

LAND AT COMBERTON
CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Green Belt Strategic Site Landscape Appraisal

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Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd
Hardwick Business Park
Noral Way
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX16 2AF

t 01295 276066

f 01295 265072

e info@aspect-landscape.com

w www.aspect-landscape.com

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Aspect Landscape Planning is instructed by Hopkins Homes Ltd to assess land known as Land at Comberton, Cambridgeshire, hereafter referred to as the Site, against the key purposes of the Green Belt and review the possible landscape and visual matters relating to the Sites potential for residential development. The Site is illustrated on Plan ASP1.
- 1.2. The purpose of this Green Belt Strategic Site Landscape Appraisal is to provide an appraisal of the existing baseline conditions for the Site, including an assessment of the landscape character setting and localised visual environment. The appraisal will assess the Site against the key purposes of the Green Belt (NPPF paragraphs 134-135) and will assist the identification of the suitability and capacity of the Site with regards the Green Belt criteria and will briefly assess the ability of the landscape & visual setting of the Site to accommodate development.
- 1.3. This appraisal will take the following format:
 - Review of baseline conditions;
 - Assess the Site against the key purposes of the Green Belt (NPPF paragraphs 142-160)
 - Identification of potential landscape and visual effects, with suggested approach to mitigation; and
 - Conclusions will be drawn
- 1.4. This appraisal does not represent a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) but has been prepared in line with guidance set out within GLVIA3, the industry best practice guidance. It is considered that if the Site is allocated a detailed LVIA would be prepared as part of any planning application for development on this site.

2. BASELINE ASSESSMENT

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

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

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

Landscape Related Policy

National Planning Policy

- 2.8. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – revised December 2024, sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and provides a framework within which the appropriate local authority can produce local and neighbourhood plans; the NPPF is a material consideration in making planning decisions.
- 2.9. The NPPF sets out three overarching objectives in achieving sustainable development, these are interdependent and need to be considered in mutually supportive ways. Economic, social and environmental objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and application of the policies within the NPPF. The NPPF also notes the importance that planning policies and decisions should play in providing an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, which should also respond to local circumstances, reflecting local character and the needs and opportunities of each area.
- 2.10. In particular, the NPPF describes the functions and importance of the Green Belt, within chapter 13. ‘Protecting Green Belt Land,’ which provides:

*Para 142. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. **The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.***

Para 143. Green Belt serves five purposes:

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

- 2.11. In relation to proposals affecting the Green Belt, the NPPF provides:

Para 153. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness⁵⁵. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

- 2.12. It is important to note that 'footnote 55,' rules out the issue of harm to Green Belt openness, if a site is either 'previously developed land' or is identified as being 'Grey Belt.'

- 2.13. The NPPF defines 'Grey Belt' in the following terms:

"Grey belt: For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

- 2.14. For the purposes of the Site, 'footnote 7' relates to ecological designations that are important habitat sites, areas of landscape importance, such as National Landscapes, heritage coastlines and / or areas of heritage importance. This does not relate to the Site.

- 2.15. The NPPF sets out a clear hierarchy for Local Planning Authorities, when considering appropriate and sustainable locations for Green Belt Release (GBR). The following NPPF paragraphs illustrate that 'Grey Belt' sites, within an urban edge, are importantly high up on this priority list and should be considered sustainable and appropriate for release, providing:

Para 148. "Where it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give priority to previously developed land, then consider grey belt which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt locations. However, when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should determine whether a site's location is appropriate with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and

115 of this Framework. Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of **channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary**, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.

Para 149. **“When defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should:**

- a) ensure consistency with the development plan’s strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;
- b) not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;**
- c) where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;
- e) be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and**
- f) define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.**

Para 155. **The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where:**

- a) **The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;**
- c) **The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework⁵⁷; and**
- d) **Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.**

Para 156. **“Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review⁵⁸, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application⁵⁹, the following contributions (‘Golden Rules’) should be made:”**

- c) **“the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.”**

Para 158. **“A development which complies with the Golden Rules should be given significant weight in favour of the grant of permission.”**

Para 159. “The improvements to green spaces required as part of the Golden Rules should contribute positively to the landscape setting of the development, support nature recovery and meet local standards for green space provision where these exist in the development plan...”

Local Planning Policy

- 2.16. The Adopted Development Plan for South Cambridgeshire District Council sets out planning policies and proposals that guide the development and use of land in the district. All planning decisions are made in accordance with the planning policies included in the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2011-2031

- 2.17. The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (adopted September 2018) sets out the planning policies and land allocations to guide the future development of the district up to 2031. The policies of relevance to this assessment are:

- **Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character**

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

- **Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Policy NH/13: Important Countryside Frontage**

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

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

Greater Cambridge Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)

2.18. The Greater Cambridge Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The HELAA assesses the potential supply of land for residential and economic development related uses and provides an assessment of the potential sites in terms of their suitability, availability and achievability.

2.19. The HELAA was published in September 2021, replacing the previous South Cambridgeshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) published in 2013.

- 2.20. The Site is identified as Site 40501 – Land at Bush Close, Comberton, CB23 7AP with the Site having the capacity for up to 120 dwellings – **see Appendix 2.**
- 2.21. The assessment of Landscape and Townscape Character within the HELAA confirms that *“the site is within the perceived village envelope and capable of being developed as proposed with little negative landscape impact. Appropriate landscaped perimeter treatments should be included and retention of trees and hedgerows is encouraged.”*
- 2.22. The assessment concludes that the Site is both **Available** and **Achievable**, confirming that *“the land has been promoted by the landowner and or development, and is known to be available for development. The site has a low existing use value and residential development is likely to be economically viable at an appropriate density.”*

The South Cambridgeshire Village Capacity Study (1998)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Emerging Local Planning Policy

Greater Cambridge Local Plan (Regulation 18: Preferred Option 2021) – First Proposals

2.24. At a regional level, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are working together to create a joint Local Plan for the two areas, which is referred to as Greater Cambridge. This is to ensure that there is a consistent approach to planning across the wider area, and provides a series of aims and draft policies which are intended to apply to development across the area. The following draft policies are considered to be of some relevance in terms of landscape and Green Belt to the Site and Proposed Development:

- Policy BG/BG: Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Policy BG/GI: Green Infrastructure
- Policy BG/TC: Improving tree canopy cover and the tree population
- Policy GP/LC: Protection and enhancement of landscape character
- Policy GP/GB: Protection and enhancement of the Cambridge Green Belt
- Policy GP/QD: Achieving high quality development
- Policy GP/QP: Establishing high quality landscape and public realm

2.25. The emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan is at an early stage of adoption at the time of writing, and while they have been considered, they carry little weight in terms of planning.

Landscape Character

National

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

Regional

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

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

County

- 2.28. The ‘Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines - 1991’ provides a county wide landscape character assessment, with the landscape divided into character areas on the basis of existing distinctive landscape character. The assessment provides an understanding of the overall character and sets out principles for landscape improvement and management.
- 2.29. The Site falls wholly within Western Claylands Landscape Character Area (LCA) – see **Appendix 3**. The key characteristics and distinctive features exhibited by the Site and adjacent study area are;
- *Sparsely populated landscape with tiny hamlets, single farms and numerous moated sites*
 - *Gentle undulating landscape*

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

Principles for landscape improvement and management

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

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

District

2.31. At the district level, The Site is washed over by the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment, which was adopted by South Cambridgeshire District Council in February 2021. The assessment identifies 9 distinct Landscape Character Types (LCTs), split into 33 more nuanced Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The Site is identified as lying within LCA 3B: Bourn Tributary Lowland Farmlands.

2.32. The key characteristics of LCA 3B are:

- *“Wide valley of the River Bourn and its tributaries as it nears its confluence with the River Cam*
- *Generally strong, rectilinear field pattern with smaller scale pastoral fields near villages*
- *Ecological richness associated with the river including lowland meadows, good quality semi-improved grassland and floodplain grazing marsh*
- *Radio telescopes are a unique and distinctive feature on the skyline*
- *Well defined settlement edges defined by mature trees, copses and thick hedgerows enclosing small scale fields and paddocks*
- *Network of major roads locally detracts from the otherwise tranquil, rural character*
- *Recreational land use includes golf clubs, University sports fields and a polo club*
- *Coton Countryside Reserve is linked to the historic core of Cambridge by views towards the city’s historic core and a green corridor which contributes to the setting of the city.”*

Aspect Landscape Assessment

2.33. The assessment does not include an assessment of sensitivity or value in terms of the individual LCAs but provides a useful introduction to the wider landscape setting of the Site. Aspect has undertaken an assessment of the Site and its localised setting in relation to the amended Box 5.1 of GLVIA3 & LI TGN 02/21 criteria.

2.34. Table 1: Assessment of Landscape Value of the Site and its Setting

Factor	Definition	Assessment of Value
Natural Heritage	<i>Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape</i>	Low - The habitat within the Site comprises entirely of grassland which itself has limited conservation interest. The Site is bound by mature hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees to the eastern and southern boundaries, these are the most noticeable feature of the Site; however, these are common features in the wider landscape.
Cultural Heritage	<i>Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape</i>	Negligible – The Site itself is not washed over by any cultural or heritage designations, and while there is a Scheduled Monument approximately 500m east of the Site, it is considered that there is no notable physical or visual connection between the two. There are several listed buildings associated with the historic centre of Comberton, and the Grade I listed Church of St Mary to the southeast, both of which are washed over by Conservation Areas. The Site is not readily perceived from these heritage assets.
Landscape Condition	<i>Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure</i>	Low - The Site comprises a small scale arable field currently under grassland, which is typical of the wider landscape, the field is defined by a combination of mature outgrown hedgerow and settlement edge. There are no landscape features within the Site itself, away from the boundary vegetation which defines the eastern and southern boundaries, providing the Site with a degree of separation from the wider agricultural landscape.
Associations	<i>Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts</i>	None – There are no known literary or historic associations with the Site or setting.

Distinctiveness	<i>Landscape that has a strong sense of identity</i>	Low - There are no notable perceptual qualities to the Site, even at a localised scale. The Site is typical of the wider landscape found within the area and is influenced by the adjacent residential development to the north and west of the Site.
Recreational	<i>Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of the landscape is important</i>	Low – The Site is not publicly accessible and is not crossed by any PRoW. The Site is adjacent to PRoW 52/7 and forms a part of the enclosed views associated with the PRoW at the Sites eastern boundary. As distance south increases, the Site forms part of the wider views towards the village, comprising a small parcel on the village edge, adjacent to the wider large scale arable field network. There is a permitted route through the arable field network to the south, and the Site contributes partly to the village edge views associated with it.
Perceptual (Scenic)	<i>Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense</i>	Low – The Site itself is not identified as being part of any important views locally, and while it does contribute partly to views associated with the wider agricultural landscape, the Site itself is more closely associated with the village edge due to the dense network of vegetation at the southern and eastern boundaries, and development associated with Bush Close and Swaynes Lane to the north and west. The Site contains no landscape features of note away from the boundary vegetation.
Perceptual (Wildness & Tranquillity)	<i>Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies</i>	Medium – The Site itself illustrates some tranquillity and wildness, due to its village edge location and proximity to the open countryside. The wider landscape has few roads carrying high volumes of traffic, with the B1046 being the busiest local road carrying traffic at between 30 and 60mph in places, while the M11 approximately 3km from the Site's eastern boundary. The Site itself is not closely associated with dark skies.
Functional	<i>Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape</i>	Low / Negligible – The Site itself contains no internal landscape features of not which contribute to the localised landscape, and the Site is not washed over by any qualitative landscape designations. The ground is grassland, which offers some habitat opportunities, while the boundary hedgerow provides further habitat opportunities and wildlife corridors. These contribute to the local Green Infrastructure network. The Site has some value in terms of drainage, being an undeveloped parcel of grassland on the village edge.

- 2.35. The Site is an undeveloped parcel of grassland on the village edge of Comberton, containing no internal landscape features of note, with some established hedgerow and hedgerow trees to the eastern and southern boundaries providing the highest amount of landscape interest. These boundary vegetation structures contribute to the wider Green Infrastructure network, while also providing the Site with visual containment and physical separation from the wider arable farmland network, particularly to the south and east. The Site is relatively tranquil, with few urbanising features associated with the Site, limited to adjacent built form along Bush Close and associated noise detracting slightly from the perception of wildness locally. The Site is not publicly accessible and while it contributes partly to some views towards Comberton associated with the local PRoW network, these are not identified as key views in any adopted planning guidance or considered locally important.
- 2.36. As such, given the assessment of the above, the Site itself is considered to be of **Low landscape value**, in relation to 'Box 5.1' of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA 3), and supported by LI TGN 02/21: *Assessing landscape value outside national designations*.
- 2.37. Overall, the Site and its immediate setting do not represent a "valued landscape" with reference to para 187 of the NPPF. Given the assessment of value above, it is considered that the Site is of low sensitivity.

Visual Environment

- 2.38. It is acknowledged that there are partial / glimpsed views into and across the Site from Byway 52/7 adjacent to the eastern boundary and the permissive route to the south of the Site. Beyond these the combination of established vegetation structure, landform and existing built development heavily restricts views for pedestrians, residents and motorists within the localised and wider landscape.
- 2.39. During the Site visit a photographic record was taken to illustrate the visibility of the Site within its immediate context and these are included within **Appendix 1 – Photographic Record**.
- 2.40. Viewpoints 1 – 2 are taken from the Byway 52/7 adjacent to the eastern Site boundary. The route runs south from Barton Road / B1046, approximately 190m to the north (viewpoint 5), along the existing settlement edge to the north east, passing adjacent to the eastern Site boundary, from here views are glimpsed over the Site from the existing gateways or through gaps in the mature Site boundary vegetation. The route continues south past the Site, over Tit Brook and out to the wider arable landscape (viewpoint 3), Approximately 675m to the south of the Site the route meets Bridleway 52/10 which runs on a west / east axis from Royston Lane.
- 2.41. Viewpoints 4 is taken from the Permissive route adjacent to St Mary's Church, approximately 385m to the south west of the Site. The view looks across the relatively flat landform towards the Site which is seen in context of the existing residential development off Bush close, which forms the existing settlement edge of Comberton.
- 2.42. Viewpoints 6 & 7 are taken from the settlement edge of Barton, located approximately 1.3km and 2.09km to the south east respectively. From here the combination of the relatively flat landform and intervening mature vegetation screens views of the Site.
- 2.43. Viewpoint 8 is taken from the higher ground to the north, along Bridleway 20/4. From here there are elevated views of the wider lower lying landform to the south. The tower of St Mary's Church is partially visible in the long distance, set within mature vegetation. The combination of the landform and mature vegetation heavily screen views of the Site and the wider settlement of Comberton.

3. GREEN BELT REVIEW

Adopted Green Belt Study

- 3.1. The Site has been assessed as a District level through the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment – South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council, prepared by LUC in August 2021.
- 3.2. The Site is identified as Parcel CO6 of the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment and is considered to have an overall contribution of ‘Moderate’ when assessed against the three purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt, identified at a local level.
- 3.3. The assessment states that:
- “The release and development of land within this parcel would increase urbanising visual impact on land within the fields to the south. However, the additional impact is limited due to a small frontage.*
- The release would not have an impact upon the contribution of land to the east or the southeast to Green Belt purposes.”*
- 3.4. Further detail is included in **Appendix 4:** Extract from Great Cambridge Green Belt Assessment.

Aspect Green Belt Assessment

- 3.5. This section provides an explanation as to the approach and methodology followed in assessing the contribution made by the Site to the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out in Para 143 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

“Para 143: Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.”*

3.6. The NPPF defines 'Grey Belt' in the following terms:

*"Grey belt: For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, **does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143.** 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.*

Approach

3.7. The approach to the appraisal comprises;

- Reviewing proposed development of the Site against Green Belt purposes;
- Judgements on the fit with existing developments (i.e. Existing built edge of the settlement) and overall impact on openness of the Green Belt;
- Identifying opportunities for positive use of the Green Belt in the vicinity of the Site; and
- Reviewing potential opportunities for Proposals.

3.8. This approach allows for the rounded consideration of how development might be accommodated within the Site and as part of a Green Belt release within the wider context and not simply site specific character.

3.9. The following sets out the assessment criteria used to guide the evaluation of the likely effects of development within the Green Belt. The Green Belt purposes relating to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns and whether it assists in the regeneration of urban areas do not apply and are therefore not appraised.

Site Analysis

3.10. The results of the Site appraisal are set out in Table 1. None of the judgements on the relative contribution of the parcel to Green Belt purposes are scored or weighted and the overall assessment reflects professional judgement on the contribution of the Site to Green Belt purposes as a whole. Thus, a Significant Contribution in respect of separation for example, and a Limited Contribution in all other respects,

can lead to an overall Significant Contribution. Equally, contributions across a number of purposes may still only lead to a judgement of a Contribution overall.

Significant Contribution

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

Contribution

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

Limited Contribution

- 3.13. The parcel makes a Limited Contribution to Green Belt purposes and release, either part or whole, could be considered in the context of other material planning considerations.
- 3.14. The appraisal also includes comment on the likely effects that development would have on the openness (absence of built development) of the Green Belt in the vicinity of the Site. This reflects the importance of openness as a particular quality of the Green Belt and how the introduction of built development to a parcel can influence the character of the wider Green Belt. As with the determination of the contribution of land parcels to Green Belt purposes, the observations reflect professional judgement.
- 3.15. Aspect undertook an initial site visit in January 2025, during which a photographic record was taken - **Appendix 1** – Photographic Record. The viewpoints illustrate the visual prominence of the existing settlement edge and wider settlement setting of Comberton within the immediate context of the Site. The viewpoints clearly illustrate the enclosure of the Site from the wider landscape provided by the mature vegetation and the relationship between the Site and existing settlement edge (viewpoints 3 & 4). These illustrate that the Site itself has a stronger connection with the settlement edge than the wider countryside.

3.16. Table 2: Assessment of the Site against Purposes (a), (b) and (d) of the Green Belt

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment Criteria	Contributions to Green Belt Purposes Analysis
Purpose A: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	• Would potential development represent an outward extension of the urban area, resulting in a physical connection between urban areas, or lead to the danger of a subsequent coalescence between such settlements? • If released from Green Belt could enduring long-term settlement boundaries be established? • Does the proposed site sensibly round off an existing built up area to help create good built form?	Development within the Site would extend the development in a south easterly direction. The extension would round off development, which at present bounds the Site to the north and west. With the western development itself consisting of an isolated linear parcel off the southern extent of the village. LIMITED CONTRIBUTION
Purpose B: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	• Would development of the proposed site appear to result in the merging of towns or compromise the separation of towns physically? • Would potential development of the proposed site be a significant step leading towards coalescence of two settlements?	Due to the existing mature belts of vegetation and the distance from the existing settlement edge of Barton, being over 1km further to the east, there would be no coalescence of settlements. LIMITED CONTRIBUTION

Purpose D: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Are there clear strong and robust boundaries to contain development encroachment and prevent encroachment in the long term?	Mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees bound the Site, with further mature vegetation adjacent to the eastern boundary of Byway 52/7. Further to this Tit Brook to the south form's strong barrier between the Site and wider countryside. LIMITED CONTRIBUTION
Overall Assessment of contribution to Green Belt purpose	In light of the assessment of the individual purposes, what is the overall contribution of the proposed site to the Green Belt, both individually and in terms of the wider context?	The combination of relatively flat landform, mature vegetated boundaries, byway and watercourse to the Site boundaries form robust strong boundaries and provide a strong degree of separation from the local countryside to the east and south. LIMITED CONTRIBUTION

3.17. The Site is contained by existing residential development and mature vegetation, as such it is considered that the development of the Site would not constitute unrestricted urban sprawl. Furthermore, existing urbanising components which bound the Site reduce the perceived remoteness and tranquillity of the immediate landscape setting, enforcing a settlement fringe character.

3.18. Development of the Site would extend the settlement edge in a south easterly direction, with the closest settlement of Barton, approximately 1.3km to the east at the closest point. The combination of landform and mature vegetation provide a strong degree of separation between the Site and the immediate landscape, with the distance between the Site to Barton resulting in there being no potential for merging.

3.19. In considering the openness of the Green Built (absence of built form) there is an existing limited level of development within the local area, most notable the existing commercial development and scattered residential development along the B1046 to the north east of the Site (viewpoints 4 and 8). It is acknowledged that development within the Site would have an affect the openness of the Green Belt with regard to

the site itself and the immediate setting to the south. However, it is considered that the proposals would provide a more robust and sensitive edge between the settlement and the wider Green Belt than the present treatment consisting of residential rear garden boundaries. Furthermore, as a result of the enclosure provided by the existing robust mature vegetation within the immediate setting and nature of the surrounding landform any development within the Site would have no effect on the openness of the wider Green Belt.

- 3.20. As identified, the Site is already defined by strong defensible boundaries to the east and south. Any development of the Site should seek to retain and enhance the existing boundary vegetation, where appropriate, reinforcing the existing vegetation structure with additional native tree, shrub and hedgerow planting in order to provide an enhanced degree of containment. The reinforced boundaries would provide robust green edges to the Site, ensuring that the introduction of built form is not readily perceived within the local or wider rural area.
- 3.21. Suitable development offsets should also be implemented from the southern Site boundary, comprising areas of open space and structural planting. This will result in a suitable and defensible redefined edge to the Green Belt which would assist in the successful integration of Proposed Development and provide a more sympathetic settlement edge to Comberton and that perceived from the local receiving landscape.
- 3.22. Aspect Landscape Planning considers that the Site does not 'strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b) or (d) in paragraph 143', and as such, the Site can be considered 'Grey Belt' land.
- 3.23. It is therefore considered that the Site could be released from the Green Belt and that a sensitively designed residential development can be successfully integrated into the Site without resulting in unrestricted sprawl or significant encroachment into the wider Green Belt with the enclosure provided by the existing robust mature vegetation and nature of the landform any development within the Site would have no effect on the openness of the wider Green Belt

4. POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

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

Potential Landscape Effects

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

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

Potential Visual Effects

- 4.8. In terms of potential visual effects, these would be localised as a result of the combination of flat landform and mature vegetation structure providing a high level of enclosure and a degree of separation of the Site from the wider landscape. However, unsympathetic development could give rise to adverse visual effects, by creating a hard built edge and extending the perceived presence of development into the countryside.
- 4.9. As identified within Section 2, and illustrated on the photographic record within **Appendix 1**, views of the Site are highly localised with the combination of flat landform and mature vegetation heavily limiting views. The implementation of native boundary planting would reflect that of the Site and local arable landscape and would ensure that a soft edge to any development and wider settlement is achieved.

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

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

Potential Effects Upon Landscape Related Policy

- 4.12. The Site is not subject to any qualitative landscape designations at a national or local level and, as set out above, is not considered to represent a "valued" landscape with reference to para 187 of the NPPF.
- 4.13. It is also noted that a careful and considered approach to the masterplanning of the layout, built form and landscaping would ensure that the proposals comply with the landscape and visual related policies, within the District planning documents and the strategies within the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines.
- 4.14. With regards to *Policy NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development In and Adjoining the Green Belt* – the implementation of the recommendations set out above, such as the retention and enhancement of the existing boundary vegetation, would mitigate any adverse effects on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. Aspect Landscape Planning is instructed by Hopkins Homes Ltd to assess land known as Land at Comberton, Cambridgeshire, against the key purposes of the Green Belt and review the possible landscape and visual matters relating to the potential development for the provision of residential development.
- 5.2. The Site is not subject to any qualitative landscape designations at a national or local level and, as set out above, is not considered to represent a “valued” landscape with reference to para 187 of the NPPF.

Green Belt

- 5.3. The Site is located within the Cambridgeshire Green Belt immediate adjacent to the settlement edge of Comberton to the north and west, with the Site is already defined by strong defensible boundaries to the east and south. Any development of the Site should seek to retain and enhance the existing boundary vegetation, where appropriate, reinforcing the existing vegetation structure with additional native tree, shrub and hedgerow planting in order to provide an enhanced degree of containment. The reinforced boundaries would provide robust green edges to the Site, ensuring that the introduction of built form is not readily perceived from the wider rural character of the Green Belt to the east and south.
- 5.4. Suitable development offsets should also be implemented from the southern Site boundary, comprising areas of open space and structural planting. This will result in a suitable and defensible redefined edge to the Green Belt which would assist in the successful integration of Proposed Development within the Site and wider receiving landscape.
- 5.5. Aspect considers that the Site does not ‘strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b) or (d) in paragraph 143’, and as such, the Site can be considered ‘Grey Belt’ land.
- 5.6. It is therefore considered that the Site could be released from the Green Belt and that a sensitively designed residential development can be successfully integrated into the Site without resulting in unrestricted sprawl or significant encroachment into the wider Green Belt with the enclosure provided by the existing robust mature

vegetation and nature of the landform any development within the Site would have no effect on the openness of the wider Green Belt.

Landscape Character

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

Visual Amenity

- 5.10. Any development should retain the existing vegetation structure within a Site wide green infrastructure network, to maintain the robust soft landscaped boundaries, especially to the eastern and southern boundaries. Planting to include native hedgerow with native hedgerow trees to create a landscape setting for the new

development that reflects the local character and setting. This would provide a more sustainable and sympathetic boundary to the Site and the overall Settlement edge of Comberton at this location and in views from the local visual environment.

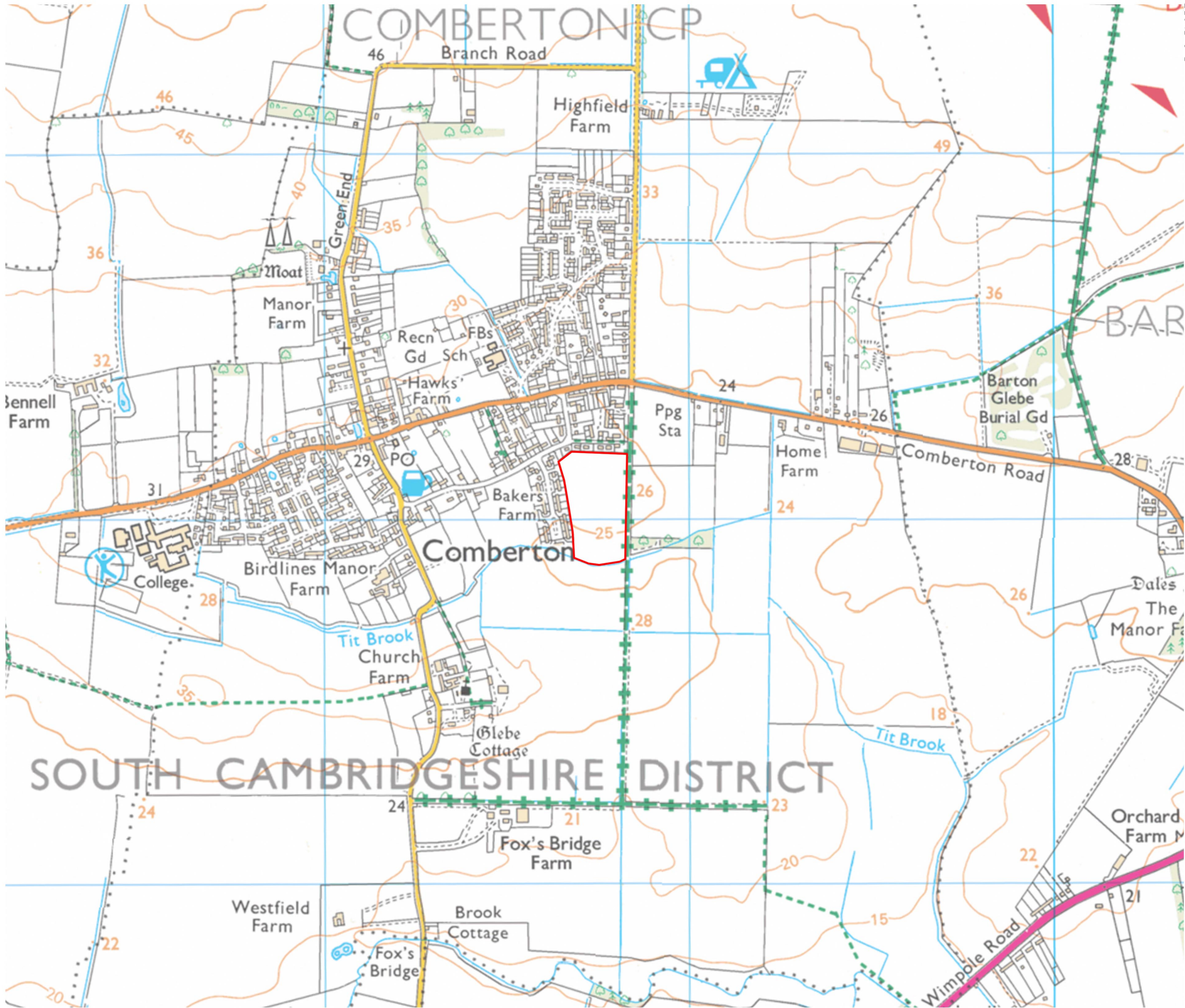
5.11. Overall, any masterplan should adopt a sensitive, landscape-led approach. Subject to the development of a sympathetic, high-quality layout with complementary landscape scheme, it is considered that the Site could accommodate residential development without significant harm to the wider receiving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

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

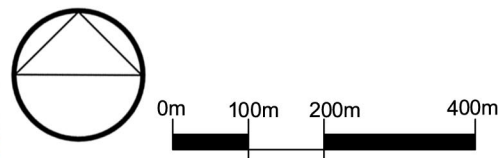
- Retain and reinforce the existing mature vegetation structure to the Site boundaries, where possible, enhance through additional planting to create soft landscape buffers to the Site boundaries and create a verdant landscape setting for any new development;
- Incorporate a comprehensive scheme of landscaping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

- 5.13. It is concluded that the Site has the capacity to accommodate a sensitively designed residential development which would not give rise to significant landscape or visual effects and is in line with adopted planning policy and the 'principles for landscape improvement and management' in the Western Claylands set out within the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines. The proposals would not represent uncharacteristic expansion of the urban extent and presents a number of opportunities to enhance local access to the countryside and recreational facilities, as well as habitat creation.

ASPECT PLANS



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Key:
 Application Site Boundary

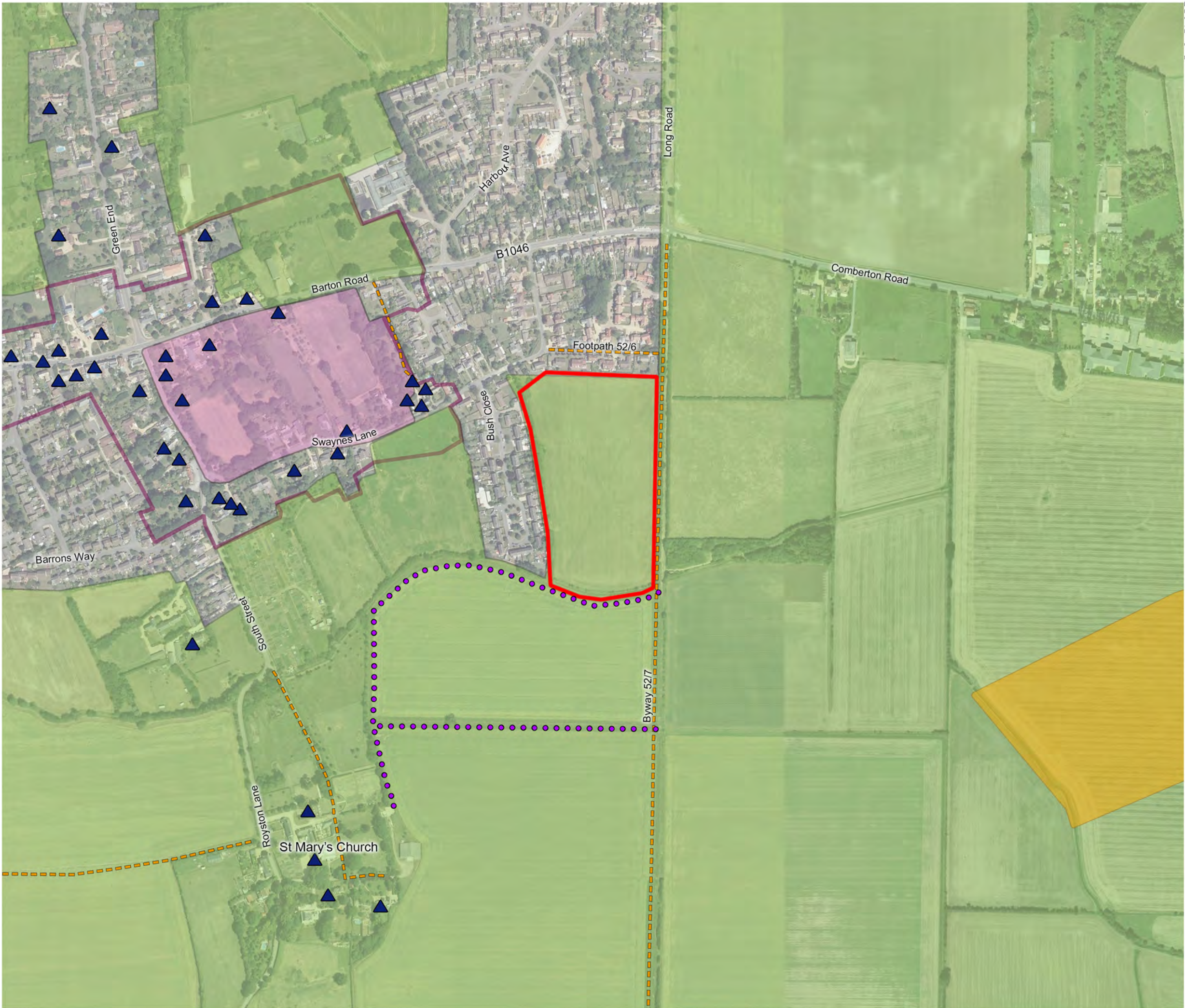
REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

aspect landscape planning

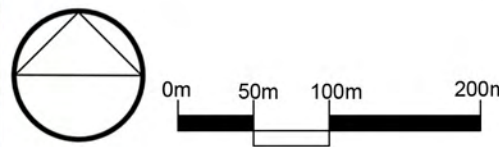
TITLE
**Comberton
Site Location Plan**

CLIENT
Hopkins Homes

SCALE 1:10,000@A3	DATE OCT 2019	DRAWN NB	CHK'D MF
DRAWING NUMBER 6994 / ASP01		REVISION	



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

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				

aspect landscape planning

TITLE
Comberton
Site & Setting Plan
CLIENT
Hopkins Homes

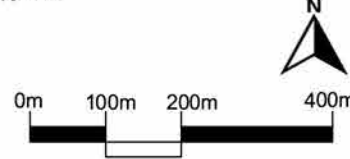
SCALE 1:10,000@A3	DATE OCT 2019	DRAWN SB	CHK'D MF
DRAWING NUMBER 6994 / ASP02		REVISION	

APPENDIX 1

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



NOTES:
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Key:

- Site Boundary
- Viewpoint Location
- Public Rights of Way
- Listed Buildings

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				
aspect landscape planning				
TITLE				
Comberton Viewpoint Location Plan				
CLIENT				
Hopkins Homes				
SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D	
1:10,000 @ A3	FEB 2025	AS	AJ	
DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION			
6994 / VLP				

Existing residential properties associated with Bush Close

Site

Existing residential properties associated with Swaynes Way



Public Right of Way
Comberton 7



Distance to Site: 0.01 km
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 538843 N 256173
Date & time of photograph: 30/01/2025 12:18
AOD & Viewing height: c. 29m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 1 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 1 (Single Frame Image)

Existing residential properties associated
with Bush Close

Site

Existing residential properties associated
with Swaynes Way



Public Right of Way
Comberton 7



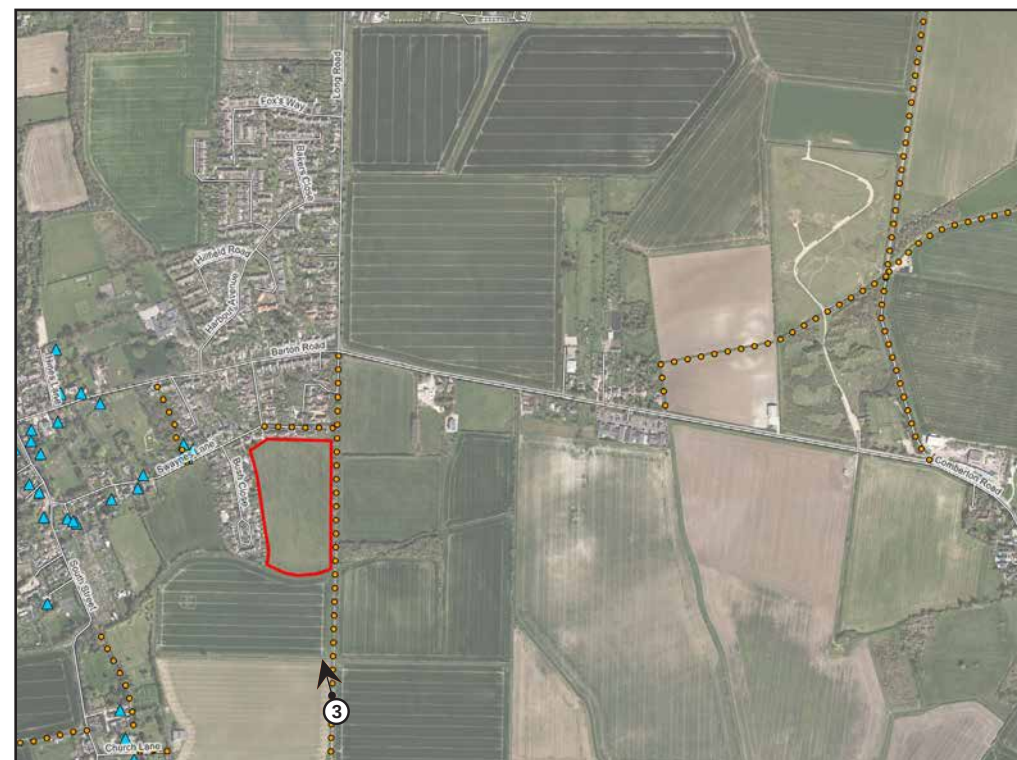
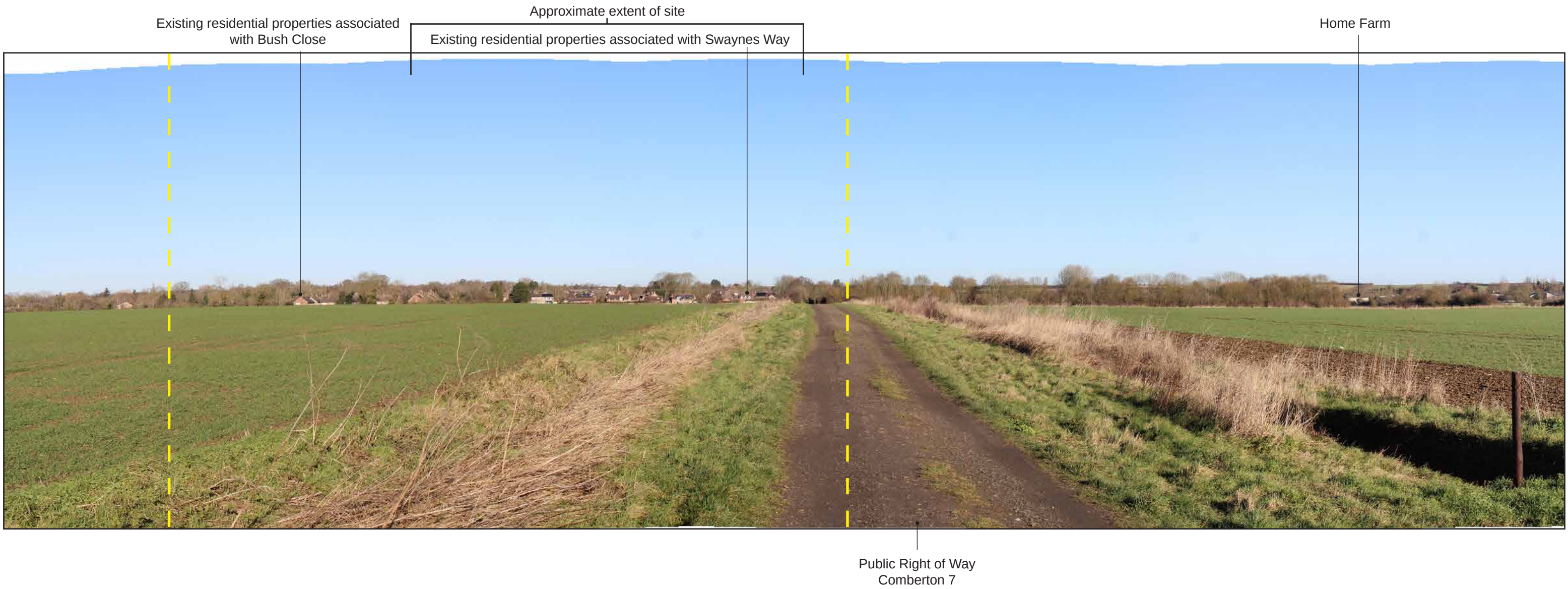
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Viewpoint Coordinates: E 538837 N 255946
Date & time of photograph: 30/01/2025 12:13
AOD & Viewing height: c. 27m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 2 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 2 (Single Frame Image)



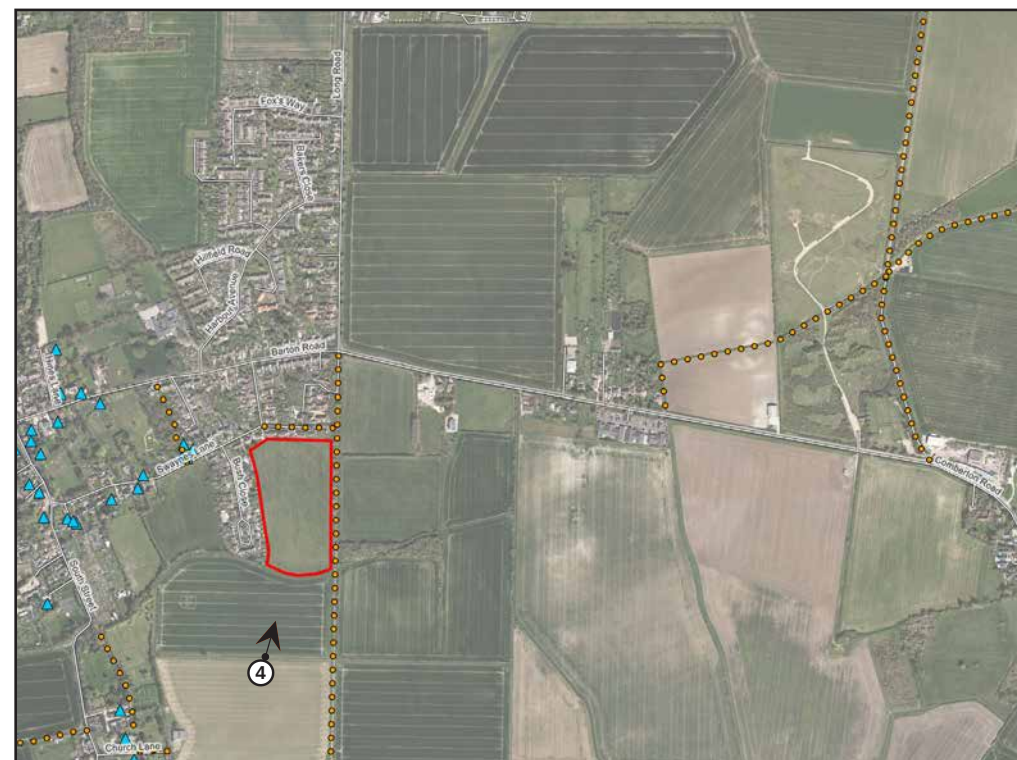
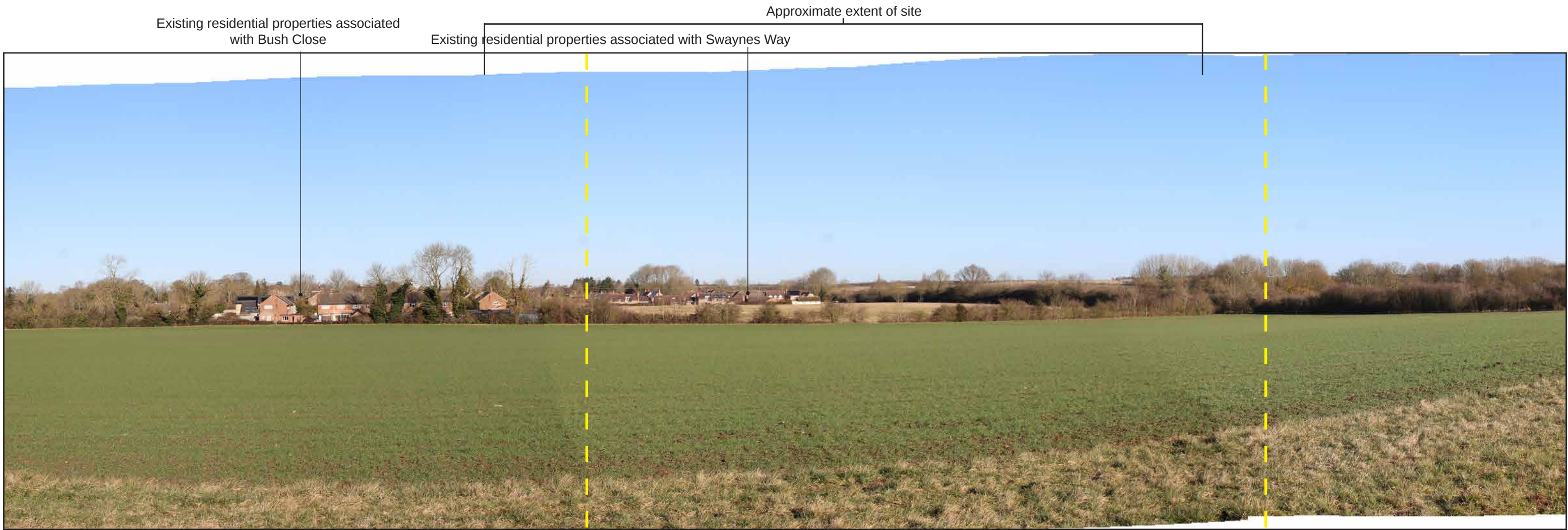
Distance to Site: **0.26 km**
 Viewpoint Coordinates: **E 538829 N 255650**
 Date & time of photograph: **30/01/2025 11:51**
 AOD & Viewing height: **c. 29m AOD 1.6m**
 Weather conditions **Clear, good visibility**

Viewpoint 3 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
 Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
 Horizontal Field of View: 90°
 Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 3 (Single Frame Image)



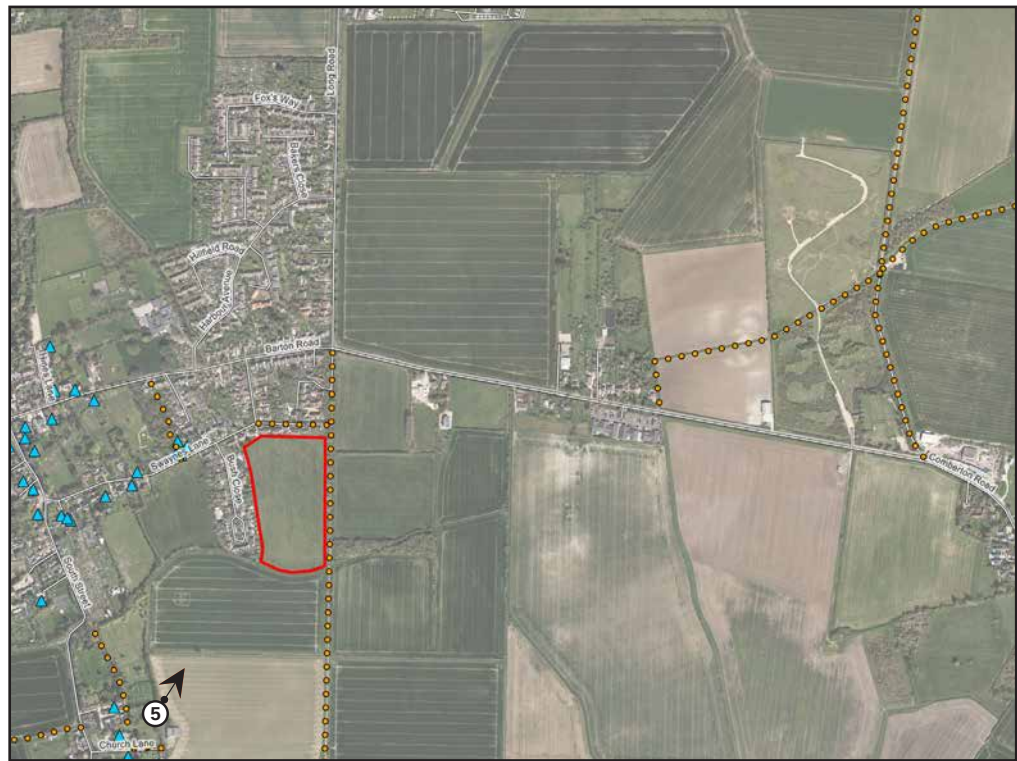
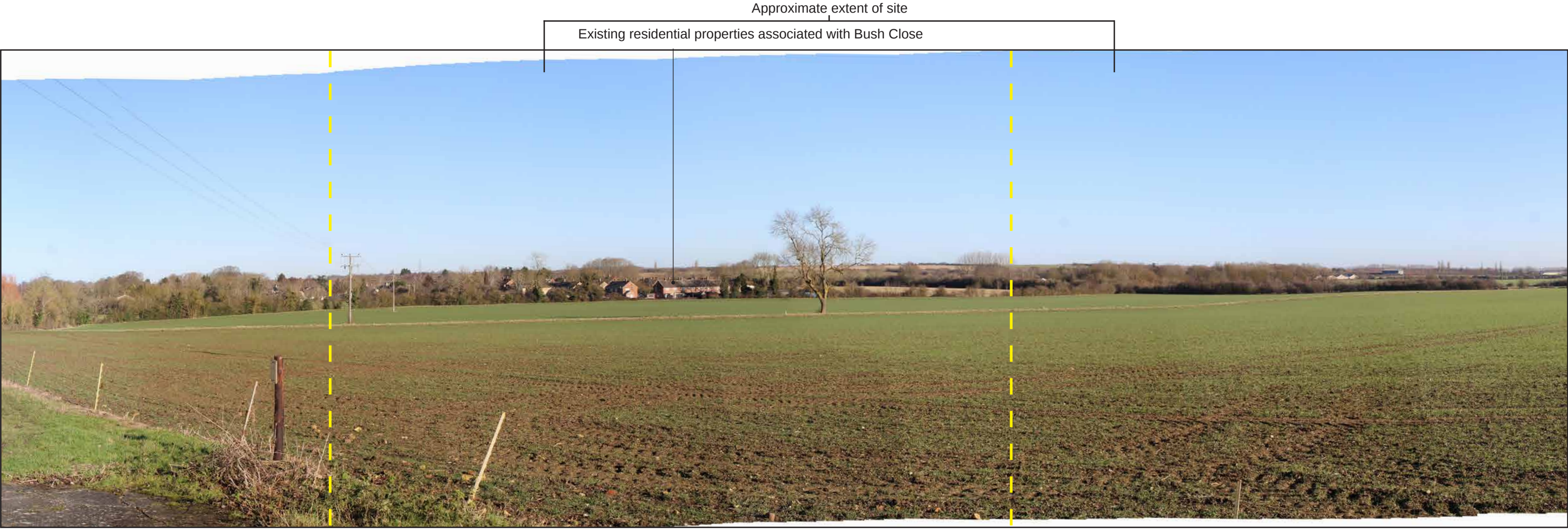
Distance to Site: 0.20 km
 Viewpoint Coordinates: E 538697 N 255711
 Date & time of photograph: 30/01/2025 11:45
 AOD & Viewing height: c. 30m AOD 1.6m
 Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 4 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
 Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
 Horizontal Field of View: 90°
 Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 4 (Single Frame Image)



Distance to Site: 0.38 km
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 538471 N 255603
Date & time of photograph: 30/01/2025 11:37
AOD & Viewing height: c. 33m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 5 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



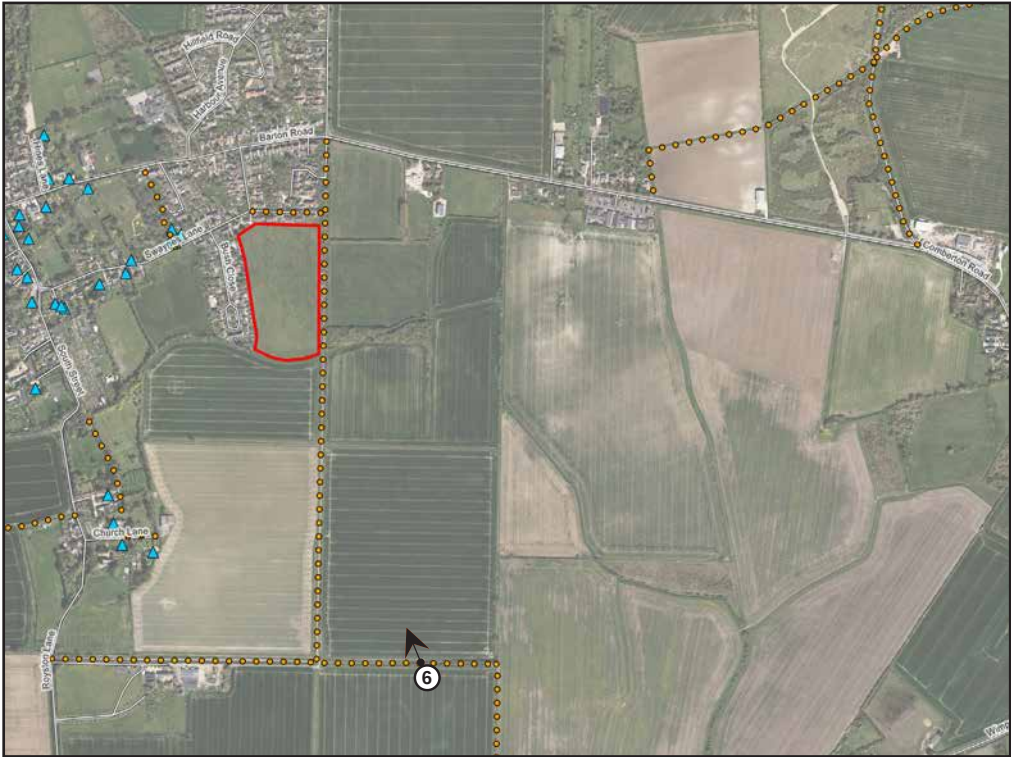
Viewpoint 5 (Single Frame Image)

St Mary's

Site located beyond existing vegetation



Public Right of Way
Comberton 10



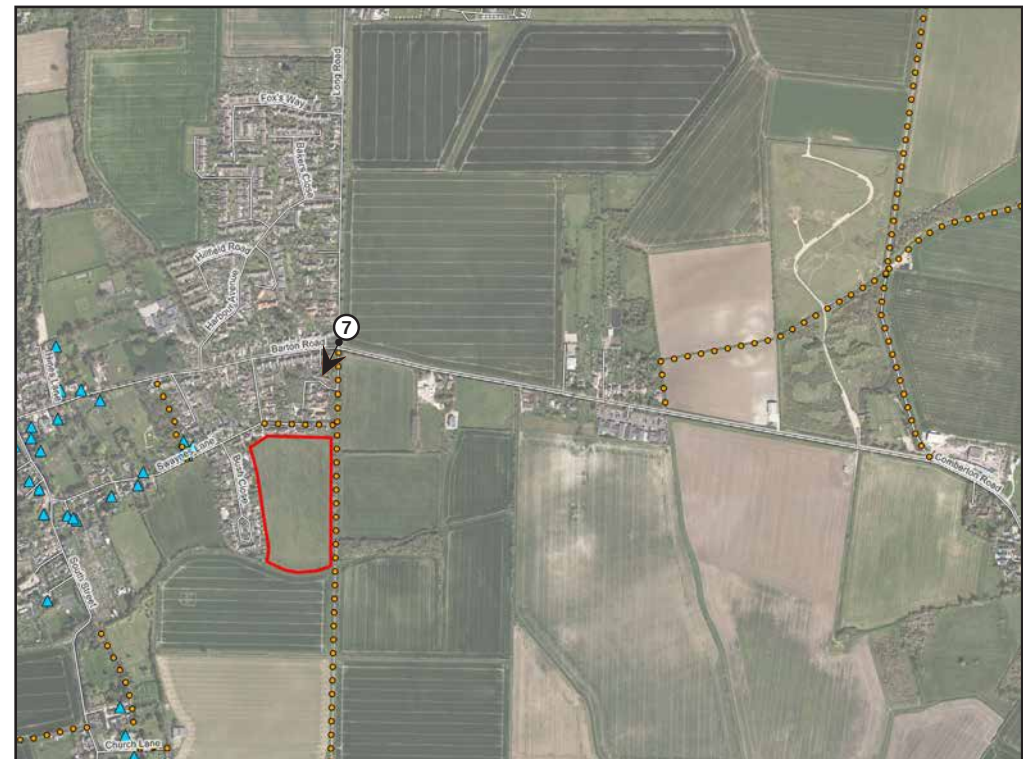
Distance to Site: 0.74 km
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 539081 N 255218
Date & time of photograph: 30/01/2025 12:01
AOD & Viewing height: c. 24m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 6 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 6 (Single Frame Image)



Distance to Site: 0.21 km
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 538848 N 256402
Date & time of photograph: 30/01/2025 12:23
AOD & Viewing height: c. 29m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 7 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 7 (Single Frame Image)

Approximate direction of site located beyond existing vegetation

Comberton Road



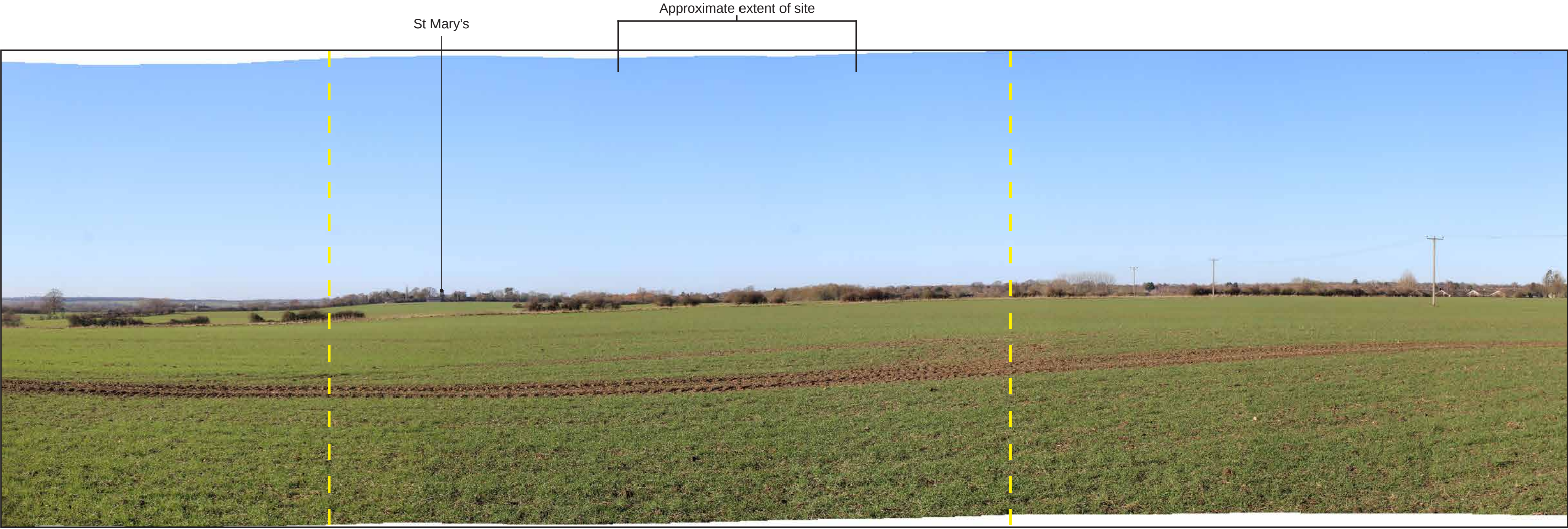
Distance to Site: 1.27 km
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 540147 N 256149
Date & time of photograph: 30/01/2025 12:53
AOD & Viewing height: c. 30m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 8 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 8 (Single Frame Image)



Distance to Site: **1.11 km**
Viewpoint Coordinates: **E 539938 N 255744**
Date & time of photograph: **30/01/2025 10:45**
AOD & Viewing height: **c. 26m AOD 1.6m**
Weather conditions **Clear, good visibility**

Viewpoint 9 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 9 (Single Frame Image)

Approximate direction of site located beyond existing vegetation

Barton Recreation Ground



Public Right of Way
Barton 8



Distance to Site: 2.17 km
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 540867 N 255378
Date & time of photograph: 30/01/2025 13:55
AOD & Viewing height: c. 20m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 10 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 10 (Single Frame Image)

Approximate direction of site located beyond existing vegetation



Public Right of Way
Barton 4



Distance to Site: 1.45 km
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 540103 N 256915
Date & time of photograph: 30/01/2025 13:08
AOD & Viewing height: c. 51m AOD 1.6m
Weather conditions Clear, good visibility

Viewpoint 11 (Panorama Image for Context Only)
Equipment & Focal Length: Canon EOS 2000D 35mm lens
Horizontal Field of View: 90°
Vertical Field of View: 27°

N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a crop sensor camera with 35mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 90° and when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 542mm curved through the same radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be substituted for visiting the viewpoint.



Viewpoint 11 (Single Frame Image)

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (HELAA) - LAND AT
BUSH CLOSE

Land at Bush Close, Comberton, CB23 7AP

Site Reference: 40501

Map 148: Site description - Land at Bush Close, Comberton



Site Details

Criteria	Response
Site area (hectares)	4.82
Parish or Ward	Comberton CP
Greenfield or previously developed land	Greenfield
Category of site	Dispersal: Villages
Category of settlement	Within or adjacent to Minor Rural Centre
Current or last use	Agricultural land/building
Proposed development	Residential, Market and affordable housing, Key worker housing, Older persons housing, Custom or self build housing, Public open space
Proposed employment floorspace (m ²)	-
Proposed housing units	120

Site Assessment Summary

Criteria	Outcome
Suitable	Red
Available	Green
Achievable	Green

Site Assessment

Suitable (Outcome = **Red**)

Issue	Assessment	Comments
Adopted Development Plan Policies	Amber	Primarily outside Development Framework Partially within the Cambridge Greenbelt (98%) Wholly within the Lord's Bridge Restricted Zone
Flood Risk	Amber	Flood zone: Wholly in Flood Zone 1 Surface water flooding: 2% lies in a 1 in 30 year event 3% lies in a 1 in 100 year event 17% lies in a 1 in 1000 year event
Landscape and Townscape	Amber	National Character Area 88 Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands the site and its surroundings are a typical of the character area. District Character Area: Western Claylands the site is typical of the character area. Landscape Character Assessment (2021) Landscape Character Area - 3B: Bourn Tributaries Lowland Farmlands The site is within the perceived village envelope and capable of being developed as proposed with little negative landscape impact. Appropriate landscaped perimeter treatments should be included and retention of trees and hedgerows is encouraged.

Issue	Assessment	Comments
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Amber	All new housing developments will require assessment of increased visitor pressure on nearby SSSI, and all non-householder applications will require consultation with Natural England regarding Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC. The Tit Brook runs adjacent to the southern boundary and will require surveys and probable mitigation. There are no other apparent priority habitats within the site; however, there are grasslands, hedges, and wooded boundaries on site that are likely to have ecological value. Applications may find provision of a 10% net gain in biodiversity difficult within their red line boundaries, and may need to find offsite compensation to comply with up-coming National legislation and developing local policies. Development of the site may have a detrimental impact on a designated site, or those with a regional or local protection but the impact could be reasonably mitigated or compensated.
Open Space / Green Infrastructure	Green	Within 50m of Informal Open Space Site is not on protected open space designation. Any impact of the proposed development could be reasonably mitigated or compensated.
Historic Environment	Green	Within 100m of a Conservation Area Development of the site would have either a neutral or positive impact, but importantly not have a detrimental impact on any designated or non-designated heritage assets.
Archaeology	Amber	Cropmarks recorded to the east show extensive remains of Roman date, including a Scheduled Monument.
Accessibility to Services and Facilities	Amber	Distance to Primary School: Less than or Equal to 450m Distance to Secondary School: Greater than 900m and Less than or Equal to 2,000m Distance to Healthcare Service: Greater than 720m and Less than or Equal to 2,000m Distance to City, District or Rural Centre: Greater than 2,000m

Issue	Assessment	Comments
		Distance to Local, Neighbourhood or Minor Rural Centre: Greater than 720m and Less than or Equal to 2,000m Distance to Employment Opportunities: Greater than 1,800m Distance to Public Transport: Less than or Equal to 450m Distance to Rapid Public Transport: Greater than 1,800m Distance to proposed Rapid Public Transport: Greater than 1,800m Distance to Cycle Network: Greater than 800m and Less than or Equal to 1,600m Adequate accessibility to key local services, transport, and employment opportunities Proposed development would not require delivery of accompanying key services
Site Access	Red	The proposed site does not to have a direct link to the adopted public highway. No possibility of creating a safe access.
Transport and Roads	Amber	The developer will have to consider cumulative impacts at local junctions as well as B1046, A603 and at M11 junction 12. Rat running is an issue in this area which the development risks intensifying. The site is in a location where sustainable travel into Cambridge and local services can be promoted. The applicant will have to ensure the site links to the Comberton and Barton Greenway proposals to provide a high quality walking/cycleway to Cambridge. The site will only be allowed if it can demonstrably deliver a high sustainable mode share. Any potential impact on the functioning of trunk roads and/or local roads could be reasonably mitigated.
Noise, Vibration, Odour and Light Pollution	Green	The site is capable of being developed to provide healthy internal and external environments in regard to noise / vibration/ odour/ Light Pollution after careful site layout, design and mitigation.
Air Quality	Green	Site does not lie within an AQMA. Minimal traffic impact on AQMA.

Issue	Assessment	Comments
Contamination and Ground Stability	Amber	Previous agricultural land use. Potential for historic contamination, conditions required.

Further constraints

Issue		Comments
Constraints to development	-	Agricultural Land Classification: 100% Grade 2
Strategic Highways Impact	Red	Within Highways England Zone 8 - M11 North No capacity for growth. Sites would need to ensure no net increase in vehicles trips on the Strategic Road Network.
Employment	-	
Green Belt – Assessment of Harm of Green Belt Release	-	Parcel ID: OA10; CO5; CO6; CO7 Very High; High; Moderate

Available (Outcome = **Green**)

Question	Response
Is the site controlled by a developer or landowner who has expressed an intention to develop?	The site was submitted by the landowner and/or site promoter who has confirmed that the site is available for development in the timescales indicated.
Are there known legal or ownership impediments to development?	No
Is there planning permission to develop the site?	No relevant recent planning history
When will the site be available for development?	0-5 Years

Achievable (Outcome = **Green**)

Question	Response
Is there a reasonable prospect that the site will be developed?	The land has been promoted by the landowner and or developer and is known to be available for development. The site has a low existing use value and residential development is likely to be economically viable at an appropriate density.

Development Potential

Capacity and Delivery	Response
Estimated dwellings per hectare	25
Estimated dwelling units	120
Estimated employment space (m ²)	-
Estimated start date	0-5 Years
Estimated annual build-out rate (pa)	40-75
Development completion timescales (years)	0-5 Years

APPENDIX 3

EXTRACTS FROM ADOPTED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

AREA 3: WESTERN CLAYLANDS

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

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

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

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

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

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

PRINCIPLES FOR LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT IN THE WESTERN CLAYLANDS

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

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

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

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



Western Claylands: Boxworth

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

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

3. Planting of woodland belts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

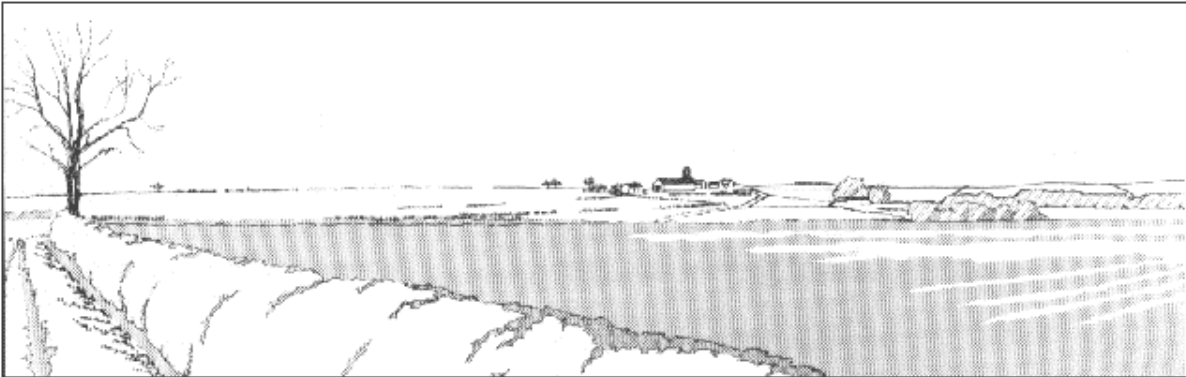
8. Village approaches: increased tree cover with trees along road margins, woodland belts alongside roads, planting at edges of villages and hedgerow planting is desirable; it is important to ensure key views are not lost.

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

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

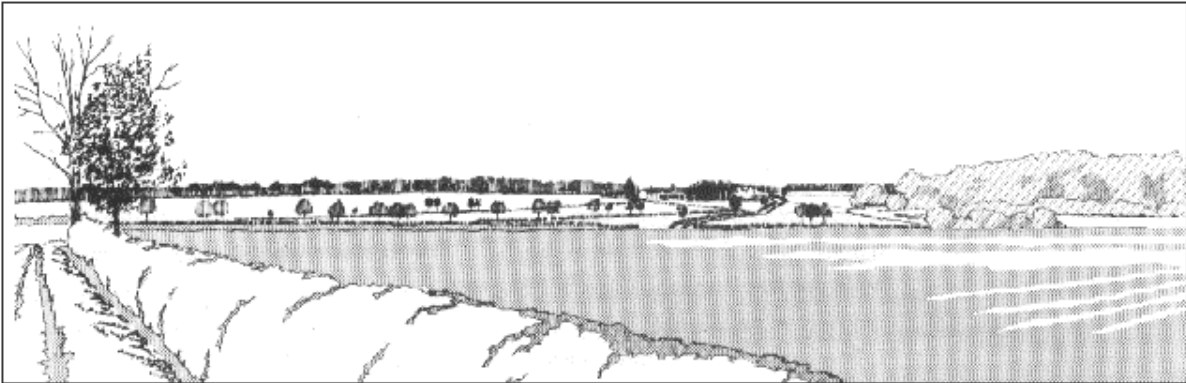
WESTERN CLAYLANDS Before

Dead tree	Very little sense of landform or enclosure.	Poor, sparse hedgerows.	Large, modern farm buildings prominent on the skyline.	Small scrubland on land difficult to cultivate.
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WESTERN CLAYLANDS After

Dead tree retained for hole-nesting birds. Saplings selected from hedge and allowed to grow untrimmed.	Tree line on horizon helps to tie features together and enclose the space.	Hedgerows emphasise landform and give character; tree planting in hedge.	Farm buildings well screened by planting.	Woodland on horizon provides good backdrop.	New woodland forms strong feature.
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PLANT SPECIES GUIDELINES FOR THE WESTERN CLAYLANDS

Mixed Woodlands

- Quercus robur* (oak)
dominant tree.
- Fraxinus excelsior* (ash)
dominant tree.
- Prunus avium* (wild cherry)
less common.
- Acer compestre* (field maple)
glades, near edges.
- Corylus avellana* (hazel)
dominant shrub, edges, glades, scrub.
- Crataegus monogyna* (hawthorn)
near edges, mixed thickets.
- Sambucus nigra* (elder)
occasional, understorey and edges.

Hedgerows, woodland edges and scrub

- Crataegus monogyna* (hawthorn)
- Corylus avellana* (hazel)
- Prunus spinosa* (blackthorn)
- Rosa canina* (dog rose)
- Acer campestre* (field maple)
- Malus sylvestris* (crab apple)
- Cornus sanguinea* (dogwood)
occasional.

Trees in hedgerows

- Quercus robur* (oak)
dominant.
- Fraxinus excelsior* (ash)
sub-dominant.
- Acer campestre* (field maple)
sub-dominant.

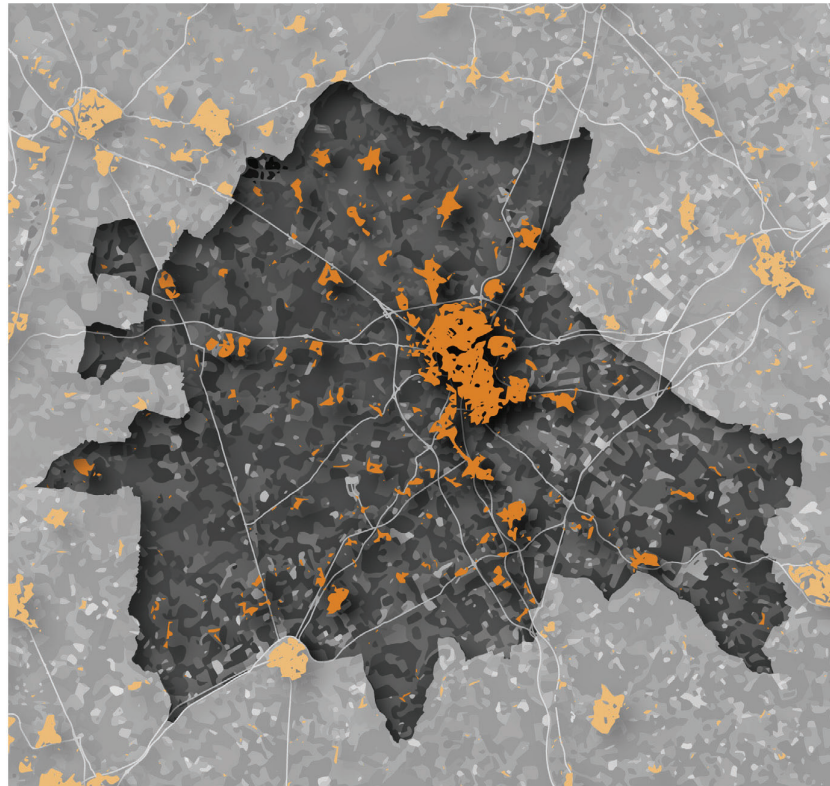
Avenues

- Quercus robur* (oak)
- Tilia* sp. (lime)
- Aesculus hippocastanum* (horse chestnut)
Environs of villages only.
- Avenues – all as single species, not mixed.

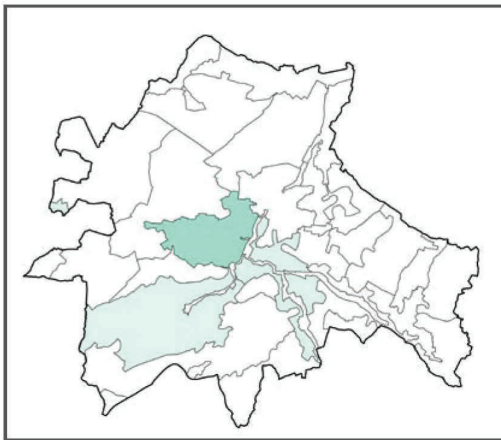
Stream sides, wet clay soils

- Alnus glutinosa* (alder)
dominant, in copses and small groups.
- Salix alba* (white willow)
Sub-dominant, not in mixes.
- Salix fragilis* (crack willow)
typical pollarded tree.
- Salix caprea* (goat willow)
scrubby copses.
- Fraxinus excelsior* (ash)
occasional where not waterlogged.
- Quercus robur* (oak)
occasional where not water logged.
- Corylus avellana* (hazel)
occasional on stream banks if not waterlogged.
- Populus tremula* (aspen)
in thickets; not in mixes.
- Viburnum opulus* (guelder rose)
occasional as individuals and small groups.
- Cornus sanguinea* (dogwood)
occasional as individuals and small groups.

Greater Cambridge Shared Partnership Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 3B: BOURN TRIBUTARIES LOWLAND FARMLANDS



3B: BOURNE TRIBUTARIES LOWLAND FARMLANDS LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Bourn Tributaries Lowland Farmlands Landscape Character Area (LCA) is a well settled rural landscape, with distinctive radio telescopes on the skyline that is strongly influenced by the wide, shallow valley of the Bourn Brook.

Description

Key Characteristics

- Wide valley of the River Bourn and its tributaries as it nears its confluence with the River Cam
- Generally strong, regular rectilinear field pattern with smaller scale pastoral fields near villages
- Ecological richness associated with the river including lowland meadows, good quality semi improved grassland and floodplain grazing marsh
- Radio telescopes are a unique and distinctive feature on the skyline
- Well defined settlement edges defined by mature trees, copses and thick hedgerows enclosing small scale fields and paddocks
- Network of major roads locally detracts from the otherwise tranquil, rural character
- Recreational land use includes golf clubs, University sports fields and a polo club
- Coton Countryside Reserve is linked to the historic core of Cambridge by views towards the city's historic core and a green corridor which contributes to the setting of the city

Bourn Tributaries Lowland Farmlands comprises the broad, wide valley of the Bourn Brook and its tributaries as it flows from west to east towards its confluence with the River Cam. The landscape is comprised of a repeating pattern of subtle ridges and dips which reflect the repeating drainage pattern of tributaries joining the Bourn Brook from the north and south. The overall appearance is relatively flat. The highest points of the gently rising valley slopes are c. 60m in the south at the boundary with 7E: Wimpole Chalk Hills, and c. 45m AOD in the north. The eastern part of the LCA becomes wider and flatter as it approaches the River Cam Floodplain, at c.10m AOD.

This LCA comprises open and intensively farmed arable farmland. Fields are generally rectilinear and organised in a regular pattern, except where they are interrupted by the network of watercourses. Fields are bound by well trimmed hedgerows or open ditches, supplemented with boundary trees. The characteristic straight boundaries and medium scale field pattern brought about by general enclosure in the 19th century are still generally in use today, however there are some examples of very large fields where several fields have been amalgamated and smaller enclosed fields and paddocks are often found around village edges. Stream corridors are often visible within the landscape as lines of willow trees. In the east, trees along the Bin Brook combine with other linear features including the Coton footpath hedge, other hedges and ditches to form a distinctive bifurcated green corridor which connects with Cambridge's historic core. Occasional small, scattered woodland blocks and shelterbelts add diversity to the landscape and provide localised visual enclosure. Pasture in the flood plain meadows along the river valleys and orchards in the north of the LCA add interest and ecological variety in the landscape.

Settlement includes small to medium sized scattered villages often located at road junctions, linear settlement along roads, and isolated cottages and farms. Villages generally have an historic, linear form, supplemented with post-war estates. They are mostly set on high ground, to the north and south of the Bourn Brook. Each village is identified by a church spire, or tower, which enliven the skyline. Villages in the south are located along the spring line at the base of the chalk ridge. The settlement edges are largely well defined by mature trees, copses and thick hedgerows, adding intimacy and visual enclosure to village edges. Small fields and paddocks contribute to their landscape setting, providing localised intimacy, visual enclosure and a transition to the surrounding countryside. Views tend to be open and expansive across arable fields towards distant wooded horizons. In the south of the LCA, the landform of the rising chalk escarpment provides localised visual enclosure. In the east of the LCA there are short views towards the skyline of Cambridge above the tree canopy, notably from Red Meadow Hill in Coton Countryside Reserve, providing a visual connection between the landmarks of the city and the rural surroundings. The Radio Telescopes at the Lords Bridge Radio Astronomy Observatory form a highly distinctive feature on the skyline, and the Travelling Radio Telescope on the re-purposed Varsity Railway is a distinctive linear feature. Other vertical features interrupting the skyline include telegraph poles and rows of poplar trees.

Sports and leisure are important land uses in the LCA. Recreational land use includes University sports grounds, Cambridge Polo Club, Cambridge Rugby Football Club, golf clubs in the north and west. Coton Countryside Reserve has a network of mown paths amongst grass meadows and orchards, and is connected to the River Cam in Cambridge via a two pronged green corridor comprising orchards, sports grounds and leafy colleges in the west of the city which contributes to the setting of the west of Cambridge. Despite the presence of some major roads including the M11 and A603 Roman Road, much of the area has a relatively tranquil, rural character due to the low density of the settlement and relatively quiet roads.

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:

- Green corridor linking Coton Countryside Reserve and the historic core of Cambridge which contributes towards the setting of the city
- Distinctive radio telescopes form a prominent landmark on the skyline
- Well defined settlement edges defined by mature trees, copses and thick hedgerows enclosing small scale fields and paddocks
- Pressure for recreational land use

Specific Landscape Guidelines

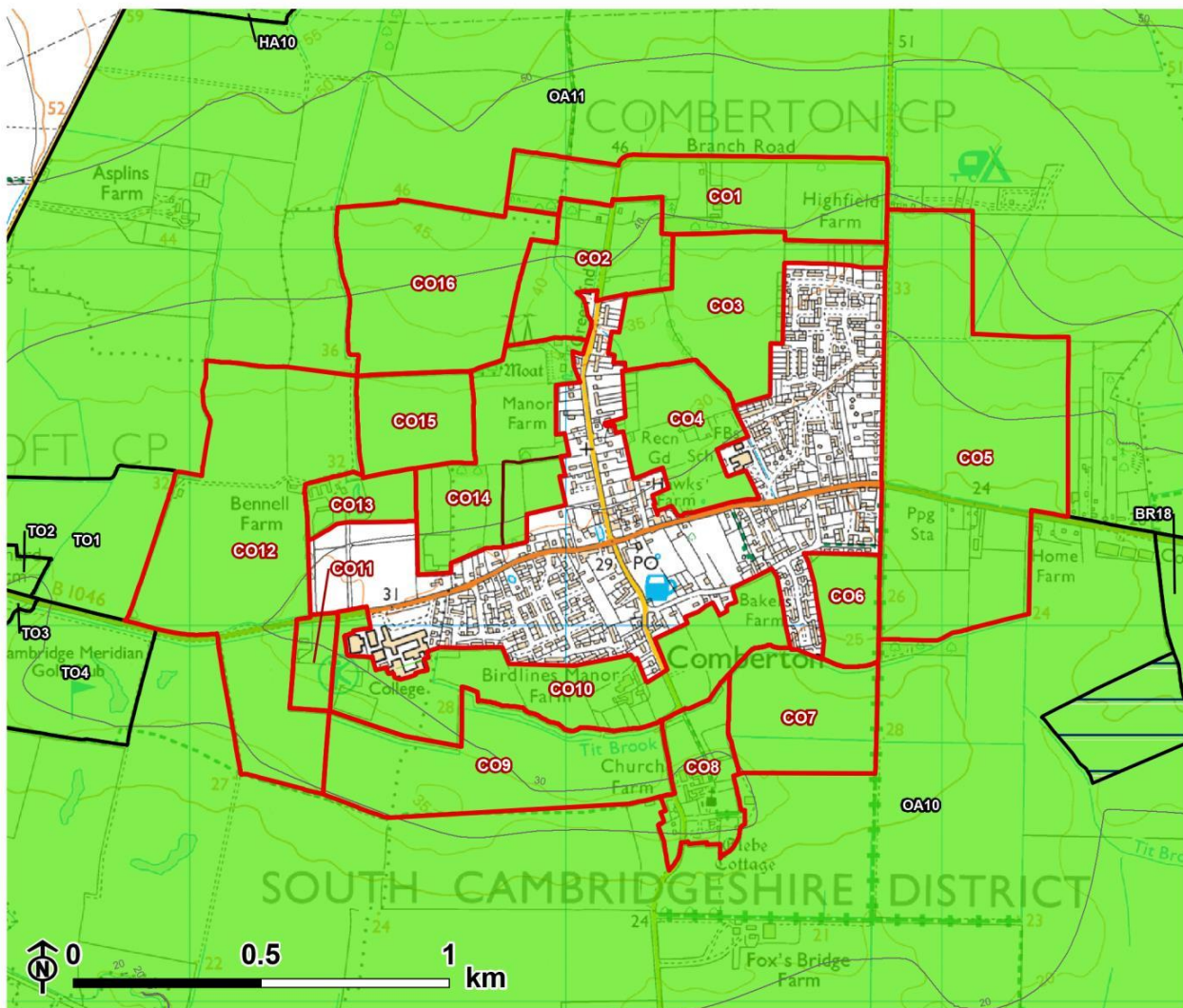
In addition to the generic landscape guidelines for this landscape character type, the following guidelines are specific to this character area:

- Ensure land developed for recreation enhances existing landscape features, creates links between villages and recreational assets and is in keeping with the open, rural character
- Conserve and enhance the regular small-scale pastoral fields, shelter belts and hedgerows at village edges

APPENDIX 4

EXTRACT FROM GREATER CAMBRIDGE GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT (2021)

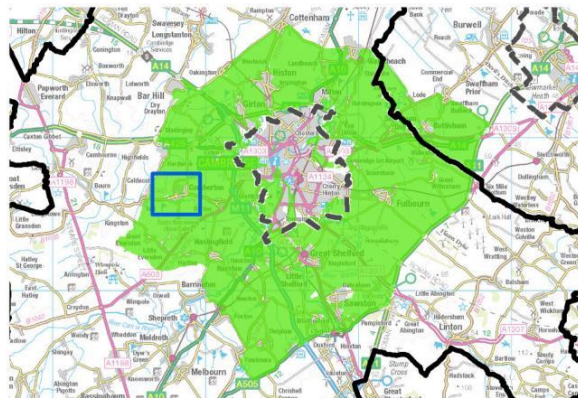
Comberton



- - - Local Authority
- Comberton parcel
- Division between parcel sub-areas
- Neighbouring parcel
- Green Belt

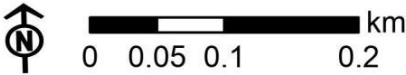
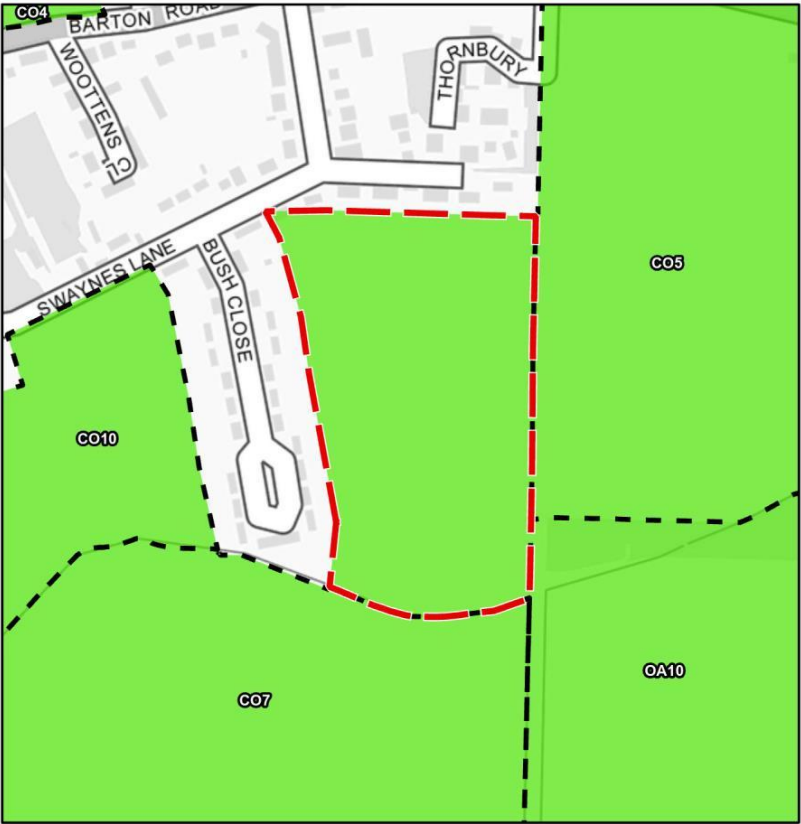
Absolute constraints

- Scheduled monument





- CO6
- Neighbouring parcel
- Green Belt



CO6

Parcel location and openness

Parcel size: 4.83ha

The parcel is located to the southeast of Comberton and is comprised of an agricultural field.

Land is open. There is no development that has an impact on Green Belt openness.

Distinction between parcel and inset area

The parcel has some degree of containment by inset development and the garden hedgerow boundaries to the north and west create little separation between the parcel and Comberton. As such, there is some urbanising visual influence. The landform and land cover within the parcel do not create any additional distinction from Comberton and, overall, there is moderate distinction between the parcel and the inset area.

Contribution to the Green Belt purposes

- Cambridge Purpose 1 - to preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre:

Contribution: Limited/No contribution

Land is not close enough to the main urban area of Cambridge to be associated with it; the land is closely associated with the settlement of Comberton. It therefore makes no contribution to Cambridge Purpose 1.

- Cambridge Purpose 2 - to maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting:

Contribution: Relatively limited

Land has a moderate distinction from the edge of Comberton, meaning it has some relationship with the inset area. However, it comprises open farmland and therefore has some rural character. Land does not form or contain any specific features/aspects that contribute to the quality of Cambridge's setting. Overall the parcel makes a relatively limited contribution to Cambridge Purpose 2.

- Cambridge Purpose 3 - to prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city:

Contribution: Relatively limited

Land is peripheral to a moderate gap between Comberton and Barton. The parcel has some relationship with the inset area, but also a degree of distinction from it. Overall, the parcel makes a relatively limited contribution to Cambridge Purpose 3.

CO6

Impact on contribution of adjacent Green Belt

- Release of land as an expansion of Comberton:

Rating: Minor

The release and development of land within this parcel would increase urbanising visual impact on land within the fields to the south. However, the additional impact is limited due to a small frontage.

The release would not have an impact on the contribution of land to the east or the southeast to Green Belt purposes.

Overall harm of Green Belt release

- Parcel CO6 makes a relatively limited contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and a relatively limited contribution to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with one another. The additional impact on the adjacent Green Belt of the release of the parcel would be minor. Therefore, the harm resulting from its release, as an expansion of Comberton, would be Moderate.

Moderate

landscape planning • ecology • arboriculture

aspect

Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd
West Court
Hardwick Business Park
Noral Way
Banbury
Oxfordshire OX16 2AF

T: 01295 276066
F: 01295 265072
E: info@aspect-landscape.com
W: www.aspect-landscape.com