

# Proposed Housing Site Allocation - Land South of New Road Guilden Morden, SG8 0JN



On behalf of  
Arrington Mac Properties Ltd

December 2019

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This proposed housing site allocation is being advanced by Magenta Planning on behalf of the landowner, [REDACTED], in respect to Land South of New Road, Guilden Morden, SG8 0JN (the site). The site is located within the jurisdiction of the South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC).
- 1.2 SCDC together with Cambridge City Council (CCC) have prepared a joint Local Plan for the Greater Cambridge area. Their currently adopted Local Plan (2018) includes a policy which makes a commitment to undertake an early review of the Plan to commence before the end of 2019.
- 1.3 As part of the development of the new Greater Cambridge Joint Local Plan, a ‘*Call for Sites*’ has been issued. This site in Guilden Morden is being put forward for consideration initially through that process as a sustainable location for development for a future low-density housing development.
- 1.4 This document provides a sustainability assessment for the site and explains its potential for delivery of a high quality sustainable rural housing scheme.

## **2 SITE & SURROUNDING AREA**

- 2.1 Guilden Morden is a village and parish located in Cambridgeshire about 25km (16 miles) south west of Cambridge and 8km (5 miles) west of the town of Royston in Hertfordshire.
- 2.2 It is served by the main line ‘Ashwell and Morden’ railway station 3 miles to the south in the neighbouring parish of Steeple.
- 2.3 The site comprises approximately 1.13 hectares (2.80 acres) of rough unused grass land located just outside of the eastern development limits of Guilden Morden.
- 2.4 The site’s northern boundary fronts onto New Road and is located directly opposite the village cemetery.

2.5 The site extends to both the south and west to the rear of Nos.14-24 New Road. These six semi-detached properties are located immediately adjacent to the village boundary and were granted planning permission in 1992 as affordable homes.

2.6 The eastern boundary of the site is defined by a public footpath. The eastern boundary aligns itself with the eastern limit of the cemetery on the north side of New Road.



Figure 1 Cemetery north of site

### 3 PLANNING HISTORY & BACKGROUND

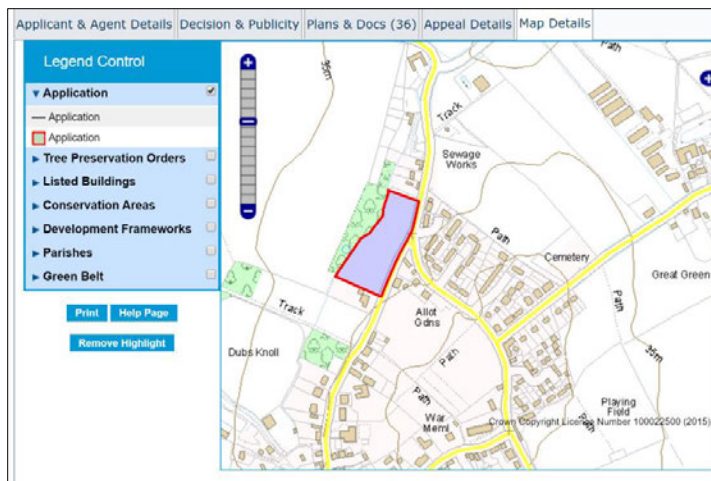
3.1 The South Cambridgeshire planning register provides the following planning history for the site and surrounding area:-

- 1962 – *Outline permission for bungalows or houses*; Refused SC/0025/62/
- 1992 – *6 houses*. Permission granted; S/0522/92/F

3.2 Other relevant planning records include:-

- 2017 Appeal dismissed – *Outline planning permission for residential development comprising 20 dwellings including matters of access with all other matters reserved*; S/0937/17/OL APP/W0530/W/18/3195001 Land to the West, Dubbs Knoll Road, SG8 OLB

3.3 The 2017 appeal proposals were for a low-density development comprising 20 dwellings on 1.12 hectares at a density of approximately 17 dwellings per hectare.



3.4 Although the appeal was dismissed, the Planning

Inspector considered that the appeal site was not isolated and would not be remote from the services and built-up area of Guilden Morden, or from the services and facilities in the village and nearby settlements of Steeple, Morden, Ashwell and Roysten. See Appendix A.

Figure 2 Appeal site location

#### 4 POLICY CONTEXT

##### i) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.1 Chapter 5 of the NPPF, ‘Delivering a sufficient supply of homes’ provides guidance for homes in rural areas. Paragraph 59 states that *“To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.”*

4.2 Paragraph 77 states that in rural areas *“In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.”*

4.3 Paragraph 78 seeks *“To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support*

*local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby."*

**ii) SCDC Local Plan (2018)**

4.4 The SCDC Local Plan sets out the planning policies and land allocations to guide planning decisions in the district up to 2031. It includes policies on topics including housing, employment, services and facilities, and the natural environment. The Plan was adopted in September 2018. As mentioned in the introduction however, there is a policy commitment to carry out an early review of this document which is to commence before the end of this year. This reflects the complexity and long-term nature of the Councils' joint strategy to deliver new communities, and the need to closely monitor the housing delivery rates of such projects in order to ensure that the Council can meet its rolling five-year land supply requirements.

4.5 The Local Plan defines Guilden Morden as a Group Village where "*limited development will help maintain the remaining services and facilities and provide for affordable housing to meet local needs*". This reflects the good level of local services available in Guilden Morden including a Primary School, the Village Hall, Recreation Ground and local pub.

4.6 Whilst 'Group Villages' are considered to be less sustainable than Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres, they are ranked as being more sustainable than 'Infill Villages'.

4.7 This is reflected by Policy S10 which supports residential development of around 8 dwellings, or exceptionally 15 dwellings where proposals are on brownfield land.

**Group Villages**

**Policy S/10: Group Villages**

1. The following villages are selected as Group Villages:
 

Balsham	Fen Drayton	Little Abington
Barrington	Fowmere	Longstanton
Barton	Foxton	Meldreth
Bourn	Great Abington	Oakington
Castle Camps	Great Wilbraham	Orwell
Coton	Guilden Morden	Over
Dry Drayton	Hardwick	Steeple Morden
Duxford	Harston	Teversham
Elsworth	Haslingfield	Thriplow
Eltisley	Hauxton	Whittlesford
Fen Ditton	Highfields Caldecote	
2. Residential development and redevelopment up to an indicative maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the development frameworks of Group Villages, as defined on the Policies Map.
3. Development may exceptionally consist of up to about 15 dwellings where this would make the best use of a single brownfield site.

Figure 3 Policy S/10

iii) **Policy designations**

- 4.8 The Site is not subject to any statutory designations in respect of ecology, heritage and landscape assets.
- 4.9 To the south, the site adjoins land designated as Local Green Space - NH/12-033 - Recreation Ground, which is directly connected by the public footpath running along the eastern boundary. The relationship of the site to this designation is shown at Figure 4.
- 4.10 In terms of the sieving process associated with a 'Call for Sites' exercise, the site is 'oven-ready' in that it is:- 'Suitable; Available; and Achievable'. This means that it could make an early valuable contribution as a deliverable residential site identified within years one to five of the plan period.

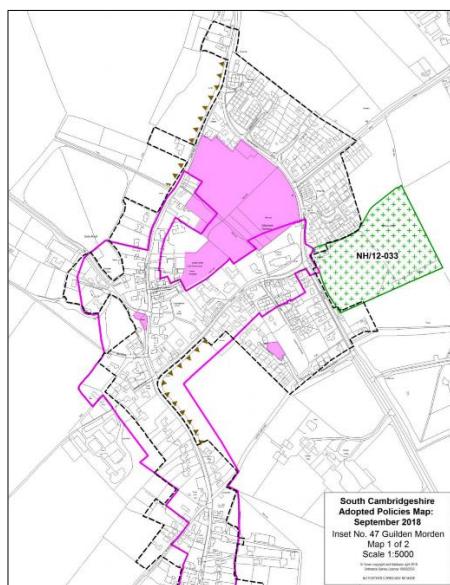


Figure 4 SCDC Adopted Local Plan Proposals Map extract

**Policy NH/12: Local Green Space**

*Local Green Space identified on the Policies Map will be protected from development that would adversely impact on the character and particular local significance placed on such green areas which make them valued by their local community. Inappropriate development, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework, would not be approved except in very special circumstances and in discussion with the local community.*



**5 SERVICES & FACILITIES**

i) **Local Amenities**

- 5.1 Guilden Morden provides a Primary School, Village Hall, Recreation Ground, two churches and local pubs. All play an important role in the vitality of the local rural community. Until recently there had been a village shop (Guilden Groceries), although this was closed in 2016.

- 5.2 Furthermore, the nearby villages of Steeple Morden, Litlington, Bassingbourn and Ashwell contain a shop and Post Office to meet the basic needs of residents. Steeple Morden, Litlington and Bassingbourn, located 2.4Km (1.5 miles), 4.8Km (3 miles), 7.5Km (4.7 miles) and 4.8 (3 miles) away respectively can be accessed directly via public transport.
- 5.3 The town of Royston is 8km (5 miles) away from the site and provides a greater range of services and facilities. The site’s relationship to neighbouring settlements is shown overleaf.

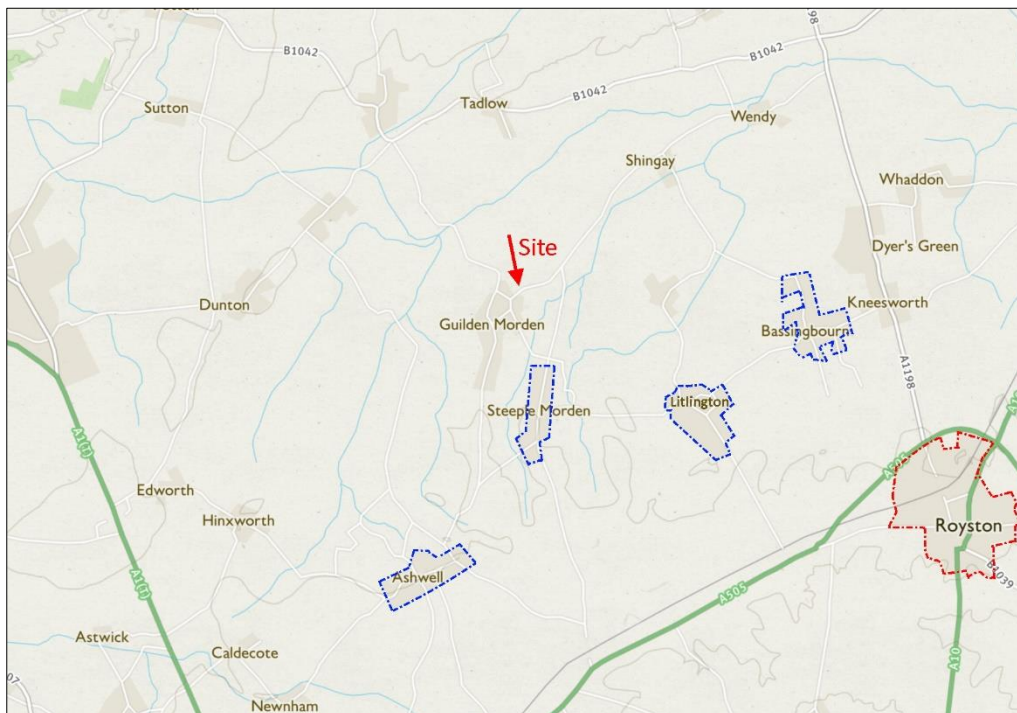







Figure 5 Neighbouring settlements

- 5.4 The nearest services and amenities are set out in the table below:-

Type	Name/Location
Doctors	The Ashwell Surgery on Gardiners Lane (5.3Km/3.3 miles)
Dentist	Ashwell Dental Surgery (5.3Km/3.3 miles)
Chemist	Ashwell Pharmacy. Prescriptions may also be dispensed at Ashwell Surgery (5.3Km/3.3 miles)
Post Offices	Cheyney Street, Steeple Morden (2.5Km/1.6 miles); High Street, Ashwell (5.1Km/3.2 miles); Church Street, Litlington (5.3Km/3.3 miles)

<p>Secondary School</p>	<p>Bassingbourn Village College, South End, Bassingbourn (7.5Km/4.7 miles)</p>
<p>Shops</p>	<p>Sarah's Farm Shop, Ashwell Road, Steeple Morden - (2.3 miles)                  Litlington Store and Post office – 4.9Km/3.1 miles                  SPAR Bassingbourn – 7.5Km/4.7 miles                  Tesco Extra Royston – 14Km/8.8 miles</p>
<p>Public Houses</p>	<p>Edward VII - 0.5Km/0.3 miles</p>  <p>The Three Tuns Guilden Morden – Community pub 1Km/0.6</p> 
<p>Places of Worship</p>	<p>Church of St Mary (0.5Km/0.3miles)</p>  <p>Guilden Morden Congregational Church</p> 

Village Hall	<p>Guilden Morden Village Hall – 0.5Km/0.3 miles. (photo below)</p> 
Recreation Ground	Adjoining site (south)
<b>Clubs and Groups</b>	<b>Description</b>
Bellringers	Meets to practice on a Monday evening at St Mary's Church
Bowls Club	Meets in Steeple Morden. It serves members from Steeple Morden, Guilden Morden, Litlington, Ashwell and the surrounding areas. Runs throughout the year
Bridge Club	Meets on a Wednesday evening at Steeple Morden Village Hall.
British Legion	Events alternate between Guilden Morden and Steeple Morden. Runs a variety of events in addition to a Remembrance Sunday Parade and buffet lunch.
Guilden Morden Cherubs Cricket Club	Plays at Guilden Morden recreation ground.
Guilden Morden FC	Formed in 2014, minimum age of 16. Allows a Saturday Senior team to compete in Cambridgeshire Tournaments.
Local History Group	Meets at Guilden Morden Congregational Chapel. The Group's objectives are to research all aspects of the history of Guilden Morden and to make this available as widely as possible within the local community.
Over 60s Club	Meets at the village hall on the 2nd Wednesday afternoon of the month.
Save the Children	The Mordens Branch of Save The Children work throughout the year to run events which raise money for the charity and provide entertainment for the people who live in the Mordens and surrounding villages.
Religious Society of Friends	Meets for worship based on silence in the Schoolroom of the

	Guilden Morden Congregational Chapel.
St Mary's Church Restoration Committee	Secular group concerned with raising money to preserve the fabric of this historic building.
The Guilden Morden Reading Group	Meets on the third Wednesday of the month, 8pm in The Edward VII pub.
The Morden's Women's Institute	Meets at Guilden Morden Village Hall. Most meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month. Transport can be provided for members.
Women's cycling	Local cycle rides for women starting from Bassingbourn and Royston on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings.
Wheels For Martin's Friends	A charity originally formed in 1989. Two folding wheelchairs, provided by the 'Wheels for Martin's Friends' charity are available for village use on short term loan. There is one located at each church.
Guilden Morden Parish Council	Meets every 4 weeks at the Village Hall with members of the public welcome to attend. Meetings are alternated between full meetings and planning meetings.

**ii) Sustainable Transport & Accessibility**

5.5 The NPPF recognises opportunities to maximise sustainable transport will vary from urban to rural areas.

5.6 Public transport is available from Guilden Morden via the 127 bus service which stops on Fox Hill Road. This bus stop is located approximately 300m south west of the site (less than 5 minutes walk). The service provides access to the surrounding villages of Ashwell, Steeple Morden, Litlington, Bassingbourn and the town of Royston which provide a wider range of services.

5.7 The service operates five times a day to and from the town, with two buses a week, both on a Wednesday operating via Ashwell. These bus services run during the day, Mondays to Saturdays, until early evening. This service provision is considered to be a good for a rural village location.

- 5.8 Ashwell and Morden train station is located approximately 4 miles south of the site, providing access and regular services into London Kings Cross and Cambridge.
- 5.9 Whilst prospective residents are likely to depend on cars for certain types of trips, the good availability of public transport, means that many day to day trips can be undertaken by sustainable travel modes. Vehicular access, with good visibility splays, to meet highway requirements is available directly from New Road.
- 5.10 The local amenities within Guilden Morden are all within close walking distance from the site. The existing public footpath also provides a direct link to the village’s recreation ground. The connectivity of the site with the rest of the village is therefore excellent, as demonstrated further below.

## 6 SUSTAINABILITY CONTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### i) Local Connectivity

- 6.1 Guilden Morden benefits from a network of public footpaths linking the village to its neighbouring settlements. One of these footpaths runs along the eastern boundary of the site. This footpath provides linkage to opportunities for leisure activity.



Figure 6 Public Footpath

6.2 This public right of way offers an excellent opportunity for connectivity in respect of any future residential proposals linking to the heart of the village. See plans (right and overleaf) and leaflet attached at Appendix B

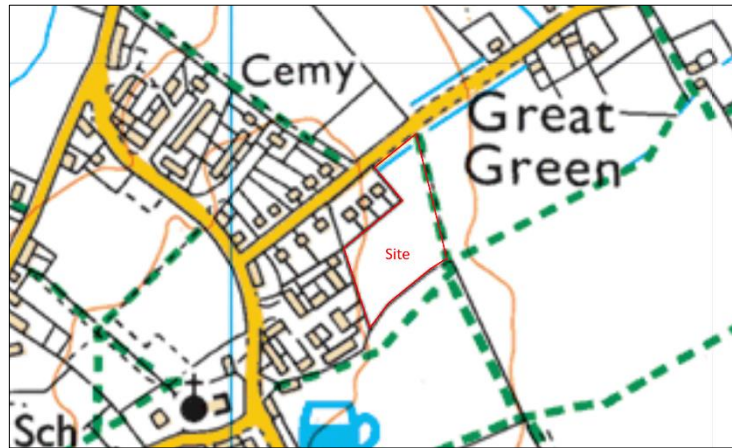


Figure 7 OS extract

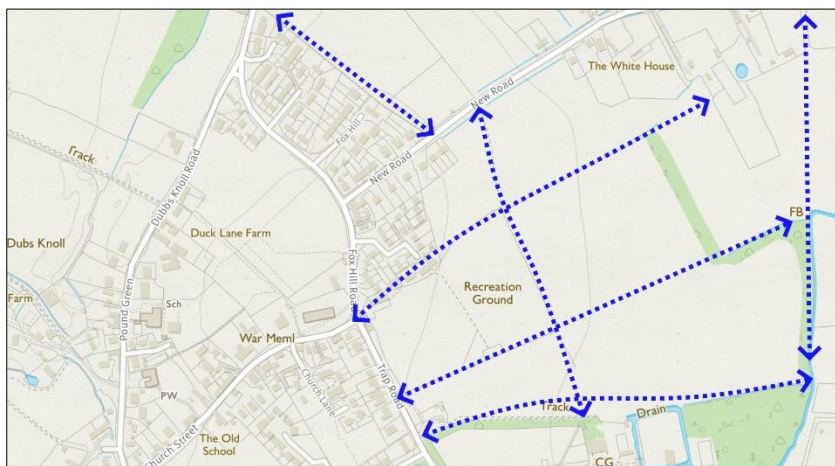


Figure 8 Public Rights of Way

**ii) Flood Risk**

6.3 The proposed housing site is located in Flood Zone 1. A Flood Risk Assessment and sustainable drainage strategy would be submitted alongside any future application to demonstrate how runoff would be mitigated to ensure that the development would not exacerbate flood risk of the site or the surrounding area in anyway.

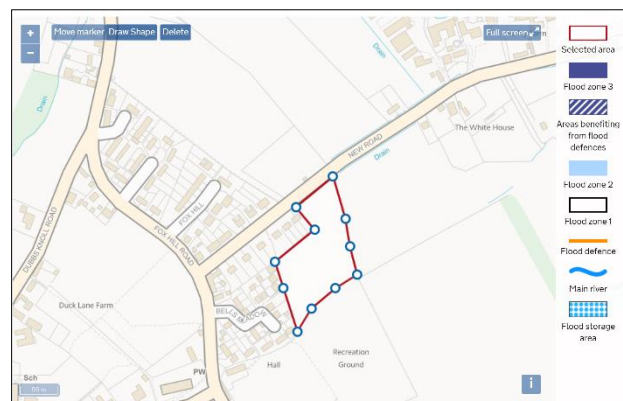


Figure 9 Environment Agency Flood Map

**iii) Residential density**

6.4 An appropriate development density would need to reflect the local character of Guilden Morden. Although Local Plan policy sets out a density of 30 dph, in order to respect the sensitive rural character of the village, a lower density would be considered to be more appropriate in this particular case. It is anticipated that a high quality residential scheme will be delivered to incorporate generous private amenity space; new local shop; and public open space. The precise housing quantum; mix; tenure; and type would be based on local needs.

**iv) Population**

6.5 2011 Census data shows that the current population of Guilden Morden is weighted towards the 45-59 age group. The proportion of people aged 60 or over is higher than the district, regional and national averages. New housing can attract those of a younger age demographic, creating balance and diversity within the community. In this respect, discussions with the Parish Council are intended to be dovetailed with the forthcoming Local Plan consultations next year to establish local needs in detail and to thereby help inform the scheme content; this could include specialist accessible units for the elderly or those in need. A bespoke Section 106 agreement will also be investigated in terms of securing the re-opening of/new village shop.

**v) Landscape and Ecology**

6.6 Any future development proposals would be supported by an Ecological Assessment and Arboricultural Impact Assessment. The size and location of the site provides an excellent opportunity for the enhancement of habitats and landscape, and to appropriately deliver net gains in bio-diversity.

**vi) Sustainable Design**

6.7 Sustainability will be integrated into the design of the proposals at the outset which will adopt an innovative; contemporary and contextual architectural approach to the local vernacular. The landowner is fully committed to delivering an exemplary sustainable development including best practice for energy and water related strategies.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The proposed housing allocation site is located in a logical position with respect to the Guilden Morden settlement boundary and its proximity to the centre of the village.
- 7.2 The site has existing defensible boundaries to the south (recreation ground) and east (footpath) and the site would not extend beyond the extent of the cemetery to the north.
- 7.3 The site would form a sustainable and logical extension to the eastern settlement boundary of Guilden Morden benefiting from its strong connectivity with the centre of the village.
- 7.4 In 2017, an appeal Inspector considered that a development on the development boundary of Guilden Morden would not be remote from the services and built-up area of Guilden Morden, and not be remote from the services and facilities in the village and nearby settlements of Steeple, Morden, Ashwell and Roysten.
- 7.5 In the context of the NPPF, it was considered that the site on the edge of Guilden Morden would not represent an isolated development site. The Inspector went on to say that there would be a choice of accessible modes of transport to access local services and facilities. It was also concluded that dwellings located in the area around Guilden Morden would not significantly undermine the aim of DCP Policy DP/1 to *“minimise the need for travel and reduce car dependency across the district.”*
- 7.6 This assessment remains highly relevant in considering the principles and sustainability credentials of development at the subject site.
- 7.7 In particular, proposed new housing at the subject site that is designed to meet specifically identified local needs, would help to underpin the on-going sustainability and long-term future of the village, thereby supporting the local primary school, pubs and the range of local community recreation and leisure groups as outlined in this report. The proposals also present an opportunity for a local shop to reopened to serve the needs of both prospective new and existing residents through a potential bespoke Section 106 agreement as a commitment to the Parish Council and local community.
- 7.8 For all the reasons set out in this report, it is considered that the proposed housing allocation, set within well-defined defensible boundaries, would offer the opportunity to enhance the

vitality of the rural village community in Guilden Morden and that of its wider network of neighbouring settlements. It will therefore deliver against all three dimensions of sustainable development; those being 'economic'; 'social' and 'environmental'.

- 7.9 The site is accordingly commended to Officers and we trust that it will score highly against the Council's initial 'Call for Sites' criteria.

## **Appendix A**

Appeal: Land to the West, Dubbs Knoll Road



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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2018

by **David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

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**Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/18/3195001**

**Land to the West of Dubbs Knoll Road, Guilden Morden SG8 0LB**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for outline planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Cambridgeshire County Council against South Cambridgeshire District Council.
  - The application Ref S/0937/17/OL, is dated 17 March 2017.
  - The development proposed is for residential development comprising 20 dwellings including matters of access with all other matters reserved.
- 

### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Procedural matters

2. The application was made in outline with all matters other than access reserved for future consideration. I have determined the appeal on this basis, treating the submitted plans and details provided as illustrative, insofar as they relate to matters other than access.
3. The Council states that, since the original application was determined, it can now demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. I will return to this later under the other matters relating to this appeal.
4. The Council's appeal statement refers to Policies S/10, NH/13 and NH/14 from the emerging South Cambridgeshire Proposed Submission Local Plan (SCLP). The SCLP is at an advanced stage and has been subject to recent examination hearings and main modifications. However, as I do not have evidence before me as to whether there have been any significant objections to the above policies and the Inspector's report has not yet been published, having regard to the advice provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)<sup>1</sup>, I give these policies in the emerging Development Plan limited weight as a material consideration.
5. A signed and completed S106 Unilateral Undertaking (UU) has been submitted by the appellant. This would secure contributions towards infrastructure provision and I return to this matter later.

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

## **Main Issues**

6. The main issues are:

- (i) Whether or not the proposed development would accord with the Framework and the policies in the development plan relating to the location of new development in the District, having particular regard to the accessibility of local services and facilities; and
- (ii) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, having particular regard to the site's location adjacent to the Grade II listed dwellings at Fox Cottage and Cherry Holt.

## **Reasons**

### *Location of development*

- 7. Policy ST/6 of the South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy (2007) (CS) identifies a number of villages including Guilden Morden as Group villages. It indicates that residential development will be restricted to schemes of up to 8 dwellings and, in exceptional circumstances, up to 15 dwellings on brownfield sites within the village development framework. The appeal site is outside the village development framework. Policy DP/7 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (2007) (DCP) sets out the circumstances in which development outside village development frameworks will be acceptable, none of which apply to the appeal proposal.
- 8. The Council considers that the appeal site is in an unsustainable location and to allow such a substantial amount of new housing would undermine the local plan approach to the settlement and the overall development hierarchy set out in CS Policy ST/2 that seeks to direct most housing development to the district's larger settlements and lesser amounts to the villages in the rural areas. DCP Policy DP/1 seeks, amongst other things, to minimise the need to travel and to reduce car dependency.
- 9. Paragraph 55 of the Framework seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas by locating housing where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances which do not apply in this case. Paragraph 186 and 187 of the Framework require Local Planning Authorities to take a positive approach to decision taking to foster sustainable development that can improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The appeal site is located on the north-western edge of the village adjacent to the village development framework boundary and the built-up area of Guilden Morden with residential properties to the north, south and east of the site.
- 10. Guilden Morden has a limited range of facilities and services, including a primary school, church and a pub and all within easy walking distance of the site along established highway footpaths. The facilities in Steeple Morden including a post office, church and pub are located about 1.6 miles to the south and the village of Ashwell is about 3 miles to the south-west of the appeal site and includes a village store and post office, pubs, doctor's surgery and pharmacy. These settlements are a reasonable distance away and, from the evidence provided and from my observations on my site visit, are not readily accessible by safe public footpaths.

11. A bus stop is situated a short walk from the site on Fox Hill Road. The information provided by the appellant indicates that the village has a bus service linking the settlement to the town of Royston to the south. This service operates five times a day to and from the town, with two buses a week, both on a Wednesday, operating via Ashwell. One bus a day runs to and from Cambridge. These bus services run during the day, Mondays to Saturdays, until early evening with no service on a Sunday. The Ashwell and Morden train station is located some 4 miles away providing access to London Kings Cross and Cambridge. As such, although future residents would be likely to depend on the private car to reach the essential services and employment available in nearby larger settlements, some day to day trips could be undertaken by sustainable means.
12. Consequently, I conclude in relation to the first main issue that the site would not be in the optimum location to maximise the use of walking, cycling or public transport to access services and facilities to meet daily needs. However, the Framework recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport will vary from urban to rural areas and different policies and measures will be required in different communities.
13. I recognise that my conclusion on this issue departs from the Inspector's conclusion in the appeal decision nearby at Trap Road in Guilden Morden<sup>2</sup> and the Council's conclusions in relation to this appeal scheme. I have had regard to the various planning appeal decisions in Over<sup>3</sup> and Gloucestershire<sup>4</sup> referred to me by the appellant. However, I have come to my conclusion on the first main issue in this case based on the circumstances of the appeal scheme and the evidence before me based on the specific circumstances of the appeal site, including its location in relation to the facilities and services available in both Guilden Morden and nearby settlements.
14. The appeal site is adjacent to the village development framework and built-up area of Guilden Morden and would not be remote from the services and facilities in the villages of Guilden Morden and nearby settlements of Steeple Morden, Ashwell and Royston. The proposed development would not be in an isolated location in the context of paragraph 55 of the Framework. There would at least be a choice to use accessible modes of transport to access local services and facilities and additional dwellings in this location would not significantly undermine the aim of DCP Policy DP/1 to minimise the need to travel and reduce car dependency across the District as a whole.

#### *Character and appearance of the area*

15. The appeal site comprises an open agricultural field covering about 1.24 hectares on the western side of Dubbs Knolls Road on the north-western edge of the village of Guilden Morden. Residential properties are located to the north, south and east on the opposite side of the Dubbs Knolls Road and Potton Road that converge at the front of the site and form one of the main approaches into the village. It is located set back behind a small grass verge with a relatively open frontage and gently sloping topography with a small woodland and open countryside to the west of the site, which adds to the open and semi- rural character of the area, which is further enhanced by the

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<sup>2</sup> PP/W0530/W/16/3155302

<sup>3</sup> APP/W0530/W/16/3148949

<sup>4</sup> Land off Bath Road, Leonard Stanley, Gloucestershire Ref: 2207324

- presence of mature landscaping and established trees within the surrounding gardens and open countryside. The indicative details show a low density residential development of 20 dwellings with vehicular access off Dubbs Knolls Road.
16. A core principle of the Framework is to take into account the character of different areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Paragraph 109 of the Framework makes it clear that, among other things, valued landscapes should be protected and enhanced. Based on the evidence before me, the site lies in an area which has no national or local designation and, whilst its open character is valued by local residents, I consider that it does not fall within the scope of Paragraph 109 of the Framework.
  17. It is clear from the evidence and from my observations during my site visit that, given the enclosed nature and the topography of the site and immediate surroundings, the appeal site would not be highly visible in the wider landscape. Nonetheless, on a more local level, given the scale of the development, it would represent a significant shift of the built up development beyond the edge of the village. The appeal site, together with the adjoining fields, provides a significant contribution to the visual quality and the openness of the area. It adds substantially to the character and appearance of this part of the village and provides an important contribution to the rural landscape setting of the village. This positive contribution to the character and appearance would largely be lost by the development, which would significantly urbanise the open and undeveloped nature of the site.
  18. These shortcomings would be exacerbated by the relatively open frontage of the site and the proposal's prominent position where it would be visible from a number of public vantage points along Dubbs Knolls Road and Potton Road. I therefore consider that the introduction of the new dwellings and associated features including gardens and other domestic paraphernalia would significantly harm the undeveloped and open character of the site which contributes to the open semi-rural character of the area.
  19. I have considered the appellant's arguments that the scale and layout of the proposed development has been carefully considered in order to minimise any impacts on the area. Whilst I recognise that the indicative low density layout would not be in keeping with the other properties in the area and the retention and enhancement of the landscaping around the site would assist in integrating the proposal with the area, these aspects do not overcome the adverse effects outlined above. I consider that the proposed development would adversely harm rather than positively contribute to the rural character and appearance of the area.
  20. Given the location of the appeal site adjacent to two Grade II listed dwellings at Fox Cottage and Cherry Holt, special attention has to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the setting of the listed buildings. The Grade II listed 17<sup>th</sup> Century thatched cottage at Fox Cottage lies immediately to the east of the appeal site on the opposite side of Dubbs Knoll Road. Although it would be set back and separated from the adjacent listed dwelling by the public highway and the proposed indicative location of the public open space, including Local Area of Play for the site, I consider that the appeal scheme, by virtue of its scale and siting, would have a negative material impact on the

open and undeveloped nature of the appeal site and the open setting of the listed building. The setting would therefore not be preserved.

21. The Grade II listed 17<sup>th</sup> Century thatched cottage at Cherry Holt is located on Potton Road to the north of the appeal site. However, due to the separation distance and the intervening buildings and screening between the appeal site and the listed building, there is only limited inter-visibility. The development has a neutral material impact on the setting of the listed building. The setting is therefore preserved.
22. Given the scale of the development, the harm would be less than substantial but in accordance with paragraphs 134 of the Framework, that harm should be weighed against any public benefits to the proposal. I note the appellant's desire is to provide a high quality residential development, including eight affordable homes, to meet the local housing need and the additional facilities and contributions towards local infrastructure provision both on and off the site. However, I find insufficient public benefit arising from this proposal to offset the identified harm to which I attach significant weight.
23. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed development would have a significant harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area including the setting of the adjacent listed building at Fox Cottage. The development conflicts with Policies DP/2, DP/3 and CH/4 of the DCP which I consider are relevant in this case. These policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure that all new development is of a high quality design that preserves or enhances the character of the area, respects the local context and local distinctiveness of the area and would not have unacceptable adverse impact on the village and landscape character and the wider setting of listed buildings. The Council has also referred to the conflict with DCP Policy CH/7 relating to Important Countryside Frontages. I have not been provided with a copy of this policy, but based on the evidence before me I find no conflict with this policy.
24. In addition, the proposal would conflict with aims of the Framework that development should seek to secure a high quality of design that takes account of the character of different areas and recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and conserve heritage assets in an appropriate manner (paragraph 17).

### **Other Matters**

25. A signed and completed UU has been submitted by the appellant towards local infrastructure including education, indoor community space, sports and open space provision both on and off the site. However, in light of my findings on the main issues above, it is not considered necessary to look at the UU in detail, given that the proposal is unacceptable for other reasons.
26. In relation to affordable homes, Policy HG/3 of the DCP states that proposals for housing developments will only be permitted if they provide an agreed mix of affordable housing to meet local needs and the amount of affordable housing sought will be 40% on schemes of 2 or more dwellings that must be available over the long term. The appellant has stated that they would provide eight affordable homes in accordance with Policy HG/3 of the DCP and that they would accept a planning condition to provide a scheme for 40% of the dwellings to be affordable prior to the commencement of the development.

27. The Council have provided evidence that South Cambridgeshire has a high level of housing need across the District (1,800 families on the waiting list). The appellant does not dispute this evidence and they indicate that the Statement of Community on the planning application for the appeal site demonstrated the local residents support for more affordable homes in the village and the Housing Needs survey for Guilden Morden (2015) indicated the need for smaller properties of two bedrooms or fewer in the village.
28. Although, the Council has not objected in principle to the affordable housing provision, no Section 106 Planning Obligation has been provided as requested by the Council. In the light of the advice in paragraph 203 of the Framework, I have considered whether the affordable housing requirement could be secured by means of a condition instead of a planning obligation. However, a condition could not for example set out legal covenants governing the expected actions of individuals and their successors in title during future transactions. It would therefore be likely to be less effective than an obligation in ensuring that the affordable housing would remain available as such in the long term. Given these circumstances and in the absence of a signed and completed Section 106 Planning Obligation to deal with such provision, I consider that the proposal would fail make adequate provision for the delivery of the affordable housing over the long term contrary to Policy HG/3 of the DCP.
29. I have noted the other developments in the area drawn to my attention by the appellant. However, the planning appeal decisions for residential development at Cottenham<sup>5</sup> and Swavesey<sup>6</sup> have different development characteristics to the appeal scheme and were granted in a different policy context when the Council could not demonstrate a 5 year land supply. Consequently, I do not consider them to be directly relevant to the case before me and, as such, I afford them limited weight as comparable cases.
30. I have considered the appellant's comments regarding the pre-application advice provided by the Council. The Council, however, provided this advice in a different policy context when the Council could not demonstrate a 5 year land supply and in any event, are not bound by the officer's pre-application advice in making their final decision. I also note the appellant's comments regarding lack of formal objections from key consultees to the appeal proposal. Whilst this maybe so, this does not preclude the proper planning assessment of the impact of the proposal on the area and is not a determinative factor on its own. I therefore accord these matters limited weight.
31. I have noted the objections raised by local residents and Guilden Morden Parish Council to the proposal. However, in light of my findings on the main issues of the appeal, my decision does not turn on these matters.
32. The appellant questions the Council's current housing policy position in light of the overall housing supply requirements in the district and the robustness of the Council's latest Five Year Housing Land Supply Update<sup>7</sup>. The Council states that it is able to demonstrate a housing supply of 5.0 years for the period 2018-2023 with a surplus of 67 dwellings based on the Sedgefield methodology with a 20% buffer. The appellant considers that housing trajectory provides insufficient flexibility for the supply of housing sites not coming forward and

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<sup>5</sup> APP/W0530/W/17/3187048

<sup>6</sup> Ref 3172405 Land South of Fen Drayton Road, Swavesey Decision Date 21/12/2017

<sup>7</sup> Update on South Cambridgeshire Five Year Housing Land Supply 21 May 2018

- other Local Authorities, such as Fylde Council, build in a reasonable allowance of 10% across the supply of sites not coming forward and this proposal would boost the housing supply in line with the requirements of the Framework.
33. The Council has indicated that the housing trajectories have been produced in consultation with various agents, developers and landowners responsible and on the larger sites have taken a more cautious approach to their delivery than promoted by the relevant agents, developers and landowners to ensure that the sites are considered deliverable in accordance with paragraph 47 of the Framework. On housing sites for 9 or less, a 10% lapse rate is applied, as the Council state it is not practical to explore the delivery of each of these sites with various agents, developers and landowners on a site by site basis<sup>8</sup>. Generally, I consider this overall approach is both reasonable and practical in the circumstances.
34. Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Framework require the social, economic and environmental roles of sustainability to be considered together. The appellant considers that the proposal would provide social and economic benefits through contributing to the supply and mix of housing in the area, including affordable homes, open space provision, providing construction jobs, supporting local services and facilities through new residents and financial contributions towards local infrastructure provision, new homes bonus payments and on-going contributions towards Council tax receipts. The Framework promotes sustainable development in rural areas, and the housing would make a positive, albeit modest contribution to the supply of housing and supporting the vitality of the village and the surrounding rural communities, that weight in favour of the proposal. In environmental terms, the appellant states that the scheme's design, sustainable construction measures, landscaping, biodiversity enhancement, waste and surface water management and the accessibility to services by other means of transport than the car would amount to environmental benefits and would help reduce emissions and mitigate climate.
35. However, in this case, I have found that the scheme would harm the objectives set out in the Framework and the great weight it places on conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the countryside and conserving heritage assets in an appropriate manner. I have found above that taken overall that the adverse impacts arising from locating the proposed development in this rural location, together with the harm identified to the area's character and appearance and the setting of the adjacent listed building at Fox Cottage, would be contrary to the relevant development plan policies set out above. In addition, in the absence of a legally binding planning obligation covering the provision of affordable housing, the proposal cannot secure the delivery and future retention of affordable housing in the manner required by the development plan. Given the extensive need for affordable housing in the area the absence of such an obligation carries substantial weight against the proposal. This harm would conflict with the environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development.
36. The Framework indicates that in the absence of relevant or up to date development plan policies the balance is tilted in favour of the grant of

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<sup>8</sup> Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Proposed Modifications Joint Housing Land Supply Update (RD/AD/500)

planning permission except where the benefits are significantly or demonstrably outweighed by the adverse effects or specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted. If policies for the supply of housing land are not up to date then less weight must be given to policy objectives in relation to the location of development.

37. Therefore, even if I were to conclude that there is a shortfall in the five year land supply as suggested by the appellant and that the relevant policies for the supply of housing could not be considered up to date, the adverse impacts of granting permission that I have identified, in my view, would be sufficient to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the scheme's benefits in this case. As such, the proposal would not comprise sustainable development when assessed against the Framework read as a whole.
38. Accordingly neither this nor any of the other matters outlined above amount to material considerations which would outweigh the conflict with the policies in the development plan when read as a whole. In these circumstances, there are no material considerations to justify making a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.

### **Conclusion**

39. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*David Troy*

INSPECTOR

## **Appendix B**

Public Rights of Way leaflet

## Parish geology & wildlife

The parish rises from north to south, reflecting the ability of the underlying rocks to resist erosion by water and ice. The southern half of the parish lies on the Middle Chalk, laid down on the Cretaceous sea floor about 100 million years ago. More chalk is hidden in the buildings of the parish: hard chalk (known as *clunch*) was quarried from local pits for use as building stone while soft chalk was heated to make lime for plaster and limewash, or to mortar cream-yellow bricks made from the Gault Clay. Some of the hard layers in the Chalk are *aquifers*, storing rainwater; the village lies where this water flows from springs, or can be reached with wells. The heavy clays of the Lower Chalk and the Gault form the lower ground to the north and east of the village.

The flower-rich grassland by the chalk pit is a good place to see how geology can influence wildlife: Common Milkwort is one of many plants here that prefer a lime-rich soil. Shrubs such as Hawthorn and Blackthorn are less demanding. For many centuries hedgerows containing these shrubs have been planted to mark field boundaries. Today they are also valued for the food and shelter they provide for wildlife. In late winter flocks of hungry redwings and fieldfares arrive to strip them of berries. Listen for skylarks singing above the fields in spring; they nest in sparse areas in the crops. Hares are becoming rare elsewhere in Britain, but in South Cambs you may still see them early on spring mornings. In high summer the uncut grassy margins of Ashwell Street and parish roads are full of colour, with yellow Lady's Bedstraw, purple Knapweed and pale lilac Scabious.



*Bright blue Common Milkwort and other wildflowers in the chalk grassland reserve by the Ruddyery Pit.*

We hope you enjoy exploring the footpaths of Guilden Morden. As you walk these paths you are, quite literally, following in the footsteps of people who have lived and worked here for hundreds or even thousands of years. You are travelling across a landscape that was once an ocean floor and, more recently, lay under an ice sheet perhaps a kilometre thick. If your imagination fails there is wildlife to be seen in uncultivated corners such as hedgerows and field margins, the chalk pit, and in cultivated fields, too. All this with fresh air and gentle exercise to benefit your health.

Please remember that other people hope to enjoy the footpaths and wildlife of the parish. Please clean up after your dog and in spring and early summer please keep dogs on leads to avoid disturbing ground-nesting birds in the fields and hedgerows. Please take your litter home!

If you have any questions about the footpaths, or wish to report problems on the network, please contact the Guilden Morden Parish Clerk, ideally via email: [parishclerk@guildenmorden.gov.uk](mailto:parishclerk@guildenmorden.gov.uk)

*This leaflet was published by  
Guilden Morden Parish Council  
with funding from Awards for All.*



# Explore landscape, wildlife & history on the footpaths of Guilden Morden



## Parish paths & parish history

Roads and paths record the ways that people move across the landscape. Walking the footpath network not only provides exercise and pleasure, it's a direct link with those who walked here in the past and will walk here in the future.

People have lived and worked in Guilden Morden for several thousand years, leaving a legacy of tracks and roads as well as the remains of their buildings and possessions. ASHWELL STREET is one of the routes of the prehistoric Icknield Way, a network of tracks running along the Chalk from Norfolk southwest to Buckinghamshire and beyond. The people who left their flint axes near MOBB'S HOLE may have travelled here on Ashwell Street; the axes might have been used to clear some of the woodland that covered much of the parish 6000 years ago. Low mounds in the fields of Odsey are BRONZE AGE BARROWS, burial mounds nearly 4500 years old, worn away by centuries of ploughing. North of Odsey the parish and county boundaries and a path follow what may be an Iron Age boundary, the SHIRE BAULK. Iron Age relics, probably from graves, have been found elsewhere in the parish. The CEMETERY on the hill that later became the chalk pit is unusual because it contained Iron Age burials as well as Roman.

Guilden Morden was already productive farmland when the Romans arrived in Britain. A VILLA stood near Ashwell Street, with a good view of the CEMETERY. A ROMAN ROAD linking Cambridge with what is now the A1 ran through the centre of the village, and the remains of other Roman buildings were found in Odsey.

The Anglo-Saxons followed the Romans. COBB'S

LANE runs along a bank that may have been raised c. 1015 to mark the boundary between two Saxon estates. The remains of SAXON DWELLINGS have been excavated south of Ashwell Street, while fragments of Saxon pottery, amber beads and a sculpted boar (possibly a helmet crest) were found elsewhere in the parish. Two SAXON GRAVES, one containing a child and the other a young man and older woman, lay near Church Lane.

The earliest written record of Guilden Morden is the Domesday Book. In 1086 the Mordens were still grouped together as *Morduna*, meaning 'Marsh-hill' (a name that makes sense if you approach either village from the north over what was once low, wet ground). By the 13th century this Morden was known as 'Guilden', meaning rich or productive.

Guilden Morden village formed as settlements on a track running south from Tadlow to the Icknield Way grew together over the centuries. Little Green and Great Green, Church Street, Pound End, Town End and a group of houses along Fox Hill and Trap Road were once all separate places. A small settlement near Ruddy known as *Redreth* was last mentioned in the 14th century. The precise location is unknown, but in the 1520s Barnwell Priory in Cambridge was still appointing hermits to its chapel, *Redderia*. Odsey appears to be another small, relatively isolated hamlet, but the land in Guilden Morden was once a medieval grange, a farm producing goods for Warden Abbey in Bedfordshire.

Like its neighbours, Guilden Morden has always been a farming community, although medieval records list the associated industry of straw-plaiting for hats as well as a brickworks, weavers, and chandlers. 'Numerous sheep' were kept here, but the most important crop was barley, sent to Royston and

London to become brewers' malt. About 500–600 people have lived here almost since records began, but the population rose to over 1000 in the 19th century heyday of coprolite mining. In this area *coprolites* are phosphate-rich nodules found in layers in the Gault and Lower Chalk. The most famous bed, the *Cambridge Greensand*, lies at the junction of the two rocks. Properly treated they became a valuable fertiliser: across the county these clays were turned over in trenches dug by hard-working and poorly-paid coprolite miners.

The open fields were enclosed in 1805, after which the low-lying meadows such as *Pelhams Cow Common* near the river were drained and ploughed. Guilden Morden is still surrounded by farmland, but has grown in size with many residents now travelling to work in London or Cambridge.



Found beside footpaths in Guilden Morden: 1. a badly-worn fragment of ammonite (Cretaceous); 2. flint containing a fossil brachiopod (Cretaceous); 3. fragment of phosphatic nodule; 4. a rounded piece of quartzite probably brought here by a glacier; 5. 'pot boilers', heat-shocked flints used to boil water in non-fireproof containers (probably Neolithic); 6. a fragment of quern (Roman); 7. potsherds (Roman and medieval); 8. clay pipe stems (19th century).

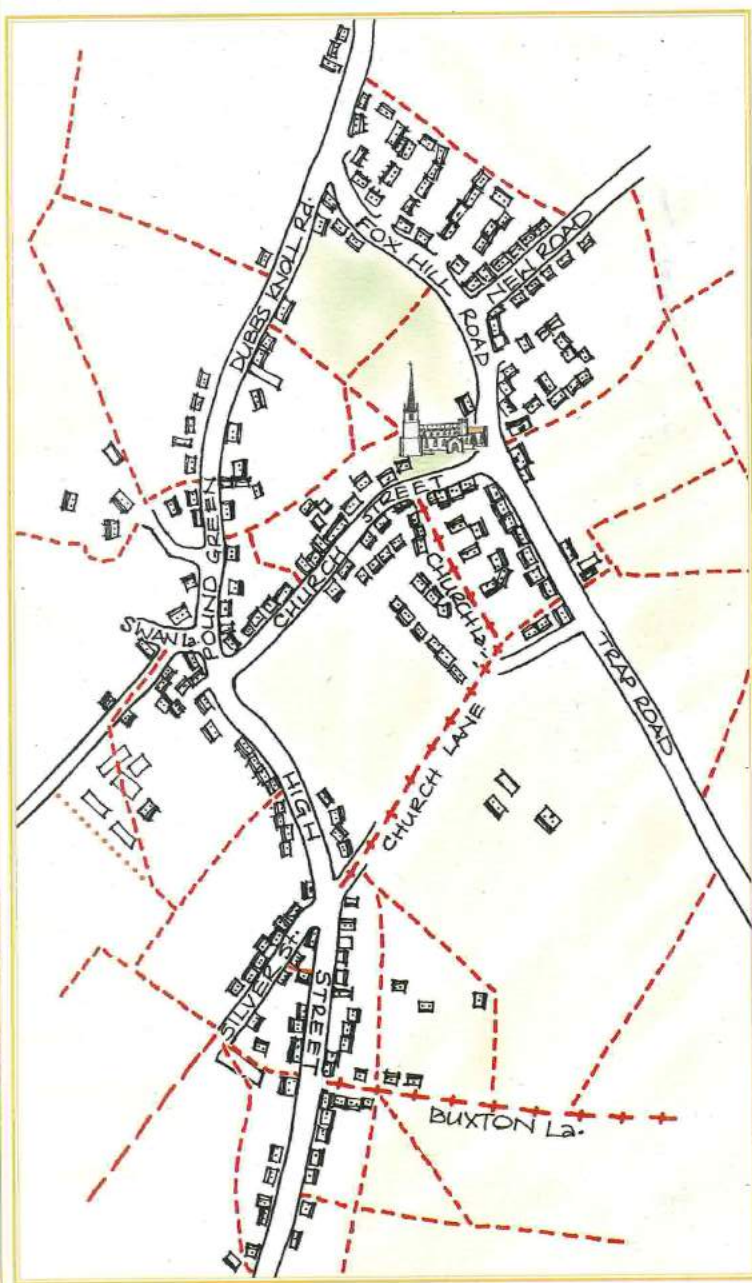


Palaeolithic	Mesolithic	Neolithic	Bronze Age	Iron Age	Roman	Saxon	Medieval	Modern
7500		3500	2000	700	43	410	1066	1500

- Key**
- Public footpath
  - Public bridleway
  - Public byway
  - Other paths, including permissive paths.
  - Parish boundary
  - County boundary

1. HOOK'S MILL was *hoksmelne* in 1381. This is probably the site of the mill recorded in the Domesday Book. It is not open to the public.
2. LITTLE GREEN
3. GREAT GREEN
4. MORDEN HALL was built by Thomas Haselden, Controller of the household of the unpopular John of Gaunt, after a party of rebels burnt his original house during the Peasants' Revolt in the 14th century. Morden Hall is one of the finest moated sites in the county.
5. TWEEN TOWNS or MILLENNIUM WOOD
6. WHITEPONDS WOOD (Steeple Morden)
7. THE VINEYARD track was granted in Guilden Morden's Enclosure Act to provide Ashwell's commoners access to their Cow Common (grazing land) until Ashwell itself was enclosed in 1858. The track remains a pleasant walk, named for adjacent fields.

Many paths within the village will take you close to houses and across private gardens. Please respect the privacy of the owners, be particularly careful not to make excessive noise, and keep dogs under control.



COBB'S LANE (most of which is in Steeple Morden) is part of a road that ran from Tadlow, on the Cambridge-Oxford road, south to Odsey and what is now the A505 (part of the Icknield Way). This was probably the most important route through the village in the Middle Ages and possibly even earlier; it runs along a bank that may mark an Anglo-Saxon boundary.

