

Swaffham Bulbeck

LANDSCAPE STUDY

Part two: Fringe Sensitivity Assessment

for Swaffham Bulbeck Parish Council

January 2020



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Lucy Batchelor-Wylam
Landscape architecture LucyBW@outlook.com

Report written by chartered Landscape
Architect Lucy Batchelor-Wylam CMLI

Landscape planning and landscape
architecture services.

Tel: 07905 791207

email: LucyBW@outlook.com

Introduction

Purpose

1. Chartered Landscape Architect Lucy Batchelor-Wylam was appointed in July 2019 to undertake a parish-scale Landscape Assessment to help inform the emerging Swaffham Bulbeck Neighbourhood Plan (SBNP). The client was Swaffham Bulbeck's Neighbourhood Plan group, on behalf of the parish council.
2. This report aims to assess the sensitivity of different peripheral areas of land on the village settlement edges, and the ability of those land parcels to accommodate residential development. The results allow different parts of the village fringe to be understood and compared in terms of sensitivity and whether there is any potential capacity (in landscape terms) for development.
3. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that sufficient housing delivery is enabled, but in appropriate locations that do not harm the special character of the village, its valued views or special landscapes. This assessment provides a framework within which to understand the potential specific landscape/visual issues of different parts of the settlement fringe, and the evidence for ensuring development is directed to the 'right' place.
4. In terms of housing growth, at the time of writing, the Local Plan position at East Cambridgeshire District Council is that only the adopted 2015 Plan is extant. A newer 2017 plan was withdrawn after the district decided that enacting the Inspector's recommendations would have rendered the plan unrecognizable from the one that was submitted. There has been no announcement concerning the commencement of preparing a new Local Plan.
5. The 2017 Local Plan contained proposals for the enlargement of Swaffham Bulbeck across two sites off Heath/Quarry Roads. The Parish Council wishes to make recommendations on the growth of the village generally, as well as include proposals for new housing delivery in the SBNP in allocated locations. This report therefore looks at that part of the village earmarked as suitable for growth in more detail than the other parts of the village fringes. It analyses the opportunities and constraints and culminates in a landscape-led strategy for planning growth in this area.

6. The assessment had the following objectives:

- a) to provide the Neighbourhood Plan group an aid for making sound decisions in relation to spatial planning and policy formation, in relation to landscape;
- b) to help the parish respond to future speculative planning applications;
- c) to help identify and justify land for allocation, and aid site planning on any such land;
- d) to help explain to residents and land owners why such decisions were taken;
- e) to identify opportunities for the enhancement, management and conservation of the landscape and views.

Green Belt

7. The southern half of the parish is covered by the Cambridge Green belt policy designation. *'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'*. (National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - para 133).
8. This means that land within the area could not be considered for residential allocation under the Neighbourhood Plan, as Swaffham Bulbeck NP policies have to accord with the district or National policies that sit 'above' it. The exception to this would be if the tests that are set out in paragraph 145 of the NPPF were met. For example, these can include limited village infilling and limited affordable residential development for local community needs, in certain circumstances.
9. After consideration the SBNP group directed that the assessment should be undertaken for all parts of the fringe regardless of the Green Belt allocation. This was to allow a full understanding of sensitivity and value issues across the village fringes, and allow the assessment to be relevant should future exception sites come forward.

What is landscape sensitivity?

10. The sensitivity of a landscape is *'the extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character'* . Landscape sensitivity is understood through the evaluation of landscape character and value, and selected sensitivity criteria. This definition is based on best practice and is compliant with the definitions given in the published guidance 'Landscape Character Assessment: Topic Paper 6' (see section on methods).
11. The assessment aims to communicate the ability of the landscape, given its particular character or visual qualities, to accommodate 'change' without undue detrimental effect. Change usually refers to new development, in this case it focuses on the residential development of a scale that is likely to come forward on the village edges in the future; however, its principles are likely to be applicable to other types of development.
12. The assessment, assisted by information set out in the Landscape Character Assessment, identifies how valuable and sensitive to change the landscape and its component features are. It analyses the features and attributes that give a landscape its character and unique sense of place. As well as the sensitivity of its physical aspects, the process also considers visual sensitivity of viewers of the landscape; who would experience the changes, where they would be experienced from, and whether valued or 'key' views are at risk. It also looks to a historic understanding of how settlements grew up, and their position in the landscape, as important factors. The evolution of settlements provides an important starting point for making judgements on future change or growth.
13. The 2015 Local Plan did not allocate any housing numbers to Swaffham Bulbeck and the village remains an unlikely area for growth given its position on the edge of the Green Belt. But it is likely to face pressure to provide some new housing on its peripheries in the future.
14. The Neighbourhood Plan team wish to take a more positive role in directing how future growth will occur. This study will form a key piece of evidence in that process but many other factors will influence decision making, including highways access issues, flood risk, infrastructure capacity, ecological impact etc. More detailed work on all types of impact needs to be carried out to determine the acceptability of individual development sites.
15. Areas identified by this study as having some potential to accommodate development (in landscape terms), may not in fact be suitable for allocation for other reasons. On their own the conclusion of this assessment cannot, therefore, be taken as a justification for supporting or resisting any future development proposal, but should be given appropriate weight.
16. Although the primary focus of this study is towards residential development, the findings can equally inform decisions about other types of development. The results will be available to landowners/developers to identify the particular issues likely to arise within each land parcel and promote sympathetic site design.

Development pressures

13. The 2015 Local Plan did not allocate any housing numbers to Swaffham Bulbeck and the village remains an unlikely area for growth given its position on the edge of the Green Belt. But it is likely to face pressure to provide some new housing on its peripheries in the future.

Method

Available methodologies

1. New guidance is available on landscape sensitivity assessment to replace ‘Topic paper 6: Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity’¹ which was the previous source of guidance, a discussion piece based on case studies, which was not overly prescriptive. Since then, good practice has continued to evolve and “An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management” was published in June 2019 (Christine Tudor, Natural England).
2. The new guidance provides the following definition of sensitivity (p5):

‘..Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value... a process that assesses the resilience / robustness of landscape character and the visual resource – and what we value - to a defined change, or changes..’
3. The guidance urges studies to be simple, transparent, robust and defensible. A basic process schematic is shown at the end of this document.
4. The assessment relies on the premise that residential development should be more readily acceptable in the least sensitive areas, where appropriate forms of mitigation would be possible. Development would be least acceptable in areas of higher value and high sensitivity and/or where conditions are such that the landscape would be sensitive to mitigation measures.
5. The approach was to consider sensitivity to the principle of residential development in general but avoided assessing specific sized hypothetical development scenarios because there was not scope to develop the study to this level. The assessment units were the character areas identified in the parish Landscape Character Assessment.
6. Conditions indicating high sensitivity are where landscape value is high and where visual sensitivity is high, for example in the following scenarios:
 - Where impacts might result to the setting of heritage features (such as listed buildings) or key landmark buildings
 - Where impacts might result to natural or topographic features that contribute notably to local character and sense of place
 - Where impacts might result because land is very visually prominent and openness is an essential contributor to character
 - Where settlement has stark edges and assimilation of new development would be hard
 - Where scenic views, that are key to the experience of a settlement, are vulnerable
7. Conversely, examples of conditions indicating land of lower sensitivity would be a lack of any designations for ecology or heritage, a lack of value associated with recreation or visual amenity, the land not playing a role in any key views of the village, contained or well vegetated land where development could be assimilated without wider impact, where development would fit well with the historic pattern of settlement development or where development might offer the opportunity for the enhancement or reinforcement of character.
8. The assessments provided an overall comparative measure of sensitivity in both landscape and visual terms, allocated along a scale from LOW / MODEST / MODERATE / HIGH / VERY HIGH. But such scales are of limited use - more useful is the detail in the supporting text that pick out the sensitivities for each area.

Scope of the study

9. The scope of the study was for assessment of broad fringes of the village settlement which display common characteristics. The limits of the fringe parcels were defined by the boundaries of the character areas identified in the parish character assessment.
10. The study looked at the land around the peripheries of each of the settlement clusters, in the rural edge or undeveloped zones adjacent to the settlement boundaries, where residential development might feasibly come forward. Seven Fringe Areas were defined and are mapped on page 11.
11. A smaller scale individual site or field level assessment was not feasible and the results of the study are not intended to suggest development sites or future settlement boundaries. The study also takes no account of other factors that would influence the suitability or availability of the land parcels for development such as flood risk, or whether access is

¹ Landscape Character Assessment Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for judging Capacity and Sensitivity . The Countryside Agency/ Scottish Natural Heritage

possible.

12. The inner boundaries of the seven fringe areas interface with the village's physical boundaries. The outer boundaries attempt to follow some recognizable landscape feature, such as a field boundary, watercourse or road. If no such feature was apparent, for example within a large field, a line was formed with the nearest such boundary feature. However, in reality the fringe areas should not be regarded as having a hard outward boundary, but instead be considered as extending outwards towards the Parish boundary. When consulting information on a specific fringe area, reference should also be made to neighbouring fringe areas where relevant.
13. Locations separated from the village edge were not included because development proposals would be much less likely to come forward in open countryside where no relationship to the existing settlement edge exists. In any such cases, the NPPF and extant local plan policy provide backing for landscape protection, and the parish character assessment should also be referred to.

Approach

14. The study was carried out using mapping at the scale of 1:10,000. The process began with reference to available baseline information including the parish landscape character assessment which identified the village character areas which provided the assessment units.
15. The settlement edges of each of the character areas were then labelled Fringe Areas whose boundary lines generally reflected the differences in character identified in the parish character assessment. Two of the character areas were divided into two fringe areas because of their size or because of differing conditions of value or sensitivity. These are labelled Fringe Area A, B, C, D, E, F and G (see map 1, page 11).
16. Fringe Area A was considered in more detail than the other areas. This is because this parcel is the focus for growth, and because conditions and landscape value varies somewhat across the parcel. Sensitivity values were attributed separately to the west/north and the east/south of the parcel (SB2 and SB6).
17. The tables that follow on pages 12 to 26 summarise findings arising from a combination of desktop work and field observations. Conditions in each of the fringe areas were assessed under separate sets of criteria - 'Landscape factors' - and 'Visual and Perceptual factors'. Desktop work included historic analysis because the evolution of settlements provides an important insight for making judgements on landscape sensitivity in respect of settlement expansion. An understanding of the historic origins of settlement and its relationship to topography is essential for directing appropriately located future growth. Mapped designated aspects of value were also key references. (Refer to the maps in the appendix document).
18. Professional judgement was applied to interpret the significance of the particular landscape and visual sensitivities, but to aid understanding of how judgements of value and sensitivity were reached, example circumstances indicating higher and lesser value are given on pages 8 and 9.
19. Landscape value was assessed under the following criteria headings:
 - Recognised indicators of value; designations or landscape policy, as well as informal indicators such as cultural/community/recreation value.
 - Landform and its contribution to character
 - Pattern, enclosure and condition
 - Settlement edge pattern
20. The following criteria were considered in relation to the visual conditions and views:
 - The visual prominence of the fringe area
 - The types of receptors that would be affected
 - Whether one or more key views would be affected
 - Whether views from footpaths would be affected
 - Whether views from principal routes would be affected
 - The degree of tranquillity
 - The aesthetical value of the views affected

21. Following completion of the tables a text summary was provided for each fringe area under the following headings:

Summary of value and sensitivities

A summary of the overall sensitivity in landscape and visual terms and reference to any specific aspects of high value and/or sensitivity.

Comments on any potential capacity for development.

Mitigation, Management or Enhancement objectives:

Notes on any management issues, or suggestion of future landscape enhancement objectives for the area.

Assessment of the likely ability of each fringe area to feature sympathetic and successful mitigation. Landscapes, where appropriate and successful mitigation can be undertaken, have more ability to assimilate development - they are, therefore, less sensitive. Mitigation is important as it must be recognised that regardless of the policies which might discourage development in areas of high sensitivity, applications may still come forward. Provision of mitigation guidance provides a basis for the determining authorities and the parish group to negotiate better design outcomes.

SUMMARY OF INDICATORS OF VALUE & SENSITIVITY: Landscape

PHYSICAL / LANDSCAPE FACTORS		Lower value and/or sensitivity	←-----→	Higher value and/or sensitivity
Designations and aspects of value	Whether the land parcel, or any of its features, are covered by any designations or protective policies. Indicators of cultural value. Includes attributing value to the historic landscape and heritage assets within it. Where the landscape forms the setting for heritage features such as Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, or ancient woodland, or simply where there is evidence for historic continuity. Also cultural aspects of value and associations - recreational or community related.	No landscape, heritage or habitat designations. No particular cultural value.	One, or more, features or areas with non-statutory designations e.g. 'Special Landscape Area' or 'Non-designated heritage asset' Some cultural value.	One, or more, features or areas with statutory landscape, heritage or habitat designations present. High value for cultural reasons.
Landform	The extent to which landform plays a role in defining character and sense of place, and how vulnerable the character is to the loss of visible landform.	Topography and landform play little role in defining character	Topography and landform play some role in defining character	Appreciation of topography and landform playing key role in defining character and sense of place
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	This refers to vegetative and field patterns and intactness of habitats. For example, a landscape comprising a complex array of different habitats and/or land cover features such as long established intact hedgerows or ancient woodland will have a higher value than a simple open landscape where structural elements have been lost. Components with a semi-natural character would be highly valued. Condition relates to state of repair of the characteristic features and their resultant role in representation of character.	Simple, large-scale, open; little evidence of historic field patterns; Straightened boundaries and field amalgamation; hedges often absent - remnant boundary vegetation only. Landscape in poor condition. Little indication of time-depth / historic continuity	Medium scale field sizes, evidence of partial boundary loss. Condition of hedges sometimes poor. Some hedgerow trees endure. Some indication of time-depth/ historic continuity	Small scale, fine grain; historic field patterns strongly in evidence; limited amalgamation, intact network of hedges; regular hedgerow trees. Landscape in good condition. Strong indication of time-depth / historic continuity
Settlement edges, and gateways	Consideration of the nature and form of the adjacent settlement edges and gateways. Long established, settlement edges where low density, historic settlement prevails, untouched by modern influences, are more valued than those where the historic settlement edge is no longer evident, owing to modern development and where 20th century development has resulted in a stark interface.	Abrupt interface between edge of settlement and countryside; boundary vegetation absent or sparse, aspects of modern development present	Settlement edge varied and indistinct, some modern elements present.	Porous edge to settlement, breaks allow interface between settlement and countryside; buffered by historic landscape pattern; native vegetation softens edges.

SUMMARY OF INDICATORS OF VALUE & SENSITIVITY: Visual and Perceptual

VISUAL AND PERCEPTUAL FACTORS		Lower value and/or sensitivity ←-----→ Higher value and/or sensitivity		
<p>Visual prominence Vulnerability of key views</p>	<p>How generally visible the land is from the surrounding landscape, settlement edges, highways or rights of way. Land that is visually prominent, owing to the combined effects of landform, tree cover or settlement is more visually sensitive than land which is enclosed and hard to see into.</p> <p>Views from major routes are deemed more sensitive than land that is only visible from the minor lanes.</p> <p>Includes consideration of the extent to which footpaths users are likely to be affected by views of residential development.</p> <p>Higher sensitivity is attributed to land easily seen as part of one or more of the key views, lower sensitivity is attributed where land is not seen within any of the key views.</p>	<p>Conditions combine to make views of land generally difficult to experience.</p> <p>Limited visibility from principal routes.</p> <p>No views from footpaths.</p> <p>Land parcel not easily seen within key views</p>	<p>Some views available where conditions allow.</p> <p>Moderately visible in views from principal routes.</p> <p>Views from a few points on footpaths and/or at longer range</p> <p>Part of land parcel seen in some key views</p>	<p>Visually prominent, forming part of view from many points.</p> <p>Integral part of view from one or more principal routes.</p> <p>Direct views from multiple footpaths, or at close range.</p> <p>Land parcel is prominent in one or more key views</p>
<p>Types of receptors experiencing visual change</p>	<p>Sensitive viewers would be residents, tourists and those experiencing views from Listed Buildings or from within a Conservation Area. Less sensitive are viewers engaged in travel or at their place of work, for example.</p>	<p>Users of low sensitivity; e.g. road users, people at work</p>	<p>Moderately sensitive; e.g. some views from dwellings or small number of Listed Buildings</p>	<p>Highly sensitive; visitors, direct views from Listed Building and/or Conservation Area</p>
<p>Tranquillity / activity</p>	<p>Aspects including traffic noise, movement from people or vehicles, sense of remoteness and tranquillity. Landscapes with a higher degree of remoteness and tranquillity will have a higher sensitivity to residential development.</p>	<p>Rarely tranquil, regular human activity seen and/or heard</p>	<p>Moderate tranquillity; some human activity seen and/or heard</p>	<p>Relatively remote and tranquil, little human activity seen or heard</p>
<p>Aesthetic perception</p>	<p>This is the more subjective of the judgments. It covers sensitivity in terms of aesthetic attributes such as interplay of landform and landscape structure, texture, naturalness, the presence or absence of detracting features or human activity. More sensitive landscapes have a more aesthetically pleasing combination of features, likely indicated by complexity, variety, and naturalness, and absence of human scale features.</p>	<p>Simple and uniform in texture; sense of naturalness eroded; human scale features apparent.</p> <p>Unlikely to be considered scenic.</p>	<p>Moderately varied texture, reasonably good degree of naturalness; some features of human scale. Moderately scenic.</p>	<p>Complex and varied texture, high degree of naturalness with few features of human scale.</p> <p>Scenic.</p>

Assessment results






Map 1: Assessment units - Settlement Fringe Areas

Map shows the assessment units used in the assessment:

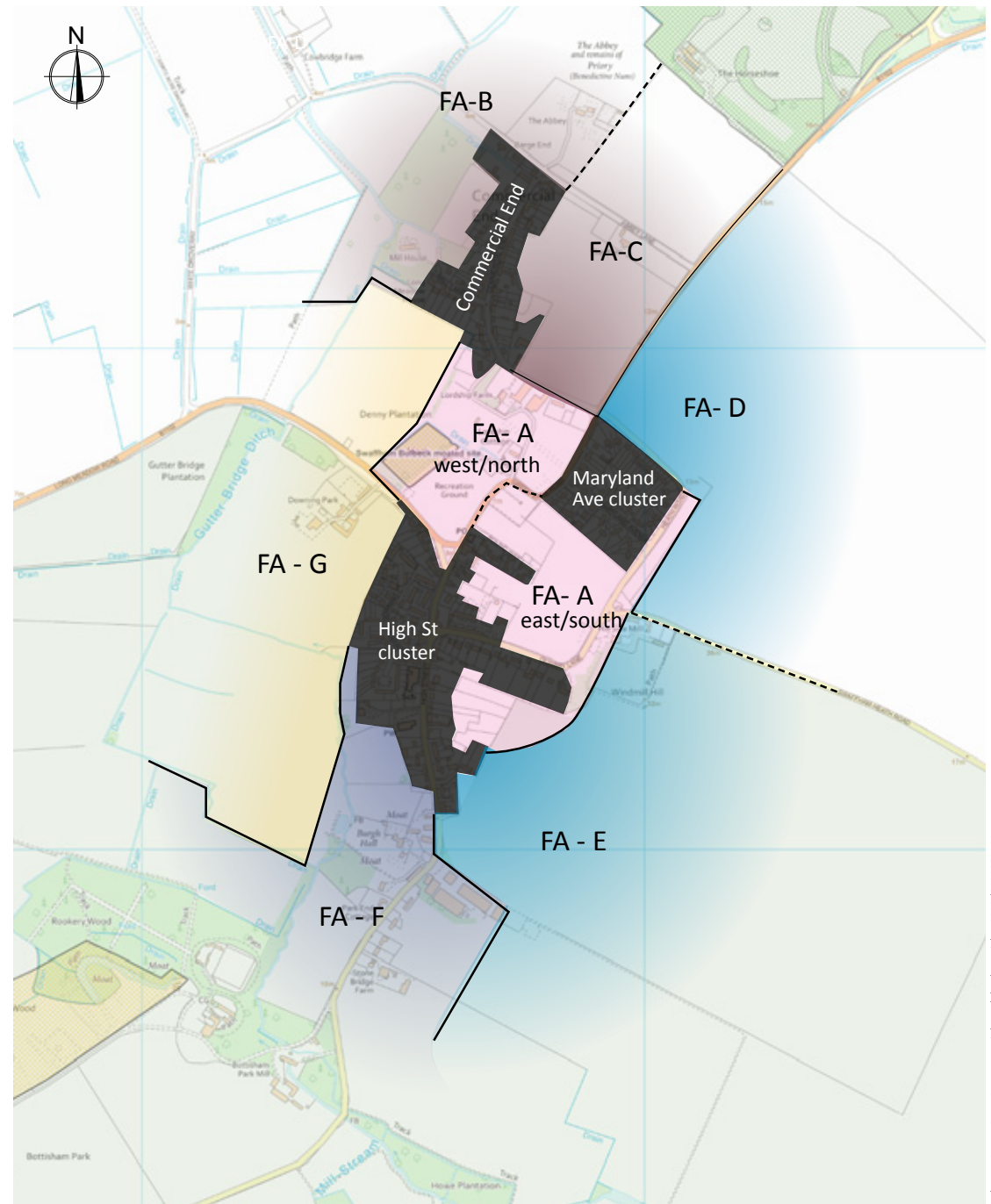
Fringe Areas (FA) analysis:

- FA - A : see page 12
- FA - B : see page 14
- FA - C : see page 16
- FA - D : see page 18
- FA - E : see page 20
- FA - F : see page 22
- FA - G : see page 24

Relevant Landscape Character Area

-  Character area SB2
-  Character area SB3
-  Character area SB4
-  Character area SB5
-  Character area SB6

Refer to separate document Swaffham Bulbeck Landscape Character Assessment for more detail on rural character.



Assessment results: Fringe Area-A

Fringe area	FA -A	Character Area	SB6
Location and function. Physical character & Land use	<p>The parcel is formed from land that lies in the centre of the three village clusters and the edges of the village on the eastern side. It picks up some small areas of 'white land' that fall outside both the settlement boundaries and the Green Belt. This area is subject to a number of planning and allocation applications.</p> <p>Much of the parcel functions to separate the three clusters and is important visually and recreationally. It is under mixed land use. There is a large farmstead, farmland, recreational land, a cemetery, woodland edge and the deep, well-vegetated rear curtilages of properties along Quarry Lane and High Street on the east side of the village.</p>		
Physical/Landscape attributes		Visual and perceptual attributes	
Designations / aspects of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designated SM (moated site) in the plantation west of the Denny. - Habitat value is also likely to be moderate around the Denny Plantation - The Denny is highly valued green space in the 'centre' of the village and functions as a large village green offering access and recreation. It has cricket and football pitches, extensive children's play and adult exercise equipment and a pavilion. - Much of the centre of the parcel is covered by the Conservation Area. - Rights of way along the side of Lordship farm, linking to Commercial End, and a short stretch linking around the back of the cemetery. 	Visual prominence and vulnerability of any key views	<p>Varies. Much of the northern half of the land parcel, the open space in the centre of the village, is very visually prominent and makes a substantial contribution to the character and identity of the village, including the privately owned land east of Lordship farm (no public access).</p> <p>Land to the east and south of the fringe parcel is much less prominent and is hard to view from the main road. Substantial hedges and screening from built form creates some pockets that are well contained - especially the 'white land' fringes south of Quarry Lane.</p>
Landform	The parcel is generally gently sloping and flat on the toe of the slope. It lies between the 5m and 15m contour. The field to the east of the cemetery has a distinctive and surprisingly varied and rolling landform in its eastern corner. Heath Road is elevated above much of the site along the eastern boundary.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	<p>Lots of people would notice change here - high levels of traffic pass through and there are several dwellings that front onto this central area. Views are sensitive too in terms of heritage - there is a Conservation Area designation, and land sometimes forms a setting to listed buildings. Fewer receptors in the east of the area.</p>
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	On early OS maps this parcel was arranged as a series of small field enclosures around the village edge. This feel endures in parts, demonstrating good historic continuity of pattern. Some mature hedged field boundaries endure. Today rows of trees are distinctive features along the main road which give a semi-formal character to the experience of passage through the village. Landscape features are generally in good condition.	Tranquillity / activity	Tranquillity is relatively low in much of this area near the busy main road. Some much quieter parts to the east along the village edge where it interfaces with countryside.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	Interfaces mainly with the older parts of the settlement which tend to be a pattern of one plot deep houses in a linear arrangement. The interrelationships between the built form, including key buildings such as the pub, and the public open spaces are very important to the village identity. The route of the main road takes a number of right angled bends which contributes to distinctiveness and opens up a sequence of views across green spaces.	Aesthetic perception	Aesthetically the area is attractive and well maintained and important for the amenity it offers, both visual and recreational.

Assessment results: Fringe Area - A

A. West/north: This area is **very highly sensitive in landscape and visual terms**

Approximate scale of sensitivity					
Landscape Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low
Visual Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low

Summary of value and sensitivities - west /north

The central and western part of the parcel has higher landscape value. Here there are designations for heritage and the open space and woodland edge have obvious value for recreation and visual amenity. The Denny plays a key role in village distinctiveness and identity and it offers landscape setting to key village amenities. It helps separate and maintain the character of the three village clusters. Along with the unconfined parcel of land east of Lordship Farm it allows attractive views and inter-visibility across the village edge. These factors combine to indicate a landscape of high landscape value and visual prominence.

Residential development on any part of the publicly accessible and visually important north and western parts of the parcel is not acceptable.

B. East/south: This area is **moderately sensitive in landscape terms** and **moderately sensitive in visual terms.**

Approximate scale of sensitivity					
Landscape Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low
Visual Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low

Summary of value and sensitivities - east / south

Value and sensitivity reduces in the south and east of the fringe parcel in both landscape and visual terms.

East of the cemetery the land is not covered by designations for heritage, although the area does still adjoin the Conservation Area along its western edge - the housing stock here along Pound Lane is modernist, white rendered single storey dwellings, and would offer good scope for integration opportunities with contemporary architecture, if need be. There are two listed buildings with directly adjoining curtilage to the parcel.

Visual sensitivity is reduced where there is more containment from field boundaries, less overlooking from the residential village edges and little visibility from the main routes through the village.

Where these conditions are met this side of the parcel has some scope for development without significant impact to the character of the the village. This needs to be at modest scale and integrated well with the landscape and its mature vegetative features, and be responsive to the land form.

Mitigation, Management or Enhancement objectives (both parts):

- Protect public open space and visually important open space with strong policy protection.
- Reflect the semi-formal tree planting in any new development.
- Look for opportunities to provide further access/rights of ways and links , including improving existing links from Maryland Avenue and Commercial End.

- For further detail refer to ‘Principles for landscape improvement and management in The Chalklands’ in the Cambridge County Landscape Character Assessment.
- For any development on or above the 15m contour, consider limiting overall height and whether skyline impacts could be softened by tree planting.
- Refer to appendix 1 for the landscape strategy for this area.

Assessment results: Fringe Area-B

Fringe area	FA -B	Character Area	SB6
Location and function. Physical character & Land use	The parcel lies to the west and north of the historic hamlet at Commercial End, and either side of Fen Lane. The majority of the parcel is flat arable farmland, laid out between strongly wooded edges, including the edges of woodland at Swaffham Prior Park which defines the parish boundary to the north and has a strong bearing on character. This gives it an enclosed feel and rural character with a sense of historic continuation. It includes the end of Swaffham Bulbeck Lode that served the port here in centuries past, and land either side of the water course remains undeveloped except on Fen Lane from Cow Bridge to Gatekeeper House. This area has a sense of quietness and remoteness that is lacking from the other parts of the village edge.		
Physical/Landscape attributes		Visual and perceptual attributes	
Designations / aspects of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No landscape, policy or ecological designations but adjoins designated sites - the registered park and garden at Swaffham Prior House - Contains The Abbey (SM) and historic features such as clunch walls. - Adjoins and is partly covered by the Conservation Area associated with Commercial End, and its Grade II listed buildings - Habitat value is likely to be moderate to high given the woodland edges and the green corridor which follows the stream.. - A footpath follows the stream and then goes across a field towards B1102 and Gutter Bridge Wood. - National Trust 100 year vision extends as far as Cow Bridge; importance of Sanger Wood and planting behind the Mill House. 	Visual prominence and vulnerability of any key views	The western and northern fringes of Commercial End are not visible from the wider landscape. There is substantial tree cover and the parcel is tucked away from general view.
Landform	The parcel feels flat and lies on and either side of the 10m contour. The flatness is a notable contributor to landscape character and sense of place. Drainage channels start to cut into the land here on the very edge of the fenlands.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	Receptors to change in this east of the area would be limited in number, away from the main road and main body of the village - Fen Lane is a relatively quiet route. On the other hand the setting of the Conservation Area and its heritage assets are highly sensitive and vulnerable to harm from unsympathetic new development.
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	According to early maps this parcel was arranged as old field enclosures around the settlement edges. There were orchards to the west of Commercial End on early OS maps. A strong sense of historic continuity from the combination of the enclosure pattern with historic built form and narrow lanes, and lack of modern influences. Landscape features are in good condition.	Tranquillity / activity	Tranquillity is relatively high here owing to the quiet narrow lane carrying relatively little traffic compared to other roads through the parish. Lane is important for recreation and is well used by walkers, and provides a link to the public footpath on Fen Lane next to Cowbridge Farm.

Assessment results: Fringe Area - B

This area is **highly sensitive in landscape terms** and of **moderate sensitivity in visual terms**.

	Approximate scale of sensitivity				
Landscape Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low
Visual Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low

Summary of value and sensitivities

This area is not in the Green Belt so this fringe parcel might be under greater pressure than other parcels that are in that policy area. However, this fringe area has specific heritage related sensitivities and high cultural value.

Part of the area falls into the Conservation Area, it backs several listed building curtilages and it provides setting to The Abbey (SM). The sense of time-depth or historic continuity and its intact character, lacking in modern development, and a degree of tranquillity gives it a distinctive feel. Commercial End has a different feel to the main village that should be conserved.

It is judged these factors combine to indicate a landscape of HIGH sensitivity.

Visual sensitivity is a little lower because of the high degree of tree cover, there are fewer places from which it can be seen - it can't be viewed from the main routes although there is a pavement/cycle route alongside Abbey Lane. Abbey Lane, Fen Lane and White Droveaway are popular routes for walkers and cyclist.

In terms of scope for development, it is considered that one or two individual plots, for example modest-scale self-build type projects, in contained sites, could be assimilated without undue negative effect. However, quality of design and sympathy to the context and special qualities of the Conservation Area would be essential to make them acceptable.

New development in open, prominent parts of the parcel would not be acceptable as it would threaten the special character of Commercial End and disrupt its historic character and dominant 'one plot deep' pattern.

Mitigation, Management or Enhancement objectives:

- Commercial End has a distinctive and historic form and any new development must be sensitively undertaken with due regard to the Conservation Area.
- Maintain and manage the high tree cover.
- Look for opportunities to provide interpretation about the port and the evolution of the settlement.
- Look for opportunities to provide further access/rights of ways and links.
- For further detail refer to '*Principles for landscape improvement and management in The Chalklands*' in the Cambridge County Landscape Character Assessment.

Assessment results: Fringe Area-C

Fringe area	FA -C	Character Area	SB6
Location and function. Physical character & Land use	The parcel is found east of Commercial End between the settlement edge and the B1102. It adjoins the parkland at Swaffham Prior House to the north which forms the parish boundary. It is simple flat arable farmland, laid out in two regular rectilinear fields, often enclosed by hedges or wooded edges, and divided by straight roads and lanes. It functions as open land between the three village clusters and between the parish boundary with Swaffham Prior.		
Physical/Landscape attributes		Visual and perceptual attributes	
Designations / aspects of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No landscape, policy or ecological designations but adjoins designated sites - the registered park and garden at Swaffham Prior House and the curtilage of The Abbey (SM). - Habitat value is likely to be moderate along the wooded edges but low elsewhere. - Adjoins the Conservation Area associated with Commercial End, and provides setting to a number of grade II listed buildings - including Lordship Farm. - No recreational footpaths but a cycle route tracks alongside Abbey Road. 	Visual prominence and vulnerability of any key views	The southern half particularly is visually prominent, the B1102 carries high levels of traffic and direct views are experienced where a roadside hedge is lacking. The parcel acts as setting to Commercial End and allows views to the farmstead - all helping convey a sense of historic continuity and communicating the separateness of Commercial End from the main village. North of Abbey Lane the land is more contained and somewhat less prominent.
Landform	The parcel is flat and lies on and either side of the 10m contour. The flatness of the land is a contributor to landscape character and provides a marked contrast from the sloping and open land upslope to the east.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	Receptors to change in the eastern part area would mainly comprise the busy traffic flow along the B1102 - direct views afforded. Any change here also would impact views from Lordship Farm and from residential properties along the main road and Maryland Avenue.
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	According to early maps this parcel was on the edge of the open farmed systems found on the uplands, where it transitions into the small scale, older enclosures around the settlement edges. There is sense of enclosure, trees form the skyline to the west and north, and continuous dense hedges along Abbey Lane help indicate the good condition of the landscape.	Tranquillity / activity	Tranquillity is limited owing to the high traffic flow that is experienced along the B1102 throughout the day.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	Interface with settlement edge is the southern edge of Commercial End - the parcel backs onto well-vegetated rear gardens. Land parcel provides undeveloped land that separates Commercial End from the main village cluster. The new barn-like house off Abbey Lane is overly prominent. Abbey Lane has a pleasant character with hedges either side and wide verges.	Aesthetic perception	Attractive views across farmland, with wooded edges, with glimpses of properties at Commercial End seen nestled amongst tree cover. Trees form the backdrop to Lordship Farm which provides a scenic composition and contributes to the pleasant rural edge character to the village clusters and an appreciation of their separation.

Assessment results: Fringe Area - C

This area is **of high sensitivity in landscape and visual terms.**

Approximate scale of sensitivity					
Landscape Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low
Visual Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low

Summary of value and sensitivities

This area is not in the Green Belt so this fringe parcel might be under greater pressure than other parcels.

It does not have any designations itself, but its sensitivity lies in the fact that it forms setting to and adjoins various designations for heritage. The listed Park to the north forms a distinctive and prominent feature in the landscape of otherwise open countryside.

Development on land here would interrupt the openness which characterises the relationships which still exist between Commercial End, the Abbey and Swaffham Prior. Modern development could be intrusive, hard to assimilate and could have potential adverse impacts on the setting of Swaffham Bulbeck Conservation Area and/or the setting of the Abbey.

These factors combine to indicate a landscape of HIGH sensitivity.

The parcel's visual sensitivity is also HIGH owing to the high number of people that would be exposed to change, the importance of the land in providing a visual gap and setting in views to the village edges.

This parcel has limited scope for development without significant impact to the separated arrangement of the clusters, each of which has its own identity, and without detracting from the 'isolated' setting of the farmstead, the historic 'one plot deep' pattern.

Mitigation, Management or Enhancement objectives:

- Commercial End has a distinctive and historic form and character and new development, unless small scale and very sensitively undertaken, would disrupt its layout and character.
- Plant new roadside hedge along the B1102 where missing.
- Preserve the character of Abbey Lane, avoiding any new accesses or reduction in its rural character.
- Retain and manage roadside hedges to retain the character of the lanes.
- Look for opportunities to provide further access/rights of ways and links.
- Look for opportunities for further tree planting
- For further detail refer to '*Principles for landscape improvement and management in The Chalklands*' in the Cambridge County Landscape Character Assessment.

Assessment results: Fringe Area-D

Fringe area	FA - D	Related character Area	SB2
Location and function Physical character Land use	Fringe Area D is contiguous with Fringe Area E to the south, they are divided along Heath Road for the purposes of this assessment. The fringe area meets the northern edge of the Maryland Avenue cluster, at the foot of the valley side and lies east of the B1102. It forms part of the undeveloped belt between Swaffham Bulbeck and Swaffham Prior to the north. It slopes gently upwards towards the east from a low point of 10m to beyond 30m AOD. It is a very simple, open and featureless landscape under arable use, lacking enclosure or structural vegetation. It is distinctly different to the landscape to the west of the B1102 in terms of topography, enclosure and tree cover.		
Physical/Landscape attributes		Visual and perceptual attributes	
Designations / aspects of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No statutory landscape or ecological designations are present or adjoin the land parcel. - Habitat value is likely to be low owing to lack of vegetative features/habitats, and the intensive arable land use. - No Listed buildings or SMs are present - but provides backdrop to grade II listed Hill Cottage (Listed Hill House also close by just to the north). - There are no non-designated heritage or cultural assets. - There are no rights of way in this area. 	Visual prominence and vulnerability of any key views	These slopes are very visually prominent. The views upslope are expansive and are without a particular point of focus. The lack of roadside hedge along the north side of the B1102 makes for an uninterrupted view upslope to distant bare skylines. Views towards the village edge to the south comprise houses beneath a vegetated skyline. Some glimpses of elevated bare slopes seen over and above Heath Road at Windmill Hill.
Landform	The parcel forms the lower edge of the valley side which is notably large in scale and open in character. The lack of any enclosure allows the landform to be easily perceived and its large scale sloping form constitutes a very defining element of its character.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	Any change in this area would be directly and easily perceived by large numbers of people - those entering the village on the B1102 and directly by the residents of the Maryland Avenue and Heath Road area.
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	Very large scale landscape and very open - lack of any enclosure or pattern from field boundaries or trees. Structural planting is generally absent so the skyline is generally bare. The condition of the landscape could be improved.	Tranquillity / activity	The lack of enclosure in this area means road noise and movement from the often busy B1102 is prevalent and it limits any sense of tranquillity but the arable landscape itself feels empty and still.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	Historically settlement was not found here on the valley side, rather it was found clustered along the toe of the slope. The addition of the block shaped residential area of Maryland Avenue, built between 1939 and 1952, disrupted this pattern. It has straight abrupt edges with the countryside, albeit with some softening from vegetation in front gardens. There is a strong if abrupt gateway/arrival point at the crossroads of Heath Road/Commercial End when arriving from Swaffham Prior.	Aesthetic perception	Sense of rural character is strong but aesthetic value is limited by lack of features and large scale composition of the landform and the simplicity of arable land use. The strong roadside hedge along the B1102 in Swaffham Prior peters out in this parish, conveying a sense of loss of condition. Little sense of time-depth even though this landscape has long been farmed in an open way. Pylons detracting features in skylines. Trees in adjoining land parcels contribute positively to the scenic qualities of local views.

Assessment results: Fringe Area-D

This area is of **modest sensitivity in landscape terms** and is **very highly visually sensitive**.

Approximate scale of sensitivity					
Landscape Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low
Visual Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low

Summary of value and sensitivities

This area has limited landscape value owing to the lack of designations, heritage features, or rights of way. It features little habitat or vegetative structure.

Value lies in the way its topography is a strong contributor to local character and its scale provides a strong sense of the place. The landscape continues to echo the historic farm systems that were in operation from Medieval times in this area - unwooded large-scale open field systems have long been characteristic, although there is little pattern, relief or variety that is usually necessary for views to be considered scenic.

Visually and aesthetically value is limited owing to the absence of focal points, pattern, or enclosure on the open slopes. Views to detracting elements like pylons are not contained. The vegetative structures that are seen are not always in good condition. These factors together result in a high degree of visual sensitivity - the unenclosed, unvegetated slopes are visually very prominent, especially from the B1102 and the village edge.

Therefore, in general, any development up the valley sides should be avoided, especially where it would form new incursions into the arable land. The village historically was found on or below the 10m contour, and today it is found at no more than 15m AOD. Any development above 15m AOD should therefore be avoided. The slopes are particularly open and prominent and effective mitigation of development would be difficult to achieve. Skylines should be protected from development.

Mitigation, Management or Enhancement objectives:

- There is scope for landscape improvement through reinstating and reinforcing its structure - field boundary hedges, with trees, roadside trees planting and strip woodlands/shelter belts. New beech 'hangers' on hilltops could form focal points and reinforce the sense of topography and chalkland character. Such actions would provide habitat, visual relief, texture and interest. Historic map analysis would help identify any opportunities to restore or reinforce historical field boundaries, whilst still retaining the historic geometrical patterns.
- Any opportunities to replace some of the arable land use with species rich grassland, if only in the form of margins, would be beneficial. This may be possible through future agri-environment schemes.
- Seek opportunities for improving biodiversity in roadside verges some of which are already fairly species rich.
- Look for opportunities to provide access/rights of way that connect to or along new or existing vegetative features.
- For further detail refer to '*Principles for landscape improvement and management in The Chalklands*' in the Cambridge County Landscape Character Assessment.

Assessment results: Fringe Area-E

Fringe area	FA - E	Character Area	SB2
Location and function. Physical character & Land use	Fringe Area E is contiguous with Fringe Area D to the north; they are divided along Heath Road for the purposes of this assessment. It is land that fringes settlement to the east of the main settlement cluster and which sometimes forms a visual backdrop to the main village. East of Quarry Lane land reaches a high point, known as Windmill Hill (circa 25m AOD), then slopes gently southwards to Park End where land flattens out (around the 10m contour). Here it is part of the rural gap between Swaffham Bulbeck and Bottisham. It is a simple, open and featureless landscape under arable use, lacking much enclosure or structural vegetation.		
Physical/Landscape attributes		Visual and perceptual attributes	
Designations / aspects of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The entirety of area FA-E is in the Cambridge Green Belt with the exception of a small triangle of land behind Nos 125-139 High Street. - No other statutory landscape or ecological designations are present or adjoin the land parcel . - Habitat value is low owing to lack of vegetative features and intensive arable land use. - Contains one listed property on the village edge - Hillside House (with listed Hillside cottage close by). - There are no non-designated heritage or cultural assets; no Conservation Area. - Right of way through this area heads east from Park End through the farmyard opposite Burgh Hall - it is the only one that links to the main village cluster. 	Visual prominence and vulnerability of any key views	This area is not visually prominent. Views into much of this area are hard to achieve owing to the more or less continuous nature of the built form and roadside vegetation along Park End which block views. Exceptions are the elevated land at Windmill Hill which is seen over the top of the village from points on the B1102, and the area at the very south of Park End, beyond the village edge, where the lack of roadside hedge allows views into the area.
Landform	The parcel forms the lower edge of a very large scale valleyside. Landform is prominent across the open slopes and is a strong defining contributor to landscape character.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	Change would easily be perceived on the elevated land but much of the parcel is much less prominent. The most direct views are experienced from the footpath east of the farmyard, but there would be much less impact on passing motorists or from dwellings themselves.
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	Very large scale landscape. Lack of pattern - openness from absence of enclosures and boundaries. No built form in this area. Structural planting is sometimes present along lanes - the skyline is often bare. The landscape is in poor to moderate condition - 'gappy' nature of distant hedgerows evident along skyline.	Tranquillity / activity	Some greater degree of tranquillity than adjoining area D because area is isolated from village edge and does not adjoin the B1102.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	Interface with settlement is provided by Character Area SB5 which is mapped to include the interfaces with the village edge.	Aesthetic perception	Sense of character dominated by the 'prairie' style farming - aesthetic value is limited by lack of natural features, and the sense of very large scale of the landscape. Little sense of time-depth even though this landscape has long been farmed in an open way. Pylons are distant detracting features. Limited intrusion from modern development. Trees in adjoining land parcels contribute positively to the scenic qualities of local views.

Assessment results: Fringe Area-E

This area is **of modest sensitivity in landscape terms** and is **moderately sensitive in visual terms**.

Approximate scale of sensitivity					
Landscape Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low
Visual Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low

Summary of value and sensitivities

The majority of this area is in the Green Belt so is highly valued in policy terms but otherwise it has no other designations for value, and limited interface with heritage settings. It features relatively little habitat or vegetative structures. Therefore, on balance, it is judged as of modest landscape sensitivity.

Its value lies in its role as undeveloped rural backdrop to the village (the elevated land around Windmill Hill) and as gateway and rural gap to the south of the village at Park End. It offers long views on the way into the village (east side) which are a counterpoint to the dense tree block of Bottisham Park to the west.

In the flatter parts, long views are possible but there is a lack of focal points, pattern, or enclosure to add interest to the views. Views to detracting elements like pylons are not screened. The vegetative structures that are seen are not always in good condition and have little impact in this large-scale landscape.

These factors together combine to give a moderate degree of visual sensitivity. The unenclosed, unvegetated slopes are not always prominent, but change here would be perceived from the footpath (valued as it is the only footpath available from the main village cluster).

Notwithstanding the Green Belt designation, this parcel may have some scope for limited development, below the 15m contour, and where it adjoins the village edge especially if in a visually contained location.

Skylines should be protected from development.

Mitigation, Management or Enhancement objectives:

- There is scope for landscape improvement through reinstating and reinforcing its structure - field boundary hedges, with trees, roadside tree planting and strip woodlands/shelter belts. Such actions would provide habitat, visual relief, texture and interest. Historic map analysis would help identify any opportunities to restore or reinforce historical field boundaries, whilst still retaining the historic geometrical patterns.
- Look for opportunities to provide new access/rights of way that connect to or along new or existing vegetative features.
- For further detail refer to '*Principles for landscape improvement and management in The Chalklands*' in the Cambridge County Landscape Character Assessment.

Assessment results: Fringe Area-F

Fringe area	FA - F	Character Area	SB3
Location and function. Physical character & Land use	The parcel lies both east and west of Park End road to the south of the main settlement cluster. It provides a lightly settled rural gap between Swaffham Bulbeck and Bottisham. It forms a small-scale landscape containing a historic farmstead and settlement, and comprises the fringes of the woodland/parkland at Bottisham Park. It is flat and almost has a valley bottom feel, provided by the parkland woods and belts of trees along the tributary Mill stream. It is a more complex and finer-grained landscape than those upslope and on the fen. The land is under both arable and pastoral use. It has a pleasant, small scale historic feel and has scenic value.		
Physical/Landscape attributes		Visual and perceptual attributes	
Designations / aspects of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The entirety of FA-F is in the Cambridge Green Belt. - The parcel includes the edges of Rookery Wood which is part of the SM at Bottisham Park. - Habitat value is good owing to the relatively high proportion of woodland and the water course. - Interfaces with curtilages of Grade II* listed Burgh Hall and Grade I church and other listed buildings. - The Conservation Area covers part of the Area around Burgh Hall - Right of way heads east from Park End through Burgh Hall Farm yard on the fringe area boundary. 	Visual prominence and vulnerability of any key views	The landscape is often screened from sight by built form, tree belts and hedges. It has an enclosed feel and the mature blocks of trees have strong visual presence. Views to the south to the blocks of trees at Bottisham Park are distinctive and provide a strong sense of containment.
Landform	The parcel is fairly flat and lies between 5m and 10m AOD. Here landform is less of a defining contributor to landscape character than the parcels upslope.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	There are fewer people likely to experience visual change - receptors include traffic from Bottisham and the residents along Park End but this area has little visual prominence in the wider landscape owing to the high proportion of tree cover and its low lying position.
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	Frequent enclosure with a more organic feel than in other parts of the parish. Intact ancient enclosure patterns endure and provide texture and visual interest and a sense of historic continuity. The landscape is in good condition here.	Tranquillity / activity	There is a reasonable sense of tranquillity associated with the rural character of the area and the quieter nature of the road through Park End compared with other roads through the village.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	Interface with settlement is a very indented, porous and well vegetated. There are many historic buildings along Park End, including the church, which provide a historic character despite the modern additions that also have filled out gaps in the older settlement. The landscape plays a role in the rural gap and gateway between Swaffham Bulbeck and Bottisham.	Aesthetic perception	Sense of rural village edge character is strong and interface with historic village edge provides sense of time-depth. Impressive listed buildings add to the richness of views along the streetscape at Park End. The high degree of tree cover and small scale of the landscape offers relief after the experience of the vast open arable lands to the east. No detracting features and limited intrusion from modern development.

Assessment results: Fringe Area-F

This area is **very highly sensitive in landscape terms** and of **modest sensitivity in visual terms**.

Approximate scale of sensitivity					
Landscape Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low
Visual Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low

Summary of value and sensitivities

This area is entirely in the Green Belt so is highly valued in policy terms. It also is sensitive in that it forms the setting to several listed buildings including Grade II* and Grade I buildings and their curtilages; Burgh Hall is particularly impressive. It is partly within the Conservation Area and adjoins the Scheduled Monument at Rookery Wood. It is well vegetated, connects into significant woodland, and contains the Mill stream. It is therefore important from a habitat point of view.

All these factors combine to indicate a highly sensitive landscape.

Visually, the parcel is well contained, and is not easily seen from the wider landscape. There are no rights of way through it. It is not part of any key views although it plays a role in the sense of arrival from Bottisham parish. Its sensitivity lies in its visual connection with historic settings.

On balance, these factors together combine to give a modest degree of visual sensitivity.

Notwithstanding the Green Belt designation, this parcel may have some scope for single or very small developments where they adjoin the village edge especially if in a visually contained location. Design would have to strive to respond sensitively and positively to the setting of Heritage assets and be of a high standard to be acceptable and reflect the vernacular.

Mitigation, Management or Enhancement objectives:

- Continue to maintain and manage the trees and hedges to retain the character.
- Look for opportunities to provide new access/rights of way which are notably lacking in this area.
- For further detail refer to '*Principles for landscape improvement and management in The Chalklands*' in the Cambridge County Landscape Character Assessment.
- Improve cycle path from Bottisham to Swaffham Bulbeck.

Assessment results: Fringe Area-G

Fringe area	FA -G	Character Area	SB4
Location and function. Physical character & Land use	The parcel lies to the west of the main village cluster and includes land both north and south of Station Road. It forms a transitional, moderate-scale landscape containing one historic farmstead. It is flat, geometric farmland divided by straight drainage ditches, and sometimes enclosed by hedges and edged by small woodlands - the southern part of the area is particularly contained. Further west, the landscape is very open and has a fenland feel. The public access into the small woodland at Gutter Bridge is highly valued.		
Physical/Landscape attributes		Visual and perceptual attributes	
Designations / aspects of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land south of Station Road, is in the Cambridge Green Belt. - The parcel adjoins a Scheduled Monument at the Denny Plantation. - Habitat value is moderate owing to presence of small woodlands. Key wildlife corridor from Bottisham Hall, Gutter Bridge Wood, the stream (evidence of otters), and groups of woodland that connect through to Wicken Fen (which has a 100 year vision extending into Swaffham Bulbeck parish). - Contains grade II listed buildings at farmstead at Downing Park. - Right of way through Gutter Bridge wood. 	Visual prominence and vulnerability of any key views	Visual prominence varies - some very open and prominent village edge parcels north of Station Road, either side of White Droveaway, but the land to the south is more enclosed and contained. The mature woodland blocks have strong visual presence.
Landform	The parcel is fairly flat and lies on and close to the 5m contour. The flat land is a notable contributor to landscape character and sense of place - a fenland character begins to be felt. The area is partly flood plain/former water meadow.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	Receptors to change in this area would mainly comprise the busy traffic flow along Station Road. Little impact on residential properties other than at Downing Park.
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	Geometric, regular shaped fields, divided by linear network of drainage ditches. These were historically similarly open but farmed in narrow strips at least into the early 20th century. Enclosure is occasionally provided by hedges and small woodlands. Landscape features are in reasonably good condition.	Tranquillity / activity	Tranquillity is limited owing to the high traffic flow that is experienced along Station Road throughout the day.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	Interfaces with settlement are straight and abrupt with the 20th/21st century estate development at Downing Court and Vicarage Close, and with the rear gardens of properties on Mill Lane and Commercial End. The landscape plays a role in the rural gap and gateway between Swaffham Bulbeck and Long Meadow/Lode, with a sense of arrival associated with Gutter Bridge and the ensuing avenue of horse-chestnuts outside Downing Park set in a wide grass verge.	Aesthetic perception	Traffic leaving the village get the first sense of the distinctive character of the the fenlands that lie to the west and north of Swaffham Bulbeck. The area offers open views of the land, skies, and drains that characterise the fens.

Assessment results: Fringe Area - G

This area is **highly sensitive in landscape terms** and **moderately visually sensitive**.

Approximate scale of sensitivity					
Landscape Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low
Visual Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low

Summary of value and sensitivities

This area is partly in the Green Belt so is highly valued in policy terms.

Aspects of value are its distinctive flat fenland edge character and where it forms the setting to the two listed buildings at Downing Park (although these do not play a role in the 'streetscape'). The woodlands at Gutter Bridge and Denny Plantation (SM) are features of value both in terms of visual amenity and habitat value, as are the water courses.

These factors combine to indicate a landscape of high sensitivity.

The parcel's visual sensitivity is higher to the north of Station Road where lack of screening allows direct views, and the Denny plantation forms the village edge. It is less sensitive to the south where there is more containment and where the interface with the existing village edge is abrupt and direct. The land outside the Green Belt is, therefore, more visually sensitive than the land inside it.

On balance, these factors together combine to give a moderate degree of visual sensitivity.

Notwithstanding the Green Belt designation, this parcel may have some scope for development to the south of Station road where it would not be visually prominent and where containment is available or achievable through structural planting, suitable to local character. This could take the form of either exception sites for residential use or even commercial/employment land use as an extension of that already occurring at Downing Park. To the north and west, the landscape opens up markedly and incursions from new development would be more damaging to the

characteristic openness and the prevailing fenland character.

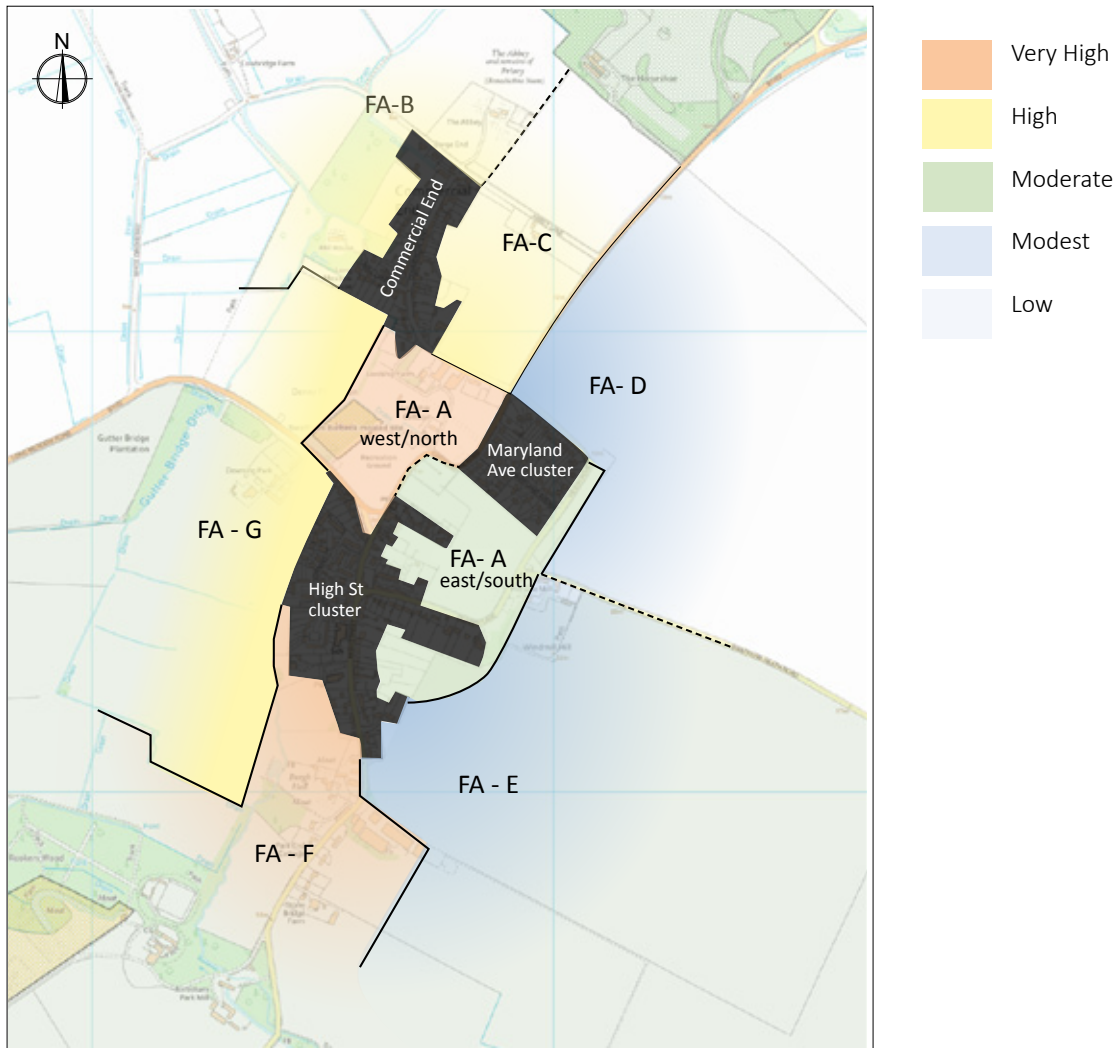
Mitigation, Management or Enhancement objectives:

- In landscape capacity terms, there may be scope for some development south of Station Road where there is the possibility for integration and absorption along the partly vegetated village edge. This would have to be accompanied by strong new native enclosure planting - this area already has quite a wooded character that could be reflected. However, there are heritage constraints that would have to be carefully addressed.
- Continue to maintain and reinforce the woodland, trees and hedges to retain the wooded character to the village edge.
- Look for opportunities to provide further access/rights of ways. Seek opportunity to provide safe access to the Gutter Bridge Wood footpath, possibly through re-orientating the existing footpath to follow the stream connecting to a possible new permissive route through to the High Street and church.
- For further detail refer to '*Principles for landscape improvement and management in The Chalklands*' in the Cambridge County Landscape Character Assessment.

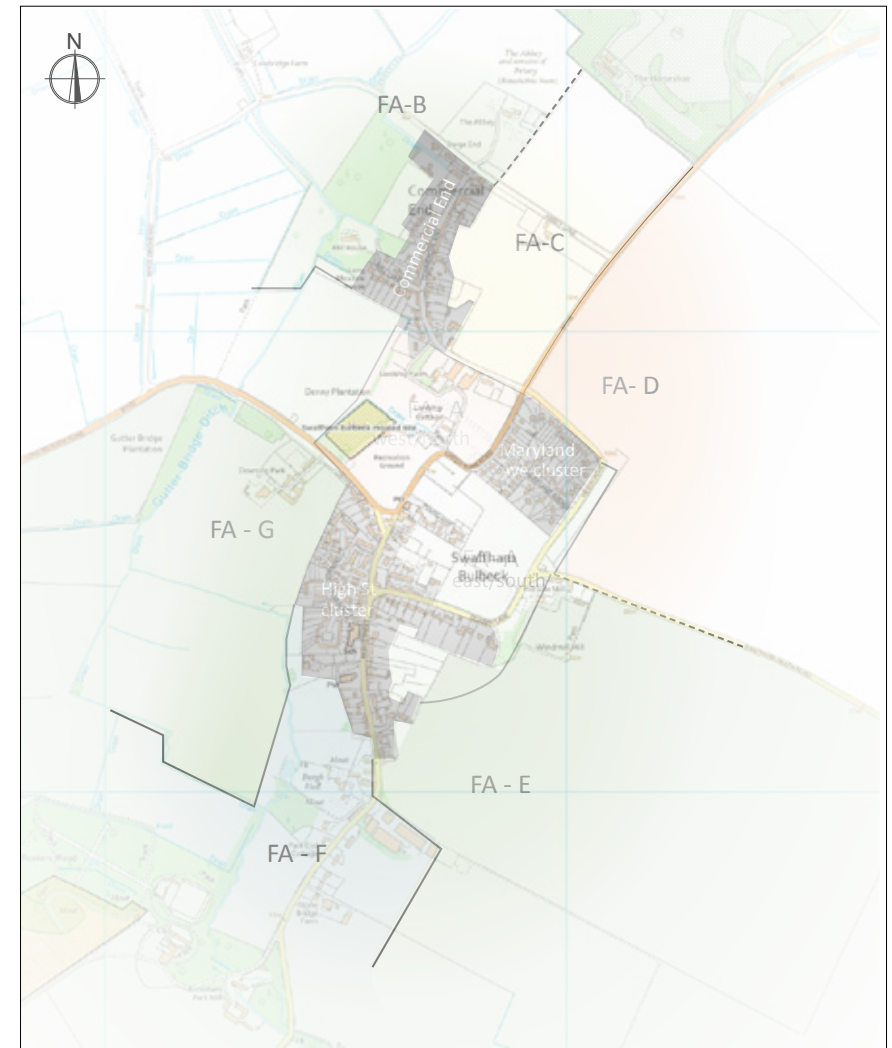
Assessment results

The two maps below show in graphic terms the relative landscape and visual sensitivity of each fringe parcel. These 'heat' type maps are useful for comparative purposes, but it is the detail of the individual sensitivities, issues or constraints that are most important when considering changes on a particular piece of land.

Map 2: Landscape sensitivity - mapped result



Map 3: Visual sensitivity - mapped result

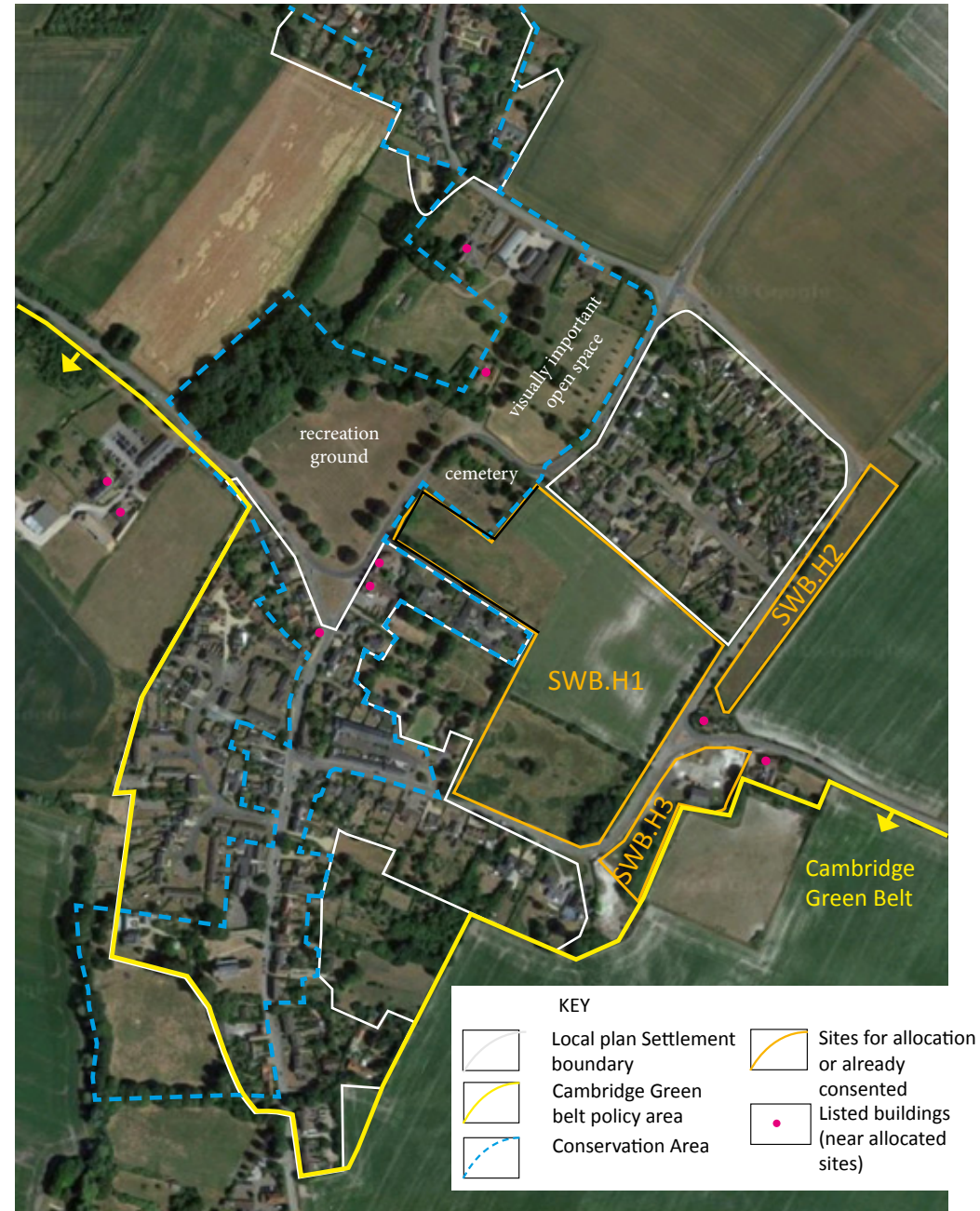


Appendix

Appendix 1:

Landscape strategy for site SWB.H1

1. The east/south of Fringe Area A is subject to a number of development pressures from planning applications and allocation proposals. At the time of writing development is consented on SWB.H3 (outline permission for 19 units), and two sites were proposed for allocation in the now withdrawn Local Plan - SWB.H1 and SWB.H3 (as mapped Nov 2017). This section looks at the site known as SWB.H1.
2. The strengths of the site are its central location within the village and proximity to its services. Development here could bring a number of opportunities for better access and linkages, recreation and potentially provide land for village amenities.
3. This land parcel is 4.5ha in size and formed of three fields that edge the northeast boundary of the main village cluster, and which forms open spaces between it and the the cemetery and the housing estate on Maryland Avenue. It faces the Denny to the west and Hillside Mill corner to the east. Land use is a mix of pasture and arable farmland.
4. The paddock to the south is enclosed on three sides but open to the south along Quarry Lane. It is enclosed by a mature hedge and features a block of mature trees in its southeast corner. The small unenclosed field next to the cemetery is also grassland. The remainder of the parcel is under arable land use. It features an area of surprisingly rolling topography in the easternmost corner of the parcel.
5. The parcel provides attractive setting to the village edges, and contributes to the openness between the clusters. It has a pleasant character, some interesting topography, and its small field sizes with vegetated edges are a relief after the vastness of the landscapes upslope.
6. The sensitivity assessment concludes that the area has some capacity for development without significant harm to the character of the village or any of its sensitive features provided it is of appropriate scale and form and well integrated into the landscape. This study would support the Neighbourhood Plan Group’s wish to support development on these three sites as the means by which sufficient house numbers can be put forward for future village growth outside the Green Belt. SWB.H1 is planned to be brought forward through a Community Land Trust mechanism in partnership with the parish.
7. It is vital the site planning is undertaken in a well considered landscape-led manner, sensitive to the site’s constraints. But development here could be positioned correctly in the landscape, would reduce pressure on other more visually sensitive village edges, cause minimal harm to heritage assets, and would offer a number of opportunities for better links and access. Its size offers scope for significant open spaces to be integrated with developed areas.

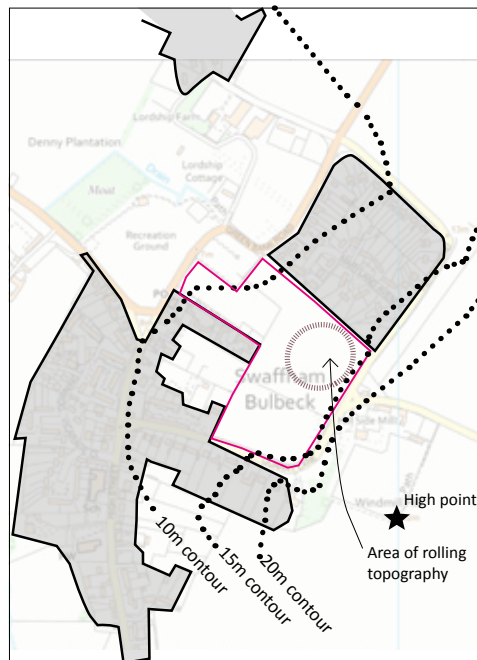


Appendix 1 continued:-

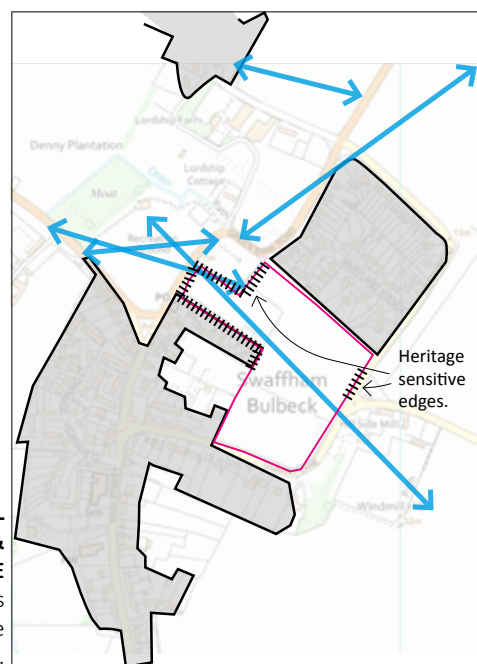
Analysis for SWB.H1

1. These diagrams provide some analysis of the site's function, position in the landscape, relationship with adjoining land, visual and heritage constraints and its role in views. It also identifies opportunities for links and connectivity between both new development areas and existing parcels.
2. Its specific sensitivities include:
 - Landform, rising to the east, and a rolling section in the northeast
 - Function as open gap between settlement clusters
 - Existing mature vegetation around the paddock in the south
 - Sensitive edges where it adjoins the Conservation Area
 - Role within views between different village edges and openness allowing appreciation of valley-side rising to the east.

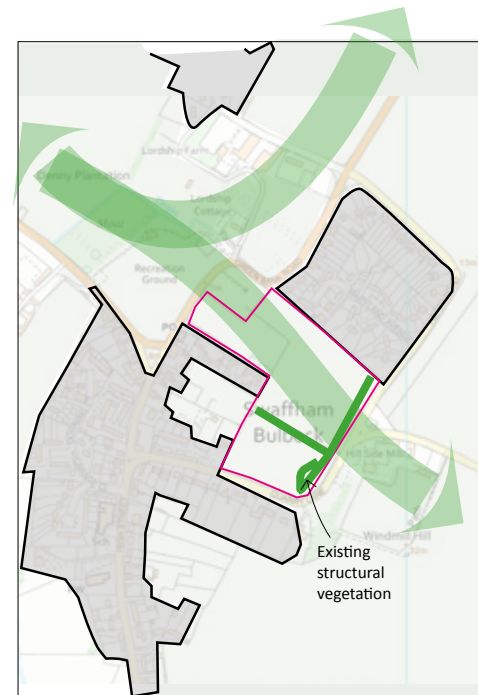
TOPOGRAPHY
Relationship to settlement position - most of the village below the 15m contour



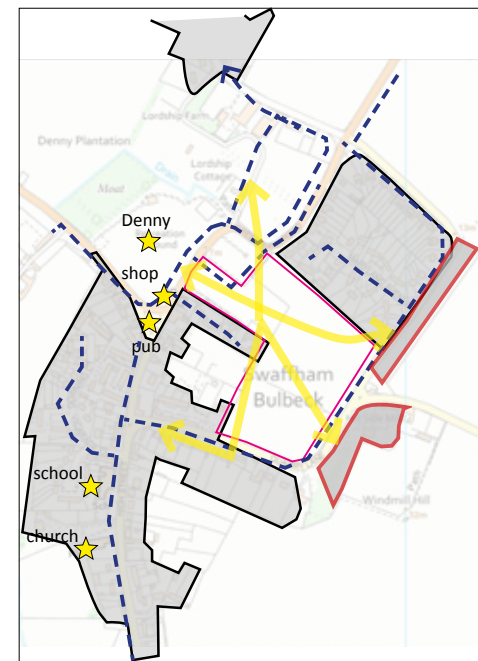
VISUAL CONNECTIVITY & HERITAGE
Notable views across open space to the village edges.



OPEN SPACE
Open space flows through and currently separates the three settlement clusters



LINKS AND ACCESS
Yellow lines and arrows show potential 'desire lines' between disparate parts of the village (incl. planned development) and its services.



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Appendix 1 continued:-













Concept for SWB.H1

Design principles

The following concept for site development is put forward which puts landscape at the heart of the village expansion plan:

- Long views through the land parcel retained - between the Denny to the west and valley sides to the east.
- A green link through the heart of the village will help retain some of the openness and separation function. All three sites will overlook and link across it. Face properties outwards into the new green spaces for active frontages and natural surveillance.
- Provision of safe pedestrian links between the different parts of the village and its facilities. Encourage walking/cycling to school/post office and leaving car at home.
- Within the parcel, locate housing blocks in the less visually prominent areas, and where it fits alongside the existing settlement pattern.
- Retain existing structural vegetation as far as possible and integrate into layout.
- Reflect existing densities of adjoining townscape in each block. Mix affordable housing in with market housing.
- Avoid developing the area in the NE corner where there is steep rolling topography - this area could be explored for dealing with runoff in a naturalistic way for habitat creation.
- Next steps - develop a masterplan and a design code to ensure high quality design approach, maintenance of the rural village feel and ensure use of vernacular materials.

KEY

	Existing village		Other development coming forward
	Proposed development		Potential vehicular access points
	Existing public greenspace		Proposed public greenspace
	Existing pedestrian links		New pedestrian links
	Community facility option?		Area with steep contours. Explore sustainable drainage opportunities/habitat creation.
	Existing vegetation to be retained		Existing and proposed Semi-formal avenues - echo character of The Denny

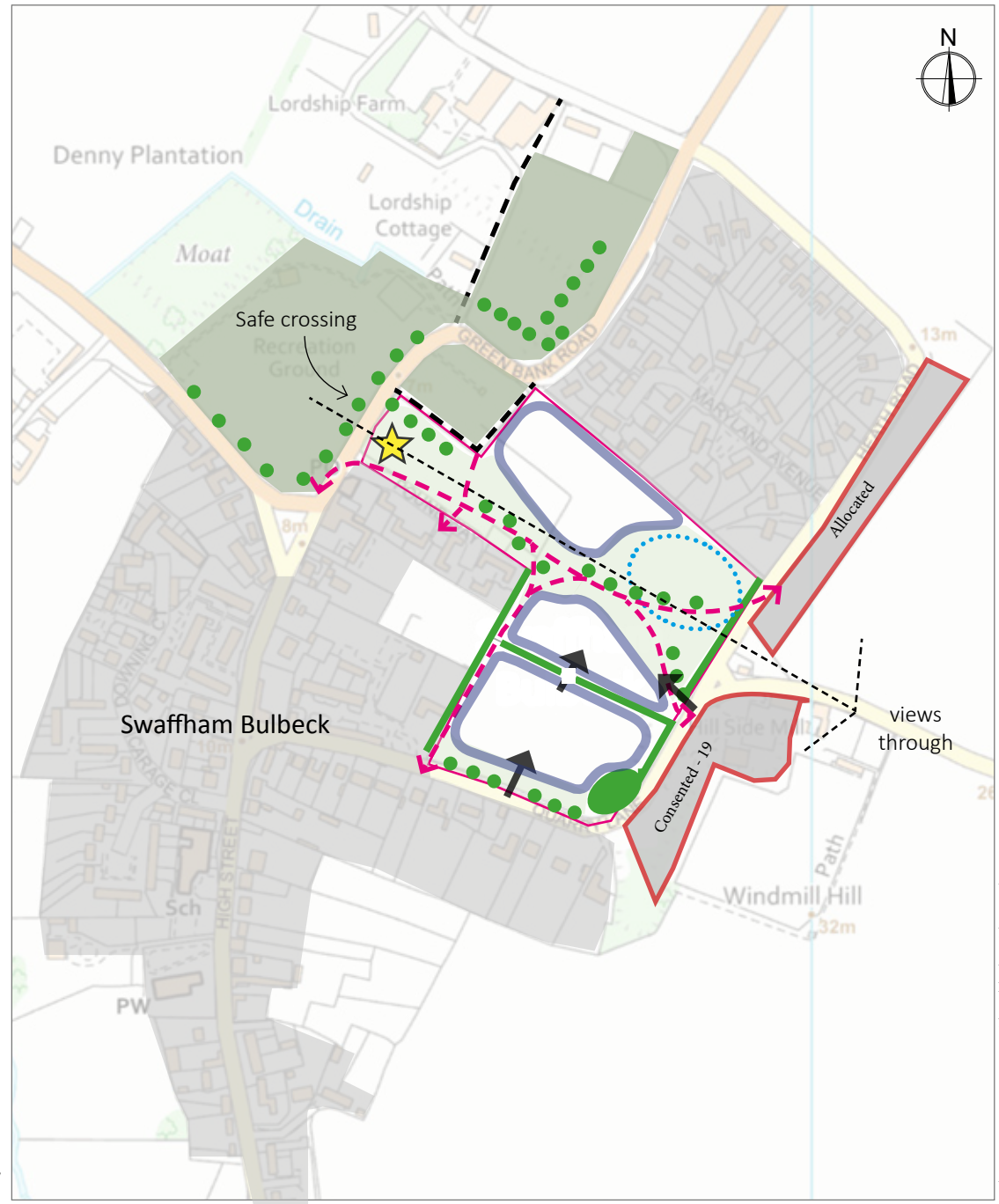


Figure 3 The process of Landscape sensitivity assessment

Appendix 2:

Process diagram reproduced from page 12 of 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment'

Natural England, Christine Tudor (2019)

