



**Ambrose Way,
Impington**

**Preliminary
Landscape and Visual
Appraisal**

Prepared by:
**The Environmental
Dimension Partnership
Ltd**

On behalf of:
Martin Grant Homes

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Section 1

Introduction and Key Conclusions

- 1.1 The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) has been commissioned by Martin Grant Homes (MGH) to undertake a preliminary Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of land at Ambrose Way, Impington. The site is being promoted by MGH for residential uses – and is hereafter referred to as ‘the site’. The site falls within South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) Local Planning Authority (LPA) area, extends to 8.72 hectares (ha), and is briefly described below.
- 1.2 EDP is an independent environmental planning consultancy with offices in Cirencester, Cardiff and Cheltenham. The practice provides advice to private and public sector clients throughout the UK in the fields of landscape, ecology, archaeology, cultural heritage, arboriculture, rights of way and masterplanning. Details of the practice can be obtained at our website (www.edp-uk.co.uk). EDP is a Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute⁽¹⁾, specialising in the assessment of the effects of proposed development on the landscape.
- 1.3 The proposals are for a development of up to 177 dwellings, open space, play space, landscaping and associated infrastructure.

Purpose

- 1.4 To date, the purpose of EDP’s work has been to gain an early understanding of the landscape and visual issues likely to affect the ‘in principle’ suitability of the site for development, and its potential capacity for development considering landscape and visual constraints and opportunities for mitigation and enhancement. To this end, this appraisal has been informed by a desk-based review of available data, policy, landscape character publications and mapping and by a site visit undertaken by an experienced Chartered Landscape Architect during October 2019.
- 1.5 This appraisal then considers the potential development capacity of the site, taking account of the constraints and opportunities identified through the above studies, and then applies these findings to give an overview of masterplanning considerations.

The Site

- 1.6 The location and boundaries of the site subject to this study are illustrated on **Plan EDP L1** and shown in **Image EDP 1.1**. This image shows the site is located approximately 0.3km to the north-west of the centre of the village of Impington. It measures approximately 8.72ha and is bounded by the residential curtilages of properties on Ambrose Way, Mill Lane, Paddock Close and Drake Way to the west, and agricultural land to the north, east, and south. The site is made up of three medium-small field parcels of agricultural land. The site

¹ LI Practice Number 1010

is divided north and south by an agricultural track, which is accessed between 60 and 62 Mill Lane to the west, and serves a small complex of agricultural buildings to the east.



Image EDP 1.1: Aerial view of the site.

Section 2 Findings of EDP Data Trawl

- 2.1 Following desk-based analysis of local landscape-related planning policy, designations and character (undertaken in 2019 and updated in 2021), a site visit was undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect from EDP in October 2019. This involved walking and driving the local area to understand the character of the site and its context, and to consider the likely landscape and visual effects that might arise from development of the land.

Landscape-related Designations, Policy and Considerations

Landscape Designations

- 2.2 The site is not located within, or near, and does not contain any national landscape designations.

Local Policy

Adopted Local Policy

Local Plan and Minerals and Waste Core Strategy

- 2.3 **Plan EDP L2** shows the landscape-related designations and considerations that would impose various levels of constraint on new development.
- 2.4 The site is located within SCDC. The Adopted Development Plan documents relevant to the site are:
- The *South Cambridgeshire Local Plan* (Adopted September 2018)²; and
 - The *Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy* (Adopted 28 July 2021)³.
- 2.5 The site falls within the area of South Cambridgeshire Adopted Policies Map: September 2018, Insert no. 58 Histon and Impington⁴ Map 4 of 7, an extract of which is included as **Image EDP 2.1**.

² <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-and-neighbourhood-planning/the-adopted-development-plan/south-cambridgeshire-local-plan-2018/> - accessed 18.11.21

³ <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/planning-policy/adopted-minerals-and-waste-plan> - accessed 18.11.21

⁴ <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/17711/inset-58-histon-and-impington.pdf> - accessed 18.11.21

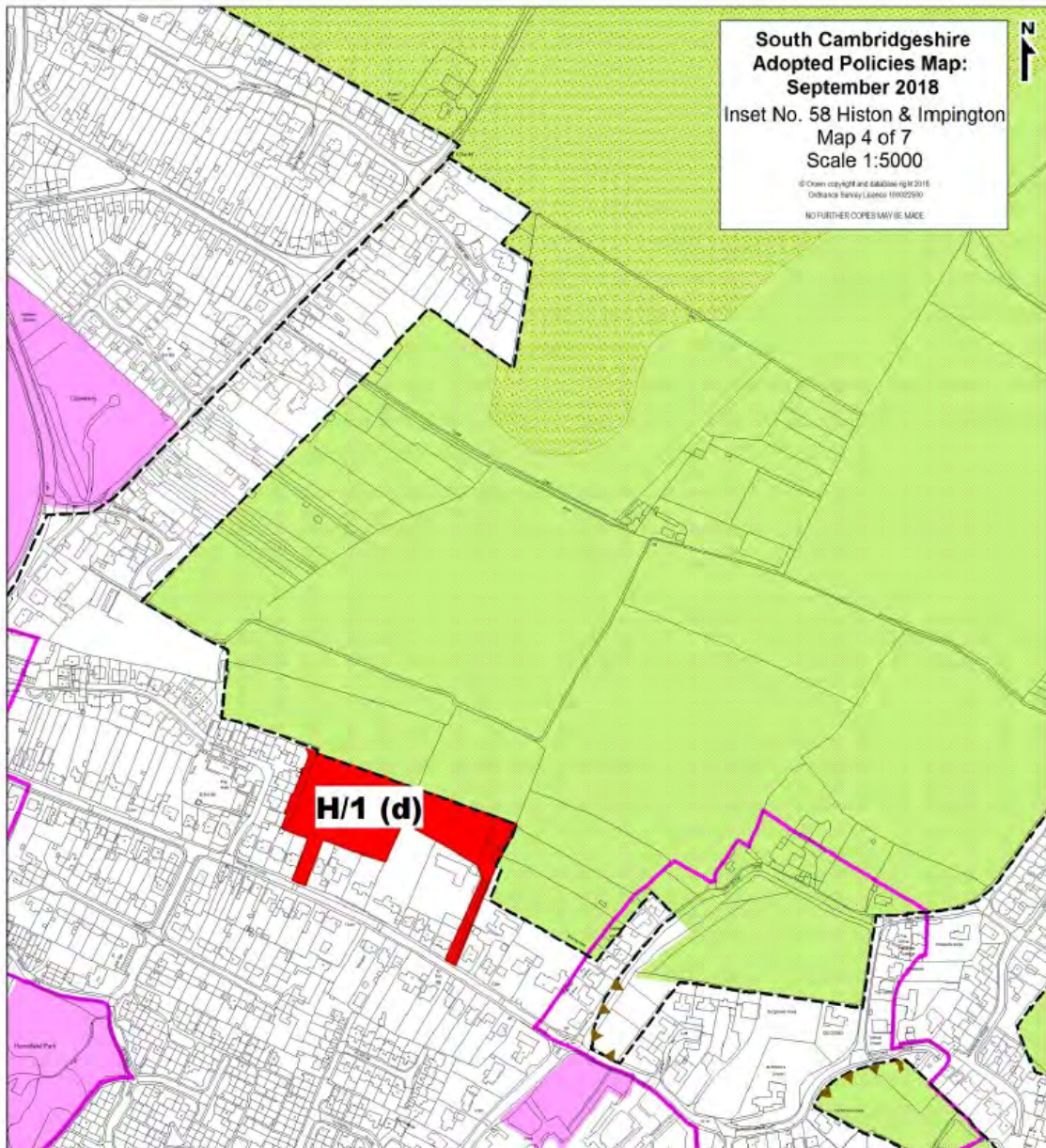


Image EDP 2.1: South Cambridgeshire Adopted Policies Map: September 2018 Inset no. 58 Histon and Impington Map 4, extract.

2.6 The Histon and Impington policy map, read with the *Minerals and Waste Core Strategy*, shows that:

- The site falls within the Green Belt (green wash) (Policy S/4); and
- The central area of the northern field previously fell within the *Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy 2011*, Mineral Safeguarding Area Sand and Gravel (speckled green hatch) (Policy CS26), but this area is omitted from the adopted 2021 Strategy.

2.7 It also shows a housing allocation (red wash) (Policy H/1 (d)), at the settlement edge to the south of the site, and two conservation areas set back, within the settlement area to the south-west and south-east of the site (pink line).

2.8 Relevant policies with regard to Green Belt are addressed within the *Green Belt Assessment*. They include Local Plan policies:

- Policy S/4: Cambridge Green Belt, aims to define and protect the Green Belt, stating that “*New development in the Green Belt will only be approved in accordance with Green Belt policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.*”; and
- Policy NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development in and Adjoining the Green Belt.

2.9 In addition, a number of over-arching Local Plan policies are relevant including:

- Policy HQ/1: Design Principles, which aims to ensure that development is of high-quality design, it states that all new development must:
 - a. Preserve or enhance the character of the local urban and rural area and respond to its context in the wider landscape;*
 - b. Conserve or enhance important natural and historic assets and their setting;*
 - c. Include variety and interest within a coherent, place-responsive design, which is legible and creates a positive sense of place and identity whilst also responding to the local context and respecting local distinctiveness;*
 - d. Be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, density, mass, form, siting, design, proportion, materials, texture and colour in relation to the surrounding area;”*
- Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character, which states that “*Development will only be permitted where it respects and retains, or enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape and of the individual National Character Area in which is it located.*”
- Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure, aims to conserve and enhance Green Infrastructure within the district.

Histon and Impington Neighbourhood Plan

2.10 The *Histon and Impington (made) Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031* (20th May 2021)⁵ contains the following policy of relevance here:

⁵ <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/17599/made-histon-impington-neighbourhood-plan-may-2021.pdf> - accessed 18.11.21

- Policy HIM01: High Quality Design – Residential Development, which aims to ensure that “*all residential development proposals shall contribute positively to the quality and character of Histon and Impington, as described in the Histon & Impington Village Design Guide SPD, and be informed by the design guidance in that document as well as South Cambridgeshire District Council’s Design Guide and any documents which supersede these.*”

Emerging Local Policy

2.11 The *Emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan (Regulation 18: Preferred Options 2021)*⁶ policies of relevance include:

- Policy BG/GI: Green infrastructure, which shows strategic Green Infrastructure initiative 6: North Cambridge Green Space skirting around the south, east and north of Histon. Further information on the purpose and objectives of this initiative is set out in the *Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Final Report (2021)*⁷ reviewed below.
- Policy BG/TC: Improving tree canopy cover and the tree population;
- Policy BG/EO: Providing and enhancing open spaces;
- Policy GP/PP: People and place responsive design;
- Policy GP/LC: Protection and enhancement of landscape character;
- Policy GP/LC: Protection and enhancement of landscape character;
- Policy GP/QD: Achieving high quality development; and
- Policy GP/QP: Establishing high quality landscape and public realm

Local Guidance

District Guides: District Design Guide, Landscape in New Developments, and Histon and Impington Village Supplementary Design Guides

2.12 To assist in retaining the distinctive nature of the South Cambridgeshire landscape, SCDC provides more detailed guidance about Landscape Character Areas in the *District Design Guide: High Quality and Sustainable Development in South Cambridgeshire (Supplementary Planning Document [SPD] March 2010)*⁸, *Landscape in New Developments SPD*

⁶ <https://consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/sites/gcp/files/2021-10/First%20Proposals%20-%20FINAL%20FURTHER%20REVISED%2028.10.21-red.pdf> – accessed 18.11.21

⁷ <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/1400/greater-cambridge-green-infrastructure-opportunity-mapping-baseline-report-nov2020.pdf> - accessed 18.11.21

⁸ <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/6686/adopted-design-guide-spd-final-contents-chapter.pdf> - accessed 18.11.21

(March 2010)⁹ and the *Histon and Impington Village Design Guide SPD* (June 2019)¹⁰. These have the aim of ensuring that development respects both the distinctiveness of the National Character Areas and the more detailed local landscapes. The SPDs note that, within the Local Plan, the SPDs will be reviewed to include the more detailed East of England Landscape Typology published by Landscape East, further refining the Landscape Character Areas within the District. At present there is no District level landscape character assessment. The *Histon and Impington Village Draft Village Design Guide* is considered further in **Section 3**.

Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy

- 2.13 The *Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy* (June 2011)¹¹ is designed to assist in shaping and coordinating the delivery of Green Infrastructure in the county, to provide social, environmental, and economic benefits both now and in the future.
- 2.14 The area of Impington, where the site falls, is not identified as being one of the Green Infrastructure priorities for Cambridgeshire, however, is identified in **Image EDP 2.2** as part of the wider Strategic Area 6: Cambridge and Surrounding areas.

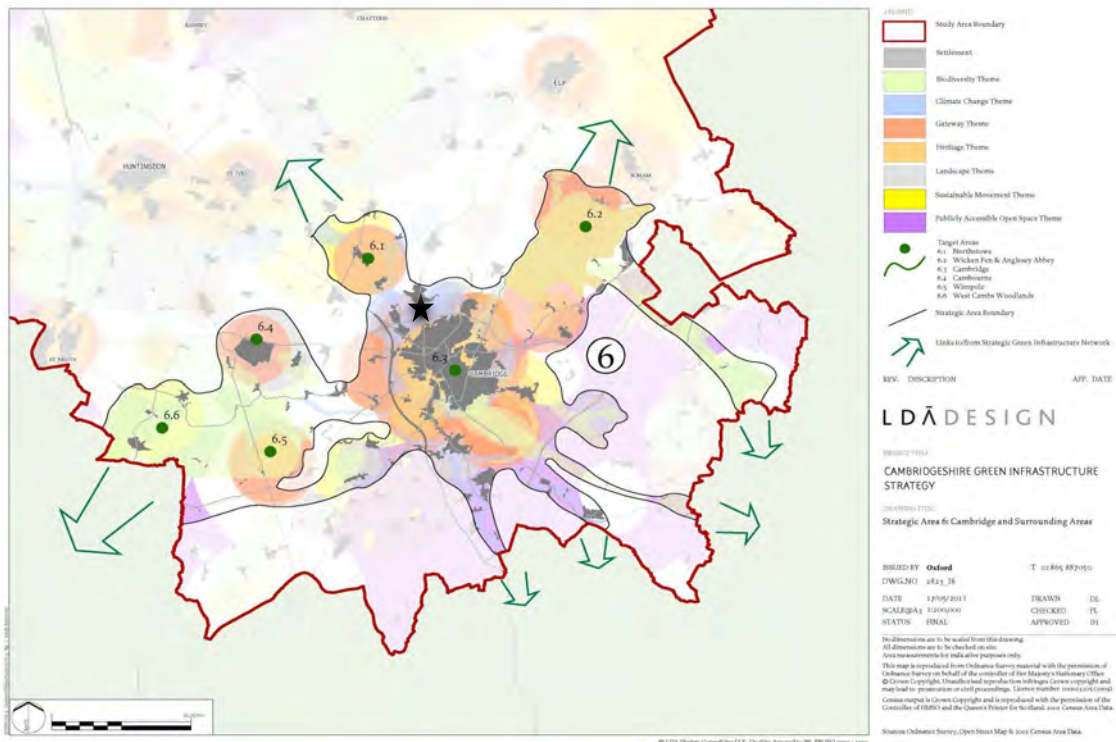


Image EDP 2.2: Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy Strategic Area 6: Cambridge and Surrounding Areas. (Black star denotes approx location of site).

⁹ https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/6689/adopted-landscape-spd_0.pdf - accessed 18.11.21
¹⁰ https://www.scambs.gov.uk/media/13612/histon-impington-village-design-guide-draft-spd_web.pdf - accessed 18.11.21
¹¹ https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/imported-assets/Cambridgeshire_Infrastructure_Strategy_2011.pdf - accessed 18.11.21

2.15 Within this Strategic Area, the site falls under the 'Climate Change Adaption' and 'Landscape' themes. These are defined below and should be factored into design considerations where new development is proposed:

- *"Climate Change Adaptation: include measures such as carbon sequestration, and flood storage and alleviation as well as urban cooling through tree planting and green space creation."*; and
- *"Landscape: contribute to landscape character through the growth of Cambridge, and through improving and maintaining the key habitats of the area."*

Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Final Report: Part 2 Recommendations Report (LUC 2021)

2.16 The *Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Final Report: Part 2 Recommendations Report (LUC 2021)* has been prepared to ensure the forthcoming joint Local Plan is based on sound evidence and supports deliverable interventions to enhance the GI network.

2.17 The report identifies 14 Strategic Initiatives across Greater Cambridge. These Initiatives fall within two categories:

- a) Spatially specific (Initiatives 1-9); or
- b) Dispersed (Initiatives 10-14).

2.18 The site falls within the spatially specific initiative 6: North Cambridge Green Space, which is to:

"Provide new strategic green space(s) to the north of Cambridge, connected to the wider GI network by green corridors, to address the deficit in accessible GI in this area, reduce recreational pressure on existing sites and provide an important asset to meet growing demand from proposed development."

2.19 Dispersed initiatives comprise:

10. Expanding Greater Cambridge's 'urban forest';
11. Woodland expansion and resilience;
12. Urban greening and 'de-paving';
13. Allotments and community gardening; and
14. Environmentally friendly farming.

- 2.20 Detailed information for each Initiative covering its objective, spatial extent, relationship with existing projects and the Local Plan, and details relating to delivery, are presented at Chapter 3. Examples of similar projects from elsewhere in the country and within Greater Cambridge are also included.
- 2.21 The objectives of each of the 14 Strategic Initiatives are provided, followed by policy recommendations to guide the Councils on delivering the Strategic Initiatives (with further detail in Chapter 4).

Summary of Findings of EDP Data Trawl

- 2.22 **Plan EDP L2** shows the landscape-related designations and considerations that would impose various levels of constraint on new development. This plan shows that:
- The site is not located within, or near, and does not contain any national or local landscape designations;
 - The site is subject to general local plan policies and SPDs that promote high-quality development that respects and retains, or enhances, local character and distinctiveness and aims to conserve and enhance Green Infrastructure within the district;
 - The site lies within the Cambridge Green Belt but lies some way beyond the main settlement areas of Cambridge to the south, Milton to the east, Cottenham to the north and Oakington to the west. Whilst the Green Belt is important in terms of potential constraint, it is not a designation for the purposes of conserving landscape value; rather a spatial planning tool. The location of the land within the Green Belt does not confer or imply any elevated value or quality in landscape terms;
 - Histon and St Andrews (Impington) Conservation Areas fall to the west and south-east of the site, respectively, and are separated from the site by intervening 20th century development;
 - There are a number of listed buildings within the centre of Histon and Impington, primarily within the conservation areas; and
 - There are no public rights of way (PRoW) running through the site and there are no PRoWs in close proximity that provide access to the wider landscape.

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Section 3 Landscape Character Considerations

EDP's Field Assessment

- 3.1 The site comprises three field parcels, ranging from small to medium, making up approximately 8.72ha of agricultural land. The site is severed north-south by an agricultural track which connects from Mill Lane, serving a group of agricultural buildings to the east.
- 3.2 At the time of the site visit (10 October 2019) the northern portion of the site was rough grassland with pockets of scrub throughout (**Image EDP 3.1**), with the southern two thirds of the site down to grazing pasture. **Image EDP 3.2** shows that the eastern and southern boundaries comprise dense mature hedgerow and trees. The western boundary abuts small horse paddocks and curtilages of residential dwellings off Mill Lane and comprises a variety of disjointed pockets of mature trees with dense understorey, to more open boundaries defined by low scrub and fence lines. The northern boundary is open with small pockets of scrub and few un-established trees interspersed along a large open ditch, a common feature found around most field parcels within the local context.



Image EDP 3.1: The northern field parcel of rough grassland with pockets of scrub offers open 'blue sky' views across adjacent flat agricultural land to the north.



Image EDP 3.2: The eastern and southern boundaries in the southern portion of the site benefit from dense vegetated boundaries offering visual enclosure and limiting visibility to the urban housing of Histon found adjacent.

- 3.3 The site is level throughout with very few features outside the dividing agricultural track and man-made features, such as overhead utilities, following the northernmost boundary and running north-south in the southern field. Along its boundaries there are steep sided drainage ditches, see **Image EDP 3.3**.



Image EDP 3.3: Steep sided ditches line the field boundaries.

- 3.4 The site falls between the urban areas of the merged settlements of Histon and Impington, generally bounded by urban influences immediately to the west and set back to the south and east. Between the site and the settlement edge, including intermittently along the western boundary, are small fields bounded by hedgerows and in places subdivided by fencing with a variety of agricultural and urban fringe uses. To the north, the site abuts low-lying, intensively managed, large agricultural fields.
- 3.5 Due to the relatively flat topography of the site and context, intervisibility with areas to the west, south, and east are limited by the dense vegetation, hedgerows, and groups of trees here, which allow only glimpses to residential properties found in close proximity.
- 3.6 In contrast, the open northern boundary allows 'blue sky' views across the adjacent flat, low-lying agricultural land. There are no intervening hillocks or defining landmarks to be seen which strengthen the character and sense of place. Although views here are open, pockets of woodland, shelter belts, groups of trees and mature hedgerows across the wider landscape intervene and screen outlying villages from view, bolstering the rural character.
- 3.7 Within the site the proximity of man-made features, glimpses of surrounding residential properties, the rough grassland to the north, and the noise from the general urban context, give the site a settlement edge character. These urban influences decrease considerably a short distance further north into the wider green belt.
- 3.8 The site does not represent any unique or rare features. The urbanising influences of the dense residential housing to the south and west edges, and the proximity to the adjacent settlement, mean the site's character is further weakened in comparison to the wider agricultural landscape found to the north. It is, however, more generally representative of several characteristics, including the arable landscape of regular fields bounded by hedgerows and groups of trees, which contribute towards unifying the landscape character within the site.

Published Landscape Character Assessments

National Character Assessment

- 3.9 At the national level, the character of England has been described and classified in the *National Character Area* (NCA) profiles published by Natural England. The site and its surroundings fall within NCA 88: Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands¹². This is a large character area stretching from Cambridge south-west to Milton Keynes and beyond. The area comprises a broad, gently undulating, lowland plateau dissected by shallow river valleys that gradually widen as they approach The Fens NCA in the east. The description of the landscape character is representative of the surrounding area but is at a broad scale of little relevance at the site level.

¹² <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5091147672190976?category=587130> - accessed 18.11.21

Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment

3.10 The *Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (CBA 2021)*¹³ (GCLCA) is the most recent and relevant landscape character assessment. This assessment has been undertaken at three scales:

- A detailed study of the landscapes within the “Greater Cambridge Study Area”, comprising South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City (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; and
- A high-level study of the landscapes and open spaces within the “Cambridge Environs Study Area” that contribute to the setting of Cambridge.

3.11 The site falls in the first two of these scales but falls just beyond the boundary of the ‘Cambridge Environs Study Area’.

A Detailed Study of the Landscapes within the “Greater Cambridge Study Area

3.12 The site falls within the Landscape Type (LT) 2: ‘Fen Edge Claylands’ and the nestled Landscape Character Area (LCA) 2B: Cottenham Fen Edge Claylands, as illustrated in **Image EDP 3.4** below.

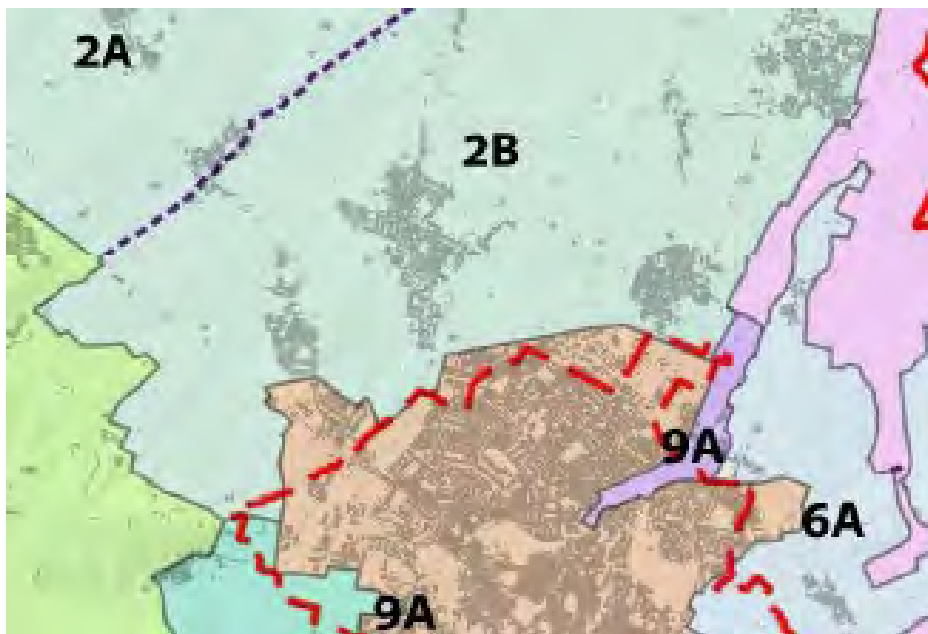


Image EDP 3.4: Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Types and Area (extract of GCLCA Figure 4.1).

¹³ Part A - https://consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/sites/gcp/files/2021-08/LandscapeCharacterAssessment_GCLP_210831_Part_A.pdf - accessed 25.11.21
Part B - https://consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/sites/gcp/files/2021-08/LandscapeCharacterAssessment_GCLP_210831_Part_B.pdf

Landscape Character Type 2: Fen Edge Claylands

3.13 The Fen Edge Claylands LT description is included at **Appendix EDP 2.1**. It is a transitional, predominantly arable landscape with large scale, open fields, orchards and villages built on “islands” of high ground.

3.14 Key Characteristics of this LT comprise (emphasis added to highlight characteristics apparent across the site and near context):

- *“Low-lying, gently undulating landscape with extensive vistas and large skies;*
- *Gradually rising landform, south from the edge of The Fens, which adds a prominence to the Fen Edge villages in places;*
- *Large-scale, open field system defined by a hierarchy of drains, ditches and lodes;*
- *Predominantly arable farmland supplemented with small scale pastoral field patterns around settlement edges;*
- *Little vegetation cover, limited to dispersed fragments of deciduous woodland, scattered traditional orchards and gappy hedgerows;*
- *Hedgerows, shelterbelts and small clumps of trees create a distinctive, localised vegetation pattern in proximity to villages;*
- *Orchards are a distinctive feature, particularly around the settlements;*
- *Dispersed settlement pattern of villages on raised landform at the edge of The Fens and individual farms and cottages.”*

3.15 Landscape Guidelines for the LT comprise (emphasis added to highlight guidelines most relevant to the site):

“The overall management objective for the Fen Edge Claylands LCT is to conserve the rural character and the important surviving landscape features such as traditional orchards, droves, drains and linear village cores. It would also be appropriate to enhance those features that are declining or are incongruous in the landscape, such as the traditional orchards and modern village edges.”

3.16 Guidance for Integrating Development into the landscape for this LT comprise:

- *“Conserve the overall rural character, with dispersed Fen Edge villages, farms and cottages linked by rural roads and historic droves and tracks;*
- *Ensure any village extensions are located on the high ground of the Fen Islands, avoiding incremental development on the flat, low-lying fen;*

- *Ensure new developments on the edges of villages are integrated by wide hedgerows, copses and shelterbelt planting reflecting the local mixes;*
- *Ensure a transition between Fen and Fen Island by retention and creation of small hedgerowed paddocks;*
- *Conserve and enhance existing orchard and hedgerowed paddocks;*
- *Maintain linear or rectilinear form of the settlements and avoid closes and cul-de-sacs where possible;*
- *Ensure buildings are mostly set on the back edge of pavements, or face the street with small front gardens in the village cores;*
- *Ensure new developments integrate/connect with existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) within development layout;*
- *Ensure new developments reflect the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings of the area and pick up on the traditional building styles, height, materials, colours and textures of the locality;*
- *Enclose boundaries facing onto roads by low brick walls and/or simple iron railings, timber picket fences and hedges as appropriate in the village cores;*
- *Retain hedges and introduce them as boundaries alongside roads outside village cores;*
- *Integrate water features, such as ditches dykes and ponds, into new developments as part of open spaces; and*
- *Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate.”*

2B: Cottenham Fen Edge Claylands Landscape Character Area

- 3.17 The LCA2B:Cottenham Fen Edge Claylands description is included at **Appendix EDP 2.2**. It is a well settled landscape, with several villages located on raised ‘islands’ above The Fens and urban influences extending from the edge of Cambridge.
- 3.18 Key Characteristics of this LCA comprise (emphasis added to highlight characteristics apparent across the site and near context):
- *“Well settled rural landscape comprising a number of large villages with historic linear cores located on elevated ‘islands’;*

- *Pockets of remnant parkland alongside orchards, hedgerows and shelterbelts create a distinctive, localised vegetation pattern in proximity to the villages; and*
- *Urban influences associated with the urban edge of Cambridge and major road network in the south which are discordant with the otherwise rural character.”*

3.19 In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this LT the following sensitivities are specific to this character area (emphasis added to highlight sensitivities apparent across the site and near context):

- *Framed, long views between vegetation from villages across open, arable fields:*
- *Remnant parkland west of Histon; and*
- *Pressure for recreation.”*

3.20 In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area (emphasis added to highlight guidelines considered most relevant to the site):

- *Ensure new development is integrated into the landscape sympathetically, is in keeping with the open, rural character, and does not affect long, framed views:*
- *Conserve parkland and enhance the specific features that give character and its context within the wider landscape in areas where it has been fragmented; and*
- *Ensure land developed for recreation enhances existing landscape features, creates links between villages and recreational assets and is in keeping with the open, rural character.”*

A high-level Study of the Rural Villages within the South Cambridgeshire District, Part of the Greater Cambridge Study Area

3.21 The “Fen Edge villages” are associated with some 17 parishes, including those of Histon and Impington.

3.22 Typical characteristics of these parishes are included at **Appendix EDP 2.3** and comprise (emphasis added to highlight characteristics considered most relevant to the site):

- *“To the north of Cambridge, towards the fens, villages are characterised by their strong linear form, often having developed outwards from crossroads along approach roads:*
- *The historic linear form is retained despite the modern estate developments that have occurred in many of the villages;*

- *Some village edges, such as at Cottenham, have a well wooded character, with hedgerows and mature trees concealing buildings, while others, such as Fen Drayton, have more open edges;*
- *Within the historic cores narrow lanes with continuous street frontages are typical, but on village edges buildings are more often setback with low walls and hedges fronting the streets;*
- *Long back gardens are also a common feature;*
- *Vernacular buildings are typically small scale, one and a half or two storeys in height;*
- *A few larger villas occur in some village core areas;*
- *Northstowe and Waterbeach New Towns are 21st century new settlements;*
- *Within the historic villages, wall materials vary with yellow Gault Clay brickwork predominating and plastered timber-frame, dark stained weatherboarding and red brick also present;*
- *Roofs are historically of thatch and plain clay tiles, with pantiles and Welsh slate being later introductions;*
- *Timber-frame building details include; steeply pitched roofs, side hung timber casements set flush to the outside face of the wall, drip boards set on gable ends and over the windows, with four or six panelled or planked doors;*
- *Eighteenth and nineteenth century house details include; vertically sliding sash windows set in reveals over shallow stone sills and with gauged or segmental arched brick lintels over, four or six panelled doors in simple classical door cases incorporating fan lights and chimneys incorporated within the buildings or at gable ends; and*
- *Some brick buildings in the village cores have Dutch gables, reflecting the eighteenth and nineteenth century's links with the Low Countries."*

Histon and Impington Village Design Guide SPD Consultation

- 3.23 The adopted *Histon and Impington Village Design Guide SPD Draft* (June 2019) further defines the Village Character. **Image EDP 3.5** shows the varied character it identifies across the settlement. The site sits adjacent to areas with 'mixed residential character' to the west and south, with 'Old Impington' set back to the south-east.

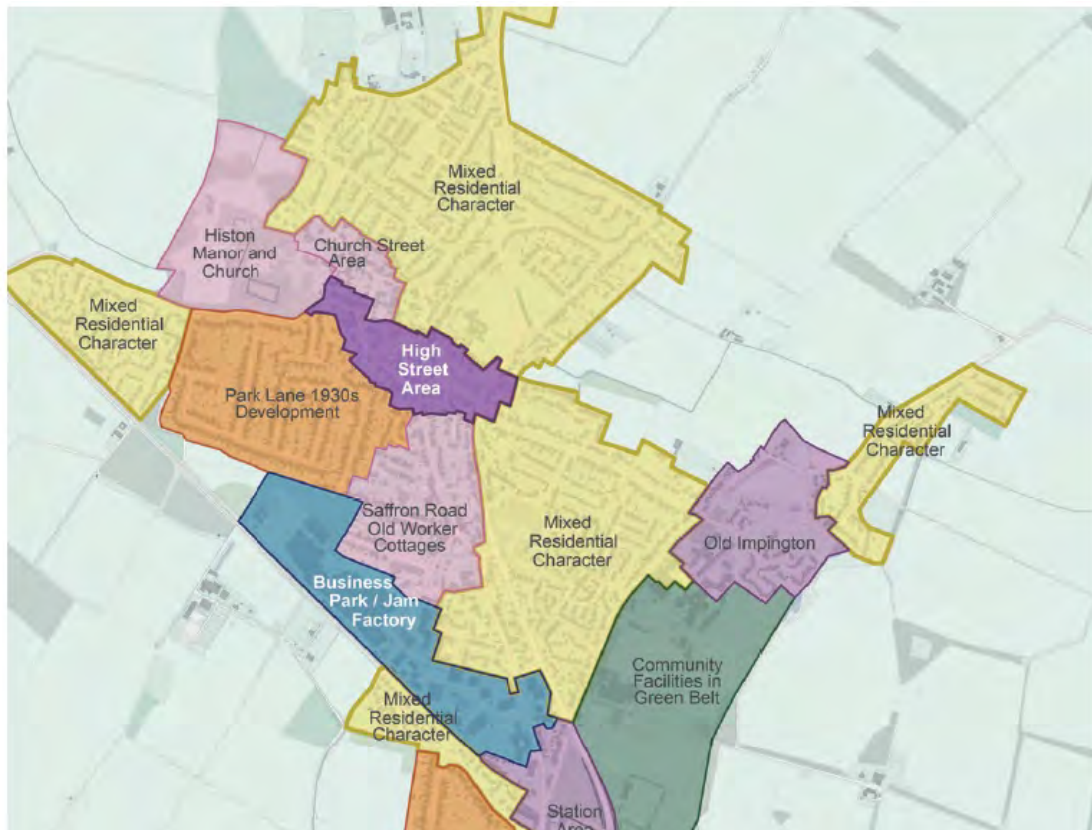


Image EDP 3.5: Adopted Histon and Impington Village Design Guide SPD Draft (June 2019) Figure 15 – A village with a varied character and many special places, extract.

3.24 With regard to the character of the village, the *Design Guide* notes at Section 4: Village Character, that:

“The village of Histon & Impington has no overall uniform image and visual identity. The High Street, with its mix of building periods and styles – some attractive, some functional – is a reflection of what happens elsewhere: the character of the village derives more from its consistent low scale, relative compactness and variety of buildings, some with very fine detailing and forms typical of their time.

The majority of the village has a mixed residential character, with small groups of houses of similar design, often limited to a handful along a street, or a short cul-de-sac, typically with generous landscaping. The village community feels that the richness of the settlement is in the variety of streets and buildings, the lack of large groups of uniform design, the fine detailing at architectural level, and the exuberant landscape intermixed within the houses and mature trees that can grow over the roof line.

The nature of the village is also reinforced by its compactness where everything is within walk or cycle distance and by the proximity and immediate access to the countryside, with localised open views out (at Old Impington and towards Cottenham), the woodland-style planting and the field ditches.”

3.25 **Image EDP 3.6** illustrates key landscape and visual considerations informing the design guidance, with regard to ‘enhancing access and relationship with the countryside’.

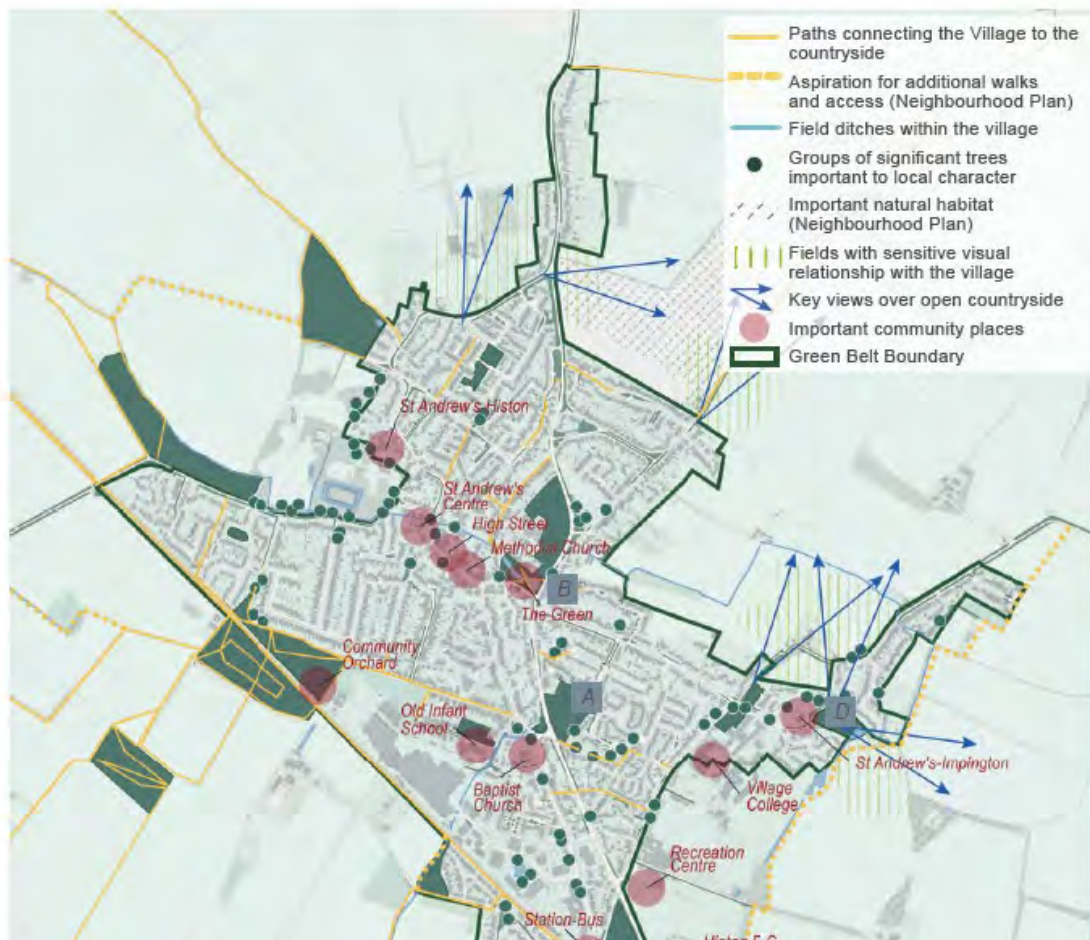


Image EDP 3.6: Adopted *Histon and Impington Village Design Guide SPD Draft* (June 2019)
Figure 31 – A close relationship with the countryside, extract.

3.26 Figure 31 (see **Image EDP 3.6**) feeds into design guidance (points 5.1 to 5.5), which state the aspiration to:

- *“Improve access and provide additional pedestrian connections between the village and countryside;*
- *Protect open views over sensitive fields (Fig. 31) where the countryside comes into contact with the village;*
- *Avoid hard edges to development and create a ‘soft’ transition between the village and countryside through landscaping and tree planting;*
- *Retain and provide new areas of natural green space within the village and new developments;*

- *Enhance the setting of field drains inside the village so they can be better appreciated.*

3.27 With regards to future development, the SPD highlights the following as inappropriate to the landscape character, with emphasis added by EDP where they are of relevance in the local context of the site:

- *“The character of the village is in the diversity of buildings and in the overall dominance of two-storey buildings, tall trees and articulated roofs. It is therefore inappropriate to adopt repetitive continuous frontages, and buildings that dominate over the landscape.*
- *Featureless facades, bulky window-frames and heavy porches are inappropriate. **Prominent parking areas or garage doors on the street should be rejected as they significantly affect the visual quality of the village.***
- *The village has a woodland style of planting, so ornamental trees and garden shrubbery is generally inappropriate.*
- ***Bare verges, lack of integration of appropriate drainage ponds, suburban wide road detailing with standard lighting and minimal planting is to be avoided.***

Summary and Conclusions with Regard to Landscape

3.28 In some respects, the site and its wider context are considered consistent with published landscape descriptions. However, published descriptions of the landscape beyond the settlement limits is broad-scale and does not take into account the local influences which create a settlement edge character across the site and near context, which reduces quickly across the landscape to the north.

3.29 While the residential development of the site would, inevitably, change the character of the site itself, the settlement edge character of the site and immediate context would reduce the magnitude of change on these receptors.

3.30 The effect of residential development of the site on the character of the wider landscape would also be limited by the restricted visibility to the site, as detailed in **Section 4**. Notably, existing vegetation along the eastern boundary would *“Protect open views over sensitive fields ... where the countryside comes into contact with the village”*. While the northern site boundary is open, there is potential within the site to establish planting here that would contribute to the integration of the proposals and a reduction in the magnitude of change to the character of the agricultural landscape to the north.

3.31 With this in mind, the Concept Masterplan retains and enhances existing mature vegetation along the site boundaries. In addition, it includes a landscape buffer along the northern boundary, to *“create a ‘soft’ transition between the village and countryside through*

landscaping and tree planting”, which is sympathetic and characteristic and would ensure that the site is integrated with the wider landscape.

- 3.32 In addition to the above considerations, the residential development of the site in accordance with the Concept Masterplan offers the opportunity to “*Enhance the setting of field drains inside the village so they can be better appreciated*”, as set out in the *Histon and Impington Village Draft Village Design Guide*. Further, the Concept Masterplan shows how the site can “*retain and provide new areas of natural green space within the village and new developments*”.
- 3.33 From a landscape perspective, it is EDP’s opinion that there are no ‘in principle’ constraints with regard to future residential development of the site. The location and nature of the site would mean that residential development in accordance with the Concept Masterplan would extend Histon and Impington within logical limits, without resulting in encroachment to the wider countryside. The site is closely related with the existing developed area, and as explained above, has a very limited influence on the wider rural setting that could be further reduced through careful site design, as illustrated by the Concept Masterplan.

Section 4 Visual Amenity Considerations

- 4.1 Visual amenity (as opposed to ‘visual character’ described in the previous section) is not about the visual appearance of the site, but has to do with the number, distribution and character of views towards, from, or within the site. An analysis of visual amenity allows conclusions to be reached about who may experience visual change, from where and to what degree those views will be affected by the proposed development.
- 4.2 **Plan EDP L3** illustrates the findings of the preliminary visual appraisal. This plan shows the Zone of Primary Visibility (ZPV), based on the assumption of two-storey residential development across the site, identified from desk- and field-based assessments. The ZPV is where views of the proposed development would normally be close-ranging and open, whether in the public or private domain, on foot, cycling or in a vehicle.
- 4.3 **Plan EDP L3** shows the limited nature of the ZPV resulting from the enclosure created by the settlement and field boundaries across the site context, which heavily restrict the opportunity for visual receptors in this flat landscape. Receptors are, therefore, limited to the immediate vicinity of the site. The ZPV is contained, by settlement to the west and south and by settlement and field boundaries to the east, to within some 200m of the site. Visibility to the site from the north and north-east is limited by hedgerows, the screening effect of which is enhanced in this flat landscape, to within some 750m of the site.
- 4.4 Added to this, there are only a limited number of PRoW, and no open access land, within the site context. In addition, there are only a limited number of roads in the site context beyond the settlement limits to the north of the site. Views to the site from roads within the settlement to the west, south, and east are substantially limited by intervening settlement and vegetation.
- 4.5 **Plan EDP L4** shows the photoviewpoints recorded during the site visit. Views towards the site from the settlement are limited due to intervening settlement and vegetation. However, there are limited views towards the site from Clay Close and Milton Way, at the north-western edge of Impington, represented by **Photoviewpoints EDP 1** and **2**. These Photoviewpoints are located in similar locations to the ‘Key Views over open countryside’ identified in the *Histon and Impington Village Design Guide SPD Consultation Draft* (June 2019) Figure 31 (see **Image EDP 3.6**). However, the Photoviewpoints are orientated to the west, towards the eastern edge of Histon, whereas the identified *Histon and Impington Village Draft Village Design Guide* views are orientated to the north.
- 4.6 **Photoviewpoints EDP 1** and **2** show that where views are available towards the site from the settlement edge they are substantially limited to the adjacent field by vegetation at the field boundary. While views to the site land are obscured by intervening vegetation, including at the site boundary, it is likely that there will be limited filtered views to the first storey and roofs of the proposals above. However, these will not be a new, or incongruous element in the view, which is already urbanised to some degree. In addition, it should be noted that the ‘Key Views over open countryside’ to the north, identified in the *Histon and*

Impington Village Draft Village Design Guide, are limited and will not be interrupted by the proposals.

- 4.7 It is likely that there are filtered partial views to the site from surrounding residential properties, in which new development would be apparent. However, visibility to the proposals would be limited by intervening vegetation at the site boundaries, within the gardens of existing properties, and along intervening field boundaries, where properties are set back from the boundary, which is generally the case.
- 4.8 Views towards the site from the wider agricultural context are limited due to intervening field boundary vegetation and hedgerows lining many routes, as is illustrated by **Photoviewpoints EDP 3 to 6**. There is no visibility to the site from these viewpoints, despite the fact that the northern site boundary is open.
- 4.9 However, should the site be developed, there will be clear views to the development edge from the adjacent privately-owned agricultural land beyond the northern site boundary, which will diminish with distance and the number of intervening hedgerows. This is reflected by the extent of the ZPV. Visibility to the development could be mitigated by planting along the northern site boundary, designed to reflect the hedgerows across the wider landscape so that it integrates with this context.

Summary of Visual Amenity Considerations

- 4.10 Based on EDP's field assessment, the following is found with regard to visual matters:

- Overall:
 - It is considered that views of the proposal would be significantly screened and filtered by field boundary vegetation and settlement, and as a result would not be readily discernible;
 - The combination of flat topography and intervening landscape features effectively restricts potential views to the proposals from the public domain to the site boundaries, with potential for visibility to the proposals limited to partial and filtered views to upper storeys and roofs; and
 - If experienced, the site would be seen against the existing context of settlement, and not appear out of character or incongruous.
- There are opportunities for views towards the site from the settlement at Clay Close Lane, to the south-east of the site. This location affords views towards the site, to the west, and across agricultural land to the north. In views west, the eastern edge of Histon is apparent across the site and so residential development of the site would not introduce new or incongruous features into the landscape. Further, the Concept Masterplan (**Appendix EDP 3**) includes a substantial green buffer along the south-

western and south-eastern boundaries, that will contain tree planting to contribute further to softening and integrating the development into the landscape;

- A limited number of residential receptors, restricted to some dwellings adjacent to the site (east of Mill Lane, north of Impington Lane, and west of Clay Close Lane), are likely to have filtered partial views to the site from the rear of their property. However, visibility to the proposals and change to the view would be limited by intervening vegetation at the site boundaries, within the often generous mature gardens of existing properties, and along intervening field boundaries, where properties are generally set back from the boundary. For residential receptors, it is a clear planning principle that there is no right to an unchanged view. However, the location and nature of the site means that careful masterplanning, as shown on the Concept Masterplan (**Appendix EDP 3**), and including sufficient offsets and fringe planting, would ensure that the visual amenity of the small number of receptors is respected;
- Should the site be developed, there will clearly be views to the development edge from the adjacent privately-owned agricultural land beyond the northern site boundary. However, the mitigatory planting along the northern site boundary, as shown on the Concept Masterplan, has been designed to reflect the hedgerows and shelterbelts across the wider landscape so that it contributes to integration of the proposals with the site context; and
- The location and nature of the site means that residential development proposals in accordance with the Concept Masterplan present an opportunity to set proposed development within a suitable landscape framework. This will ensure that the site remains visually and physically contained, and connected with the eastern edge of Histon and the wider agricultural landscape to the north, while retaining views north from the western edge of Impington.

4.11 To summarise, this appraisal finds that the ZPV for the development would be very limited and the proposal would be visually well contained within the site boundary and the enclosed nature of the landscape setting. The effect of the proposal is likely to be experienced in the immediate context of the site, which would be further reduced with the appropriate landscape mitigation strategy illustrated on the Concept Masterplan. Therefore, it is considered that the development of the site would not represent unacceptable levels of visual impacts and the local landscape can accommodate the scheme.

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Section 5 Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 5.1 The following summary points can be drawn from the above review of landscape and visual matters relevant to the site.
- 5.2 Main findings of the data trawl comprise:
- The site is not located within, or near, and does not contain any national or local landscape designations;
 - The site is subject to general local plan policies and SPDs that promote high-quality development that respects and retains, or enhances, local character and distinctiveness and aims to conserve and enhance Green Infrastructure within the district;
 - The site lies within the Cambridge Green Belt; and
 - There are no PRoW running through the site and there are no PRoWs in close proximity that provide access to the wider landscape.
- 5.3 The potential landscape and visual effects resulting from sympathetic residential development would be confined to the site itself and the immediate local area. This is primarily due to the restricted intervisibility between the site and its surroundings, and the compatibility of the proposals with the retention of key landscape elements, primarily vegetation at the site boundaries. The visual containment of the site is primarily due to the screening effect of field boundary vegetation, settlement, and flat topography, combined with the limited number of receptors. The immediate local area, with potential intervisibility to the proposals, is largely defined by adjacent agricultural land to the north, a local road at the settlement edge to the south-east, and a small number of adjoining residential dwellings to the west.
- 5.4 The site has the capacity for the incorporation of landscaping measures, within any proposed residential development, that would provide further mitigation, where necessary, to promote integration of the proposals into the landscape at the northern edge of Histon and Impington. Primary measures within the masterplan include:
- Retention and enhancement of existing mature vegetation along the western, eastern and southern site boundaries to strengthen these characteristic landscape elements, “create a ‘soft’ transition between the village and countryside” (*Histon and Impington Village Draft Village Design Guide*) and contribute further to a new defensible Green Belt boundary. Enhanced vegetation along the southern and eastern boundaries will

also *“Protect open views over sensitive fields...where the countryside comes into contact with the village” (Histon and Impington Village Design Guide);*

- Establishment of a hedgerow and tree buffer along the northern boundary, to *“create a ‘soft’ transition between the village and countryside” (Histon and Impington Village Design Guide);* which is sympathetic and characteristic. This would contribute to integration with the wider landscape, and contribute further to a new defensible Green Belt boundary along the existing ditch;
- Retain and enhance field ditches at the site boundary and *“enhance [their] setting” “so they can be better appreciated.” (Histon and Impington Village Design Guide);*
- Flood alleviation methods to be informed by existing characteristic drainage features, and integrated into the Green Infrastructure to contribute to landscape, visual, and recreational amenity and biodiversity;
- *“Retain and provide new areas of natural green space” (Histon and Impington Village Draft Village Design Guide)* that are multifunctional and linked to the wider green infrastructure across the site and context;
- Planting forms and species should integrate into the *“village woodland style of planting” (Histon and Impington Village Design Guide);*
- Existing and proposed vegetation to be brought into long-term management to ensure retention of healthy, effective green spaces and boundaries;
- *“Improve access and provide additional pedestrian connections between the village and countryside” (Histon and Impington Village Draft Village Design Guide);* and
- Proposed development to respect the characteristics of the surrounding built environment, including with regard to massing, scale, and materials. In order to integrate with the settlement, consideration should be given to reflection of village characteristics including:
 - *“the diversity of buildings”;*
 - *“the overall dominance of two-storey buildings”;* and
 - *“tall trees and articulated roofs”.*

Consideration should also be given to the avoidance of non-characteristic features including:

- *“repetitive continuous frontages”;*
- *“buildings that dominate over the landscape”;*

- *“featureless facades”;*
- *“prominent parking areas or garage doors on the street”;*
- *“bare verges”;* and
- *“suburban wide road detailing with standard lighting and minimal planting”.*

Conclusion

- 5.5 From a landscape and visual perspective it is EDP’s opinion that there are no ‘in principle’ constraints with regard to future residential development of the site. The location and nature of the site would mean that residential development would extend the merged settlements of Histon and Impington within logical limits, without resulting in encroachment to the wider countryside. The site is closely related with the existing developed area of the merged settlements of Histon and Impington, and as explained above, has a very limited influence on the wider rural setting that could be further reduced through careful site design as illustrated by the landscape led Concept Masterplan.

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Appendix EDP 1

Methodology: Thresholds and Definitions of Terminology used in this Appraisal

A1.1 Landscape and visual assessments are separate, though linked procedures. Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape fabric, which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. Visual effects relate to changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the perception of the landscape, to people’s responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.

Table EDP A1.1: Defining the Sensitivity of the Landscape Baseline

EDP Assessment Terminology and Definitions	
Landscape Baseline - Overall Sensitivity	
Very High	Value: Nationally/internationally designated/valued countryside and landscape features; strong/distinctive landscape characteristics; absence of landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Strong/distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; absence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in excellent condition. Landscapes with clear and widely recognised cultural value. Landscapes with a high level of tranquillity.
High	Value: Locally designated/valued countryside (e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas) and landscape features; many distinctive landscape characteristics; very few landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Many distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; very few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in good condition. The landscape has a low capacity for change as a result of potential changes to defining character.
Medium	Value: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape characteristics; few landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Some distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in fair condition. Landscape is able to accommodate some change as a result.
Low	Value: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; few distinctive landscape characteristics; presence of landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Few distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in poor condition. Landscape is able to accommodate large amounts of change without changing these characteristics fundamentally.
Very Low	Value: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; absence of distinctive landscape characteristics; despoiled/degraded by the presence of many landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Absence of distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of many landscape detractors; landscape receptors in very poor condition. As such, landscape is able to accommodate considerable change.

Table EDP A1.2: Defining the Sensitivity of the Visual Baseline

Visual Baseline - Overall Sensitivity	
Very High	Value/Susceptibility: View is: designed/has intentional association with surroundings; recorded in published material; from a publicly accessible heritage asset/designated/promoted viewpoint; nationally/internationally designated right of way; protected/recognised in planning policy designation.
	Examples: May include views from residential properties; National Trails; promoted holiday road routes; designated countryside/landscape features with public access; visitors to heritage assets of national importance; Open Access Land.
High	Value/Susceptibility: View of clear value but may not be formally recognised e.g. framed view of scenic value or destination/summit views; inferred that it may have value for local residents; locally promoted route or PRoW.
	Examples: May include from recreational locations where there is some appreciation of the visual context/landscape e.g. golf, fishing; themed rights of way with a local association; National Trust land; panoramic viewpoints marked on OS maps; road routes promoted in tourist guides and/or for their scenic value.
Medium	Value/Susceptibility: View is not widely promoted or recorded in published sources; may be typical of those experienced by an identified receptor; minor road routes through rural/scenic areas.
	Examples: May include people engaged in outdoor sport not especially influenced by an appreciation of the wider landscape e.g. pitch sports; views from minor road routes passing through rural or scenic areas.
Low	Value/Susceptibility: View of clearly lesser value than similar views from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible.
	Examples: May include major road routes; rail routes; receptor is at a place of work but visual surroundings have limited relevance.
Very Low	Value/Susceptibility: View may be affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued.
	Examples: May include people at their place of work, indoor recreational or leisure facilities or other locations where views of the wider landscape have little of no importance.

Magnitude of Change

A1.2 The magnitude of any landscape or visual change is determined through a range of considerations particular to each receptor. The three attributes considered in defining the magnitude are:

- Scale of change;
- Geographical extent; and
- Duration and reversibility/proportion.

A1.3 **Table EDP A1.3** provides an indication of the criteria by which the geographical extent of the area will be affected within this assessment.

Table EDP A1.3: Geographical Extent Criteria

Landscape Receptors	Visual Receptor Criteria
Large scale effects influencing several landscape types or character areas	Direct views at close range with changes over a wide horizontal and vertical extent.
Effects at the scale of the landscape type or character areas within which the proposal lies	Direct or oblique views at close range with changes over a notable horizontal and/or vertical extent.
Effects within the immediate landscape setting of the site	Direct or oblique views at medium range with a moderate horizontal and/or vertical extent of the view affected.
Effects at the site level (within the development site itself)	Oblique views at medium or long range with a small horizontal/vertical extent of the view affected.
Effects only experienced on parts of the site at a very localised level	Long range views with a negligible part of the view affected.

A1.4 The third, and final, factor, in determining the predicted magnitude of change is duration and reversibility. Duration and reversibility are separate but linked considerations. Duration is judged according to the defined terms set out below, whereas reversibility is a judgement about the prospects and practicality of the particular effect being reversed in, for example, a generation. The categories used in this assessment are set out in **Table EDP A1.4**.

Table EDP A1.4: Factors Influencing Judgements on Magnitude of Change

Duration	Reversibility
Long Term (20+ years)	Permanent with unlikely restoration to original state e.g. major road corridor, power station, urban extension, hydrocarbons.
Medium to long term (10 to 20 years)	Permanent with possible conversion to original state e.g. agricultural buildings, retail units.
Medium term (5 to 10 years)	Partially reversible to a different state e.g. mineral workings.
Short term (1 – 5 years)	Reversible after decommissioning to a similar original state e.g. renewable energy development.
Temporary (less than 12 months)	Quickly reversible e.g. temporary structures.

Table EDP A1.5: Defining the Magnitude of Change to the Landscape and Visual Baseline

Magnitude of Change	
(Considers Scale of Proposal/Geographical Extent/Duration and Reversibility/Proportion)	
Very High	<p>Landscape: Total loss/major alteration to key receptors/characteristics of the baseline; addition of elements that strongly conflict or integrate with the baseline.</p> <p>Visual: Substantial change to the baseline, forming a new, defining focus and having a defining influence on the view.</p>
High	<p>Landscape: Notable loss/alteration/addition to one or more key receptors/-characteristics of the baseline; or addition of prominent conflicting elements.</p> <p>Visual: Additions are clearly noticeable and part of the view would be fundamentally altered.</p>

Magnitude of Change	
Medium	<p>Landscape: Partial loss/alteration to one or more key receptors/characteristics; addition of elements that are evident but do not necessarily conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.</p> <p>Visual: The proposed development will form a new and recognisable element within the view which is likely to be recognised by the receptor.</p>
Low	<p>Landscape: Minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape receptors/-characteristics; additional elements may not be uncharacteristic within existing landscape.</p> <p>Visual: Proposed development will form a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component.</p>
Very Low	<p>Landscape: Barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.</p> <p>Visual: Proposed development will form a barely noticeable component of the view, and the view whilst slightly altered would be similar to the baseline.</p>
Imperceptible	<p>In some circumstances, changes at representative viewpoints or receptors will be lower than 'Very Low' and changes will be described as 'Imperceptible'. This will lead to negligible effects.</p>

Predicted Effects

A1.5 In order to consider the likely level of any effect, the sensitivity of each receptor is combined with the predicted magnitude of change to determine the level of effect, with reference also made to the geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the effect within the assessment. Having taken such a wide range of factors into account when assessing sensitivity and magnitude at each receptor, the level of effect can be derived by combining the sensitivity and magnitude in accordance with the matrix in **Table EDP A1.6**.

Table EDP A1.6: Determining the Predicted Levels of Effects to the Landscape and Visual Baseline

Overall Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude of Change				
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Very High	Substantial	Major	Major/- Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/- Minor
High	Major	Major/- Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/- Minor	Minor
Medium	Major/- Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/- Minor	Minor	Minor/- Negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate/- Minor	Minor	Minor/- Negligible	Negligible
Very Low	Moderate/- Minor	Minor	Minor/- Negligible	Negligible	Negligible/- None

Table EDP A1.7: Definition of Effects

Definition of Effects	
Substantial	Effects that are in complete variance to the baseline landscape resource or visual amenity.
Major or Major/Moderate	Effects that result in noticeable alterations to much (<i>Major effect</i>) or some (<i>Moderate/Major effect</i>) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
Moderate	Effects that result in noticeable alterations to a few of the key characteristics of the baseline landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
Minor or Minor/Negligible	Effects that result in slight alterations to some (<i>Minor effect</i>) or a few (<i>Minor/Negligible</i>) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
Negligible or Negligible/None	Effects that result in barely perceptible alterations to a few (<i>Negligible effect</i>) or some (<i>Negligible/None effect</i>) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
None	No detectable alteration to the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.

- A1.6 Effects can be adverse (negative), beneficial (positive) or neutral. The landscape effects will be considered against the landscape baseline, which includes published landscape strategies or policies if they exist. Changes involving the addition of large-scale man-made objects are typically considered to be adverse, unless otherwise stated, as they are not usually actively promoted as part of published landscape strategies.
- A1.7 Visual effects are more subjective as people’s perception of development varies through the spectrum of negative, neutral and positive attitudes. In the assessment of visual effects, the assessor will exercise objective professional judgement in assessing the level of effects and, unless otherwise stated, will assume that all effects are adverse, thus representing the worst-case scenario. Effects can be moderated by maturation of landscape strategies.
- A1.8 The timescale of each effect is also important, and effects are generally assessed at time stamps in the whole development life cycle: temporary (at a mid-point in construction), short-term (completion at year 1), medium-term (typically 15 years), medium- to long-term (15+ years). In some cases, the operational phase of a scheme could be considered ‘temporary’.

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Appendix EDP 2.1

Landscape Character Type 2: Fen Edge Claylands

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 2: FEN EDGE CLAYLANDS

Landscape Character Areas:
2A: Longstanton Fen Edge Claylands
2B: Cottenham Fen Edge Claylands



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 2: FEN EDGE CLAYLANDS

The Fen Edge Claylands Landscape Character Type (LCT) is a transitional, predominantly arable landscape with large scale, open fields, orchards and villages built on “islands” of high ground.

Description

Key Characteristics

- Low-lying, gently undulating landscape with extensive vistas and large skies
- Gradually rising landform, south from the edge of The Fens, which adds a prominence to the Fen Edge villages in places
- Large-scale, open field system defined by a hierarchy of drains, ditches and lodes
- Predominantly arable farmland supplemented with small scale pastoral field patterns around settlement edges
- Little vegetation cover, limited to dispersed fragments of deciduous woodland, scattered traditional orchards and gappy hedgerows
- Hedgerows, shelterbelts and small clumps of trees create a distinctive, localised vegetation pattern in proximity to villages
- Orchards are a distinctive feature, particularly around the settlements
- Dispersed settlement pattern of villages on raised landform at the edge of The Fens and individual farms and cottages.

Physical Influences

The Fen Edge Claylands landscape is relatively low-lying, with very gradual variation in a general north-south direction from c.5m AOD adjoining the Fen landscape, to c.20-30m as it transitions to the more distinctly rising Claylands.

The underlying geology varies from Jurassic and Cretaceous Clays with pockets of overlying River Terrace Deposits in the west to Lower Greensand and Upper Greensand with a greater concentration of surface River Terrace Deposits in the east. The variation in underlying geology is not reflected within the terrain, which is relatively uniform across the LCT.

The soils across the LCT are mostly loamy and clayey with impeded drainage. They are moderately to highly fertile with good grassland and arable cover. The soils are suited to wet pasture, woodland and rich vegetation.

The landscape is drained by small, generally indistinct streams that drain north into The Fens to the Great River Ouse. Between these is a network of ditches and dykes, similar although less distinct to those found in The Fens. The concentration and distinctive pattern of these ditches and drains generally reduces to the south, moving away from The Fens towards the rising Claylands.

Biodiversity

This is a productive landscape that is dominated by arable agriculture, interspersed with occasional pasture on lower-lying land and fields used for horticulture including traditional orchards. This is not an ecologically rich area, with few designated sites across the LCT.

The Fen Drayton Gravel Pits County Wildlife Site (CWS) is located on the northwest boundary of the LCT with The Fens. Swavesey Meadows adjoins this, within the LCT. These are made up of a variety of habitats, including a large percentage of open water/wetland and grassland with some scrub/woodland. Beach Ditch is a linear CWS towards the east of the LCT, which links with lodes and drains in the adjoining Fens to the north. A small area of orchard at Ashley Farm and short stretch of the Over Railway Cutting are also small CWS within this LCT.

Priority habitats identified within this LCT include pockets of floodplain grazing marsh near Swavesey, Oakington and Landbeach; a number of traditional orchards, generally concentrated around settlements through the north of the LCT; and scattered, small blocks of deciduous woodland.

This is generally a sparsely vegetated landscape, with small groups of trees, including traditional orchards and small deciduous woodland concentrated around the settlements. The fields are predominantly bound by ditches and drains with occasional trimmed, often gappy hedgerows and tree shelter belts along roads and tracks. Hedgerows are more common around the smaller scale field networks in proximity to settlements, particularly those on the edge of Cambridge to the south of the LCT.

Historic Landscape Character

The location of the existing main settlements on the edge of the Fen landscape has characterised and influenced their development. As the Fen and peaty soils have receded the villages have expanded north.

Many of the villages have their origins in the 11th and 12th centuries, when they exploited the high ground and expanded with successful schemes of fen drainage. There was also rapid population growth in the area in the 16th and 17th centuries¹⁸. The Fen Edge villages were traditionally wealthy and contain several fine medieval churches.

Akeman Street (Roman Road) transects the eastern part of the LCT, running north towards the north Norfolk coast. There are a large number of Iron Age and Roman archaeological sites in proximity to the straight line of the Roman Road (which forms the A10 as it leaves the LCT to the north).

There are a small number of scheduled monuments within the LCT, which include former abbey sites at Waterbeach and Denny Abbey in the east and some Priory earthworks in the northwest. There are also some small areas of castle earthworks at Swavesey and Rampton, relating to remains of medieval settlement of the landscape.

¹⁸ Historic Britain from the Air, R.E.Glasscock, 1992

Settlement Form and Built Character

The Fen Edge Clayland is a well settled landscape that has traditionally been an important location for settlement, being above the Fen floodplain and with easy access to both the wetland resources to the north and the higher land, suitable for agriculture to the south. It is an area that is dominated by arable agriculture, interspersed with commuter settlements with former RAF bases.

The largest of the settlements in this area are Swavesey, Over, Willingham, Longstanton, Cottenham, Histon, Impington and Milton. These villages originally established along a linear pattern following the main road systems, as evidenced by the designation of their conservation areas. Their modern form is more dispersed, having expanded since the 1960s as commuter settlements in proximity to Cambridge. A number of individual farms and cottages are dispersed across the landscape between the villages.

Traditional building materials within the villages include gault brick, render and thatch. Due to the geology of the area, there were limited building material resources, which has influenced the vernacular architecture with a consistency of appearance. Stone was imported and used for architectural detailing on brick built, higher status buildings in the 18th and 19th centuries.

There are some significant areas of quarrying within the LCT, between Cottenham and Waterbeach in the east and south of Milton in the southeast (now Milton Country Park). These were formerly areas of clay extraction and more recently for sand and gravel for more recent development expansion.

Remnants of the RAF barracks are present in the landscape between Longstanton and Oakington and to the north of Waterbeach, including the landing strips and former buildings.

Access to the Landscape

The A14 is the main road, following the straight line of the former Roman Road, through the south of the LCT between the northwest edge of Cambridge, northwest to Huntingdon. The A10 connects north, through the east of the LCT from the north edge of Cambridge to Ely.

A number of B- and minor roads connect in a north-south direction through the LCT, linking Cambridge and the A14 to the outlying, commuter villages. Minor roads link between the villages, with tracks that follow the ditches connecting off these for farm access.

There are many bridleways across the Fen Edge Claylands, including a continuous route through the centre following the route of the guided busway between Cambridge and Huntingdon. A variety of footpaths, byways and bridleways link from this, following the line of ditches and drains to the nearby villages.

The Pathfinder long distance walk connects through the centre and west of the LCT. This path links the historic RAF Pathfinder stations at Wyton, Graveley, Oakington and Warboys, using rights of way through gentle countryside and passing many wartime memorials.

Evaluation

Key Landscape Features

- Historic, dispersed settlement pattern of villages and individual farms and cottages
- Characteristic Fen Edge villages along the line of the floodplain
- Numerous, small, traditional orchards particularly in the north of the LCT in proximity to the village settlements
- Pockets of priority habitats, particularly grazing marsh in proximity to watercourses
- Strong sense of historic settlement and land use

Forces for Change

- Intensive arable agriculture has resulted in field expansion and removal of key habitats including hedgerows. Changes in agri-environmental schemes and agricultural subsidies could result in further fragmentation of ecological networks and conversion/expansion of farmsteads
- Loss of traditional orchards and small-scale field systems in proximity to the traditional settlements, through development expansion, change of land use and further intensification and modernisation of farming practices
- Climate change and land use change could lead to increased risk of flooding, which would alter the ecological networks, resulting in shift in species composition and requiring alterations in management
- Pressures for development which would change the character of the Fen Edge villages through further expansion and densification
- Ad hoc woodland and shelterbelt planting that would alter the open character of the landscape
- Development of large scale buildings on farms due to intensification of farming practices
- Continued evolution of the landscape as the new town at Northstowe is built out

Condition

The Fen Edge Claylands is an intensively farmed LCT with limited ecological value. The hierarchy of drainage channels and historic tracks and droves connecting between the settlements and The Fens to the north are generally intact historic landscape features that contribute to the value of this landscape. The overall condition of the landscape is perceived to be **moderate**.

Strength of Character

This is a peaceful rural landscape judged to be of **moderate** strength of character with few distinguishing features. Traditional orchards are a feature of this landscape. However, this network is declining in places due to development and farming pressures. The historic linear form of the Fen Edge villages is generally retained. Modern estates have altered the overall form of the settlements, although are generally well integrated by hedgerows, copses and shelterbelts where appropriate.

Key Landscape Sensitivities

- Network of historic ditches and droveways that contribute to the area's sense of place
- Peaceful, rural open character of the landscape
- Hedgerows, shelterbelts and small clumps of trees forming a distinctive, localised vegetation pattern in proximity to villages
- Surviving traditional orchards
- Remaining pockets of high ecological value landscape features such as grazing marsh alongside watercourses and scattered deciduous woodland
- Historic, linear village cores

Landscape Guidelines

The overall management objective for the Fen Edge Claylands LCT is to **conserve** the rural character and the important surviving landscape features such as traditional orchards, droves, drains and linear village cores. It would also be appropriate to **enhance** those features that are declining or are incongruous in the landscape, such as the traditional orchards and modern village edges.

Guidance for Landscape Management

- Conserve and restore traditional orchards whilst maintaining the productive Claylands arable landscape
- Conserve and enhance existing watercourses, drains and ditches to maintain historic features and enhance ecological value of the farmed landscape
- Conserve and enhance the regular small-scale pastoral fields, shelter belts and hedges at village edges
- Manage the agricultural landscape and soils both for production and opportunities to improve biodiversity
- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerows and consider opportunities for re-planting hedgerows where these have been lost/become fragmented
- Protect the sites and features of archaeological and historic interest
- Encourage opportunities to expand and link woodland, hedgerows and other semi-natural habitats to benefit biodiversity whilst managing the open character of the landscape

Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape

- Conserve the overall rural character, with dispersed Fen Edge villages, farms and cottages linked by rural roads and historic droves and tracks
- Ensure any village extensions are located on the high ground of the Fen Islands, avoiding incremental development on the flat, low-lying fen
- Ensure new developments on the edges of villages are integrated by wide hedgerows, copses and shelterbelt planting reflecting the local mixes
- Ensure a transition between Fen and Fen Island by retention and creation of small hedgerowed paddocks
- Conserve and enhance existing orchard and hedgerowed paddocks
- Maintain linear or rectilinear form of the settlements and avoid closes and cul-de-sacs where possible
- Ensure buildings are mostly set on the back edge of pavements, or face the street with small front gardens in the village cores
- Ensure new developments integrate/connect with existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) within development layout
- Ensure new developments reflect the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings of the area and pick up on the traditional building styles, height, materials, colours and textures of the locality
- Enclose boundaries facing onto roads by low brick walls and/or simple iron railings, timber picket fences and hedges as appropriate in the village cores
- Retain hedges and introduce them as boundaries alongside roads outside village cores
- Integrate water features, such as ditches dykes and ponds, into new developments as part of open spaces
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

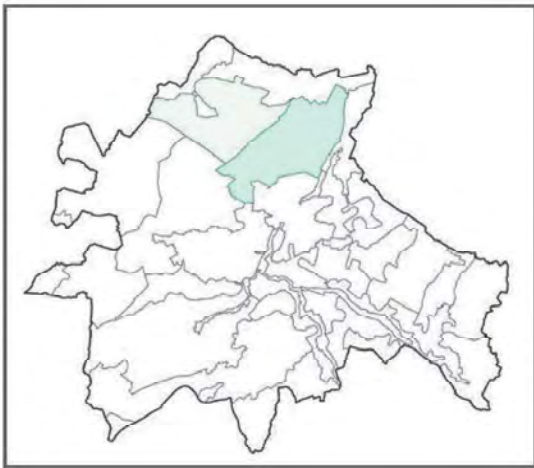
- **2A: Longstanton Fen Edge Claylands**
- **2B: Cottenham Fen Edge Claylands**

Appendix EDP 2.2

Landscape Character Area 2B: Cottenham Fen Edge Claylands

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 2B: COTTENHAM FEN EDGE CLAYLANDS



2B: COTTENHAM FEN EDGE CLAYLANDS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

The Cottenham Fen Edge Claylands Landscape Character Area (LCA) is a well settled landscape with several villages located on raised 'islands' above The Fens and urban influences extending from the edge of Cambridge.

Description

Key Characteristics

- Well settled rural landscape comprising a number of large villages with historic linear cores located on elevated 'islands'
- Pockets of remnant parkland alongside orchards, hedgerows and shelterbelts create a distinctive, localised vegetation pattern in proximity to the villages
- Urban influences associated with the urban edge of Cambridge and major road network in the south which are discordant with the otherwise rural character

The Cottenham Fen Edge Claylands gently undulating landscape rises very gently from c. 5m AOD at the edge of The Fens in the north to c. 30m AOD in the south where it meets the Wooded Claylands. A small number of minor streams flow through the south of the area from the Wooded Claylands and join the more regimented drainage network of drains and ditches that extends across the wider area. A number of scattered waterbodies are consistent with historic mineral extraction, particularly in the east of the area at Cambridge Research Park, Milton Country Park and west of Waterbeach.

This is a predominantly arable landscape, comprising medium sized fields arranged in a generally irregular rectilinear pattern defined by straight historic ditches and droveways with occasional gappy hedgerows. Smaller scale pastoral fields, paddocks and orchards on the edge of settlements have a more enclosed character created by boundary hedges, shelterbelts and trees close to the villages. Belts of woodland around waterbodies and fragments of historic parkland in Histon, and shelterbelts concentrated around settlements, golf courses and the disused airfield north of Waterbeach Barracks provide occasional vegetation cover which creates localised visual enclosure and frames views across the surrounding arable landscape. South of the A14 the vegetation cover begins to include more robust hedges and scattered blocks of woodland, creating a greater sense of enclosure as the landform starts to rise towards the Wooded Claylands.

This is a settled rural landscape, with several small to medium sized villages including Cottenham, Waterbeach, Histon Milton and Girton, located on low 'islands' that rise from The Fens. There are also some small linear settlements along roads and isolated farms and cottages. The villages have strong historic linear cores, often with large greens. More recent, suburban development has taken place, expanding the villages as commuter settlements along the major route network in proximity to Cambridge. Settlement generally sits low in the landscape and is well screened by mature trees, shelterbelts and hedgerows, but glimpses of built form can often be seen, maintaining a settled rural character between villages. Rows of poplar trees, occasional lines of telegraph poles and pylons are vertical features which interrupt the skyline.

The proximity of this rural LCA to Cambridge means that there are a number of localised urban influences particularly in the south and east of the area that locally are discordant and detract from the tranquillity experienced elsewhere within the LCA. These include the major road network and industrial sites such as the factory at Impington and Cambridge Research Park. There are also a number of recreational sites including the restored mineral extraction sites which are used for sailing and have walking trails; golf courses at Girton and north of Waterbeach Barracks; and a fishing lake south of Histon.

Evaluation

Specific Landscape Sensitivities

In addition to the generic landscape sensitivities for this landscape character type, the following sensitivities are specific to this character area:

- Framed, long views between vegetation from villages across open, arable fields
- Remnant parkland west of Histon
- Pressure for recreation

Specific Landscape Guidelines

In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Ensure new development is integrated into the landscape sympathetically, is in keeping with the open, rural character, and does not affect long, framed views
- Conserve parkland and enhance the specific features that give character and its context within the wider landscape in areas where it has been fragmented
- Ensure land developed for recreation enhances existing landscape features, creates links between villages and recreational assets and is in keeping with the open, rural character

Appendix EDP 2.3

Fen Edge villages

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5.7 The Fen Edge Villages

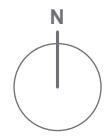
The “Fen Edge villages” are associated with the parishes of Cottenham, Fen Drayton, Girton, Histon, Horningsea, Impington, Landbeach, Longstanton, Milton, Northstowe, Oakington, Over, Willingham, Rampton, Swavesey, Waterbeach and Westwick

Typical characteristics:

- To the north of Cambridge, towards the fens, villages are characterised by their strong linear form, often having developed outwards from crossroads along approach roads.
- The historic linear form is retained despite the modern estate developments that have occurred in many of the villages.
- Some village edges, such as at Cottenham, have a well wooded character, with hedgerows and mature trees concealing buildings, while others, such as Fen Drayton, have more open edges.
- Within the historic cores narrow lanes with continuous street frontages are typical, but on village edges buildings are more often setback with low walls and hedges fronting the streets.
- Long back gardens are also a common feature.
- Vernacular buildings are typically small scale, one and a half or two storeys in height.
- A few larger villas occur in some village core areas.
- Northstowe and Waterbeach New Towns are 21st century new settlements.
- Within the historic villages, wall materials vary with yellow Gault Clay brickwork predominating and plastered timber-frame, dark stained weatherboarding and red brick also present.
- Roofs are historically of thatch and plain clay tiles, with pantiles and Welsh slate being later introductions.
- Timber-frame building details include; steeply pitched roofs, side hung timber casements set flush to the outside face of the wall, drip boards set on gable ends and over the windows, with four or six panelled or planked doors.
- Eighteenth and nineteenth century house details include; vertically sliding sash windows set in reveals over shallow stone sills and with gauged or segmental arched brick lintels over, four or six panelled doors in simple classical door cases incorporating fan lights and chimneys incorporated within the buildings or at gable ends.
- Some brick buildings in the village cores have Dutch gables, reflecting the eighteenth and nineteenth century’s links with the Low Countries.

Appendix EDP 3
Concept Masterplan
(edp5518_d023c 19 November 2021 CG/PW)

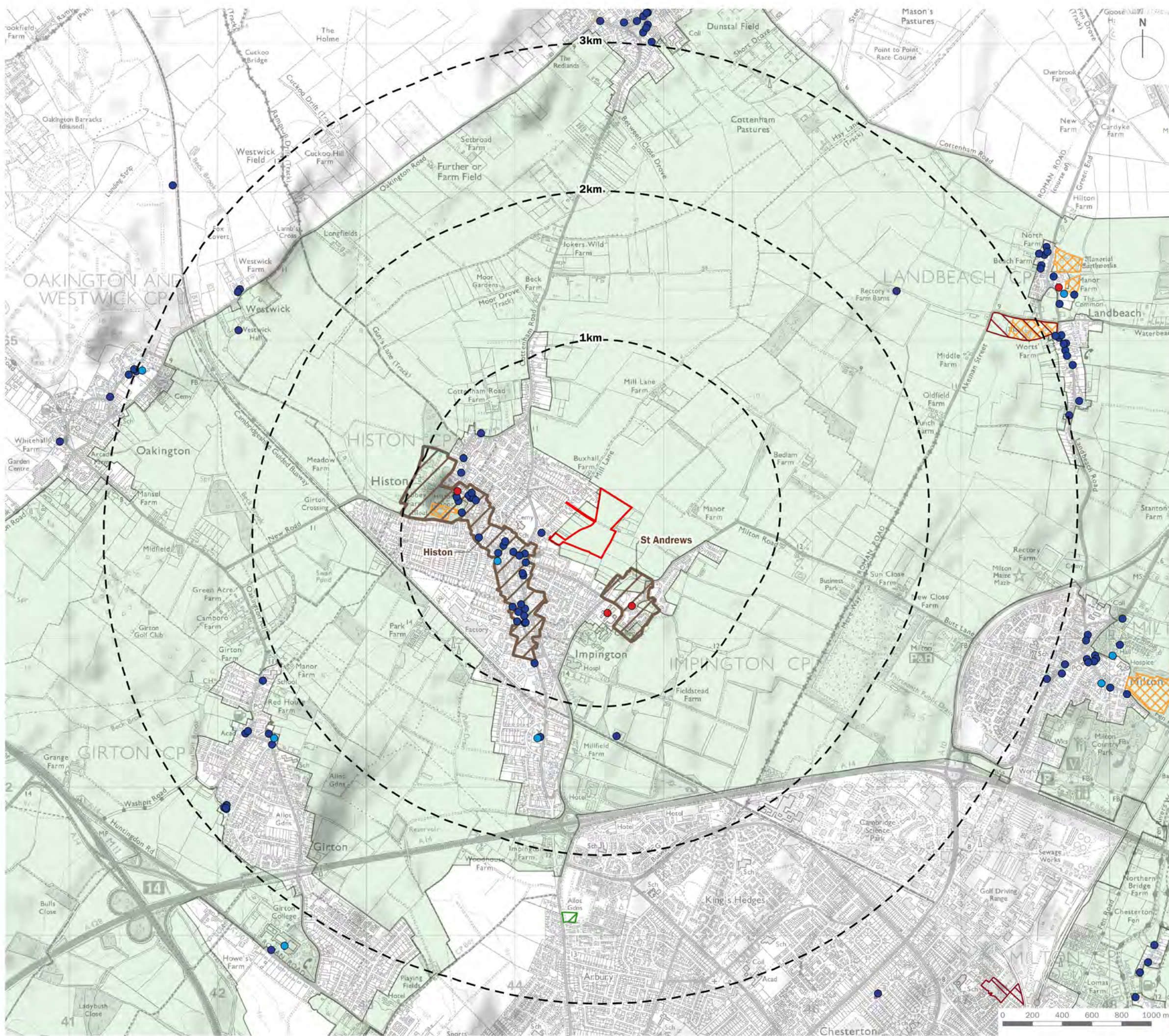
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Plans

- Plan EDP L1** Site Location and Context
(edp5518_d012b 30 November 2021 NB/EW)
- Plan EDP L2** Environmental Planning Context
(edp5518_d013b 30 November 2021 NB/EW)
- Plan EDP L3** Zone of Primary Visibility and Photoviewpoint Locations
(edp5518_d014b 30 November 2021 NB/EW)
- Plan EDP L4** Photoviewpoints EDP 1-6
(edp5518_d015a 12 February 2020 GY/EW)

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- Site Boundary**
- Range Rings (at 1km intervals)
- Planning**
- Green Belt
- Ecology**
- Local Nature Reserves
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Heritage**
- Conservation Area
 - Grade I Listed Building
 - Grade II Listed Building
 - Grade II* Listed Building
 - Scheduled Monument

client
Martin Grant Homes

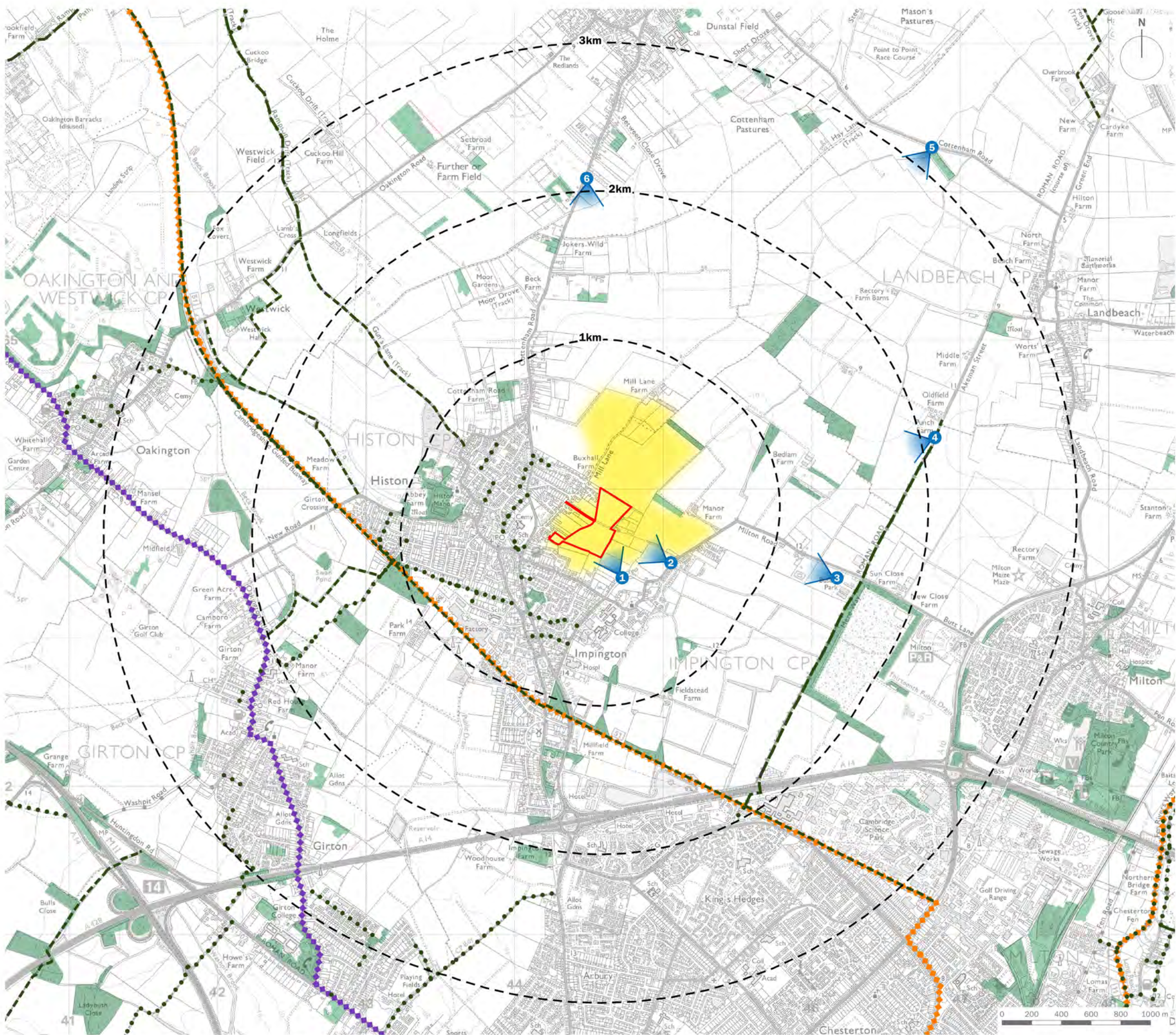
project title
Ambrose Way, Impington

drawing title
Plan EDP L2: Environmental Planning Context

date **30 NOVEMBER 2021** drawn by **NB**
drawing number **edp5518_d013b** checked **EW**
scale **1:25,000 @ A3** QA **CR**



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- Range Rings (at 1km intervals)
- Access**
- Bridleway
- Byway
- Footpath
- National Cycle Network
- Regional Cycle Route
- Vegetation**
- National Forest Inventory
- Photoviewpoint Locations
- Zone of Primary Visibility
- Site Boundary

client
Martin Grant Homes

project title
Ambrose Way, Impington

drawing title
Plan EDP L3: Zone of Primary Visibility and Photoviewpoint Locations

date **30 NOVEMBER 2021** drawn by **NB**
drawing number **edp5518_d014b** checked **EW**
scale **1:25,000 @ A3** QA **CR**



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Photoviewpoint EDP 1: Clay Close Lane south east of site



Approximate extent of site beyond site boundary vegetation

Photoviewpoint EDP 2: Milton Road east south east of site



Approximate extent of site filtered by field boundary vegetation

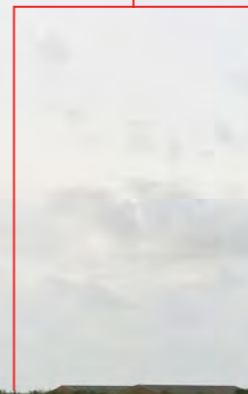
Photoviewpoint EDP 3: Eastern Edge of Evolution Business Park east south east of site

Approximate extent of site heavily filtered by intervening vegetation



Photoviewpoint EDP 4: Byway Ref: 162/3 south of Akeman Street, Milton

Approximate extent of site hidden by intervening vegetation



Photoviewpoint EDP 5: Cottenham Road north east of site



Approximate location of site not perceptible due to distance and intervening vegetation

Photoviewpoint EDP 6: Cycleway along Hilton Road north of site



Approximate extent of site heavily filtered by intervening vegetation

Local cycleway



the environmental
dimension partnership

CARDIFF
02921 671900

CHELtenham
01242 903110

CIRENCESTER
01285 740427

info@edp-uk.co.uk
www.edp-uk.co.uk

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