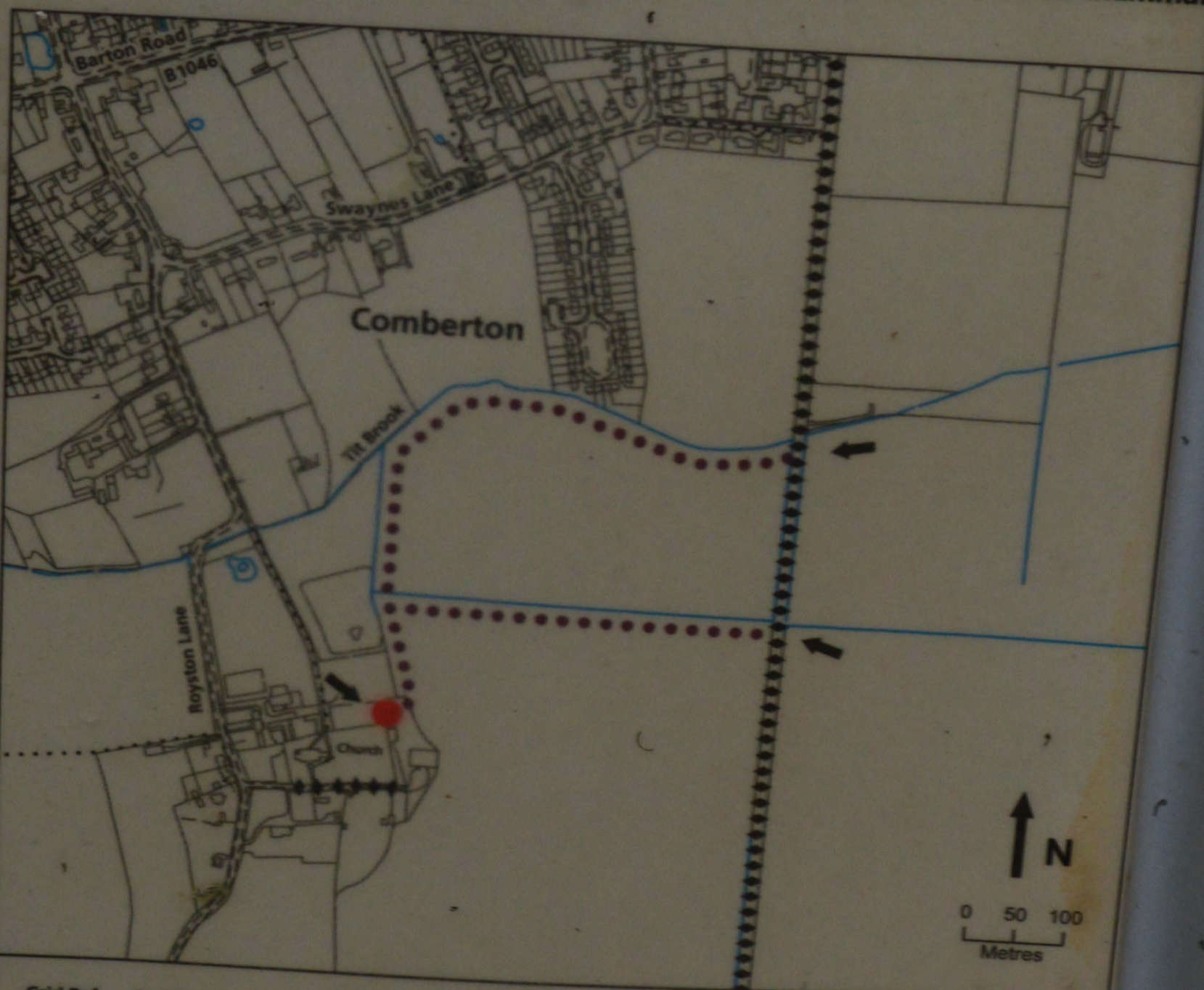
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DRAWING NUMBER 6994 / ASP02		REVISION	

APPENDIX 1

PLAN OF PERMISSIVE ROUTE

PERMISSIVE ACCESS

This permissive footpath links with the Public Right of Way and allows a circular route from the churchyard at Comberton. The path provides a pleasant walk through the arable farmland. The farm is being managed for the benefit of wildlife. Grass margins have been created to provide a habitat for farmland birds, small mammals and insects.



Grid Ref TL 384 557

Ref Nos AG00294556
05/191/0006



Entry/exit point



You Are Here



BOATS (Byway Open to all Traffic)



Permissive Footpath



Public Footpath

This access has been provided under the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs' farm conservation schemes as managed by Natural England, which help farmers and land managers protect and improve the countryside, its wildlife and history. It is permissive access and no new rights of way are being created. Existing rights of way are not affected. Please follow the Countryside Code and observe any other requirements shown above. Do not disturb wildlife, livestock or other visitors and in particular keep dogs under control. This is working farmland so please take care, people using this site do so at their own risk. Access ends on 30th September 2019.

For access related queries please call the Environmental Stewardship Permissive Access Team on 0300 060 1114 (Office Hours). For all other Defra related queries please contact the Defra Helpline on 08459 335577 (Office Hours).

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**ENVIRONMENTAL
STEWARDSHIP**

**COUNTRYSIDE
STEWARDSHIP**

**ENVIRONMENTALLY
SENSITIVE AREAS**



cwr.naturalengland.org.uk

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SHLAA) - LAND
EAST OF BUSH CLOSE

**South Cambridgeshire Strategic Housing Land Availability
Assessment (SHLAA) Report
August 2013**

Appendix 7i: Assessment of 2011 'Call for Sites' SHLAA sites

Index of Comberton Site Assessment Proforma

Site Number	Site Address	Site Capacity	Page
Site 004	Land adj (north) to 69 Long Road, Comberton	10 dwellings	702
Site 079	40 - 48 West Street, Comberton	29 dwellings	709
Site 080	50 - 54 West Street, Comberton	18 dwellings	716
Site 087	Land to the rear of 42 Swaynes Lane, Comberton	13 dwellings	723
Site 088	Land south and east of 42 Swaynes Lane, Comberton	50 dwellings	730
Site 110	Land to the west of Birdlines, Manor Farm, Comberton	90 dwellings	737
Site 158	Land off Long Road (south of Branch Road), Comberton	128 dwellings	744
Site 181	Land to the West of Green End, Comberton	135 dwellings	751
Site 255	Land to the East of Bush Close, Comberton	73 dwellings	759

**South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
Site Assessment Proforma**

Proforma Created	July 2012
Proforma Last Updated	June 2013
Location	Comberton
Site name / address	Land to the East of Bush Close, Comberton
Category of site:	A village extension i.e. a development adjoining the existing village development framework boundary
Description of promoter's proposal	Housing development
Site area (hectares)	4.83
Site Number	255
Site description & context	Field surrounded by hedgerows bounded by residential to the north and west and an unsurfaced track to the east. On the southeastern flank of the village.
Current or last use of the site	Agricultural.
Is the site Previously Developed Land?	No.
Allocated for a non-residential use in the current development plan?	No.
Planning history	1960. Planning permission for residential refused for various reasons including land liable to flood, lack of mains drainage and because there was already sufficient development land around Cambridge (RO/0218/60).
Source of site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site suggested through call for sites.

Tier 1: Strategic Considerations	
Green Belt	<p>The site is within the Green Belt.</p> <p>Green Belt Purposes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains and enhances the quality of Cambridge's setting • Prevents coalescence between settlements and with Cambridge <p>Function with regard to the special character of Cambridge and it's setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distribution, physical separation, setting, scale and character of Green Belt villages • A landscape which retains a strong rural character <p>Development would have an adverse impact on upon Green Belt purposes regarding the setting, scale and character of Comberton by increasing the footprint of the village out into the open rural countryside, by the loss of the views down into the village from the south, and by causing a loss of rural character.</p>
Is the site subject to any other considerations that have the potential to make the site unsuitable for development?	None.
Tier 1 conclusion:	<p>Field surrounded by hedgerows bounded by residential to the north and west and an unsurfaced track to the east. On the southeastern flank of the village. The site is within the Green Belt.</p> <p>Green Belt Purposes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains and enhances the quality of Cambridge's setting • Prevents coalescence between settlements and with Cambridge <p>Function with regard to the special character of Cambridge and it's setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distribution, physical separation, setting, scale and character of Green Belt villages • A landscape which retains a strong rural character <p>Not subject to strategic considerations which may make the site unsuitable for development.</p>
Does the site warrant further assessment?	Yes

Tier 2: Significant Local Considerations

Designations and Constraints	
Heritage considerations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listed Buildings / Conservation Area - Adverse effect on Comberton St Marys Conservation Area and setting of Church group including Church (Listed Grade I) due to the prominence of the site in the foreground in views from the footpath and land to southeast of the site. Impact could be mitigated by restricting development to the northern part of the site. Non-statutory archaeological site - The site is located to the south east of the historic village core. Cropmarks indicate the location of Romano-British settlement to the east, part of which is designated as a Scheduled Monument (SAM 96). Further information would be necessary in advance of any planning application for this site.
Environmental and wildlife designations and considerations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Rights of Way – Byway runs down eastern edge of the site. Presence of protected species - Claylands – These landscapes support species and habitats characterised by hedgerows, mature trees, ponds, small watercourses, and rough grassland with species such as skylark and grey partridge. Flooded gravel and clay pits diversify the semi-natural habitats and provide habitat for various waterfowl and the great crested newt. Hedges, isolated trees and woods can give a wooded feel and provide habitat for song thrush, bullfinch and corn bunting. Hay meadows may include flower species such knapweeds and crested dog's-tail grasses. Relict parkland and large hedgerow trees particularly of oak with associated bats, lichens and turtle doves occur. Arable farming dominates the landuse and provides habitat for skylarks, grey partridge and brown hare. Any development proposals should show how features of biodiversity value have been protected or adequately integrated into the design. Agricultural land grade 2.
Physical considerations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sewers crossing the site.
Townscape and landscape impact?	<p>The South Cambridgeshire Village Capacity Study (1998) refers to the landscape setting of Comberton as characterised by large arable fields, with smaller enclosed fields and paddocks close to the north and south of the village. The land rises to the north, whilst to the south it slopes down to Tit Brook before rising to an east-west ridge crested by St Mary's Church. The village edges are generally soft and green except on the north eastern boundary where open arable fields abut linear estate housing. The pastures between Barton Road and Swaynes lane create a particularly rural area in the heart of the settlement which is a particular characteristic.</p>

	<p>This site is screened from view by the robust hedges and tree belt adjacent to the byway which runs down the eastern edge of the site.</p> <p>Development would have a neutral effect on the landscape setting of Comberton. The impact of development on the Byway which extends to the south should be mitigated.</p>
Can any issues be mitigated?	Yes. Heritage impacts Impact could be mitigated by restricting development to the northern part of the site. Landscape impacts could be mitigated by retention of robust hedgerows and tree belt.

Infrastructure	
Highways access?	The proposed site does not appear to have a direct link to the adopted public highway except by the unsurfaced Byway which has unrestricted access to all vehicles. There is no certainty that this would be acceptable to the County concerning public rights of way.
Utility services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity - No significant impact on existing network. • Mains water - The site falls within the CWC Eversden Reservoir distribution zone, within which there is a minimum spare capacity of 540 properties based on the peak day for the distribution zone, less any commitments already made to developers. There is insufficient spare capacity within the Eversden Reservoir Distribution Zone to supply the total number of proposed properties which could arise if all the SHLAA sites within the zone were to be developed. CWC will allocate spare capacity on a first come first served basis. Development requiring an increase in capacity of the zone will require either an upgrade to existing boosters and / or a new storage reservoir, tower or booster plus associated mains. • Gas – Comberton does not have a gas supply. • Mains sewerage - There is sufficient capacity at the Haslingfield works to accommodate this development site. The sewerage network is approaching capacity and a pre-development assessment will be required to ascertain the specific capacity of the system with regards to this site. If any mitigation is deemed necessary this will be funded by the developer.
Drainage measures?	No FRA provided.
School capacity?	<p>Comberton has one primary school with a PAN of 50 and school capacity of 350, and lies within the catchment of Comberton Village College with a PAN of 300 and school capacity of 1,500 children. In their 2011 submission to the South Cambridgeshire and City Infrastructure Study, the County Council stated there were 181 surplus places in Comberton taking account of planned development in Comberton, and a deficit of 352 secondary places taking account of planned development across the village college catchment area which currently includes Cambourne.</p> <p>The development of this site for 150 dwellings could generate a need</p>

	<p>for early years places and a maximum of 53 primary school places and 38 secondary places.</p> <p>After allowing for surplus school places, and the construction of a new secondary school in Cambourne to relieve the deficit of places at Comberton VC, development of this site would only require an increase in school capacity in combination with other development sites. This may require the expansion of existing schools and/or the provision of new schools.</p>
Health facilities capacity?	<p>Comberton Surgery, 58 Green End, Comberton with no physical capacity to expand.</p> <p>The Appletrees Dental Practice, 3 West Street, Comberton.</p>
Any other issues?	None.
Can issues be mitigated?	In Part. The sewerage network is approaching capacity and a pre-development assessment will be required to ascertain the specific capacity of the system with regards to this site. If any mitigation is deemed necessary this will be funded by the developer.

Does the site warrant further assessment? (Updated June 2013)	No. It is not possible to provide safe highway access to the site and it is not linked to the adopted public highway.
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Tier 3: Site Specific Factors

Capacity	
Developable area (Updated June 2013)	None (2.42 ha if unconstrained)
Site capacity	73 dwellings
Density	30 dph

Potential Suitability	
Conclusion (Updated June 2013)	The site is not potentially capable of providing residential development taking account of site factors and constraints.

Availability	
Is the land in single ownership?	Yes.
Site ownership status?	Landowner, no known ownership constraints.
Legal constraints?	None known.
Is there market interest in the site?	The promoter has indicated that the site has not been marketed, no known developer interest.
When would the site be available for development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is not available immediately. The site could become available 2011-16. This assessment is based on the Call for Sites questionnaire.

Achievability	
Phasing and delivery of the development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The promoter has indicated that the first dwellings could be completed on site 2011-16. The promoter has indicated phasing – 100 dwellings 2011-16, and 50 dwellings 2016-21.
Are there any market factors that would significantly affect deliverability?	None known.
Are there any cost factors that would significantly affect deliverability?	None known.
Could issues identified be overcome?	No issues identified.
Economic viability?	<p>Viability Category 1 Most viable sites</p> <p>This viability assessment is provided independent of any policy or other assessment as to whether the site should be allocated for development. The references to planning policy only relate to those existing policies governing how a site would be developed, not whether it should be allocated in the new Local Plan.</p> <p>Having undertaken an assessment of this site the local planning authority do not have any major concerns as to why the landowner would be unable to deliver a development that complies with current</p>

	<p>planning policy in respect of density, mix and the provision of onsite facilities whilst still delivering the necessary level of affordable housing, planning obligations and potential community infrastructure levy payments.</p> <p>In summary this site is not considered to have any barriers, in terms of development viability alone, to restrict it coming forward within the next 5 years (new settlements and other very large developments may take longer than 5 years to come forward).</p>
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Site Assessment Conclusion
Updated June 2013: Site with no development potential.

Status of Site in Proposed Submission Local Plan 2013
Not allocated for development; outside Development Framework; Green Belt

APPENDIX 3

EXTRACT FROM CAMBRIDGESHIRE LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES –
WESTERN CLAYLANDS LCA

AREA 3: WESTERN CLAYLANDS

As in the South-eastern Claylands, dense woodland and heavy soils deterred prehistoric farmers, and even Roman settlements are not commonly found in these regions. Population pressure and the use of improved ploughs, however, led to many medieval settlements which have since been deserted or have shrunk to tiny hamlets or single farms. Ridge and furrow (a survival of medieval ploughing), deserted medieval villages, such as Wintringham, Weald and Washingley, and other substantial medieval settlement earthworks, such as those at Steeple and Little Gidding, Hamerton, and Winwick, together with numerous moated sites and ruined churches (at Denton and Woolley) are now all features of this sparsely populated landscape.

This gentle undulating landscape is subdivided by the shallow Ouse Valley (landscape area 4). It consists of large-scale arable farmland with open fields, sparse trimmed hedgerows and watercourses often cleared of bankside vegetation. There are scattered woodlands and approximately half of these are ancient semi-natural woodlands of considerable importance in the County context. The biggest concentration of woodlands is in the south-west corner of the County. Elsewhere individual woods are of importance in visual and nature conservation terms, but they tend to be isolated incidents in an area dominated by arable farmland.

The landscape of this part of Cambridgeshire has been greatly affected by modern agricultural practices. Increased mechanisation has led to the removal of hedgerows and amalgamation of fields. Many of the remaining hedges are 'gappy' and trimmed almost out of existence by regular cutting. Dutch Elm Disease has taken a considerable toll of hedgerow trees, and the extensive replanting which is still young has yet to make any major impact, although with over one million grant-aided trees having been planted since 1974 significant change is likely over the next few decades. Marginal

land has been brought into production by drainage and other soil improvements. Larger farm units have created a need for large storage buildings, which can be prominent in the landscape.

Small villages and hamlets are scattered throughout the area, usually in sheltered places with existing trees. Small grass paddocks typically occur on the edges of the villages. Church spires and towers enliven the skyline.

Existing and former wartime airfields at Alconbury, Wyton, Molesworth, Glatton, Warboys, Upwood, Kimbolton, Graveley, Staughton, Sibson, Bourn and Great Gransden have a significant impact on the area.

PRINCIPLES FOR LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT IN THE WESTERN CLAYLANDS

It would be unrealistic and inappropriate to attempt to restore the pre-war landscape of smaller fields with tree-lined hedges. Instead a new landscape pattern that responds to the demands of both modern agricultural practice and the need for landscape enhancement is necessary. The vision is one of a fairly large-scale landscape with large rolling fields enclosed by and sweeping around blocks and belts of woodland and broad hedgerows. In the valley bottoms, the objective should be to create small-scaled stream-side landscape zones with trees, copses, meadows and other features.

Where remnants of the old ridge and furrow survive as grassland or in woodland they should be preserved.

Creation of the new landscape structure should be directed towards the following principles:

- 1. Management of existing woodlands:** the careful management of ancient semi-natural woodlands and selective re-stocking and creation of 'edge areas' elsewhere (see Farmland Model A4b) is essential.
- 2. Creation of new woodlands:** ideally these should be at least 2 hectares in size and located so that they make a major impact in relation to:



Western Claylands: Boxworth

- viewing points;
- wildlife potential;
- landform and skylines.

The new woodland blocks may be planted to reflect landforms, thus developing a new character of wooded skylines, distinctive clumps and woodlands following the folds in the land. Elsewhere, woodlands may be planted to reflect the existing or former field patterns, thus being derived from the inherited pattern (see Farmland Model A5). In practice, a combination of these two approaches would emerge, reflecting both old and new landscape patterns.

3. Planting of woodland belts:

probably based on existing hedgerows, linking woodland blocks, the belts should be carefully aligned to reinforce landforms and would enclose large areas of rolling farmland (see Farmland Model A4b).

4. Creation of landscape corridors in valley bottoms: this will necessitate setting aside 5-15m or more either side

of streams to create semi-wooded corridors of diverse habitats (see Farmland Model A6).

5. Hedgerows: selected hedgerows should be reinforced or managed for particularly significant impact, based upon their visual and wildlife potential. Historically significant hedgerows should be carefully conserved, and new hedges planted to emphasise the existing landscape.

6. Road margins: verges should be managed for floral diversity; hedgerows with trees should be concentrated on lower slopes to prevent loss of views from higher land and planted to create a bold sequence of enclosed and open characters appropriate to the large scale of the landscape (see Farmland Models A4a and A4b).

7. Footpath corridor improvements: a small number of long-distance routes and also circular/linking routes related to villages and towns should be located, and landscape improvements implemented along their alignments; ideally these features will be integrated with other new features as in 1 and 4 above (see Farmland Model A7).

8. Village approaches: increased tree cover with trees along road margins, woodland belts alongside roads, planting at edges of villages and hedgerow planting is desirable; it is important to ensure key views are not lost.

9. Old airfields: there may be unsightly buildings which require fresh landscape treatment.

10. Urban fringe: where the claylands border the Ouse Valley towns (St Ives, Huntingdon, St Neots) a substantial increase in tree and hedge cover is needed with trees along road margins, and woodland belts alongside roads and edges of developments.

WESTERN CLAYLANDS Before

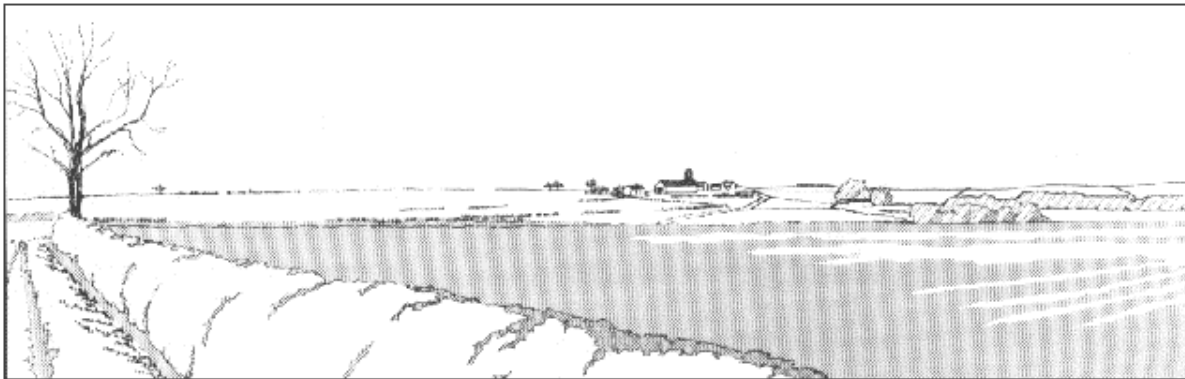
Dead tree

Very little sense of landform or enclosure.

Poor, sparse hedgerows.

Large, modern farm buildings prominent on the skyline.

Small scrubland on land difficult to cultivate.



WESTERN CLAYLANDS After

Dead tree retained for hole-nesting birds. Saplings selected from hedge and allowed to grow untrimmed.

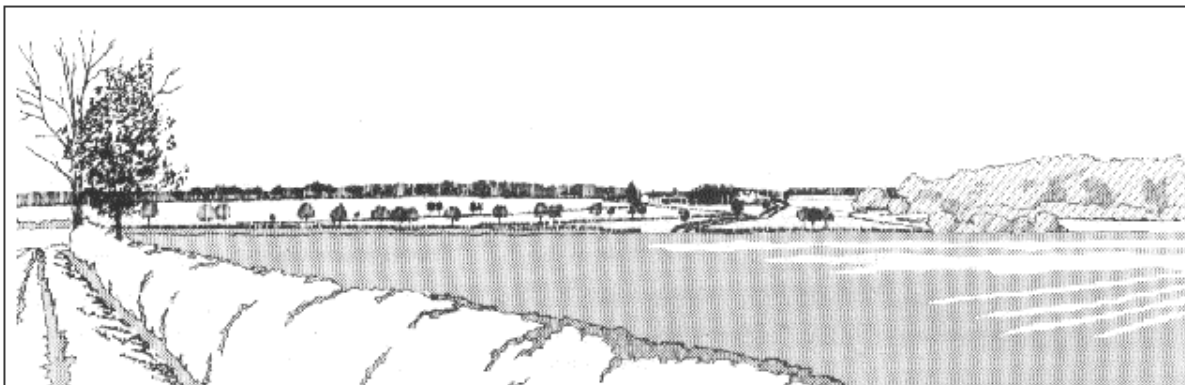
Tree line on horizon helps to tie features together and enclose the space.

Hedgerows emphasise landform and give character; tree planting in hedge.

Farm buildings well screened by planting.

Woodland on horizon provides good backdrop.

New woodland forms strong feature.



PLANT SPECIES GUIDELINES FOR THE WESTERN CLAYLANDS

Mixed Woodlands

Quercus robur (oak)

dominant tree.

Fraxinus excelsior (ash)

dominant tree.

Prunus avium (wild cherry)

less common.

Acer campestre (field maple)

glades, near edges.

Corylus avellana (hazel)

dominant shrub, edges, glades, scrub.

Crataegus monogyna (hawthorn)

near edges, mixed thickets.

Sambucus nigra (elder)

occasional, understorey and edges.

Hedgerows, woodland edges and scrub

Crataegus monogyna (hawthorn)

Corylus avellana (hazel)

Prunus spinosa (blackthorn)

Rosa canina (dog rose)

Acer campestre (field maple)

Malus sylvestris (crab apple)

Cornus sanguinea (dogwood)

occasional.

Trees in hedgerows

Quercus robur (oak)

dominant.

Fraxinus excelsior (ash)

sub-dominant.

Acer campestre (field maple)

sub-dominant.

Avenues

Quercus robur (oak)

Tilia sp. (lime)

Aesculus hippocastanum (horse chestnut)

Environs of villages only.

Avenues – all as single species, not mixed.

Stream sides, wet clay soils

Alnus glutinosa (alder)

dominant, in copses and small groups.

Salix alba (white willow)

Sub-dominant, not in mixes.

Salix fragilis (crack willow)

typical pollarded tree.

Salix caprea (goat willow)

scrubby copses.

Fraxinus excelsior (ash)

occasional where not waterlogged.

Quercus robur (oak)

occasional where not water logged.

Corylus avellana (hazel)

occasional on stream banks if not waterlogged.

Populus tremula (aspen)

in thickets; not in mixes.

Viburnum opulus (guelder rose)

occasional as individuals and small groups.

Cornus sanguinea (dogwood)

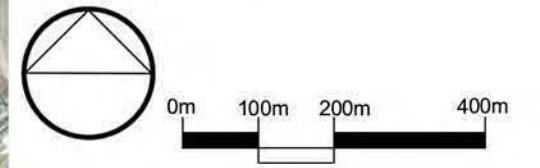
occasional as individuals and small groups.

APPENDIX 4

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



NOTES:
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- Key:
-  Application Site Boundary
 -  Viewpoint Location

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				

aspect landscape planning

TITLE
Comberton Viewpoint Location Plan

CLIENT
Hopkins Homes

SCALE 1:10,000@A3	DATE OCT 2019	DRAWN NB	CHK'D MF
DRAWING NUMBER 6994 / VPL		REVISION	



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 538830,N 256160 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 10:59 AOD & Viewing height: c. 29m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 1**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 538830,N 256160 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 10:59 AOD & Viewing height: c. 29m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 1**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 538826,N 255939 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 10:59 AOD & Viewing height: c. 27m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 2**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 538826,N 255939 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 10:59 AOD & Viewing height: c. 27m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 2**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 538831,N 255644 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 11:02 AOD & Viewing height: c. 30m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 3**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 538831,N 255644 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 11:02 AOD & Viewing height: c. 30m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 3**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 52.1812427, N 0.02379609 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 11:04 AOD & Viewing height: c. 33m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 4**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 52.1812427, N 0.02379609 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 11:04 AOD & Viewing height: c. 33m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 4**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 538851,N 256397 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 10.58 AOD & Viewing height: c. 28m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 5**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 538851,N 256397 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 10.58 AOD & Viewing height: c. 28m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 5**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 540132,256152

Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 11:06

AOD & Viewing height: c. 30m AOD 1.6m

Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

Viewpoint 6



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 540132,256152

Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 11:06

AOD & Viewing height: c. 30m AOD 1.6m

Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

Viewpoint 6



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 540865, N 255353 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 11.08 AOD & Viewing height: c. 23m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 7**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 540865, N 255353 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 11.08 AOD & Viewing height: c. 23m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 7**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 540103,N 256977 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 11:12 AOD & Viewing height: c. 51m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 8**







Viewpoint Coordinates: E 540103,N 256977 Date & time of photograph: 04/10/2019 11:12 AOD & Viewing height: c. 51m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 8**

APPENDIX 5



CAMBRIDGE GREEN BELT STUDY – VISUAL ASSESSMENT


Cambridge Green Belt Study

Visual Assessment






-  Key elevated panoramic view to Cambridge
-  Key low-level view to Cambridge
-  Approximate area of Green Belt from which Cambridge may be seen
-  Key Cambridge landmarks visible from the setting

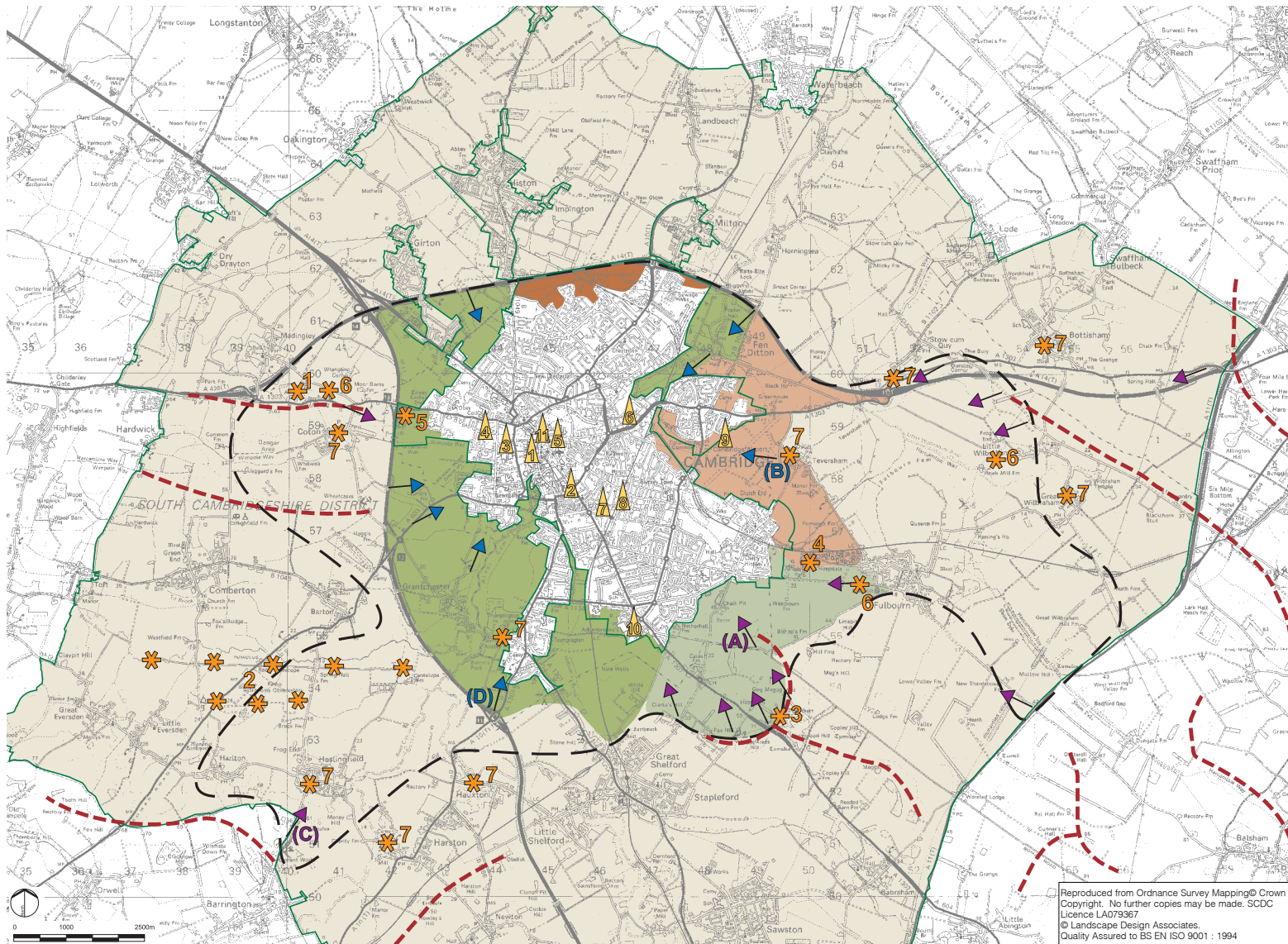
1. King's College Chapel
2. Roman Catholic Church spire
3. University Library
4. Girton College
5. All Saints Jesus Lane
6. Chimney
7. Rank Hovis Building
8. Carter Bridge
9. Cambridge Airport hangars
10. Addenbrooke's Hospital
11. St John's College

-  Ridgelines
-  Green Belt boundary (inner and outer edges)

-  Distinctive / memorable features in the setting of Cambridge
1. American Cemetery
 2. Radio Astronomy Observatory
 3. Wandlebury woodland on hill top
 4. Fulbourn Hospital
 5. Schlumberger Building
 6. Windmills
 7. Village churches

Townscape / countryside interface - elevation, foreground character and built edge character as seen in immediate views from routes close to Cambridge

-  Level views, countryside foreground, generally soft urban edge
-  Elevated views, countryside foreground, generally soft urban edge
-  Level views, little / no foreground, generally hard edge with immature planting (housing and science park)
-  Level views, mixed foreground, mixed urban edge
-  Rural setting with scattered villages



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Notes:

Key viewpoints shown are not exhaustive but are considered to be the most significant. There are also many other locations from which Cambridge and its setting can be seen. Letters in brackets next to key viewpoints refer to photographs in Photograph Panels A and B, Appendix A.

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