



Contents

1.0	Introduction	4
2.0	The Site and Immediate Context	5
3.0	Local Planning Context	7
4.0	Landscape Context	8
5.0	Visual Baseline	10
6.0	Landscape and Visual Effects	17







# Introduction



## 1.0 Introduction

This Landscape and Visual Study (LVS) has been prepared by Stone & Meadow, on behalf of Ms. C Sawyer Nutt, to accompany the promotion of Land North of Pampisford Road, Great Abington, hereafter called 'the Site', through the Greater Cambridgeshire Call for Site Consultation.

- 1.1 This document should be read in conjunction with other documents part of the same submission. This document concerns considerations relating to the landscape and visual matters only.
- 1.2 The Site's potential allocation focuses on residential uses. As illustrated in Figure 1 adjacent, the masterplan achieves circa 135 dwellings located to the north and west of the Site. Some small Public Open Spaces (POS) are scattered through the developable area, which also include an attenuation pond; the remaining land to the south-west is dedicated to a large, informal open space.

### Scope of the Report

- 1.3 The level of detail provided within this study is proportionate to the current planning stage. It provides a high level analysis of the Site's landscape and visual context, identifies key landscape and visual receptors and potential effects caused by the proposed development, and finally it considers if any specific design principles should be considered in further design evolutions to ensure that potential adverse effects are mitigated.



Figure 1 - Proposed Masterplan



## 2.0 The Site and Immediate Context

**The Site consist of a medium sized field north of Pampisford Road, where the access to the field currently is. It is in agricultural use.**

- 2.1 The field is enclosed to the south and east by a fairly consistent hedgerow with some mature trees. The remaining Site's boundaries are defined by existing developments, the one to the north is modern as recently completed, while to the west is the 20th century expansion of Great Abington.
- 2.2 While there is no significant vegetation within the field, which appears intensely farmed, the boundary hedgerow and mature trees in the residential development to the west create a strong vegetative structure.
- 2.3 Topography within the Site rises considerably towards the southern boundary.
- 2.4 The Site's context is largely rural with a small to large fields pattern and a distinctive woodland cover along the River Granta. The woodland blocks and linear feature follow the sinuous river course, however there is an other distinctive linear woodland along the dismantled railway line to the south of the Site.
- 2.5 The urban fabric is diverse. Abington's urban pattern extends between Little and Great Abington. The modern 20th century development has a different architectural and urban character from the historical village. The Granta Park has its own townscape qualities with large buildings organised around a managed parkland. The linear residential pattern along North Road and South Road preserves a strong sense of history and distinctive townscape character.



Figure 2 - Site location





# Baseline Analysis

### 3.0 Local Planning Context

**The Site is located within the South Cambridgeshire Local Authority jurisdiction, relevant policies in the adopted Local Plan are listed below. Notably the Site sits outside the Great Abington Neighbourhood Plan.**

**South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018)**

- Policy S/2: Objectives of the Local Plan
- 3.1 This policy sets out the strategic objectives of the local plan, setting out six key objectives to guide development within the district. Objectives include the protection of *‘the character of South Cambridgeshire, including its built and natural heritage, as well as protecting the Cambridgeshire Green Belt.’*
- Policy HQ/1: Design Principles
- 3.2 This policy is prefaced with the acknowledgement that settlements within the district vary in character. *‘All new development will have an impact on its surroundings. Development needs to be of an appropriate scale, design and materials for its location and conform to the design principles set out in the policy’.*
- 3.3 *‘Any development must also take proper care to respond to its surroundings, and create sustainable, inclusive and healthy environments where people would wish to live, work, shop, study or spend their leisure time’.* In order to achieve such design quality, the policy lists fundamental design principles, which include protection and enhancement of natural and historical assets, as well as conserving the countryside and open spaces, referring to the District Design Guide SPD and village design guides where appropriate.
- Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
- 3.4 This policy focuses on the preservation and enhancement of local and national character and distinctiveness of the landscape as prescribed by existing evidence, such as the National Character Area Profiles: *‘The district’s landscape is dominated by arable farmland with dispersed woodlands and often low, trimmed hedgerows. As a result, it is a predominantly open landscape, allowing long views. A mosaic of hedgerows, fields, parkland and small woodlands create variety and combine to create an often treed skyline. A greater degree of enclosure and a more detailed landscape is often associated with settlements and the many small river valleys.’*

**South Cambridgeshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document**

- 3.5 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) forms part of the South

Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF), with a purpose to ensure *‘the delivery of sensitively and appropriately designed, sustainable developments.’* The Guide identifies that all *‘new development will have an impact on its surroundings. The aim must be that any development, from a major urban extension to Cambridge to an extension to an existing home, takes all proper care to respond to its surroundings, including existing buildings, open spaces and village edges, and ensure an integrated scheme that does not harm local amenity and wherever possible, brings benefits to the area.’*

- 3.6 The SPD requires that any new development *‘must sit comfortably in its landscape, taking account of the topography and natural or man-made features. New development should not intrude upon the skyline, with the exception of specifically agreed features selected as landmarks, in the tradition of church spires or towers. ... careful consideration must be given to the height and form of buildings, with the built form broken down to appear as a composition of forms, rather than one large form and utilising trees and other planting to soften the impact on long distance views.’*



4.0 Landscape Context

According to the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (CBA, 2021), the Site is located in Landscape Character Type (LCT) 8 and Landscape Character Area (LCA) 8A.

- 4.1
- LCT 8 - Lowland Chalklands is described as a landscape in moderate condition and of moderate strength of character. It is an intensively farmed arable landscape between the Lowland Farmlands and the Chalk Hills. It is not an ecologically rich landscape and it is disturbed by major transport routes and expanded villages. It is predominantly productive with fragments of lowland calcareous grassland and limited woodland cover.
- 4.2
- Historically, settlements struggled to establish in this dry landscape, villages concentrate on the lower topography in proximity of watercourses. These became commuter villages for Cambridge and have expanded in the 20th century: *'In the east of the LCT, settlement forms a larger proportion of the landscape, having developed along the key routes into Cambridge, resulting in some expanded, ribbon development and a substantial science and technology park at Babraham and Great Abington.'*
- 4.3
- Key characteristics of this landscape that can be recognised within the Site's context includes:

'Gently rolling landscape, occasionally dissected by small streams in shallow valleys'

Productive, predominantly arable landscape with limited woodland cover

Vegetation cover comprises scattered copses and shelterbelts of deciduous woodland with occasional hawthorn hedge field/roadside boundaries

The landscape is dominated by late enclosures, resulting in field patterns which are generally rectilinear and occasionally sinuous

Settled rural landscape characterised by dispersed historic, nucleated villages on lower landform

Generally strong rural character, locally interrupted by major roads cutting across the landscape'

4.4

The Character Assessment identify a number of key landscape features, including:

'Low-lying, rolling, rural landscape'

Balanced landscape of medium to large fields
- with sparse woodland linked by hedges
- Settled rural landscape characterised by dispersed, historic, nucleated villages'

Pressure for development to expand village settlements along the main transport routes is identified as a force for change, as well as planting ad hoc shelterbelt that would alter the open character of the landscape.

4.5

Pressure for development to expand village settlements along the main transport routes is identified as a force for change, as well as planting ad hoc shelterbelt that would alter the open character of the landscape.

4.6

Key landscape sensitivities include:

'Low-lying, gently rolling landform dissected by small streams in shallow valleys'

Medium to large sized fields enclosed by hedges

Strong sense of historic integrity, with several visible historic earthworks, routes and buildings

Tranquil, often remote rural landscape away from major roadways and extended villages'

4.7

In order to conserve the tranquil and rural landscape away from urban influence and to enhance landscape features, new development should:

'Conserve and enhance existing hedge boundaries and restore where possible'

Conserve the tranquil and uninterrupted rural character

...

Conserve and enhance existing hedgerows and consider opportunities for re-planting hedgerows where these have been lost/become fragmented

Manage planting of new trees and woodland in order to conserve open views of the undulating chalkland and emphasise landforms whilst improving biodiversity'.

4.8

LCA 8A - Pampisford Lowland Chalklands reflects all the LCT characteristics and more specifically it comprises of the following distinctive features:

'Mature hedgerows, small blocks of woodland and shelterbelts combine with occasional lines roadside trees to create a visually enclosed, intimate character'

Scattered designed historic parkland features, including some

Figure 3 - Landscape Character Assessment 2021

modern developments of large science and technology research parks, in proximity to the River Cam and River Granta

Settlement pattern of scattered small villages on elevated ground at the edges of the River Valleys

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

4.9

In addition to the LCT sensitivities LCA 8A has a well wooded, visually enclosed, intimate character and scattered historic parklands that now hosts modern, science and technology research parks in proximity of the River Cam and Granta. Therefore specific landscape guidelines includes maintaining the wooded character and manage historic parklands to enhance their distinctive features and ecological value.

Page 8

STONE & MEADOW LANDSCAPE TOWNSCAPE





Figure 4 - View across the Site from the northern boundary

## LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

THE LOCAL RURAL CHARACTER OF LCA 8A -  
PAMPISFORD AND LOWLAND CHALKLANDS

VEGETATION PATTERN, PARTICULARLY THE EXTANT  
HEDGEROWS DEFINING FIELDS BOUNDARIES

STRONG WOODED CHARACTER WHICH ALSO  
CHARACTERISES THE SKYLINE

NUCLEATED VILLAGE PATTERN

SENSE OF TRANQUILLITY ACROSS THE RURAL  
LANDSCAPE, AWAY FROM URBAN DISTURBANCE



# 5.0 Visual Baseline

A site visit was conducted in February 2025 to understand the Site's context, its visibility and identify potential visual receptors.

- 5.1 The Site is enclosed by a consistent hedgerow, which provides some screening but allows glimpses of the existing urban area of Great Abington. The village mostly consist of low-lying residential buildings along the western Site's boundary; however the more recent development to the north of the Site includes taller buildings of bright brick tones, which appears dominant in local views (see Viewpoint 5).
- 5.2 The visual experience of the Site's context is generally quite rural. The existing planting, particularly along the River Granta, provides strong visual enclosure and limits the urban influence on the visual amenity. As distance of the viewer from the Site increases the layers of trees and hedgerow densify and urban elements are almost completely screened.
- 5.3 Eight viewpoints have been identify to represent the experience of potential visual receptors. Location of the viewpoints is illustrated in the adjacent Figure 5.
- 5.4 Most of the local receptors experience limited visibility of the Site due to the filter provided by the field boundary hedgerow. However receptors on Linton Road and Larkfield have a direct view of the Site and its rural character. Ramblers on public footpaths to the south of the Site and road users on Back Road benefit of layers of intervening vegetation and topography which screens the Site and its urban context.



Figure 5 - Viewpoints location map





Viewpoint 1 - View experienced by local residents looking at the Site. The view is framed by the existing buildings and extends only as far as the northern Site's boundary due to the rising topography and hedgerow. The visual quality of the view is rural but unremarkable.



Viewpoint 2 - View experienced by local residents using a local green for recreational purposes. The view is enclosed by the existing built form, which screens the Site.





Viewpoint 3 - View experienced by local residents and road users looking towards the Site, which is visible in the middle ground.. The view is partially enclosed by existing buildings and vegetation. Although urban elements are noticeable, the view has strong rural qualities.





Viewpoint 4 - View experienced by road users approaching Great Abington from the east. The Site is not readily visible as screened by the existing hedgerow. Glimpses of the existing urban form are available through the winter vegetation. Overall the visual experience is largely rural.



Viewpoint 5 - View experienced by road users approaching Great Abington from the south-east. The Site is not readily visible as screened by the existing hedgerow. Glimpses of Great Abington settlement are available through the winter vegetation and the more modern extension is particularly prominent in the view. Despite visibility of the urban context the view still appears largely rural.





Viewpoint 6 - View experienced by ramblers on a footpath to the south of the Site, which is not visible due to the intervening planting and built form. These elements also constrain the depth of the view, which has a strong rural character.



Viewpoint 7 - View experienced by ramblers on the Chalky Road footpath. Urban elements are limited and the view appears largely rural. The Site is not visible due to the intervening topography and vegetation.





Viewpoint 8 - View experienced by road users on Back Road. The view is enclosed by dense vegetation which also screens the Site, as well as Great Abington urban edge. As a result the view appears largely rural.

## VISUAL RECEPTORS

- LOCAL RESIDENTS, PARTICULARLY LOCATED TO THE EAST OF GREAT ABINGTON AND IN THE NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMNET AT LARKFIELD
- ROAD USERS ON LINTON ROAD, PAMPISFORD ROAD AND BACK ROAD
- RAMBLERS ON CHALKY ROAD





# Conclusions



## 6.0 Landscape and Visual Effects

**The analysis conducted in this LVS concludes with the consideration of potential landscape and visual effects that are likely to occur on relevant receptors.**

- 6.1
- It is intrinsic to a development allocation that the landscape character of the Site will be altered due to the change in use. However, the transformation of a green site is not necessarily causing wider adverse effects if the proposed development responds appropriately to its context character and protects distinctive qualities.
- 6.2
- While the Site's landscape character will change, the overall qualities of LCA 8B will not be altered as the area where the change will occur is limited compared to the extent of the LCA. Therefore the rural character of the setting of Great Abington will remain largely intact.
- 6.3
- Coincidentally the proposed development will reinstate the nucleated character of the village by creating a more compact settlement pattern. The recent Larkfield development has caused a linear sprawl along Linton Road which has altered the historic village shape, the proposal will re-connect the urban area to the eastern village edge.
- 6.4
- The proposed development includes a green open space to the east-south of the Site which creates a positive interface with the contextual rural landscape. On one hand users of the open space will have a direct visual experience of the surrounding countryside; on the other hand the preservation of existing hedgerow enclosure and implementation of more tree cover will filter views of the development which will appear nested in the local landscape. The visual experience from Linton Road and Pampisford Road will therefore be true to the existing baseline condition with glimpses of urban elements through a strong vegetation cover.
- 6.5
- The retention and enhancement of the existing vegetative cover that would screen or filter urban disturbance is also key to the preservation of a sense of tranquillity experienced in the country lanes and local footpath network. Notably, it is unlikely that the proposed development will be visible in views from footpaths to the south (Viewpoints 6 and 7) of the Site and from roads to the north (Viewpoint 8).
- 6.6
- Finally, it is clear that the visual amenity experienced by residents to the east of Great Abington and Larkfied will experience the loss of rural character. Such adverse effect would be mitigated through the preservation of boundary vegetation and creation of a new positive interface with the proposed development.
- 6.7
- In conclusion, the potential adverse landscape and visual effects caused by the proposed development includes:

- Loss of local rural character within the Site's boundary; and
  - Changes to the visual amenity experienced by residents to the east of Great Abington.

- 6.8
- These effects are intrinsic to the change in land use within the Site, however they can be mitigated through the application of the adjacent design principles through out the evolution of the design proposal. These principles have all been included in the masterplan in Figure 1.
- 6.9
- It is also concluded that the proposed development is also likely to result in the following positive impacts:
  - Reinstatement of a nucleated village pattern;
  - Preservation and enhancement of vegetation cover consisting of hedgerows and trees;
  - Creation of a positive urban edge and interface with the contextual rural landscape;
  - Preservation of wider sense of tranquillity.

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

**Create a developable zone that reinstates the nucleated village shape and resolves the sense of sprawling along Linton Road.**

**Create a positive rural edge through built form facing a generous green open space to the south and east of the Site.**

**Limit the extent of development along Pampinsford Road and consider appropriate buildings height on the higher topography to avoid prominent urban intrusion in local and long distant views.**

**Retain the existing hedgerow and augment the vegetative cover with trees within the green open spaces to filter views of the existing and proposed settlement edge and preserve a wooded skyline.**

**Create a pleasant interface along the existing village edge to the north and west of the Site with strategic landscape buffers and positive orientation of the buildings.**



