

Land North of Cambridge Road, Linton

**Preliminary Landscape and Visual Appraisal**

for

Carter Jonas

on behalf of

Bloor Homes

Planning | 21st December 2021



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the study

- 1.1.1 The Landscape Partnership has been commissioned by Carter Jonas on behalf of Bloor Homes to undertake a Preliminary Landscape and Visual Appraisal of land to the north of Cambridge Road, on the western edge of Linton, referred to here as the site.
- 1.1.2 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire Council are working together to create a joint Local Plan for the two areas, referred to collectively as Greater Cambridge. The plan will cover the period to 2041.
- 1.1.3 The findings of the Preliminary Landscape and Visual Appraisal, as presented in this Technical Note, will be used to demonstrate the site's suitability to accommodate residential development as part of representations to include the site in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals consultation.
- 1.1.4 The proposed site extends to 20.83ha and encompasses a collection of agricultural fields and associated buildings.
- 1.1.5 It is anticipated that the site might be developed for c.300 dwellings, a GP surgery site, an early years site, and allotments.

## 1.2 Objectives of the report

- 1.2.1 The preliminary landscape and visual appraisal provides a high-level review of landscape (site features and landscape character) and visual receptors that might be affected by development at the site.
- 1.2.2 In defining 'landscape', reference is made to the adopted definition agreed by the European Landscape Convention (Florence: Council of Europe 2000), which states that the landscape is: "*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*". The process to understand how landscape features, landscape character and views would be affected is informed by the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA)<sup>1</sup>. This appraisal is not, however, a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as this was not considered proportionate or necessary at this stage of the project, when firm development proposals are not available.
- 1.2.3 The appraisal provides a description of the existing landscape and built features within the site and its immediate vicinity. It also considers the relationship of these features to the local and wider landscape characteristics; the contribution that these features have in views; and the presence of statutory or local landscape-related designations.
- 1.2.4 In doing so, the appraisal highlights the key sensitive landscape and visual receptors that could be affected by residential development at the site. It provides initial commentary on the likely effects development would have on them, and notes as to potential mitigation measures that might be

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, April 2013

appropriate to negate or offset such effects to within acceptable thresholds. It should be noted that such receptors and mitigation measures have been identified as part of the baseline assessment and without recourse to an appropriate impact assessment or detailed scheme proposals, thus they may not be exhaustive.

1.2.5 The following work stages were undertaken to prepare the preliminary landscape and visual appraisal:

- Desktop study to identify an indicative zone of visual influence, any local statutory and non-statutory landscape-related designations, local public rights of way, and existing landscape character assessments covering the site and its vicinity.
- Field study to verify local landscape characteristics; provide commentary on the condition, sensitivity and capacity of the local landscape character to accommodate change of the type and scale proposed; appraise the contribution of any landscape features within the site that might be lost; identify and provide commentary on the sensitivity of key visual receptors.
- Identification of any parcels of land within the site that might have the capacity, in landscape terms, to accommodate residential development, to help inform the emerging masterplan.
- Identification of any broad mitigation measures that may be required if the proposed development is to be considered acceptable.

1.2.6 Supporting figures and context photographs are reproduced at Appendix 01.

### 1.3 Assumptions and limitations

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1.3.1 The following assumptions have been made in respect of the assessment of effects:

- The site is as shown on Concept Masterplan, within the Masterplan Vision prepared by Carter Jonas, dated December 2021.
- The appraisal baseline year is 2021.
- Existing vegetation will continue to grow at rates typical of the species, and its location and maturity.
- Any proposed tree and shrub planting would grow at a rate of approximately 250 to 300mm/year and the proposed hedge planting at approximately 250mm/year, based on the average expected growth rates for typical species growing on freely draining, slightly acid, base rich soils, with a high fertility<sup>2</sup>, that are likely to be present at the site. Predicted growth is also based on the assumption that no growth will take place in the first year, as the plants adjust to their new growing environments.
- The receptor for a view from a public right of way, within public open space, or within a residential property is represented as an adult standing with an eye height of 1.6m.
- Visual effects are assessed on the basis of good visibility. Visual effects can be expected to vary, e.g. poor visibility at times of low cloud, rainfall and dusk. At these times, a reduction in visual

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>, accessed 30.01.2020



clarity, colour and contrast would be experienced. Reduced visibility would limit the extent of view possible particularly in mid to long distance views. Consequently, the assessment of effects is based on the worst-case scenario, where the proposed development would be most visible.

- Extent of use of public rights of way is based on known information (e.g. if the right of way forms part of a promoted route at a local or national level), signage, and circumstantial evidence at the time of the survey such as recent disturbance of grass and crops, a clearly defined path, extent of wear, and the number of people/horses using the right of way at the time of the survey. The extent of use of a road is based on the number of vehicles observed using the road at the time of the survey and as could reasonably be expected for the class of road.

1.3.2 The appraisal was undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect and Members of the Landscape Institute, who viewed the site during two site visits in February 2020 and October 2021 from adjacent land, local rights of way, and public locations (e.g. areas with recreational access). On all occasions, the weather was bright and clear. It was noted that deciduous trees were devoid of leaves and that ephemeral vegetation such as grasses and herbaceous plants had little presence. As such, the views experienced might be considered to represent a worst-case scenario in terms of screening properties.

1.3.3 In undertaking the appraisal, other than the site, private property has not been accessed, as it is generally considered impracticable to seek approval to gain access to residential properties or other buildings to assess the effect on views from each window in a property or adjoining land. Assessment is therefore based on the nearest publicly accessible location, which will usually be a road or public right of way, or on views within the site looking outwards. Professional judgement is used to extrapolate what the likely effect on views would be from windows, making allowances for changes in height, e.g. from a first-floor window.

## 1.4 Land parcels

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1.4.1 The site comprises an area of farmland at the western edge of the village and to the north of Cambridge Road. Linton Lane leads northwards from Cambridge Road towards Little Linton Farm and bisects the site. The area around the historic farmstead is not included within the application site.

1.4.2 To aid clarity within this appraisal, the site has been sub-divided into a set of parcels:

- Parcel A describes the land to the west of Linton Lane.
- Parcel B describes the land between Linton Lane and Linton Village Collage.
- Parcel C describes the area nearest the river.

1.4.3 All parcels are contiguous with each other. The location of the parcels is illustrated at Appendix 01, Figure 01.

## 2 Landscape context and site features

### 2.1 Site context

- 2.1.1 The site is located on the western edge of the village of Linton. The parish falls within the administrative area of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
- 2.1.2 Linton is a large village. It is located in the Granta Valley, in the south-eastern portion of the South Cambridgeshire district.
- 2.1.3 The geological deposits that underlie South Cambridgeshire predominantly date from the Cretaceous Period of geological history (65 to 140 million years ago). The south-eastern part of the district is underlain by chalk. This chalk is overlain by glacial bolder clay that was deposited by the retreating glaciers at the end of the last ice age. The chalklands rise into a range of low-lying hills that are around 100m above sea level. All of the chalklands drain to the River Cam and its associated tributaries, which in turn feeds into the River Great Ouse and onwards to the North Sea via the Wash.
- 2.1.4 The siting and historical development of settlements within South Cambridgeshire is closely associated with the communication network (and in particular river crossings and road junctions), the avoidance of land liable to flooding and developments in agriculture. The spring-lines between the chalk and clay were favoured areas for settlement and so, to an even greater extent, were the river valleys, with their light gravel and alluvial soils and good communications. The chalk areas to the south could only be settled where water supplies were available, but the open aspect of this countryside made it particularly suitable for trade routes from east to west across the region, using numerous parallel tracks that are collectively known as the Icknield Way.
- 2.1.5 All the current villages of South Cambridgeshire were in existence at the time of the Domesday Book, with the exception of the modern communities at Bar Hill and Cambourne. Until the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the majority of parishes farmed in common, as they had since Saxon times, with the huge medieval open fields worked in narrow strips. Then, over a period of 100 years, these fields were enclosed by successive acts of parliament as the enclosure movement brought about major change to the countryside.
- 2.1.6 The village of Linton lies approximately nine miles south-east of Cambridge, at a crossing point on the river Granta.
- 2.1.7 Little Linton and Great Linton originated as separate settlements. The two Lintons are recorded as early as 1008 when King Ethelred sold land in the area to Ely Abbey. Both names appear in the Domesday Book of 1086, with Little Linton apparently half as populous as Great Linton. The site of Little Linton manor house was a moated enclosure between the present day farmhouse and the river. A mill, fishpond and barns were also part of this manorial complex. No visible remains of the manor house survive. The oldest parts of the existing farmhouse (to the south-west of the moat) appear to date from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.1.8 The history of the village of Little Linton is uncertain. It has been suggested that it never existed as a discrete settlement, separated from the present-day Linton. However, earthworks immediately to the south-west of the medieval moated site form rectilinear enclosures which are typical of a

deserted medieval village. The earthworks cover a relatively small area but nonetheless probably represent at least part of the deserted medieval village of Little Linton. There is also evidence of rabbit warrens.

2.1.9 Archaeological investigations in the 1990s revealed the presence of cobbled surfaces which were interpreted as parts of a cobbled street forming part of a small village which is thought to date from the Saxon era. Pottery remains suggest that the village survived in the later medieval period. It is also understood that a gravelled carriageway known as ‘the causeway’ was laid out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This marked the course of a much earlier trackway between Little Linton manor house and the village of Linton.

## 2.2 The site

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2.2.1 The site comprises an area of arable and pastoral farmland that extends to 20.83ha. The application boundary takes in land at the western edge of the village, to the north of Cambridge Road. Linton Lane leads northwards from Cambridge Road to Little Linton. Little Linton originated as a distinct settlement, which was based around a medieval manor. The manor was located on a moated site between the existing farmhouse and the River Granta. There are no remains of the manor, but the 17<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse survives together with a series of historic barns. These form an attractive group of buildings that do not form part of the application site.

2.2.2 As noted at Section 1, to aid clarity within this appraisal, the site has been sub-divided into a set of land parcels.

- Parcel A describes the land to the west of Linton Lane.
- Parcel B describes the land between Linton Lane and Linton Village Collage.
- Parcel C describes the area nearest to the river.

2.2.3 All the parcels are contiguous with each other.

2.2.4 Parcel A (the land to the west of Linton Lane) is the largest in extent and is less influenced by its proximity to the existing settlement. It includes relatively small fields adjacent to Linton Lane and a large open field to the west. The areas adjacent to Linton Lane are more domestic in character. An avenue of young trees lines one side of the lane, there is a steel cattle barn and block of woodland plantation, and a pair of 20<sup>th</sup> century cottages on the approach to the farmstead. A public bridleway follows the route of the lane.

2.2.5 The hedgerows within this parcel appear to be relatively recent (20<sup>th</sup> century), but are well-established and maintained. The large field is crossed by overhead power lines and the field includes a tall steel pylon. The north-western corner of the site includes a number of mature parkland trees (oaks). The first edition OS map shows that much of the site originally comprised parkland, but only a few of these trees survive. These fields are labelled as ‘warrens’ on earlier estate maps.

2.2.6 The western edge of the parcel adjoins Cow Gallery Wood. This wood consists of an oak plantation. The southern boundary is demarcated by Cambridge Road. The current road follows its historic alignment but has been ungraded in the past and has the appearance of a modern highway. The road disturbs the tranquillity of the countryside in this part of the site. The northern boundary is

marked by a native hedgerow with hedgerow trees. The western end of this hedgerow follows the alignment shown on the earlier OS map. Other features within the parcel (the cattle barn, plantation woodland and semi-detached properties) are later additions to the landscape. There is a gentle fall across the parcel towards the river.

2.2.7 Parcel B is located to the east of Linton Lane. The parcel comprises pasture and paddocks, as well as a small disused gravel pit. The boundary with the Linton Village Collage is defined by young plantation woodland. Fields are delineated by fences. The northern part of this parcel contains a series of subtle mounds which are thought to represent medieval streets and banks. A 17<sup>th</sup> century map shows this area as plantation woodland/orchard. A public right of way forms the northern boundary of this parcel, and a second public right of way crosses the parcel. The parcel is relatively flat.

2.2.8 Parcel C consists of further paddocks, with the eastern boundary adjoining the River Cam. This parcel of land is situated between a public right of way and the river, part of which falls within the flood zone. Fields are delineated by fences. Riparian trees are present within the river corridor. The parcel is relatively flat.

## 2.3 Site features

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### **Geology**

2.3.1 The geological deposits that underlay South Cambridgeshire predominantly date from the Cretaceous Period of geological history (65 to 140 million years ago), which, by geological standards, are therefore relatively young. The geology is divided into a series of strata that outcrop in bands running roughly north-east to south-west across the district. The south-eastern half of the district is underlain by chalk, a soft white limestone of great purity and composed almost entirely of calcium carbonate derived from the shells of marine animals deposited in a warm, clear sea.

2.3.2 The chalk bedrock in South Cambridgeshire is covered by superficial deposits of diamicton of the Lowestoft Formation. These consist of mixed glacial deposits which formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. The Cam valley cuts through these glacial deposits to reach the underlying chalk strata. Alluvial deposits are present within the narrow floodplain area, while river terrace deposits are also present to either side of the floodplain. It is these river terrace deposits that underlie the majority of the site.

### **Soils**

2.3.3 The soils within the site are described as freely draining, slightly acid, and base-rich, with a high fertility<sup>3</sup> Landcover is typically arable and grass land, and drainage is to groundwaters. Regarding water protection, it is note that there is a risk of *“Groundwater contamination with nitrate; siltation and nutrient enrichment of streams from soil erosion on certain of these soils”*.

2.3.4 Typical habitats of these soils are base-rich pastures and deciduous woodlands, and this should be reflected in the landscape strategy accompanying any development at the site.

2.3.5 The soils of the lower lands, along the north-eastern edge of the site and adjacent to the river corridor, are described as *“Loamy and clayey floodplain soils with naturally high groundwater”* with

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>, accessed 30.01.2020

moderate fertility and are noted to drain to local groundwater feeding into the river. With regard to water protection, it is noted that: “Close proximity to river results in pollution risk from floodwater scouring and from drainage water after spreading of fertiliser or slurry”. Typical land use grassland, with some arable, and typical habitats here are “Wet flood meadows with wet carr woodlands in old river meanders”.

### **Landform**

2.3.6 While much of South Cambridgeshire is low lying, there are some significant variations to the topography across the district, with a strong correlation to the underlying geology. All of the chalklands drain to the River Cam and its associated tributaries, which in turn flows into the River Great Ouse.

2.3.7 The site itself is located within the base of the Cam Valley. It lies to the south of the River Cam, and the ground within the site slopes gently towards the river.

2.3.8 The landform of the site and its environs is illustrated on Figure 02: Topography.

### **Vegetation**

2.3.9 Most of the site consists of fields. The vegetation cover in these fields consists of permanent grassland which is subject to grazing. The site also includes a small disused gravel pit which contains scrub and grassland.

2.3.10 Woody vegetation at the site consists of:

- a hedgerow along the Cambridge Road frontage, containing a mixture of mature shrubs and more recent infill planting;
- native hedge with hedgerow trees along the north-eastern boundary;
- Internal, well-maintained native species hedgerow;
- tree belts and hedges along the south-eastern boundaries;
- intermittent parkland oaks in the vicinity of the electricity pylon;
- an avenue of young trees lining Linton Lane; and
- a small block of young plantation woodland adjoining Linton Lane.

2.3.11 There is also a block of woodland immediately beyond the north-western boundary at Cow Gallery Wood. The near-by river channel is also well-wooded.

### **Landscape-related historical assets**

2.3.12 The OS six-inch map of England and Wales, revised 1901 and published in 1904 shows quite an open site with a scattering of parkland trees. Fields in this area were farmed in common and hedgerows were not therefore an important feature of the landscape. The only field boundaries that are shown on the OS map are straight, which suggests late enclosure.

2.3.13 A few parkland oaks survive within Parcel A. These are the only remnant of the parkland that previously occurred across much of the site.

- 2.3.14 The network of public rights of way that cross the site largely preserve the historic routes shown on the first edition OS map, but with some rationalisation.
- 2.3.15 The disused gravel pit is shown on the first edition OS map and could be considered an historic feature. Cow Gallery Wood is also present to the west of the site. This is an area of oak plantation which survives more or less intact.
- 2.3.16 The route of the former Cambridge Haverhill & Sudbury Branch line is evident to the south-west, beyond Cambridge Road.

#### **Public access**

- 2.3.17 Linton Lane is a minor public road which leads from Cambridge Road to Little Linton. The road terminates at the farm and is not likely to carry much traffic.
- 2.3.18 The site is crossed by a number of rights of way:
- PROW 146/2 is a long footpath that follows the route of the river valley from Linton to Hildersham. The footpath follows a line along the northern edge of parcels A and B. It also marks the southern edge of Parcel C. The footpath offers views to the historic farmstead and the river corridor.
  - PROW 146/7 is a public bridleway that leads southward along the route of Linton Lane from Little Linton Farm. The route also continues beyond the site boundary.
  - PROW 146/5 follows a line across Parcel B that connects PROW 146/2 and Linton Lane. The path continues to the west of Linton Lane across Parcel A to meet Cambridge Road.
- 2.3.19 The public rights of way are illustrated on Figure 04.

## **3 Landscape character**

### **3.1 Overview**

- 3.1.1 The importance of understanding the landscape character of all landscapes in England is recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF para 174), which states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to the natural environment by: *“recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland”*. Landscape character assessment is the process which can identify these intrinsic values and unique characteristics of the diverse landscapes in the UK.
- 3.1.2 Landscape character assessments enable landscapes to be described and understood by mapping natural, physical and cultural features in order to define different landscapes and demonstrate what makes them special. Landscape character types share similar characteristics, such as underlying geology, soil type, topography and landform, the pattern and type of land/field enclosure, historic land use, the pattern of settlements and types of building that these comprise, tree and woodland cover and the general visual experience of the area. Landscape character areas are specific geographic areas that exhibit a particular landscape character type. Landscape character assessments can be undertaken at a range of scales. Boundaries are only indicative of the

change between areas and therefore when working at a site scale, especially close to boundaries between landscape character types or character areas; users should carefully identify which landscape the land parcel belongs to, based on its specific characteristics. In addition, it is important to note that while drawn with a line on a map, areas close to boundaries often may be better thought of as an area of transition and may display some of the characteristics and sensitivities of both character areas.

3.1.3 Effects on landscape character can be both direct, i.e. on the character area/type that the site is located within, and indirect, i.e. changes to characteristics or perceptions of character that occur beyond the boundary of a character area/type.

3.1.4 There are a number of relevant landscape character assessments that encompass the site. These are at the national level (National Character Areas), the regional level (East of England Landscape Typology), the county level (Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines) and the district level (Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment). Reference is also made to the South Cambridgeshire Village Capacity Study.

## 3.2 National level – National Character Areas

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3.2.1 In the mid-1990s, English Nature and the Countryside Commission jointly produced The Character Map of England – a single map that identified and described 159 Joint Character Areas (JCA) covering the whole of England. (The Landscape Partnership undertook the mapping and character assessment work on behalf of Natural England for the east of England). Each distinct area was defined following consideration of its landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, and cultural and economic activity. The boundaries of the areas followed natural rather than administrative boundaries. The various volumes of the Map were published between 1998 and 2000.

3.2.2 More recently, Natural England has undertaken a review of the JCAs in order to fulfil, in part, responsibilities set out in the Natural Environment White Paper 2011, Biodiversity 2020, and the European Landscape Convention 2007, creating National Character Area (NCA) profiles that are based on the original JCA profiles.

3.2.3 The site is located within **NCA 87: East Anglian Chalk**. The East Anglian Chalk National Character Area (NCA) is characterised by the narrow continuation of the chalk ridge that runs south-west to north-east across southern England. The underlying Cretaceous Chalk geology is covered in superficial glacial deposits of till. This creates a visually simple and uninterrupted landscape of smooth, rolling chalkland hills with large regular fields enclosed by low hawthorn hedges, with few trees and straight roads. The vast majority of the landscape is open countryside under cereal production. The smooth rolling chalkland hills are dissected by the gentle valleys of the rivers Granta and Rhee, which converge to form the River Cam. The region has thin chalk soils. Historically, sheep rearing and corn production have shaped the area, leading to the creation of botanically rich grasslands, which are now often small and fragmented.

3.2.4 Relevant key characteristics of NCA 87 include:

- *The underlying and solid geology is dominated by Upper Cretaceous Chalk, a narrow continuation of the chalk ridge that runs south-west–north-east across southern*

*England, continuing in the Chilterns and along the eastern edge of The Wash. The chalk bedrock has given the NCA its nutrient-poor and shallow soils.*

- *Distinctive chalk rivers, the River Rhee and River Granta, flow in gentle river valleys in a diagonally north-west direction across the NCA.*
- *The rolling downland, mostly in arable production, has sparse tree cover but distinctive beech belts along long, straight roads. Certain high points have small beech copses or 'hanger', which are prominent and characteristic features in the open landscape. In the east there are pine belts.*
- *Remnant chalk grassland, including road verges, supports chalkland flora and vestigial populations of invertebrates, such as great pignut and the chalkhill blue butterfly.*
- *Archaeological features include Neolithic long barrows and bronze-age tumuli lining the route of the prehistoric Icknield Way; iron-age hill forts, including that at Wandlebury; impressive Roman burial monuments and cemeteries such as the Bartlow Hills; a distinctive communication network linking the rural Roman landscape to settlements and small towns, such as Great Chesterford; the four parallel Cambridgeshire dykes that cross the Chalk: the Anglo-Saxon linear earthworks of Devil's Dyke, Fleam Dyke, Heydon/Bran Ditch and Brent Ditch; ridge-and-furrow cultivation remains of the open field systems of the earlier medieval period; and large numbers of later moated enclosures, park lands Wandlebury Hill Fort from the air in 1980. The wooded concentric earth bank can be clearly seen. created, sheepwalks, arterial routes and nucleated villages that emphasise the land use change of this period.*
- *Brick and 'clunch' (building chalk) under thatched roofs were the traditional building materials, with some earlier survival of timber frame. Isolated farmhouses built of grey or yellowish brick have a bleached appearance.*
- *Settlement is focused in small towns and in villages. There are a number of expanding commuter villages located generally within valleys. Letchworth Garden City is a nationally significant designed garden city.*

3.2.5 This is a visually continuous, open landscape, with occasional long views over the lower land to the north and west. The valleys of the rivers Granta, Rhee and Cam have a contrasting small-scale intimacy that is enhanced by small woods, pasture and wetland vegetation.

### 3.3 Regional Level – East of England Landscape Typology

3.3.1 The East of England Regional Landscape Framework was developed by Landscapes East in 2010. The landscape framework provides a consistent, integrated landscape typology for the East of England. Work was undertaken at a regional scale (1:50,000). The work integrated Landscape Description Units with Historic Landscape Characterisation, regional biodiversity data and rural settlement mapping to create the regional typology.

3.3.2 Linton is found within the **Lowland Village Chalklands** Character Type. This is described as “a well settled, low lying landscape. The high density of settlement, intensive agriculture and major transport infrastructure mean that this is often a busy, rural landscape.”



3.3.3 The Lowland Village Chalklands have a low-lying topography which includes land within the river valleys. This landscape is drained by small streams that are visually indistinct. In terms of its ecological character this is an intensively farmed agricultural landscape, with patches of wet woodland, reedbed and wet grassland within the river valleys. Arable farmland is the dominant land use, with some areas of pasture and orchards, as well as occasional flooded gravel workings. Tree cover consists of groups of trees around farmsteads and occasional small plantations. Medieval moated sites and fine stone churches are a characteristic feature. The area features a dense, largely nucleated, rural settlement pattern of small towns, villages and outlying farmsteads. The main building materials include Gault clay, brick, clay tile, render and thatch. The landscape is dominated by the late enclosure of common fields. All fieldscapes have experienced significant modification during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.4 Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines, 1991

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3.4.1 The Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines were prepared by Cambridge County Council in 1991 to:

- *Increase people's awareness of landscape quality.*
- *Mobilise care and action amongst the main bodies who play the most active role in generating tomorrow's landscapes.*
- *Improve overall visual quality and strengthen the contrasts between landscapes in different parts of the County (emphasising a sense of place).*
- *Integrate wildlife conservation into landscape action at all scales from planning at a county level, through site planning, design and management, to the detailing of "hard" and "soft" features at the smallest scale.*
- *Protect and enhance historic features.*
- *Conserve existing features and create landmarks and 'personality' in the landscape.*

3.4.2 The site falls within Landscape **Character Area 1: South-east Clay Hills**. The supporting text notes:

*This is an undulating area, quite high for Cambridgeshire, at about 100-120m above sea level on the hilltops. The small villages and hamlets have developed in more sheltered situations, usually along the springline in the shallow valleys.*

*Dense woodland and heavy soils deterred prehistoric farmers. By medieval times all our present villages had been founded, although these are often recognisably later and less successful than villages to the east or west. Moated sites are common, making use of water-retentive soil to give protection to homesteads in a newly settled landscape.*

*Landscape character derives from the scattering of farmsteads, and small settlements interspersed with farm woodlands. The field sizes are large, but are united by the gently rolling landform and woodlands. Earth banks are a distinctive feature along some roadsides, appearing to be a relic from the historic hedge and bank field boundaries; a few still retain their hedges. Elsewhere surviving hedges, often without trees, are trimmed low and can created [sic] a mean appearance to the landscape.*

3.4.3 This description accords with the landscape in the vicinity of the site at Little Linton.

3.4.4 The guidelines cite principles for landscape improvement and management in the South-east Clay Hills and notes: *“Generally this is a small-scale and satisfactorily composed landscape with enclosure and form provided by the gently rolling landform and woodland blocks. Nevertheless, improvements could usefully be direct towards the following principles”*; specific principles relevant to the site include:

- Management of existing woodlands: ancient semi-natural woodlands are important landscape, historical and nature conservation features, and those in the area should be carefully conserved. Enhancement of other woodlands could include selective felling and re-stocking, while most woods would benefit from the creation of ‘edge areas’.
- Creation of new woodlands: ideally these should extend or link with existing woods, but free-standing woods of 2 to 5ha or more in the area would have a significant impact. They should be carefully sited with regard to:
  - existing or potential views;
  - wildlife potential;
  - landform and skyline; and
  - the broader pattern of the landscape.
- Planting woodland belts and widened hedgerows: to create bold linear elements which link woods and copses; if sensitively placed for maximum impact, it is noted that such belts need not involve large areas of land.
- Hedgerow management: simple enhancement of the landscape could be achieved by allowing selected existing hedges to grow taller; those hedges with the strongest visual and wildlife potential should be selected for this purpose. Historically significant hedgerows should be carefully conserved.
- Village edges: where unsightly fringes to village meet farmland, woodland belts or broad hedgerows can be used for screening where land is available. Views from roads can be obscured by planting along the road margin. It is important to retain or frame particularly important views of distant skylines, fine village views, church towers, etc. and in these situations, a more open village edge, possibly with short avenues on the entrance roads, will be more appropriate.
- Footpath corridor improvements: landscape enhancement to local footpaths is needed along selected routes.

3.4.5 Such measures should be considered when exploring means of accommodating development at the site.

3.4.6 The site is close to the boundary with **Landscape Character Area 2: Chalklands**.

### 3.5 District level – Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment

3.5.1 The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service commissioned CBA to prepare *“an up-to-date and consistent Landscape Character Assessment of the whole Greater Cambridge area”*. The assessment was published in February 2021 and was undertaken at three scales:

- A detailed study of the landscapes within the Greater Cambridge Study Area (outside of the Cambridge Urban Area).
- A high-level study of the rural villages within the South Cambridgeshire District part of the Greater Cambridge Study Area.
- A high-level study of the landscapes and open spaces within the Cambridge Environs Study Area that contribute to the setting of Cambridge.

3.5.2 The site falls outside the area deemed to contribute to the setting of Cambridge.

3.5.3 The assessment is to be used by the councils to:

- Develop an appropriate spatial strategy in the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan.
- Develop suitable Local Plan policies to protect and enhance the area's sensitive, valued and vulnerable landscapes.
- Develop design, place-making, sustainable development and climate change policies in the Local Plan.
- Inform decision-making on planning applications.

3.5.4 The assessment divides the study area into Landscape Character Types (LCTs) – the site falls within LCT9: River Valleys - and then divides each of the LCTs into Landscape Character Areas (LCAs).

3.5.5 The site is located within LCA 9D: Granta River Valley, close to its boundary with LCA 8A: Pampisford Lowland Chalklands, the boundary being defined by the A1307.

3.5.6 The overall condition of the River Valleys LCT is described as good, and there is a strong sense of character.

3.5.7 The Granta River Valley is characterised by “a pattern of designed parkland and a sense of separation between historic villages on the raised edges of the floodplain in the Lowland Chalklands”; its key characteristics include:

- *Designed parkland landscapes, including modern development at Granta Park*
- *Sense of separation between villages on elevated land in the neighbouring Lowland Farmlands*
- *Time depth associated with historic routes into Cambridge, the Ickniel Way and designed parkland*

3.5.8 It is noted that “*The edges of the villages of Little Abington, Great Abington and Linton are within this LCA, as well as scattered linear settlement along roads, farms and cottages. Historically, settlement has grown along the important routes into Cambridge on the edges of this LCA where land is raised off the floodplain, and this LCA provides a sense of separation between villages in 3D: Cam & Granta Valley Lowland Farmlands and 8A: Pampisford Lowland Farmlands*”

3.5.9 The Specific Landscape Sensitivities of Landscape Character Area 9D are:

- *Designed parkland landscapes, including modern development at Granta Park*

- *Sense of separation between villages on elevated land in the neighbouring Lowland Farmlands*
- *Time depth associated with historic routes into Cambridge and the Icknield Way*

3.5.10 LCA 8A: **Pampisford Lowland Chalklands**, encompasses the lower slopes to either side of the river corridor. The Pampisford Lowland Chalklands LCA is a transitional landscape, between the River Valleys, Lowland Farmlands and the Chalk Hills. This area is described as “*a settled landscape comprising villages located on key historic routes along the River Cam and River Granta.*”

3.5.11 The key characteristics are noted as:

- *Mature hedgerows, small blocks of woodland and shelterbelts combine with occasional lines roadside trees to create a visually enclosed, intimate character*
- *Scattered designed historic parkland features, including some modern developments of large science and technology research parks, in proximity to the River Cam and River Granta*
- *Settlement pattern of scattered small villages on elevated ground at the edges of the River Valleys*

3.5.12 Views are “*generally short and enclosed by landform, woodland and shelterbelts, but occasionally there are framed long views towards wooded horizons from high ground.*”

3.5.13 It is noted that the A1307 is a busy road which locally erodes the rural character.

3.5.14 The Specific Landscape Sensitivities are:

- Well wooded, visually enclosed, intimate character
- Scattered designed historic parkland features, including some modern developments of large science and technology research parks, in proximity to the River Cam and River Granta

3.5.15 Views from within the Pampisford Lowland Chalklands are considered at Section 4: Visual context, e.g. Viewpoint F and Viewpoint H.

3.5.16 The LCA 7C: **Linton Chalk Hills**, is a simple, large scale rolling arable landscape with scattered woodland and open views across the Granta River Valley.

3.5.17 The key characteristics are noted as:

- *Simple rural landscape with large, rectilinear arable fields organised in an irregular pattern*
- *Sparsely scattered small woodland blocks, including ancient woodland*
- *Small pockets of lowland calcareous grassland and mosaic habitat*
- *Open character with long views across the Granta River Valley*
- *Distinctive linear features including earthworks, a Roman road, historic tracks, minor roads and dismantled railways*

- 3.5.18 The Linton Chalk Hills LCA is part of a rolling, elevated chalk landscape which extends beyond the district boundary. The land within this character area forms a series of chalk hills with a high point of 112m at Rivey Hill.
- 3.5.19 In terms of views “*The elevated landscape offers long views across the Granta River Valley to distant horizons which are punctuated by scattered woodland.*”
- 3.5.20 “*Rivey Hill Water Tower is a prominent feature on the horizon above Linton from the southern section of the LCA. Occasionally pylons and masts interrupt the skyline, and the wind turbines in 7A: Eastern Chalk Hills can be seen on the horizon in some views. Villages on lower ground within the 8A: Pampisford Lowland Chalklands are occasionally visible within views, generally they are well integrated into the landscape and built form appears in a wooded context.*”
- 3.5.21 This is a good description of the views in the vicinity of Linton.
- 3.5.22 The Specific Landscape Sensitivities of this area are:
- Scattered areas of priority habitat including deciduous woodland, pockets of lowland calcareous grassland and mosaic habitat.
- 3.5.23 Views from within the Linton Chalk Hills are considered at Section 4: Visual context, e.g. Viewpoints C, D and E.
- 3.5.24 The likely effects of the proposed development on LCA 9D, LCA 8A and LCA 7C, together with any recommendations for mitigation, are considered at Section 6.

### 3.6 South Cambridgeshire Village Capacity Study

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- 3.6.1 The South Cambridgeshire Village Capacity Study was prepared by Chris Blandford in 1998 on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council. The purpose of the study was to investigate the environmental capacity of South Cambridgeshire’s villages to accommodate development. The study divides the district into four character areas:
- Fen Edge
  - Western Claylands
  - Chalklands
  - South-East Clay Hills
- 3.6.2 Linton is found within **District Character Area C: Chalklands**. The assessment states that Linton has been a substantial settlement for many centuries and formerly had a market and fair. The landscape setting is described as follows:

*Linton is set in a Chalkland Landscape. It lies in the valley of the River Granta, enclosed by rising arable land. Within this setting there are marked differences. To the north, the land rises steeply from the village edge to Rivey Hill, creating a dominant backcloth. To the south east, the large predominantly hedge-free arable fields are in an undulating landscape, rising to the southern ridgelines of the chalk hills including Haw’s Hill, in the distance. The fields to the south are smaller, but have hedges, scattered trees, and some linear tree groupings along field edges.*

*The River Granta has its own water meadows and these, together with trees and hedgerows, form strong features in the landscape setting of Linton, both to the north-west and south-east of the village, but also between the southern edge of the historic core and the A1307.....*

*Part of the village edge is bounded by the water meadows of the River Granta, providing a soft enclosed feel to the village. The remaining edges are, in the main, well defined, with hedgerows delineating the boundaries of housing estates. To the west, the playing fields of the village college create a transition between Linton and the surrounding countryside.*

3.6.3 The assessment makes reference to:

- *Gradually rising large arable fields [to the south of the site]. Groups of trees to the horizon and a few tree/hedgerow boundaries.*
- *Very wide views [from public footpath to north of Cambridge Road] of village, with village college and estate development visible at the foot of Rivey Hill.*
- *Views [from Cambridge Road] across fields and estate development to water tower and woods.*

3.6.4 The closest identified village settlement edge to the site is No. 17, which is described as a “*Harsh edge with Village College fronting onto playing fields*”.

3.6.5 The environmental capacity assessment notes that settlement edge 17 adjacent to the site has a *Limited* capacity, noting: “*Village college playing fields form transition between collage buildings and surrounding countryside.*”

## 4 Visual context

### 4.1 Overview

4.1.1 In terms of its visibility, there are close proximity views from the public rights of way that cross the site and from the A1307. Private views, from the near-by residential properties, school and recreation ground, tend to be restricted in summer months by the intervening vegetation but would be more open during winter months.

4.1.2 The site is generally contained by vegetation, and mid-distance and longer-distance views are limited.

### 4.2 Close proximity views

4.2.1 There are a number of public rights of way within, and adjacent to, the site. Clear open views would be available from the public rights of way that cross the site, and here consideration would need to be given to the effects of the proposed development on the amenity of footpath users.

4.2.2 Footpath 146/2 is situated within the base of the valley. This path leads westwards from Linton towards Hildersham. New buildings would be visible from a section of this path where it crosses the site. The path would be retained within a corridor of open space. The visual experience would change quite noticeably in the eastern part of the site as a result of the introduction of new houses. The changes to views from the western section of the path, beyond Little Linton Farm, would be

less pronounced. This section of path is bordered by a native hedge, which would be supplemented with additional planting, thus lessening the effect on views.

- 4.2.3 Public footpath 146/5 crosses the site diagonally. It is likely that this path would be enclosed by development, which would alter the experience of users. The path only leads to the A1307, and beyond that to bridleway 146/6, which is a dead end. It is unlikely therefore that this path is frequently used. The path could be retained within a corridor of open space. Buildings should also be arranged to overlook the path, and gardens should be enclosed with hedges. It is considered that the path could be incorporated within the scheme design in an acceptable manner. Additional linkages could help make the route more attractive to users.
- 4.2.4 There is a section of bridleway to the west of Cambridge Road which affords views towards the site (bridleway 146/6). The bridleway does not, however, lead anywhere and is unlikely to be frequently used. Views of new houses would also be moderated by the proposed woodland planting.
- 4.2.5 The northern section of bridleway 146/7 follows the route of Little Linton Lane. This path would be retained within the development, but the visual experience would change. The path would continue to follow the route of Little Linton Lane, which would become a wider road. Buildings would be introduced that would overlook the road. The existing avenue of trees and the existing block of woodland would be retained within the proposed development. It is considered that measures could be taken to incorporate the route within the scheme design in an acceptable manner.
- 4.2.6 Public footpath 146/1 is situated in the base of the valley and leads towards the site. The path is enclosed by dense hedges which limit views. New houses would be situated beyond an existing hedgerow and would have a relatively small influence on views from the path. As it develops the proposed woodland planting would increasingly screen views of the new buildings, which would further reduce the effect on views from this path.
- 4.2.7 The site is clearly visible from the section of Cambridge Road (the A1307) which adjoins the southern site boundary. Views are available over the foreground field, the roofs of the farm buildings at Little Linton Farm can be seen, and Rivey Hill is visible in the background of the view. Pylons also feature overhead. A belt of woodland planting would be introduced adjacent to the road. As it develops this vegetation would increasingly screen the new houses within the view, and would create a soft edge to the settlement.
- 4.2.8 Most views from residential areas to the east are filtered by trees within the river valley. There are, however, a few properties that would have views from upstairs windows. These properties would overlook the proposed meadows which are adjacent to the River Granta. The development would not influence views from the main living spaces, and the effects on views would be moderated by existing vegetation.
- 4.2.9 Views from the school are filtered by belts of young trees on or near the site boundary.
- 4.2.10 The proposal would introduce new development in close proximity to the recreation ground. It is assumed that the trees on the site boundary would be protected and retained within the proposed development. The existing trees limit views into the site during summer months and the change to summertime views would be small, with new features glimpsed through the existing vegetation. The change to wintertime views would be more pronounced with more open views through the

vegetation. The recreation ground is already experienced within a fairly urbanised context with the school to the south and residential development to the north-east. The change to views from the recreation ground would therefore be relatively small.

### **4.3 Mid-distance and longer-distance views**

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- 4.3.1** There are potential views from the footpaths that traverse the rising ground to the south of the site. Views from bridleway 146/31, which also forms part of the Icknield Way, are prevented by the dense hedge which lines the route. Bridleway 146/7 leads directly towards the site from the south and views from the southern section of the route are constrained by hedgerows. More open views are available from the mid-section of this route, but most of the site is concealed by the intervening grain store, as well as vegetation. The westernmost edge of the site is visible beyond the grain store, but no development is proposed in this section of the site. Other footpaths to the south offer very limited potential views, with most views into the site being prevented by the grain store and the near-by vegetation.
- 4.3.2** The steep northern valley-side shares some inter-visibility with the site. The land to the north-west consists of farmland and is not publicly accessible. There are, however, potential views of the site from a short section of the Icknield Way Path (bridleway 146/21). From this route the site is seen in the base of the valley in the middle-distance. The higher ground of Rivey Hill offers extensive views across the countryside. It should be noted that housing estates within Linton are already a component of the existing view. The proposed development would extend the area of the settlement along the valley floor. Whilst this would have an adverse effect on the view, it would be an extension of the existing settlement pattern.
- 4.3.3** There are also partial views into the site from a section of Back Road. Views into the main body of the site are prevented by the tall trees in the river valley, but the westernmost section of the site is visible. It is probable that new buildings could be glimpsed during winter months; the influence of new development on views from the road would, however, be relatively small.
- 4.3.4** Bridleway 146/28 is situated on higher ground to the east of Linton. The bridleway offers views over the village, but the site is hidden amongst the vegetation in the base of the valley. Rooftops could be visible in winter months, but any change to the view would be minimal.

### **4.4 Representative views**

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- 4.4.1** Figures 04 illustrates the locations of a set of representative viewpoints that have been used to describe the range of views which might be available. They are all publicly accessible and encompass a range of geographical locations and receptor types at varying distances from the site. It is important to note that many of the viewpoints are points on linear movement routes (e.g. public footpaths), and that the view described is frequently representative of that experienced from many other points on the route. Annotated photographs illustrating the composition of the view from each point are also included at Appendix 01.



## 5 Landscape-related designations

### 5.1 Overview

5.1.1 Landscape-related designations covering the site or within its environs, which may be affected or influenced by development at the site, are described below. See also Figure 05: Landscape-related designations.

### 5.2 Ancient Woodland

5.2.1 Ancient Woodland is formally defined by Natural England and comprises woodland that has existed continuously since 1600. Such woodland is likely to have developed naturally, since before that date the planting of woodlands was not commonplace.

5.2.2 The nearest area of Ancient Woodland is approximately 800m to the north of the site at Furze Hill<sup>4</sup>.

### 5.3 Tree Preservation Orders

5.3.1 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) are made by a local planning authority in England to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity. An Order prohibits the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage or wilful destruction of trees without the local planning authority's written consent.

5.3.2 There are no TPOs within the site or its immediate vicinity<sup>5</sup>.

### 5.4 Scheduled Monuments

5.4.1 Scheduled Monuments are nationally important monuments and sites. The aim of scheduling is to preserve sites and monuments as far as possible in the form in which they have come down to us today. They are legally protected through the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979.

5.4.2 The nearest Scheduled Ancient Monument is Linton Roman Villa which is located approximately 1.2km to the east<sup>6</sup>. The villa survives in the form of substantial archaeological remains beneath the present ground surface and is largely unexcavated. There is no intervisibility with the site.

### 5.5 Listed Buildings

5.5.1 A Listed Building is a building or structure of special architectural or historic interest. Listed Buildings are protected by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

5.5.2 Linton contains a large number of listed buildings which are concentrated within the historic core of the village<sup>7</sup>. The historic core comprises the High Street, The Grip and Hadstock Road, together with a number of minor lanes which lead off High Street.

<sup>4</sup> Natural England's MAGIC Map <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>, accessed 09.12.2021

<sup>5</sup> Greater Cambridge Search by Map <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/planning/search-by-map/>, accessed 09.12.2021

<sup>6</sup> Natural England's MAGIC Map <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>, accessed 09.12.2021

<sup>7</sup> Natural England's MAGIC Map <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>, accessed 07.12.2021

5.5.3 The application area does not contain any Listed Buildings. Little Linton Farmhouse and a number of associated barns are, however, listed (all Grade II):

- Little Linton Farmhouse is a 16th century farmhouse, rebuilt in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with two rear wings, and partly demolished in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The building is a combination of timber-frame and plaster and painted brick. It has a slate and plain tile hipped roof and is two stories high.
- The barn to the north of Little Linton Farmhouse is a 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier aisled barn. The barn is timber-framed and weatherboarded with some lath and plaster infill, and has a brick plinth.
- Two barns to east of east-west range of barns, west of Little Linton Farmhouse. The two barns comprise an original 16<sup>th</sup> century barn with 17<sup>th</sup> century alterations and additions, and a later 17<sup>th</sup> century barn which was added to the west. The barns are timber-framed and weatherboarded with a plastered brick plinth.
- Barn to west of east-west range of barns, west of Little Linton Farmhouse. This barn is another aisled barn dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Like the other barns it is timber-framed and weatherboarded with a brick plinth.

5.5.4 The listed structures form part of two east-west ranges of barns which frame a large farmyard. There is some visual connection between the site and the listed buildings, though views are partially screened by intervening trees.

5.5.5 In addition to the buildings which are associated with the farm there is a listed clapper style to the north west of the Village Collage and west of the recreation ground. This style is located on the application boundary.

5.5.6 The Village College (1937) is a grade II listed building which represents the Modern movement style. This is accompanied by a Wardens House to the north of the village college (also 1937) which is also grade II listed. The Village College is located approximately 130m from the site at its closest point, and is partially separated from it by more recent educational buildings. There is however some potential intervisibility between the college and the eastern portion of the site. There is no intervisibility between the site and the Wardens House.

5.5.7 This appraisal considers only the visual context of listed buildings; effects on the heritage value and significance of the Listed Building are outside the scope of this assessment. The potential for effects on heritage assets is considered in the Heritage Assessment.

## 5.6 Conservation Areas

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5.6.1 The concept of Conservation Areas was first introduced in the Civic Amenities Act 1967 in which local authorities were encouraged to determine which parts of their area could be defined as “*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”. This was the first time that recognition was given to the architectural or historic interest not only of individual buildings, but also to groups of buildings, the relationship of one building to another, and the quality and character of the spaces between them.

5.6.2 Linton has an extensive Conservation Area which covers the historic parts of the village. The Conservation Area is centred on the High Street (which is 700m long), but also includes land to the south, where the church and mill can be found. The historic village (i.e. the designated area) is situated within the base of the valley. No Conservation Area Appraisal had been prepared at the time of writing. The site is located approximately 350m from the Conservation Area boundary at its closest point. The site is separated from the Conservation Area by modern residential development, a school and a Recreation Ground. There is no inter-visibility between the site and the Conservation Area.

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## 5.7 Registered Parks and Gardens

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5.7.1 The Historic England 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England', currently identifies over 1,600 sites assessed to be of particular significance. The main purpose of the register is to celebrate designed landscape of note, and encourage appropriate protection. Registration is a material consideration in the planning process, meaning that planning authorities must consider the impact of any proposed development on the landscapes' special character.

5.7.2 There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the study area<sup>8</sup>.

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## 5.8 Registered Common Land

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5.8.1 Conclusive Registered Common Land is land mapped under the Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 – Section 4. This is land which the public enjoy certain rights over, including the right of access.

5.8.2 There are no areas of registered common land in the study area<sup>9</sup>.

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## 5.9 Village Green

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5.9.1 Town and village greens developed under customary law as areas of land where local people could enjoy lawful sports and pastimes. Land can be registered as a Green if it has been used by local people for lawful sports and pastimes 'as of right' (i.e. without permission, force or secrecy) for at least 20 years.

5.9.2 The Recreation Ground is a Village Green (of less than 1ha). The Recreation Ground occupies a part of the floodplain immediately to the east of the site. The River Cam flows along the northern boundary of the Recreation Ground and there is a footpath along its southern boundary. The Recreation Ground is contained by built development to the north and south. Views between the Recreation Ground and the site are restricted by a belt of trees along the western edge of the public open space, and by school buildings (which are two floors high).

5.9.3 Another Village Green can be found at Hildersham 1.0km. The Green is located within the Granta Valley and is 1.0km downstream of the site. There is no view of the site from this green.

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<sup>8</sup> Natural England's MAGIC Map <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>, accessed 09.12.2021

<sup>9</sup> Natural England's MAGIC Map <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>, accessed 08.12.2021

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## 5.10 Public Rights of Way

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- 5.10.1 Public rights of way (PRoW) are designated routes accessible year-round to the public. These include public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways, and byways open to all traffic (BOATs).
- 5.10.2 PRoWs in the vicinity of the site are noted at Section 2 and illustrated on Figure 05.
- 5.10.3 There are a number of PRoWs that cross the site; however, it is considered that these could be incorporated and integrated within the proposed scheme. Long-term effects arising from the proposed development on the experience of users of the rights of way would be limited to changes in the view from them and such matters are considered in Section 4: Visual context.
- 5.10.4 Implementation of the proposed development would enable the creation of new links and circulation routes that could enhance the experience and enjoyment of users of the PRoW.

## 6 Summary of landscape capacity

- 6.1.1 The Landscape Partnership has been commissioned by Carter Jonas on Bloor Homes to undertake a preliminary landscape and visual appraisal to assess the capacity of a parcel of land to the north of Cambridge Road, on the western edge of Linton, to accommodate residential development. The findings will be used to help inform and shape the extent of any future development proposals.
- 6.1.2 The findings of the initial landscape and visual appraisal have been used to assess the capacity of the site to accommodate development.
- 6.1.3 It is important to note that the study considers only landscape-related aspects in its assessment of the ability of the site to accommodate development. For example, no account has been taken of access or highway issues, or the presence of ecologically important habitats. It is quite possible that the site could have the capacity to accommodate development in landscape terms (e.g. it is relatively well screened or set in strong vegetation framework), but that such development is not deliverable on account of other aspects, e.g. access or flooding issues.
- 6.1.4 The following recommendations have been made regarding the extent and form of landscape and visual mitigation measures that might be necessary:
- The site is located within the base of the Granta Valley and is adjacent to the existing settlement edge. It would therefore provide an extension to the existing settlement pattern. Use of appropriate building layouts, densities, forms and materials, as typical of the character of this area, would also help to integrate the development within the landscape.
  - The meadow adjacent to the River Granta, and the mature Oaks within the site (a legacy of a former parkland landscape) are typical features of the area, and are afforded a higher sensitivity. Particular care should be taken to ensure the survival of the oaks.
  - Existing vegetation should be retained within the design wherever possible and suitable offsets and protection measures should be provided to existing trees and hedges in accordance with the recommendations of an arboriculturist to ensure their survival. Potential for locally appropriate planting.

- The development would clearly have an urbanising effect on what is at present open farmland and would therefore have some adverse effect on the setting of the village. The Concept Masterplan includes a belt of vegetation/woodland along the Cambridge Road frontage. It is considered that this vegetation would be vital to creating an appropriate new edge to the settlement. This planting would also be required to mitigate the effect on views from the road and would help to mitigate perceived effects on the wider landscape. Planting adjoining Cambridge Road should consist of locally appropriate, native woodland species. The (minimum) recommended width for the woodland belt is 15m.
- Whilst the proposed woodland belt would provide mitigation for views to the new development, it would, in itself, block the expansive views across the valley (and so preventing the reading of the valley floor/course of the river from points within the wider landscape) and the specific views to landmarks on the opposite valley side such as the water tower. The latter could be partly rectified by the creation of open sight lines to the water tower through the development that could be experienced from localised points on Cambridge Road.
- The site is located in LCA 9D: Granta River Valley. The proposed development would inevitably have an effect on the landscape of the site itself, which would take on a predominantly urban character. The most sensitive part of the site in landscape terms is considered to be the area adjacent to the River Granta. It is proposed that this portion of the site remains as an undeveloped river valley.
- Designed parkland landscapes are a key characteristic of this area. The site includes several veteran oak trees which are a legacy of designed parkland. It would be possible to retain these features within the development as shown on the Concept Masterplan. The extent of the parkland planting is now limited to a small group of trees, while the main part of the site consists of fields. The site therefore could be partially developed, whilst retaining the important parkland trees. There is also an area of potential archaeological interest which would require further investigation. The proposed development would be adjacent to the existing settlement and there would continue to be considerable separation with the next village (Hildersham).
- Loss of farmland is a negative consequence of development, but it is likely that some undeveloped land would need to be allocated for residential use to provide for the development needs of the district.
- The river Granta adjoins the northern site boundary and is a notable feature of the landscape. There is no public access to this part of the site at present. A new area of public open space adjacent to the river would represent a beneficial effect of development, and provide access that does not currently exist.
- Development would have some effect on the landscape setting of the Listed Buildings at Little Linton Farm. The proposed development would be set back from the farm complex, and there are some intervening trees which would offer some separation. Effects on the heritage value of the Listed Buildings are outside the scope of this assessment.

- The PRoWs crossing the site are sensitive to change, and minimising adverse effects on their amenity should be considered in the emerging proposals. The Concept Masterplan shows how the existing public rights of way could be retained within the proposed development. Changes to public rights of way would therefore be limited to potential changes in surfacing, and changes to the visual experience of the users. There is the potential to add new linkages and circulation routes to enhance the experience and enjoyment of those using the PRoWs.
- From the PRoWs that cross the site there would be obvious changes to the view as a result of the introduction of residential development. The Concept Masterplan shows how these routes could be retained within green corridors which would help to reduce the negative effects on the amenity of the routes. Housing should be laid out to overlook the pedestrian routes in a positive manner wherever possible and gardens should be enclosed by hedges. Routes should also be easy to follow and clearly signed.
- From a visual perspective, the proposed development would be adjacent to the existing urban and contained within the valley floor. It would not infringe on the more visually-sensitive valley sides.

6.1.5 The following general comments and observations are made regarding the layout and form of any development proposed at the site.

- New residential areas should be laid out in a manner to reflect the more successful settlement patterns in the vicinity, with properties orientated to offer a positive frontage to areas of open space and public footpaths.
- Lighting to be kept to a minimum and designed in a manner to ensure it has minimal influence on the surrounding nightscape.
- Develop a green infrastructure strategy in advance of the layout of development in order to link existing and proposed habitats and open spaces in the optimum manner and to improve access to and through the site.
- Proposals to be accompanied by a comprehensive landscape strategy, utilising native species of local provenance, appropriate to the site conditions and future challenges that might be presented by climate change.
- Where appropriate, the suggested landscape enhancements promoted in the published landscape character assessments should be implemented, e.g. woodland belts, woodland management, hedgerow management.
- Consider the use of advance planting, e.g. to provide an establishing framework of vegetation, particularly in relation to substantial woodland belts on the southern and eastern edges of the site.
- Instigate a long-term management plan to enhance the existing trees and hedges.