Land at Grange Farm, Cambridge

Landscape and Visual Assessment

for

St John's College Cambridge

July 2012
Quality control

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for

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The Landscape Partnership
Registered office
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1 Introduction

1.1. The Landscape Partnership (TLP) was commissioned in June 2012 to undertake a landscape focused assessment of land at Grange Farm, Cambridge on behalf of St Johns College, Cambridge. This study has been produced further to representations by Savills (on behalf of St Johns College) to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) produced by Cambridge City Council (CCC). The purpose of the SHLAA was to assess the amount of land that may be available for new housing in Cambridge over the next 20 years.

1.2. The City Council is now embarking on its Local Plan review. The current position of the City Council appears to indicate that the site is retained as green belt. This report will consider a number of aspects to test this position and in particular will consider the following:

- A description of the site
- The landscape context of the site and role of the site in a number of strategic views
- Review of relevant landscape and planning studies produced by CCC and South Cambs District Council (SCDC), including the SHLAA entry for the site
- Assessment of the landscape capacity of the site and its role in the Green Belt
- Identification of the opportunities and constraints for the site in relation to potential development

1.3. We carried out a site visit in July 2012 to consider the features on the site and views to and from the land. During the time of the field visit the vegetation was in full leaf. It is therefore possible that some more open views would be available during the winter period.

1.4. The report is illustrated by a number of supporting Tables, Drawings and Photographs included in the Appendices. The photographs provided in Appendix 1 were all taken with an Olympus E420 digital SLR camera with a Zuiko Digital 25mm lens which is directly equivalent to 50mm lens on a manual SLR camera that uses 35mm film. In some cases the photographs have been stitched together to form panoramas, while others use single frame shots.
2 Site Description

2.1 The site is approximately 44 hectares in size. The site consists of three broadly rectilinear fields that run in an east-west orientation. The fields are currently generally under arable cropping including cereals and beans, with a playing field in the eastern part of the site.

2.2 The landform comprises low lying and gently sloping ground. A finger of slightly higher ground runs through the site from the west in an eastwards direction as noted by the presence of the 15m contour (see Figure GF3). The land slopes slightly down to the south west field and also towards the northern boundary to field drainage ditches. The levels on the site overall vary from approximately 12-17m above ordnance Datum (AOD).

2.3 The largest of the three fields lies to the east and includes a smaller extension of land further to the south east. The northern boundary of this field is marked by a post and rail fence and then the cycleway that runs east west from the existing West Cambridge development into the city. This route also forms part of the long distance Harcamlow Way and Wimpole Way. Beyond the cycleway there are areas of hard and soft landscape and then a number of large modern university buildings providing educational, research and accommodation facilities. These are very prominent 4-5 storey structures on the edge of the Green Belt. The eastern boundary is marked by the University Sports Ground which includes an athletics track and an all weather hockey pitch. The majority of the sports facilities are concealed from view by boundary hedges and other native tree and shrub planting areas around the grounds. The most prominent built features which are seen above the vegetation are the floodlighting columns around the hockey pitch and the sports pavilion. The southern boundary is marked by a mature and largely continuous native hedge at c. 3-4m height. Where the field extends to the south east the site includes a small playing field which is partially enclosed by planting. The western boundary comprises a mature native hedgerow at c. 3-4m to the southern section but with a few gaps and a more open section to the south. The northern section, which also bounds the West Cambridge development, borders a small area of woodland of mixed native species including some evergreen pine. The Coton footpath/cycleway passes between the woodland and a hedgerow along the site boundary for a short north-south section of the route. Internally a northern drainage ditch includes three small trees which are the only trees within the main body of the site.

2.4 The north western field slopes down from the Coton cycleway/footpath, which is separated from the site by a post and rail fence. The surfaced route extends west to Coton village beyond the M11 overbridge. The northern boundary of the footpath is marked by a native hedgerow and beyond this there are areas of structure planting associated with the West Cambridge development which is currently still under construction. The new development includes areas of open space and water features but also buildings relatively close to the Green Belt. These buildings will exert an increasing visual influence on the Green Belt. The remaining boundaries to the south and west are...
marked by mature native hedges. The south west of the field extends into a narrower smaller section of field.

2.5 The south west field is fully contained by tall mature native hedges with a few access points for agricultural machinery providing the only break in the cover. A length of public footpath is located within the south east and eastern boundary, and is located along the outside of the southern and western boundaries. There is a further hedgerow within the centre of the site which follows a ditch line.

**Visual Character**

2.6 The visual character of the site is predominantly open, albeit subdivided by a number of mature hedges which also define the boundaries. The existing public views are afforded from the rights of way that run around parts of the perimeter. The most extensive and numerous views will be from the northern cycleway/footpath from where the two northern fields are most visible (see Figure GF3 and Photographs GF1, 4, 6, 7 and 8). There are also some views to the landmark buildings in the city, set within the mature vegetated edge of the western edge of Cambridge. The most notable of these is the University Library, which is the largest and closet landmark building (see Figure GF3 and Photographs GF3, 4, 6 and 8). It is also possible to identify the spire of the Church of our Lady and the English Martyrs between the trees. Other prominent features in this view to the east include the floodlights around the University Sports Ground Hockey Ground and the associated pavilion. The alignment of the cycleway in an east/west route provides a direct view travelling east along the cycleway. Views to the west include boundary hedges and the rising ground at Red Meadow Hill north of Barton (see photograph GF7). The field to the south west cannot be seen from the cycleway to the north due to the presence of the hedges.

2.7 A public footpath passes west of the site boundary close to the M11 which is a dominant and very noisy feature. While the boundary hedges screen most views to the east and the site there are a few framed views into the field from the public footpath (see photographs GF9 and 10). From these locations there are views over the field towards the city, which include some of the historic landmarks including University Library, the spire of the Church of our Lady and the English Martyrs and the corner pinnacle spires of Kings College Chapel (at c. 2.5km distance). However, there are also views (see photograph GF10) to the much closer and prominent buildings associated with the West Cambridge development seen rising over the hedgerows to the north. From the public footpath to the south there are views over the immediate field and also to the most south east corner of the adjacent field to the north where there is a gap in the hedging (see photograph GF11). From this direction the West Cambridge development can again be seen over the hedges including the modern tent like structure of the Schlumberger Buildings and other new emerging modern mid rise buildings.
2.8 From the track located to the south of the eastern field there is a single gap through which the expanse of the West Cambridge development can be seen across the open arable field. However, this is an isolated location and not representative of the character.

2.9 The site is fully within the existing Cambridge Green Belt boundary as shown on Figure GF2. The site is also fully within Cambridge City Council’s administrative boundary which follows the site to the south west section.
3 Landscape context

3.1 Cambridge is located at the junction of three contrasting landscape character areas. The low lying and level Fens lie to the north east, the undulating sweeping chalklands to the south and east and the claylands to the west. The historic core of the city of Cambridge developed close to the River Cam which runs from the chalklands northwards over the edge of the clay and then onto the Fens and eventually to the Wash. The site is located to the west of Cambridge on the claylands. It forms part of an area of largely arable land use extending from the western built edge of the City towards the M11 and then beyond.

Landform (See Figure 1)

3.2 The site is located at c. 12-17m AOD. To the east the land falls to below the 10m contour along the alignment of the River Cam and its associated tributaries, the closest to the site being the River Bin. Most of the land between the M11 and the built edge of the city is at c. 10-20m AOD and comprises the gentle lower slopes of the claylands as they run down to Cambridge. To the west, beyond the M11 corridor, the natural topography rises up above Barton, Coton and Madingley to elevations at and above 50m AOD. These low clay hills effectively mark the western edge of the wider setting of Cambridge. There are two ridges which run east west within this higher ground. To the north a ridge follows the A1303 Madingley Road at Madingley Hill. This higher ground is also reasonably well wooded. The second ridge lies to the south above Barton and is more open in character.

Existing vegetation (See Figure 1)

3.3 The western claylands outside the city are predominantly used for a range of arable cropping. The fields are enclosed by hedges of varying height but many are tall (c.3-4 m). Between the M11 and Cambridge there are a number of hedges that together visually combine to filter views from the west. There are also areas of meadow and grassland. These mainly follow the course of Bin Brook and the River Cam and are also associated with riparian vegetation and small tree groups.

3.4 With the exception of Madingley Wood there are few large woods in the area. However, there are a number of shelter belts and copses. A number of these follow main roads e.g. Madingley Road, Barton Road and a substantial linear belt near the Rifle Range to the south west. The local villages of Coton, Barton and Grantchester are also generally relatively enclosed by perimeter vegetation including copses, hedges and a number of mature gardens.

3.5 The western edge of Cambridge City from the Backs and River Cam to the western built edge is also notable for the large amount of mature vegetation. This is a function of the low density character of the residential areas, university college facilities and associated playing fields etc. There are many mature trees and areas of semi natural vegetation and large gardens in this part.
of the city that combine to help to create a soft green edge to the west of the city. This density of planting also provides a considerable measure of screening to the majority of the buildings in the historic core as seen from the west.

**Built development**

3.6 The character of the settlement varies in the locality. To the east the western side of Cambridge comprises a number of individual houses and buildings which are mainly located in a mature well vegetated setting. These include a number of architectural styles from the early 20th century onwards. Most are substantial detached houses set in large gardens. There are also a number of university accommodation blocks dating from the late 20th to early 21st century. Most of the buildings are architect designed and exhibit a high standard of design. There are a number of other individual buildings including sports pavilions.

3.7 The West Cambridge development to the north is in marked contrast with a campus style including a number of large buildings set within a formal landscaped masterplan layout. A number of these are 4-5 storeys in height and typically use steel and glass construction (see photograph GF3).

3.8 The closest villages are Coton and Barton and lie to the west. Both contain a mix of traditional vernacular dwellings in the village centre and areas of 20th century small estate developments. The church at Coton is relatively modest in scale and cannot be seen from the site.

**Views**

3.9 The views towards and from the site and study area are an important consideration. This is particularly the case in the context of the Green Belt designation (See Figure GF2). A number of landmark features are recorded on Figure GF1. Of these buildings a number can be seen from the site and include the Cambridge University Library tower, King’s College Chapel, St John’s Chapel tower and the spire of the Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs. The modern Schlumberger Building is the closest landmark building located to the north near Madingley Road.

3.10 The draft Cambridge Skyline Guidance (2011) identifies a number of Strategic Viewpoints within and to the city. These views each show cones of view and would indicate that the site may be visible in some of these views including views from: Madingley Rise(Madingley Road); Redmeadow Hill (Barton); Grantchester Road; Grantchester Meadows; and Castle Hill Mound( Shire Hall).

3.11 As part of our assessment we have visited these locations. From Castle Hill Mound the major landmarks in the city core can be easily identified (see photograph GF17). There are also views over the west of Cambridge towards the site. The mature tree cover between the Backs and the site screens any views to the site itself. However, the elevated western claylands beyond the M11 mark the distant horizon at c 4km. We do not anticipate that there would be any notable impact on this Strategic View from residential development (at 2-3 storeys) on the site.
3.12 From Madingley Rise (Madingley Road) the view is focused to the south from the A1303 and the views to the site would be screened by mature vegetation either along the road or around properties fronting it. There are some glimpsed views from the public footpath further to the south towards Coton. From this route there are views to some of the landmark buildings and the cranes at West Cambridge. However, the site itself is well screened by intervening woodland and shelter belts. Again we do not anticipate that there would be any impact on this Strategic View from residential development (at 2-3 storeys) on the site.

3.13 From Red Meadow Hill north of Barton there are elevated panoramic views over Cambridge (see photographs GF14 and 15). This viewpoint falls within the public access land that is managed by Cambridge Past Present and Future and accessed via a permissive footpath. The panorama is effectively subdivided into two sections by a small copse. The most open view to the left of the copse contains a number of the large modern buildings at West Cambridge. The most open view to the right of the copse contains a number of the historic landmarks including the Cambridge University Library tower, King’s College Chapel, St John’s Chapel tower and the spire of the Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs all visible above the rest of the city skyline. The site and hedged arable fields to the east of the M11 are visible and in part screened by the boundary hedges. We anticipate that there would be some visibility of development on the site from this location. However, the impacts and height would be less that the existing buildings at West Cambridge and could be effectively screened by appropriate planting in the medium term. Furthermore the landmark buildings in the historic core would still remain the most notable and prominent features on the skyline to the north east.

3.14 From Grantchester Road, west of the M11, there are views over the motorway towards Cambridge and a number of the landmark buildings. These are set above the well vegetated edge to the city (see photograph GF16). This is a lower viewpoint than GF14 and 15 and the view is markedly affected by the constant presence and movement of the motorway traffic. The view from the public road is also relatively less sensitive and more fleeting that the elevated view at Red Meadow Hill although the range of landmark features in the view are similar to those from Red Meadow Hill. However, due to the lower elevation the ability to see the site is more constrained by the intervening hedges. This is particularly the case for the more easterly field. We anticipate that development of 2-3 storey residential units on the eastern part of the site would be largely screened or hidden by the existing hedges. Further mitigation would serve to effectively screen development in the medium term. The western fields are closer to the viewpoint but the hedges and intervening M11 overbridge provide some screening and enclosure. Furthermore, in this direction the development would be seen more against the backdrop of the modern West Cambridge rather than the landmarks in the historic core.
3.15 From Grantchester Meadows to the north of Grantchester village the extent of intervening vegetation most notably along Barton Road would screen all potential views to the site. The views to the buildings in the historic core would be unaffected and lie to the east of the site.

**Designations**

3.16 The majority of the countryside beyond the city limits is all designated as Green Belt (see Figure 2). Part of the study area was formerly designated as an ‘Area of Best Landscape’ but this local designation has not been carried forward in the Cambridge City Council or South Cambs District Council Core Strategy or Local Plan.

**Rights of Way**

3.17 There are a number of existing Public Rights of Way through the study area. There are connections east - west from Cambridge to the land west of the M11. The route to Coton is the best surfaced route. Other routes are mainly unsurfaced footpaths and the route to the south near Laundry Farm requires walking down Barton Road to access it. Connectivity between these radiating routes particularly close to the existing built edge of Cambridge is more limited.

3.18 There are a number of footpaths and permissive routes west of the M11 associated with the Cambridge Past Present and Future Coton Reserve. This provides facilitates to access substantial areas of countryside including a reserve and access to Red Meadow Hill. Access further west is constrained by the Rifle Range Danger Area. There is no public access south of Barton Road.
4 Review of relevant Landscape Planning Documents

Cambridge City Council Inner Green Belt Boundary Study, 2002

4.1 This study was undertaken by an in-house Landscape Architect at Cambridge City Council in order to assist in identifying sites close to Cambridge to accommodate growth. The document indicates that its fundamental purpose is as an in-house working document to guide the Council’s view on potential development sites. The study assessed the importance of sites to the purposes of Green Belt and the potential impacts of developing sites.

4.2 The purposes of Green Belt have been long established at a national level through PPG2, PPS2 and now the NPPF. The purpose and aim of Green Belt is set out in the NPPF as follows:

‘79. 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.

80. Green Belt serves five purposes:

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

4.3 The Inner Green Belt Boundary Study adapted the key purposes of Green Belt as set out at a national level to relate to the context of Cambridge. The purposes identified in the Inner Green Belt Boundary Study are:

• to preserve the setting and special character of Cambridge (as described in the Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (LCA))
• provide separation between existing villages and any urban expansion of Cambridge
• ensure the protection of green corridors running from open countryside into the urban area
• a vision of the city and of the qualities to be safeguarded (as described in the Cambridge LCA and other City Council documents)

4.4 The following assumptions underpinned the methodology for the study:

• Areas essential to the character and setting of Cambridge (areas of ‘Defining Character’ in the Cambridge LCA) should be protected from development
• Areas identified as ‘Supporting Character’ in the Cambridge LCA are of varying value to the purposes of the Green Belt
• The potential effect of changing the Green Belt boundary and for built development to change the Character of Cambridge has more direct and profound implications close to the City
• Not all land released from Green Belt will be built on
• Features and urban edges that detract from the setting of Cambridge can lead to opportunities to enhance amenity through development
• The economic viability of agricultural holdings was not assessed as part of the study
• Proximity to public transport, employment and services was not assessed

4.5 The methodology used for the study can be found in Appendix 4. The Grange Farm site falls within an area identified as Sector 3. Full details of this Sector can also be found in Appendix 4. The site at Grange Farm is located within Areas 1 and 2 of Sector 3. Green Corridors are identified along the northern and southern boundaries of Areas 1 and 2, as well as into part of Area 2, although these vary from the Green Corridors identified in other documents discussed below.

4.6 Area 1 is described as playing a minor part in ‘Defining Character’, and being of medium importance to the setting of Cambridge. The study considers that it is of high/medium importance to the character of Cambridge and is of negligible importance to separation. Important views to the historic core of Cambridge and out to its rural hinterland are referenced, as are important hedgerows. Its overall importance to Green Belt is described as High, with the significance of development in the area on Green Belt as likely to be of high/medium significance. Whilst the area is described as being a logical extension with potential to improve the edge of Cambridge and also that low density development would be appropriate the study concludes that the area has amenity and environmental value for local residents.

4.7 Area 2 is described as part ‘Defining Character’, and being of very high/medium importance to the setting of Cambridge. The study considers that it is of low importance to the character of Cambridge and is of negligible importance to separation. Important views to the historic core of Cambridge and out to its rural hinterland are referenced, as are important hedgerows. Its overall importance to Green Belt is described as Very High, with development considered by the study to be inappropriate.

4.8 Whilst TLP would agree with a number of the overall findings for Sector 3, particularly the relative ranking and relative sensitivity to development of Areas 1 and 2 (i.e. development within the western fields would have a relatively greater impact on the Green Belt than development in the north eastern corner), some of the variations in the findings for the Areas between the various criteria are illogical. It is unclear, for example, how Area 1 can be in the lowest category of ‘medium’ importance to the setting of Cambridge (with which we would agree) while at the same
time the highest at ‘high/medium’ in regard to ‘importance to character’ while all the other Areas in sector 3 are of ‘low’ importance to the setting.

4.9 The methodology used for the study is also difficult to follow and does not seem to accord with usual approaches to this type of study. Whilst it uses a matrix of sensitivity against magnitude of effect to determine the significance of likely impacts on the Green Belt, as recommended in ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ (Second Edition, 2002, The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment), the approach of taking the highest single score out of a range of different factors to determine overall suitability or sensitivity is not usual and appears to overstate the outcomes. For example for Area 1 the overall importance to Green Belt is stated as ‘High’ whereas there are a number of entries under the various purposes of Green Belt criteria which identified the results as; negligible, medium or medium/high. Furthermore without knowing the form and scale any development would take it could also be potentially inaccurate to decide the likely magnitude of effect.

**Cambridge Green Belt Study - A Vision of the Future for Cambridge in its Green Belt Setting, 2002**

4.10 This study was prepared by Consultants LDA Design on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council. The study focuses on preserving the setting and special character of the historic city of Cambridge, describing the factors that contribute to the setting and special character, qualities to be preserved and setting out a vision for the city. The study is strategic, so does not consider sites on a field-by-field basis.

4.11 The study used a five stage methodology as follows (full details provided in Appendix 5):

- **Baseline Studies** - Establish an understanding of the existing conditions of Cambridge and its setting.
- **Setting and Special Character** - Drawing in particular on the 4th purpose of Green Belts as set out in PPG2 (and now also the NPPF), this analysis seeks to establish what factors contribute to the setting and special character of Cambridge.
- **Qualities to be Safeguarded** - This considers which qualities in the setting and special character of Cambridge need to be safeguarded.
- **Vision of Cambridge** - The vision of Cambridge and its setting is based on preserving the qualities to be safeguarded and on the identification of strategic initiatives which could enhance the city and its setting.
- **Green Belt** - The city edge and landscape east of Cambridge are analysed in more detail, and recommendations are made for the Green Belt boundary in this area.
4.12 In terms of Baseline Studies, the study identifies the following in relation to the Grange Farm site:

- City Wildlife Sites along the northern boundary hedgerow and other hedgerows in the west of the Grange Farm site
- Public footpaths along the northern, western and part of the southern boundaries of the site, as well as the Harcamlow Way and Wimpole Way along the northern boundary. The West Cambridge Conservation Area is located to the east of the site
- The site is generally between 10 and 20m AOD
- The site is located within Landscape Character Area 4C – Rhee and Bourn Valleys. The character is described as a repeating pattern of subtle ridges and dips that appear relatively flat. Views are said to be long and there is a strongly rural feel. The majority of land is in arable production. Key views towards Cambridge are seen from the M11, with landmarks of the historic core forming skyline elements. The low lying countryside, which includes the site, forms the foreground to views with the green edge of the city appearing to merge gradually into the countryside.
- Views from the site are described as level views, with countryside foreground and a generally soft urban edge. No key views or landmarks are identified specific to the site

4.13 TLP consider that it should be possible for any development of the Grange Farm to retain the County Wildlife Sites and their corridors, as well as the routes of public footpaths and the Harcamlow Way and Wimpole Way. Careful consideration of any layout could also help to retain key views to the city, albeit slightly altered and more framed.

4.14 In terms of Setting and Special Character, the study identifies the following in relation to the Grange Farm site:

- The eastern part of the site is identified as ‘Distinctive Cambridge’
- The remainder of the site is identified as ‘rural land within Green Belt’
- The northern part of the site is identified as forming part of the open countryside separating Cambridge from the ‘inner necklace village’ of Coton
- The eastern part of the site is identified as ‘distinctive landscape’ - specifically recognisable and distinctive to the city, with components such as quintessential views, landform, backdrops to the city, areas rich in biodiversity, etc.
- The remainder of the site is identified as ‘supportive landscape’ – supporting the historic core and distinctive landscapes, providing backdrop and ambience, bolstering the sense of place of the city and its approaches
4.15 Whilst TLP would agree that there are differences between the eastern and western areas of the Grange Farm site, the eastern part of the site appears to display less of the distinctive features identified than the eastern side in contradiction to the findings of the study. There is also a contradiction with the more detailed ‘Cambridge City Council Inner Green Belt Boundary Study’ (2002), which indicated that there were no likely coalescence issues between Cambridge and Coton.

4.16 In terms of Qualities to be Safeguarded, the study identifies the following in relation to the Grange Farm site:

- The site falls within peripheral area 5, where particular qualities to be safeguarded include the high quality landscape merging with the soft green edge of Cambridge, the close proximity of distinctive university buildings to the countryside and views from the long distance footpath (the Harcamlow Way and Wimpole Way)
- The open countryside separating Cambridge from the ‘inner necklace village’ of Coton
- The distinctive and supportive landscape of the whole site

4.17 TLP disagree that the whole of the Grange Farm site is a high quality landscape. Whilst there are university buildings at West Cambridge now in close proximity to the site they do not have the same historic appeal as most of the landmark buildings in the historic core. Most of the historic buildings are either not visible from the Coton footpath or are only part visible from the site. It would be possible to retain the existing views that are present within a development.

4.18 In terms of a Vision of Cambridge, the study identifies the following in relation to the Grange Farm site:

- The whole site is located within Green Belt
- The open countryside merging with the green edge of the city should be preserved
- Other special qualities identified above should also be safeguarded

**Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment, 2003**

4.19 This study was prepared for Cambridge City Council in 2003. The study considers the merits of all landscapes around Cambridge, within the City Council’s administrative boundary. It provides a detailed description and evaluation of the unique character of Cambridge through identifying Landscape Character Areas. The purposes of the study include:

- Identifying the capacity of landscapes to accommodate new development;
- Identifying landscapes which should be safeguarded;
• Identifying how and where development can take place without a detrimental impact on the character of the City; and
• Identifying areas where opportunities should be sought for environmental enhancement

4.20 The study identifies the element of the landscape that contribute to the Defining Character of Cambridge. Elements that are applicable to the Grange Farm site include:

• A green corridor/finger along the southern boundary of the site
• A 'positive edge' to the City to the north east and east of the site
• Views towards positive strategic landmarks such as the Schlumberger Building, Cambridge University Library tower and King’s College Chapel
• City Wildlife Sites along the northern boundary hedgerow and other hedgerows in the west of the Grange Farm site (also referred to as Old Hedges)

4.21 The Grange Farm site is located within the Rural Lowland Mosaic - Western Claylands Landscape Character Area. Full details are provided in Appendix 6. Parts of the Landscape Character Area fit the criteria for ‘Defining Character’. These include urban edge characteristics; brooks, ditches and wetlands; views; and hedgerows and field pattern. Key pressures for the Landscape Character Area include pressures from development; noise, visual intrusion and pollution from nearby motorway traffic; and agricultural utilisation of land for maximum commercial output.

4.22 The vision for the Landscape Character Area is:

“to ensure that landscape features of importance and biodiversity is conserved or enhanced. Access opportunities, along with opportunities for informal recreation should be promoted.”

4.23 The main opportunities for the Landscape Character Area are:

• Any extended edge to Cambridge should seek to replicate the current edge of City landscape;
• create further wetland habitats such as ponds ditches and field drains to augment existing water systems;
• create recreation opportunities using brooks and ditches as a green network of paths, increasing the existing network of paths;
• take opportunities to reduce noise and visual intrusion of motorway where appropriate;
• increase biodiversity through appropriate management regimes such as having headlands on arable crops, wildlife sensitive management of ditches and where appropriate replacing dead elm;
• work in partnership with Cambridge Preservation Society with regard to the proposed Coton Countryside Park; and
• in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type in visual and cultural terms and which, where appropriate, benefit wildlife.

4.24 TLP consider that the above opportunities as set out in the Vision could be met with a development on the Grange Farm site as outlined in the Opportunities and Constraints section and as illustrated at Figure GF4.

Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, 2011

4.25 This study was prepared by Consultants for Cambridgeshire Horizons in 2011. It updates and replaces a previous Green Infrastructure study produced in 2006 for a number of reasons, including: extending coverage to the whole of Cambridgeshire; strengthening the role of Green Infrastructure in the planning process; extending the period covered to 2031 and beyond, Supporting the development of Cambridgeshire’s Integrated Development Programme; integrating the wider benefits of Green Infrastructure, with benefits for climate change, health and well-being, heritage and the delivery of sustainable communities; building on national guidance; and providing a framework and methodology for the delivery of Green Infrastructure at district and community level.

4.26 The purpose of the Strategy is to identify a Strategic Network of Green Infrastructure for Cambridgeshire which:

• Supports the protection, management and enhancement of existing Green Infrastructure and the creation of new Green Infrastructure at a county scale.

• Provides context for the planning and delivery of local Green Infrastructure plans and projects to 2031, in line with emerging local planning policy.

• Is ‘connected’, linking urban and rural areas, joining up wildlife habitats and giving people access to nature.

• Is sensitive to and reinforces the distinctive landscape, historic and other characteristics of Cambridgeshire’s settlements and countryside.

• Identifies the benefits that can be achieved by coordinating Green Infrastructure planning and investment at community, local and ‘subregional’ scale.

• Identifies Green Infrastructure investment opportunities at a strategic level that can provide benefits to a broader set of issues including health, climate change mitigation and adaptation, economic development and enhancing biodiversity.
• Provides a robust evidence base and other means for Local Authorities to produce and support planning policies, manage development and provide an evidence base for Strategic Green Infrastructure investments as part of a future Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

• Provides support for bids for funding and other resources for Green Infrastructure projects.

4.27 The study considers Green Infrastructure under a series of overarching themes. The themes are:

• Biodiversity
• Climate change
• Green Infrastructure gateways
• Heritage
• Landscape
• Publicly Accessible Open Space
• Rights of Way

4.28 In relation to specific Green Infrastructure elements within Cambridgeshire, the Grange Farm site is located within the ‘Cambridge and surrounding areas’ Strategic Area. Full details are provided in Appendix 7. In the ‘Cambridge and surrounding areas’ Strategic Area, and more specifically in the Cambridge Target Area, the study identifies the following opportunities:

• Biodiversity: there are opportunities for enhanced management of and linkages between Cambridge’s commons and riverside meadows, including via green corridors to the wider countryside. Floodplain habitat restoration is also an excellent opportunity to improve biodiversity in the area. On the City fringes there are specific opportunities available, and several projects are being progressed including the Gog Magogs Countryside Project, Trumpington Meadows County Park and Byron’s Pool Local Nature Reserve. There are deficits in the existing levels of parkland habitat in the north of Cambridge and in Queen Edith’s ward.

• Climate Change: there are opportunities around remediation of the urban heat island effect and flood alleviation. The whole of the City forms an urban heat island. Surface water drainage needs to be a key consideration for the City, given its densely built-up nature. Existing open space should be protected and planting regimes for open spaces should consider climate change.

• Green Infrastructure Gateways: the growth areas provide opportunities for enhanced linkages between the City, the surrounding countryside, the navigable river and Green Infrastructure sites. Examples of linkages between the City and the surrounding countryside include Cambridge East, northwest Cambridge, Grantchester Meadows, Trumpington Meadows and...
Haslingfield, and examples of Green Infrastructure sites are Coton Countryside Reserve, Wandlebury/Gog Magogs and Milton Country Park.

- Heritage: by the protection and enhancement of the historic built and natural environment.
- Landscape: by ensuring that the growth of Cambridge protects and enhances the setting of the historic City and enhances the character of the City through maintaining and contributing to green corridors linking the wider countryside with the heart of Cambridge.
- Publicly Accessible Open Space: the provision of open space and linkages to the strategic Green Infrastructure network and Public Rights of Way forms one of the key elements of the growth agenda for Cambridge. Significant levels of high quality open space are required by planning policies. These open spaces must link well with the surrounding built-up area. The ANGST analysis indicates that there are particular areas of deficiency for 2ha plus in the north and south/south-east of the City, for 20ha plus in the northern and southern fringes, for 100ha plus on the eastern side of Cambridge and at the 500ha plus standard the majority of the City except the very northern edge near Milton.
- Rights of Way: by ensuring that all communities have access to sustainable modes of movement and enhanced links to the wider countryside as required by the plans for the major developments to provide for countryside recreation. A number of the growth sites are required to enhance or provide green corridors, reflecting the existing green corridors that run from the surrounding countryside to the heart of Cambridge. There are also opportunities to provide linkages between growth areas, the existing City, the river and nearby villages and the surrounding countryside, such as from Trumpington Meadows into the City along the River Cam, to Grantchester Meadows, and out via the new Country Park to nearby villages such as Haslingfield. The north of the City has a limited Rights of Way network, whilst the network in the south-east of the City is fragmented.

**Draft Cambridge Skyline Guidance, 2011**

4.29 Consultation on this draft guidance document ended in December 2011. The document was produced to provide clarity on saved Policy 3/13 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2006). It is intended to be for the benefit of developers, landowners, the community and the Council in exercising its decision-making powers on planning applications. The purposes of the draft guidance are listed as:

- To provide a working definition of a "tall building" in the context of Cambridge and scope of Policy 3/13;
- To outline the characteristics of the Cambridge skyline, its setting and landscape and townscape character and identify valued views and vistas;
• To set out the relevant background documents, policy and guidance that underpin Policy 3/13 and their application in the assessment of tall buildings in the City skyline; and

• To provide specific criteria which must be considered in the preparation and assessment of a proposal for a tall building.

4.30 The draft guidance identifies the character of existing approaches to Cambridge, landmark buildings and key strategic viewpoints. In relation to the Grange Farm site, the southern part of the site is identified as a ‘green finger approach’ to Cambridge. Landmark Buildings close to or potentially visible from the site include the Schlumberger Building, Cambridge University Library tower, King’s College Chapel, St John’s Chapel tower and the spire of the Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs. The draft guidance indicates that the site may be visible in views from Madingley Rise, Madingley Road; Redmeadow Hill, Barton; Grantchester Road; Grantchester Meadows; and Castle Hill Mound, Shire Hall.

**Appraisal of the Inner Green Belt, 2012**

4.31 The study provides an update to the Cambridge City Council Inner Green Belt Boundary Study (2002) and the Cambridge Green Belt Study – A Vision of the Future for Cambridge in its Green Belt Setting (2002), in the context of more recent land releases. These include releases at the following sites:

• NIAB
• University Northwest site
• Trumpington Meadows
• Glebe Farm
• Clay Farm
• Bell School
• Cambridge East (the airport site)

4.32 The study specifically reconsiders zones of land immediately adjacent to the City, in terms of the principles and function of Green Belt. The methodology for the study is a simplified version of that used for the Cambridge City Council Inner Green Belt Boundary Study, based on the principles of landscape and visual assessment. It assumes that areas considered essential to the setting of Cambridge (areas of ‘Defining Character’ in the Cambridge LCA) should be protected.

4.33 The Grange Farm site is located within Zone 9 of the study. Full details of this Zone can be found in Appendix 8. The description for Zone 9 relates to a much wider area than the Grange Farm site ranging from Madingley Road to the River Cam. This means that much of the description is not specifically applicable to Grange Farm. There is no further detailed analysis that would relate...
specifically to the Grange Farm site. Zone 9 is described as flat farmland with some elevation to the north and south. Views are stated to be open and of an abrupt urban edge with soft green foreground. Reference to distant views from around Haslingfield and towards Haslingfield church are not applicable to the Grange Farm site, although there are distant views towards the site from areas of the rolling clayland hills to the west. There are also some views towards the historic collegiate core of Cambridge from the site, although these are generally just of the tops of a few buildings the most notable being the University Library. The western edge of Cambridge is described in the study as:

"one of the most sensitive areas of landscape around the City because of a combination of topography, open views and the proximity of the historic core of Cambridge to the edge of the City. All of these factors result in a landscape which very important to the setting of the City and for the purposes of Green Belt."

4.34 However, Plan 1 accompanying the report indicates that parts of the two northern fields of the Grange Farm site are considered to be ‘Areas of Lower Importance’. This is a significant point and matches our own assessment of the relatively lower importance of the eastern part of the Grange Farm site in contributing to the setting of the city and its role in the Green Belt. The summary text at para 4.8 of the 2012 Appraisal of the Inner Green Belt is in TLP’s opinion too general in determining whether there are areas that could accommodate development. The plan is a better tool to identify more specific detailed findings. As with the 2002 findings a more restrictive approach has been taken in the 2012 study to the Green Belt than the Council’s own evidence would otherwise indicate.

**Cambridge Local Plan - Towards 2031: Issues & Options Report, 2012**

4.35 This document has been prepared by Cambridge City Council as the first stage of a review of the Cambridge Local Plan. The new Local Plan will plan for and manage development to 2031, with the Issues & Options Report attempting to identify all of the planning issues facing Cambridge in order to develop appropriate policies to address them.

4.36 The document identifies ten potential broad locations for growth at the edge of Cambridge and requests comments on the suitability of the locations and whether further land should be released from the Green Belt. The Grange Farm site falls within Broad Location 1, which is discussed under Option 10 of the Issues & Options Report. The full text relating to Broad Location 1 can be found in Appendix 9. Broad Location 1 covers an area to the west of Cambridge, north and south of Barton Road. It is therefore much larger than the Grange Farm site and there is no specific detail relating to the Grange Farm site provided.
4.37 The text relating to Broad Location 1 indicates that the area is:

“A series of large agricultural fields and recreation grounds, mostly surrounded by hedgerows and occasional hedgerow trees, giving an open appearance when viewed from the west.”

4.38 A number of designations/constraints are identified that relate to Broad Location 1. Of the ten identified, the following are relevant to the Grange Farm site. However, the presence of the constraints should not in themselves necessarily preclude appropriate development:

- Whole area is designated as Green Belt;
- Adjacent to Cambridge West Conservation Area;
- University sports fields to east are protected private open space;
- Several hedgerows within this location are designated as a City Wildlife Site;
- Part of the location would be affected by noise and air quality issues from the M11 and mitigation would be required;
- The location needs to be carefully considered in conjunction with ongoing development on the West Cambridge site, which was designed to create a new city edge;
- The uses alongside the edges of the area would raise potential overlooking issues; both within and out of the location;
- There are public rights of way to the north, to the west and through the centre.

4.39 Many of these constraints are identified in the SHLAA. As discussed in relation to the SHLAA, in the following Chapter 5 of this report, only buildings within Cambridge West, to the north of Site 916, overlook the Grange Farm site. The layout of any proposed development could be designed to relate to these tall buildings and address any potential overlooking issues. The layout of any proposed development would take into account the edge of the West Cambridge development. Many of these buildings are visually prominent from the surrounding area, with limited room for vegetation to soften the edge, and development within the Grange Farm site could help to soften these prominent edges. The routes of Rights of Way around the Grange Farm site can be taken into account and retained in green corridors as part of any proposed development layout.

4.40 The description in the section on Green Belt/Landscape/Townscape borrows heavily from the 2012 Appraisal of the Inner Green Belt. As discussed above, much of the text relating to Zone 9, in which the Grange Farm site is located, is not applicable. This includes reference to small fields, views to and from Haslingfield and abrupt urban edges.
5 **Review of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment**

5.1 Cambridge City Council published its latest Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in May 2012, in support of the issues and options stage of the local plan review. The SHLAA assesses the relative suitability of potential housing sites, based on their developability, deliverability, suitability, availability and achievability. The study is based on the methodology outlined in the Department of Communities and Local Government document ‘Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments – Practice Guidance’ (2007).

5.2 The Grange Farm site was assessed as Site 916 in the latest SHLAA (see Appendix 10 for full assessment). Site 916 is considered to be an ‘Edge of City strategic site’ in the SHLAA and is fully assessed in the document. For such sites, the principle of whether there should be more development on the edge of Cambridge and whether exceptional circumstances exist to justify the release of further land from the Green Belt to meet the housing and employment needs of the area is not considered, as this will be considered as part of the Issues and Options Report for the Local Plan Review.

5.3 The first stage of the SHLAA Assessment process considers the suitability of the site in terms of ‘Strategic Considerations’. With regards to landscape and visual matters, the most relevant ‘Strategic Considerations’ from a landscape perspective are whether the site is in Green Belt and whether development of the site would affect an Historic Park and Garden.

5.4 The first stage of the SHLAA scores the site as red for undevelopable in reference to its location in the Green Belt. The Assessment quotes extensively from the 2012 ‘Appraisal of the Inner Green Belt’ study, regardless of whether the extracts are relevant to the Grange Farm site, and states that both the 2002 and the 2012 Inner Green Belt studies found that “all areas within this zone were of medium to very high importance to the setting of the City and medium to very high importance to Green Belt purposes”. However, the plan accompanying the 2012 report indicates that large parts of the two northern fields of Site 916 are considered to be ‘Areas of Lower Importance’. Table 1 below indicates TLP’s comments to the description in the first stage assessment SHLAA (and as also taken from the 2012 Inner Green Belt Appraisal). However, the SHLAA indicates that “it is not the role of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Study to determine if land should be released from the Green Belt.”

5.5 As there are no Historic Park and Gardens in the vicinity, the site is given a score of green (g) meaning that it is developable in relation to this factor.
### Table 1 - Comments on SHLAA Site Assessment Criteria relating to Green Belt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement in SHLAA Assessment/ 2012 Appraisal of the Inner Green Belt</th>
<th>TLP Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The majority of this zone is on flat farmland with some slight elevation to the north and south of the area. The land is mostly arable and divided into relatively small fields with managed hedgerows and ditches. Grantchester Village is located in the southern part of this zone. Also in the southern part of this zone is the river Cam and it associated river valley landscape. The elevated parts of the zone create small plateaus that are sometimes screened by their landform and by vegetation.</td>
<td>Field sizes are generally medium to large in Site 916. Grantchester is not visible from Site 916 and Site 916 is not visible from Grantchester. The southern part of the zone is not relevant to Site 916.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views are usually open and of abrupt urban edges with a soft green foreground. There are distant views from the rolling clayland hills to the west of Cambridge, particularly around Haslingfield. The tower of Haslingfield church can be seen from the edge of the City and there are clear views of the historic collegiate core of Cambridge seen above the urban edge in the near distance.</td>
<td>The urban edge of Cambridge to the east of Site 916 is described as softened by vegetation and positive, not abrupt, in a number of other related studies. Haslingfield church is not visible from Site 916 and Site 916 is not visible from Haslingfield. Whilst there are views towards some of the buildings within the historic collegiate core of Cambridge from Site 916, these are views of the tops of buildings only, not the historic core itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The land between the River Cam and Trumpington Road rises up gently from the river and includes sports and recreational uses as well as arable land and tree cover. There is a mature tree belt within the site and along the River Cam which forms its western boundary. On the opposite (western) side of the river lie Grantchester meadows and village. There are some interrupted views over the river valley to the west.</td>
<td>This paragraph is not relevant to Site 916.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This part of the western edge provides separation between the City and Grantchester and is also part of the rural river corridor that reaches into and through the City. The river corridor is a defining Character to Cambridge.</td>
<td>This paragraph is not relevant to Site 916.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Green Belt western edge of Cambridge is one of the most sensitive areas of landscape around the City because of a combination of topography, open views and the proximity of the historic core of Cambridge to the edge of the City. All of these factors result in a landscape which very important to the setting of the City and for the purposes of Green Belt.</td>
<td>The plan accompanying the 2012 Appraisal report indicates that large parts of the two northern fields of Site 916 are considered to be ‘Areas of Lower Importance’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.6 The second stage of the SHLAA Assessment process considers the suitability of the site in terms of ‘Significant Local Considerations’. With regards to landscape and visual matters, the most relevant ‘Significant Local Considerations’ are the presence of Protected Open Space, the presence of sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance and elements of any relevant planning history. Table 2 below indicates TLP’s responses to relevant aspects of the second stage of the SHLAA Assessment process.

Table 2 - Comments on the second stage of the SHLAA Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement in SHLAA Assessment</th>
<th>TLP Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site designated Protected Open Space or meets criteria:</strong> No. However, the University Athletics Track to the east of the site is protected open space.</td>
<td>The Protected Open Space would not be encroached on by any proposed development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Nature Conservation importance:</strong> Site includes a number of hedgerows designated as City Wildlife Sites and supporting communities of declining farmland birds ... Area currently forms a good link between the network of City wildlife sites, gardens and the wider countryside.</td>
<td>The presence of important hedgerows on Site 916 is acknowledged. The links created by these could be incorporated in open space associated with any proposed development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Relevant Planning History:** Land in this location considered for Green Belt release by a series of Plan Inspectors since 2002 ... In all cases Green Belt release was rejected because of the importance of the land to Green Belt purposes. Cambridge Local Plan Inspectors Report 2006: Omission Site No.10 - Land South of West Cambridge Site (small site on northern edge of Site CC916) - The Inspector rejected this site for a new college and innovation centre on the basis it had been already been rejected by the Structure Plan Examination in Public panel, on Green Belt grounds. He found no reason to disagree with this despite the fact it adjoins the West Cambridge site. The Council's Inner Green Belt Boundary Study identified this site as being of high or medium importance to Green Belt in terms of its contribution to character and setting. He did not recommend its release for the following reasons:  
  • its contribution to the character and setting of the City;  
  • the site lies beyond the existing high visible and firm boundary to the built-up area to the north of the site (West Cambridge site);  
  • however carefully designed it would cause intrusion on views from the west towards the City centre and have a particular impact from the Coton footpath in narrowing available views from the west;  
  • would narrow views of the countryside to the west from the built up area reducing the green corridor that penetrates the built-up area | Many changes have occurred in the vicinity of Site 916 since 2002. These include substantial development on the West of Cambridge site, which significantly influence Site 916 and its Green Belt role. This is illustrated by the plan accompanying the 2012 Inner Green Belt Appraisal. Impacts of the new development at Cambridge West include open views of large 4-5 storey buildings, particularly from the south and west; removal of some vegetation along the boundary with Site 916; upgrading of the cycleway/ Harcamlow Way/ Wimpole Way to a more urban character; interruption of views towards the Schlumberger Building. Further assessment by TLP of the Green Belt role of Site 916 is provided in Chapter 6 of this report. |
5.7 The Level 2 review of Site 916 indicates that it warrants further assessment but that there would be Green Belt and ecological constraints on any proposed development.

5.8 The third stage of the SHLAA Assessment process considers the suitability of the site in terms of ‘Other Considerations’. With regards to landscape and visual matters, the most relevant ‘Other Considerations’ are any constraints topography would place on development, elements of access to the site meeting highway standards, elements relating to the site providing access to other properties/highways, potential overlooking of the site, developability of the site based on its shape, elements of the integration of the site with existing communities, and some of the ‘other constraints’ on the site. Table 3 below indicates TLP’s responses to relevant aspects of the third stage of the SHLAA Assessment process.

**Table 3 - Comments on the third stage of the SHLAA Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement in SHLAA Assessment</th>
<th>TLP Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Could topography constrain development?</strong> The northern part of the site is fairly flat. The southern edges are at the top of a gentle slope down to the south.</td>
<td>There is no obvious reason why topography would constrain the development of Site 916.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access meets highway standards:</strong> This is a main Cambridge radial route for cyclists so any development would need to ensure that cyclists are fully taken into account. It is not clear how this site would be accessed by vehicular traffic. Major works would be required on the Clerk Maxwell Road Bridge if it was to be converted to a vehicular access as long as it could be demonstrated that the junction could accommodate the additional traffic. Improvements to the existing cycle way that the runs along the edge of the site between Coton and Madingley Road would be required.</td>
<td>The cycle route would be retained as part of any proposed development layout for Site 916. Cyclists would be taken into account in the design of any junction with Clerk Maxwell Road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Does the site provide access to other properties/highway?</strong> The site is surrounded by a network of pathways, but there is no vehicular access through the site. The pathways will need to be taken into account in the urban design. As well as providing a constraint to development they offer a potential opportunity for sustainable development.</td>
<td>The routes of pathways around Site 916 can be taken into account and retained in green corridors as part of any proposed development layout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nearby buildings overlook the site:</strong> The uses alongside the edges of the site will raise potential overlooking issues; both within and out of the site.</td>
<td>Only buildings within Cambridge West, to the north of Site 916, overlook the site. The layout of any proposed development could be designed to relate to these tall buildings and address any potential overlooking issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Statement in SHLAA Assessment

| **Site part of larger site or prejudice strategic site development?** | This site does not in itself prejudice the development of another site, but it has access difficulties of its own. It could potentially be developed as a larger area in conjunction with Site 921 and other South Cambs sites to the south. |
| **Sites integration with existing communities:** | Development could feel quite isolated from existing communities, although any issues could be overcome with good urban design, good connectivity with West Cambridge, and appropriate community provision to aid integration. |
| **Any other constraints on site?** | West Cambridge Site: The site needs to be careful considered in conjunction with ongoing development on the West Cambridge site, Site 921 and other potential South Cambs District Council sites, which may raise access and capacity constraints. The West Cambridge site was designed to create a new city edge and will need to be considered as part of any development proposals in this area. |

#### Rights of Way
- The site is bordered on three sides by Rights of Way, which would need to be considered in any future development.

#### Townscape Comments
- The only obvious potential access to the site is via Clerk Maxwell Road from the north. The site is not an evenly shaped parcel and stretches very close to the eastern boundary of the M11. On its own e.g. without Site 921 or South Cambs site SC232, the whole of Site 916 would create an elongated, inefficient shape for a development site and push a considerable portion of development very close to the M11 (though it is relevant that it is partly in a cutting in this location). A second means of access to accommodate this number of units would be essential; though there is no obvious location for where this could be found, other than possibly from the westerly end of the West Cambridge site e.g. from High Cross.

## 5.9

The SHLAA conclusion indicates that the principle of further land release from the Green Belt will need to be addressed by other studies prior to conclusions on Site 916 being made. It identifies issues that would need to be addressed, including: access; overlooking; integration with existing communities; the relationship of the site with West Cambridge; public rights of way; and wider urban design and townscape considerations. TLP consider that all of these issues could be addressed as part of any proposed layout for future development of Site 916.
6 Assessment of Landscape Capacity and role in the Green Belt

6.1 Notwithstanding the preceding studies carried out by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council as reviewed in the sections above we have carried out our own independent assessment of the relative landscape sensitivity and capacity of the site. The methodology used in this assessment is based on the guidance in Topic Paper 6 - ‘Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity’. This paper forms part of the Countryside Agency and Scottish Heritage ‘Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland’. Topic Paper 6 also reflects the thinking in the publication ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ 2002. Elements of the purposes of Green Belt have also been built into the methodology, given the location within the Cambridge Green Belt.

6.2 The methodology developed for this study adopts the following premise that:

“existing landscape features+ visual sensitivity = Overall Landscape Sensitivity”

6.3 A number of criteria have been selected to identify both existing landscape features and visual sensitivities. These criteria reflect both the national guidance in Topic Paper 6 and the particular circumstances for the rural-urban fringe landscape around Cambridge.

6.4 The following criteria have been selected to reflect existing landscape features:

- Slope analysis
- Vegetation enclosure
- Complexity and scale of the landscape
- Historic Character
- Condition of the landscape

6.5 The following criteria have been selected to reflect visual sensitivity:

- Openness to public view
- Openness to private views
- Views towards landmark buildings/ features
- Relationship with existing urban built form/ edge of Cambridge
- Role in setting of Cambridge
- Prevention of merging /coalescence
- Scope to mitigate the development
6.6 The Overall Landscape Sensitivity provides an evaluation of the sensitivity of a land parcel in broad strategic terms. In order to assess the Overall Landscape Capacity of a land parcel, landscape value was added to the equation, as follows.

“Overall Landscape Sensitivity + Landscape Value = Overall Landscape Capacity”

6.7 In the absence of any specific stakeholder consultation, the landscape value of the land parcels was assessed by considering:

- Presence of Green Belt
- Green Infrastructure/Green Finger function
- Tranquillity/remoteness
- Scenic beauty

6.8 To effectively assess the landscape capacity of a site, an assumption is made as to the form that the potential development will take. For the purposes of this study it is assumed that development would include in the main 2-3 storey residential development. It is not anticipated that there would be any taller structures for the purpose of this assessment.

6.9 The overall site was first divided into coherent parcels of broadly similar character. For the site at Grange Farm this includes three Parcels: GF1, GF2 and GF3 (see Figure GF3). These were each then assessed against the criteria noted above, using a 5-point scale from A to E. The relative suitability for each criterion was guided definitions/descriptions that have been devised for this particular study to reflect local characteristics. These definitions are contained in Appendix 2.

6.10 The criteria were then ‘scored’, with 5 points being awarded to A’s (the most suitable for development) and 1 point to E’s (the least suitable for development). The scores were totalled for each Land Parcel to provide both a Landscape Sensitivity Profile and a Landscape Capacity Profile. Parcels with an overall higher score are considered to be relatively less sensitive to change and to also have a relatively higher capacity. The total score is then allocated an Overall Capacity value by using the following range.

6.11 The bandings between categories have been defined based on the theoretical minimum and maximum range of scores that could be achieved using the methodology. If a more comprehensive study was undertaken for a wider range of sites with a larger number of land parcels included, this could be refined by using the actual minimum and maximum scores achieved. The bandings are:

- 16 – 28 = Low Landscape Capacity
- 29 – 41 = Medium Low Landscape Capacity
- 42 – 54 = Medium Landscape Capacity
- 55 – 67 = Medium High Landscape Capacity
- 68 – 80 = High Landscape Capacity
6.12 Completed appraisal forms for each Land Parcel can be found in Appendix 3, with the areas of the Parcels GF1- GF3 illustrated on Figure 3. It should be emphasized that no absolute conclusion should be drawn from the numerical totals. The influence of individual criteria in a given Land Parcel and in the context of the wider Landscape Character should also be given due consideration. There may be individual criteria that indicate that development may be incompatible unless it can be effectively mitigated. It is important that the overall spread and balance of the profiles is fully considered rather than just the total Landscape Capacity value. In other words, each proposal will still need to be considered on its merits.

6.13 The results for the Three Parcels are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parcel</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GF1</td>
<td>North west field</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GF2</td>
<td>South West field</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GF3</td>
<td>Eastern field</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.14 From the above results it is considered that GF3 is the relatively least sensitive and has the highest capacity for development. Factors that would make the site relatively less suitable are the openness to public view from the Coton footpath/cycleway, the views to the landmark buildings in Cambridge and the role as part of a green finger. It is considered that all of these factors could be satisfactorily addressed through a suitable development layout and scheme. In addition the site's location being within Green Belt is the factor that scores lowest. The Green Belt boundary would need to be redrawn to counter this factor.

6.15 The north west field (Parcel GF1) is considered to be the relatively least suitable part of the Grange Farm site. The main difference compared to GF3 is the fact that the parcel is located further from the city and closer to the M11. It would as a consequence be harder to provide sufficient space for mitigation and also to retain some longer views over fields to the historic core of the city e.g. as from Photographs GF9 and 10.

**Role of site in Cambridge Green Belt**

6.16 The site is currently fully located in Green Belt. The role the site plays as Green Belt has been addressed by a number of studies carried out by and on behalf of Cambridge City Council and South Cambs District Council from 2002 as reviewed in Sections 4 and 5 above.

6.17 The Inspector’s Reports from the 1996 and 2006 Local Plan Inquiries did not support the idea of development on the site principally on Green Belt Grounds. A number of reasons were given including:

- Its contribution to the character and setting of the city
- It lying beyond the existing high visible and firm boundary of West Cambridge
• The effect on views towards the city Centre especially from Coton footpath and
• Reducing the green corridor that penetrates the built-up area

6.18 The 2002 Inner Green Belt Study considered the Site as Area 1 and Area 2. Area 1 is the land to the east and equates to TLP’s Parcel GF3. The Inner Green Belt Study identified that Area 1 (GF3) was ‘medium’ in its importance to the setting of Cambridge and was only a ‘minor part defining role’. We would agree with this assessment as the site, and even more so the parcel, is now more closely associated with the existing built development of West Cambridge. One is not generally aware of the presence of the rest of Cambridge from Parcel GF3. Equally this part of the site is not readily identified from any of the Strategic Viewpoints discussed (see section 3 above). In regard to the ‘importance to character’ the Inner Green Belt Study considers Area 1 to be ‘High/Medium’ while Area 2 (GF1 and 2) to be ‘Low’. However, when it comes to assessing the overall ‘Importance to Green Belt’ the 2002 Study considers Area 1 to be High and Area 2 to be Very High. While TLP agree that Area 2 is relatively more important to the setting we do not agree that the overall importance of Area 1 is High. The rationale for this High rating is not provided. We consider it does not match the individual findings in the 2002 assessment or more importantly the finding of being an ‘Area of Lower Importance’ in the most up to date 2012 Appraisal of Inner Green Belt study.

6.19 In respect of the site lying beyond a highly visible and firm boundary it is not clear why this would preclude development on the site. The existing built boundary of the West Cambridge development next to Area 1 (Parcel GF3) comprises a number of very dominant built forms and an abrupt edge to the city and Green Belt. While some of the buildings may be of architectural merit they do not help extend the soft edge that is preset to the edge of the city further to the south east. The current built form of the city boundary could in our view be eased by a less dense development including new areas of open spaces and structural landscape. The boundary to Area 2 ( Parcel GF1) is currently relatively softer with some structural planting and areas of water. However, there will still be large scale buildings close to and readily visible from the site. It is acknowledged from our own sensitivity and capacity study that Parcels GF1 and GF2 are relatively more sensitive.

6.20 In relation to views towards the site and city centre it is accepted and noted above that there are views from the Coton footpath/cycleway towards the city. However, the most significant building is the University Library. This is a 20th century Grade 2 listed building and visible from many locations. The views are not of a wider range of the historic towers or spires. Where there are glimpse of spires they are much more inconsequential and set between the trees and very much smaller in the view than features such as the floodlights around the all weather hockey pitch. It would be possible, as illustrated on the Opportunities and Constraints plan, to retain and frame the views to the University Library while also allowing for built development. The potential for new
structure planting will also help replicate the soft edge from the western section of the Coton footpath. It should also be noted that there are views from the Coton Footpath to the West Cambridge development and the route passes adjacent to this for most of its route and is hence not an existing unaffected rural approach to the city. The footpath cycleway is also fairly urban and functional in character itself. The relative importance of the view to the historic city from the Coton Footpath should not in our opinion be overemphasised.

6.21 A number of Green Corridors have been indicated on the various studies running west to east into Cambridge. It is accepted that these are important Green Infrastructure assets to the city for both its people and as biodiversity corridors. It is possible to retain a good sized corridor both on the site and on adjacent land, maintaining and significantly enhancing these corridors. Much of the land is currently in arable production and of limited biodiversity value. A wider corridor including the existing and emerging features at West Cambridge and on site can all be provided to ensure that visual and physical connections into the city can be retained and enhanced.

6.22 Therefore, for a variety of reasons given above, we do not consider that the sensitive development of the eastern part of the site would be significantly harmful to the setting of the city.
7 Opportunities and Constraints

7.1 The site provides a number of opportunities and constraints in respect of its development potential. The following are the main areas identified from a landscape perspective and are also illustrated in Figure GF4.

**Opportunities**

a. The main land use on the site is arable and of limited intrinsic value in landscape character and biodiversity terms.

b. The land is relatively low lying and flat so the impact of built development would generally be restricted to its built height and not significantly assisted by topography.

c. Hedgerows between the three field units could all be retained and strengthened within in any development.

d. The woodland copse adjacent to the north east corner of Parcel GF3 could be retained in any development.

e. Vehicular access can be achieved from Clerk Maxwell Road.

f. There is scope to provide areas of residential development. The least sensitive areas are located to east of the site.

g. The introduction of 2-3 storey residential buildings to the northern boundary would help to reduce the massing and scale of the 5 storey development to the southern edge of the West Cambridge development, which includes some prominent built forms that are most noticeable from local rights of way and are dominant compared with the landmark buildings in the city.

h. Strategic native tree planting adjacent to the perimeters of the residential development area (at c.2 storeys) could provide strong visual enclosure of development as seen from the west in the medium term c. 10-15 years. This would particular apply if development was limited to the most easterly field and the two western fields were retained in arable production.

i. The existing hedgerow and areas of adjacent semi natural vegetation and water course/ditches provide the basis of semi-natural green fingers running from the countryside into Cambridge corridors to the northern and southern boundaries of the site. These could be widened within the site area to enhance the opportunities for wildlife.

j. There is scope to provide enhanced public access and connectivity between existing rights of way, linking east west routes with north and south routes. This includes accessibility to the area of Coton Reserve and associated permissive rights of way west of the M11.

k. Views to the landmark buildings in the city can be retained and framed within any development layout.
l. Access from the West Cambridge development can be provided into residential areas with integral open spaces.

**Constraints**

m. The whole site is designated as Green Belt within the Cambridge Green Belt. The site plays a role within the wider setting of Cambridge. However, this role should not be overemphasised and reflect the presence of actual views and connections with the city. The 2012 study by the City Council identifies the eastern part of the site as an 'Area of lower importance'.

n. The mature hedges are designated wildlife sites and should be retained.

o. There are locations from within the site and in particular along the cycleway /footpath to Coton where there are views towards landmark buildings in Cambridge. The most prominent of these is the University Library. Other landmark buildings in the historic core are glimpsed or are just visible among the tree cover to the western edge of Cambridge.

p. There are views from outside the site from the west including from the M11, public rights of way and higher public access land (managed by Cambridge Past Present and Future) north east of Barton towards the city. The impact on these views would need to be carefully addressed.

q. A secondary access is potentially required. This could potentially be provided off Wilberforce Road, West Cambridge or via land to the south as part of a larger and more comprehensive development.
8 Conclusions

8.1 The land at Grange Farm is a substantial site located to the west of Cambridge outside the current built limits of the city.

8.2 The land use is mainly arable and is therefore well suited to built development in that there would be no significant effects on existing landscape features. The main physical site features are mature hedges and copses and these could be fully retained in any development.

8.3 The site is currently fully located in Green Belt. The role the site plays within the Cambridge Green Belt has been considered in a number of studies carried out by Cambridge City Council and South Cambs District Council from 2002. However, the studies do not consider the site in detail but rather as part of larger areas. A number of the findings are also somewhat dated in respect of physical changes on the ground.

8.4 The Inspectors reports from the 1996 and 2006 Local Plan Inquiries did not support the development of the site mainly on Green Belt Grounds including: its contribution to the character and setting of the city, lying beyond the existing firm boundary of West Cambridge, the effect on views towards the city Centre and the impact on the green corridor.

8.5 The latest relevant City Council study, ‘2012 Appraisal of the Inner Green Belt’ identifies at Plan 1 that the eastern part of the site as an ‘Area of Lower Importance’ in Green Belt terms to the setting of the city.

8.6 TLP have undertaken a separate assessment of the site which finds that the eastern part of the site, Parcel GF3, is relatively well suited to development. There would not be any significant harmful effects on the setting of the City subject to: retention of boundary features, a sensitive layout, restriction of building heights and densities and the incorporation of a number of green infrastructure features including strengthening the green fingers.

8.7 The western Parcels GF1 and GF2 should be retained as agricultural land to retain the wider setting to the city from the west.

8.8 A number of opportunities and constraints have been identified for the site and these should be incorporated into a suitable layout.

8.9 We consider that there is a good case in landscape terms for a release of Green Belt on the eastern part of the site to accommodate any identified housing needs.
Nil. Landmark features are identified in the following studies:
- Cambridge Green Belt Study, 2002
- Cambridge City Council Inner Green Belt Boundary Study, 2002
- Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment, 2003
- Draft Cambridge Skyline Guidance, 2011
GF1 - View from cycleway/Harcamlow Way/Wimpole Way, looking south west.

GF2 - View from Charles Babbage Road, looking south.
GF3 - View from Harcamlow Way/Wimpole Way, looking east.

GF4 - View from Harcamlow Way/Wimpole Way, looking south east
GF5 - View from Harcamlow Way/Wimpole Way, looking south.

GF6 - View from Harcamlow Way/Wimpole Way, looking south east.
Red Meadow Hill (open access land in Coton Reserve)

GF7 - View along Harcamlow Way/Wimpole Way, looking east.

Cambridge University Library tower
King's College Chapel
University Sports Ground
Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs

GF8 - View along Harcamlow Way/Wimpole Way, looking east.
GF11 - View from public footpath between Coton and Cambridge, looking north west.

GF12 - View over playing field at eastern end of Parcel GF3, looking north.
GF15 - View from access land in Coton Reserve, looking north east.

GF16 - View from Grantchester Road, looking north east.
GF17 - View from Castle Mound, looking south west.
### Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Appraisal – Criteria Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria group</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Measurement of criteria</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existing Landscape Features</strong></td>
<td><strong>Slope analysis</strong></td>
<td>A= Plateau (away from edge)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B= Rolling /undulating landform providing some enclosure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C= Tributary valleys/lower valley slopes/floodplain edge</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D= Valley floor/floodplain</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E= Elevated landforms, plateau edge, ridges and prominent slopes on valley sides with limited enclosure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enclosure by vegetation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>A= Enclosed by mature vegetation – extensive treebelts/ woodland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B= Semi-enclosed by vegetation - moderate woodland cover, good quality tall hedgerows/ hedgerows with hedgerow trees</td>
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<td>C= Fragmented vegetation - scattered small woodlands, fragmented shelterbelts and/or hedgerows</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D= Limited/poor hedges (with no trees) and/or isolated copses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E= Largely open with minimal vegetation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complexity/ Scale</strong></td>
<td>A= Extensive simple landscape with single land uses</td>
<td>The complexity and scale of the landscape includes consideration of the land use, field boundaries and levels of enclosure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B= Large scale landscape with limited land use and variety</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C= Large or medium scale landscape with variations in pattern, texture and scale</td>
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<td></td>
<td>D= Small or medium scale landscape with a variety in pattern, texture and scale</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E= Intimate and organic landscape with a richness in pattern, texture and scale</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Historic Character</strong></td>
<td>A= Area entirely of modern origin and without local historic features</td>
<td>Historic Character is derived from the Cambridgeshire Historic Landscape Characterisation study and the relative presence or absence of local historic features or designations</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B= Area partially of modern origin or with limited local historic features</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C= Area of 18th – 19th century origin or with several local historic features</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D= Area partially of pre-18th century origin or with many local historic features</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E= Area entirely of pre-18th century origin or with numerous local historic features</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Appraisal - Criteria Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria group</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Measurement of criteria</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landscape Character Quality/Condition</strong></td>
<td>A= Area of weak character in a poor condition</td>
<td>Strength of character is based on the relative presence or absence of 'Characteristic Features' identified in the Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B= Area of weak character in a moderate condition or of a moderate character in a weak condition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C= Area of weak character in a good condition or of a moderate character in a moderate condition or of a strong character in a poor condition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D= Area of moderate character in a good condition or of a strong character in a moderate condition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E= Area of strong character in a good condition</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Visual Factors** | Openness to public view | A= Site is well contained from public views | Public views will include views from Roads, Rights of Way and public open space. The evaluation allows for summer and winter situations. The category will depend on the extent of the visibility from all the site perimeters and rights of way through site, as well as the number of likely viewers. |
| | B= Site is generally well contained from public views |
| | C= Site is partially contained from public views |
| | D= Site is moderately open to public views |
| | E= Site is very open to public views |

| **Visual Factors** | Openness to private view | A= Site is well contained from private views |
| | B= Site is generally well contained from private views |
| | C= Site is partially contained from private views |
| | D= Site is moderately open to private views |
| | E= Site is very open to private views |

| **Visual Factors** | Views towards landmark buildings/features | A= Site does not have or allow views towards any landmark buildings/features |
| | B= Site has or allows glimpsed views towards any landmark buildings/features |
| | C= Site has or allows partial views towards landmark buildings/features |
| | D= Site has or allows moderately open views towards landmark buildings/features |
| | E= Site has or allows very open views towards landmark buildings/features |

Buildings/features could include views to e.g. historic university buildings, church towers or spires and views to villages. The assessment also relates to the numbers of landmark buildings/features from any given location.
## Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Appraisal – Criteria Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria group</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Measurement of criteria</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with existing urban built</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>form/edge of Cambridge</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A= Location where built development will</td>
<td>A= Location where built development will form a natural extension of an adjacent part of urban fabric</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B= Location where built development will</td>
<td>B= Location where built development will form some close associations with the existing parts of urban fabric</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C= Location where built development will</td>
<td>C= Location where built development will form some moderate associations with existing urban fabric</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D= Location where built development will</td>
<td>D= Location where built development will only form some limited associations with the existing urban fabric due to major obstacles</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>E= Location where development will be</td>
<td>E= Location where development will be isolated from and not form any relationship with existing urban fabric</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role in setting of Cambridge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A= Site does not play any role in the setting of Cambridge</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B= Site plays a limited role in the setting of Cambridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>C= Site plays a moderate role in the setting of Cambridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>D= Site plays an important role in the setting of Cambridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>E= Site plays an integral role in the setting of Cambridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevention of merging/coalescence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coalescence would comprise the merging of Cambridge with an adjacent village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A= Development would not compromise any separation</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B= Development would have slight impact on separation</td>
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<tr>
<td>C= Development would have moderate impact on separation</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D= Development would significantly compromise separation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E= Development would cause complete coalescence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Landscape Features</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope to mitigate the development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This is an assessment based on landscape character, aesthetic factors (scale, enclosure, pattern, movement), overall visibility of site, consideration of existing viewpoints and setting of the City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A= Good scope to provide mitigation in the short to medium term in harmony with existing landscape pattern</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B= Good scope to provide mitigation in the medium term and in keeping with existing landscape pattern</td>
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<tr>
<td>C= Moderate scope to provide mitigation in the medium term broadly in keeping with existing landscape pattern</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D= Limited scope to provide adequate mitigation in keeping with the existing landscape in the medium term</td>
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<tr>
<td>E= Very limited scope to provide adequate mitigation in the medium to long term</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Appraisal – Criteria Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria group</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Measurement of criteria</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landscape Value</strong></td>
<td>Presence of Green Belt</td>
<td>A= Location where built development will have no impact</td>
<td>This criteria is used as a proxy for Landscape Value in the absence of specific stakeholder consultation or other landscape designations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B= Location where built development will have slight impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C= Location where built development will have moderate impact</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D= Location where built development is adjacent to designated area, and/or will have high impact</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E= Location fully within a designated area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Infrastructure/Green Finger Function</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>A= Area is not part of a Green Finger or Green Infrastructure Corridor</td>
<td>Green Fingers are identified in the Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment and Wildlife Corridors were identified in similar locations in the Cambridge City Council ‘Inner Green Belt Boundary Study’ (2002) based on the 1996 Cambridge City Local Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B= Area is unlikely to form part of any identified Green Finger or Green Infrastructure Corridor</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C= Area has potential to form part of a Green Finger or Green Infrastructure Corridor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D= Area includes part of a Green Finger or Green Infrastructure Corridor</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E= Area is an integral part of a Green Finger or Green Infrastructure Corridor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tranquillity/remoteness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>A= Area indicated by CPRE to have low tranquility</td>
<td>The Council to Protect Rural England produced maps of relative tranquility in 2007, on a County by County basis. These are based on factors such as ‘naturalness’, visibility of natural features, visibility of man made features, openness, light pollution and noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B= Area indicated by CPRE to have medium low tranquility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C= Area indicated by CPRE to have medium tranquility</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D= Area indicated by CPRE to have medium-high tranquility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E= Area indicated by CPRE to have high tranquility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scenic Beauty</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>A= Area has no factors that contribute to scenic beauty</td>
<td>Scenic beauty considers factors such as sense of place, the impact of landform (is it striking?), the level of visual interest/variety, aesthetic appeal and the presence of memorable views/features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B= Area has limited factors that contribute to scenic beauty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C= Area has some factors that contribute to scenic beauty</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D= Area has many factors that contribute to scenic beauty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E= Area has extensive factors that contribute to scenic beauty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Appraisal - Survey Form

Landscape Parcel No = GF1  
Landscape Character Area = Rural Lowland Mosaic - West Cambridge Claylands  
Surveyors = JB, RK  
Date surveyed = 2/7/12

## Criteria Group  
1. Existing Landscape Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slope analysis</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetation enclosure</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity/ Scale</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Character</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

**Sub Total**  
0 2 3 0 0 17

2a. Visual Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Openness to public view</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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2b. Potential Landscape Features

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### Landscape Sensitivity Profile (1+2a & 2b)

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**Sub Total**  
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**Overall Capacity Profile (1+2a, 2b & 3)**  
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**Overall Capacity Range** = Medium
## Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Appraisal - Survey Form

**Landscape Parcel No = GF2**  
**Landscape Character Area = Rural Lowland Mosaic – West Cambridge Claylands**  
**Surveyors = JB, RK**  
**Date surveyed = 2/7/12**

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**Overall Capacity Range = Medium**
### Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Appraisal - Survey Form

Landscape Parcel No = GF3  
Landscape Character Area = Rural Lowland Mosaic - West Cambridge Claylands  
Surveyors = JB, RK  
Date surveyed = 2/7/12

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**Overall Capacity Range** = Medium
3.3 The potential effect of changing the Green Belt boundary and for built development to change the character of Cambridge has more direct and profound implication close to the City.

3.4 Not all the land released from the Green Belt will be built upon. A landscape framework including green corridors to enhance amenity, increase biodiversity and provide opportunities for recreation and access must be planned into future development.

3.5 Features and urban edges which presently detract from the setting of Cambridge can be assessed and opportunities taken in design proposals to enhance amenity through development.

3.6 Economic viability of agricultural holdings is not assessed as part of this study.

3.7 Proximity to public transport, employment and services has not been assessed in this study as the areas are all within the City's administrative boundary and should therefore be reasonably close to public transport and employment centres. Their inclusion would have transformed the study into more of a site finding exercise than a principled review of the Green Belt.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 This study reviews the inner boundary of the Green Belt. The following steps were taken (see Table 1).

4.1.2 Step 1

'Defining Character' Areas, defined as representing key resources that are essential to the special qualities of Cambridge and its setting, are already identified in the Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment. These areas are automatically retained as Green Belt.

4.1.3 Step 2

The areas of search for boundary changes are thus confined to those lands which are not included as...
'Defining Character' and which are within the area of search south of the A14, east of the M11 and in an arc around the Shelfords and Fulbourn to Wilbraham.

4.1.4 Step 3

Desk Study
This drew upon information already held by the City Council. Desk top research with particular reference to the Landscape Character Assessment indicated environmental and landscape features which are important to setting and character.

Field Survey
This was carried out on a sector by sector basis. Field surveys identified important localized views, setting and important features from which area descriptions and assessments were made. Also any proposed boundary changes were located and checked on site ensuring that physical features are followed.

4.1.5 Step 4

Information describing the results of the desk and field study survey are presented in tabular form accompanied by plans and photographs. The detailed survey and analysis allows value judgements to be made about proposed boundary changes.

4.1.6 Step 5

Assessments were made on a site-by site basis of the importance to the Green Belt purpose of setting, character and also of separation and described as very high, high, medium, minor, and negligible. The worth to Green Belt function was attributed as the highest value.

4.1.6 Step 6

Environmental Criteria
Various environmental criteria were assessed for each location including:
- vegetation
- existing land use
- land quality and classification
- ecology
- archaeology
- would it form a logical extension to the urban area?
- avoidance of coalescence if developed
- potential to improve edge
- brownfield
- severed by transport spines?
- aquifer

4.1.7 Step 7

Whilst some sites are of less importance to Green Belt function than others, their development could be detrimental to the setting and character of the City. For example one field may be of an identical importance to another in terms of its own amenity on setting and character but have very different impact on the purposes of the Green Belt if developed. Therefore an impact assessment - the Significance Matrix - was developed. It allows for these factors to be taken into account in as consistent a manner as possible. It allows comparison and judgement of the likely impact of development with the ability of different areas to accept change without detriment to the setting and character. The Significance Matrix used is given in Table 2. The matrix compares sensitivity of setting, character and separation against the likely magnitude of the impact of development.

A value of importance for immediate setting and character of Cambridge is already given for each area, ranging from very high to negligible. The highest value is used to extrapolate importance to Green Belt purpose and then used along with the magnitude of effect to evaluate the potential significance of development.

A value description of the likely effect of development is given. In most instances in Cambridge, the magnitude and densities contemplated would suggest most impacts lie in the band between medium to very high impact.

4.1.8 Step 8

A sensitivity of (major/high) indicates an area is generally important to the purposes of the Green Belt and very sensitive to change. No relaxation of Green Belt is recommended for these areas. A sensitivity score of (medium/minor/negligible) indicates that the Green Belt boundary changes
should be reviewed against the environmental criteria and a conclusion drawn to whether development should be considered.

5 RESULTS

5.1 The City edge is sub-divided into Sectors (Figure 1), and each Sector is further sub-divided into land parcels. The results of the survey, importance to the Green Belt, and potential impact of development are set out in the Sector Tables. The tables should be read with the plans and photos associated with each Sector. Conclusions were made about the importance to the Green Belt, likely impact of development and hence whether or not the land parcel should remain within the Green Belt. It should be noted that not all of the photographic evidence is submitted here.
TABLE 1 METHOD PLAN

Defining Character → Inner Green Belt core areas identified

→ Areas of search identified

→ Desk study
→ Field survey

→ Plans and Descriptions

→ Make judgements about the importance to green belt purpose

→ Environmental Criteria

→ Make judgements about significance of development proposals

→ Propose changes to Green Belt Boundary

STEP 1
STEP 2
STEP 3
STEP 4
STEP 5
STEP 6
STEP 7
STEP 8
<table>
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<tr>
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<td>MINOR/NEGLIGIBLE</td>
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Table 2: Significance Matrix

Sensitivity for Immediate Setting and Character of Cambridge
KEYS

Analysis

- Setting Views
- Significant views
- Minor views
- Landmarks
- Negative Edge
- Ridge
- Critical Gap
- Biodiversity Landscape Opportunities
- Visual Containment
- Critical Separation
- Water

Topography and Features

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<td>Ridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highest</td>
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</table>
Local Plan (Proposals) Plan 1996

- View Point
  - Setting (NE2)
  - Skyline (NE2)
- Wildlife Corridor
- Playing Fields
- Allotment Gardens
- Historic Parks & Gardens
- Flood Plain
- Areas of Best Landscape
- SSSI
- City Wildlife Sites
- Structurally Important Open Space
- Common Land, Public Open Space and Recreation Ground
- Green Belt

Conclusion of Significance

SIGNIFICANCE

- Very High
- High
- Medium
- Low
- Negligible
- Corridor
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<th>AREA 2</th>
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<td>West Claylands. Parts of the Character Area are 'Defining Character': Setting, Views, Green corridor, Environmental features</td>
<td>West Claylands. Parts of the Character Area are 'Defining Character': Setting, Views, Green corridor, Environmental features</td>
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<td>25 km</td>
<td>21 km</td>
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<td><strong>HEIGHT</strong></td>
<td>Elevation between 10m and 15m OD: Doing down to water of the River</td>
<td>Mostly 15m to 20m OD</td>
<td>10m to 15m OD</td>
<td>Mostly 10m OD</td>
<td>Mostly over 10m OD, dropping down to below 10m OD: Kernbrook Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IMPORTANT VIEWS</strong></td>
<td>To historic core and out to rural hinterland</td>
<td>From historic core and out to rural hinterland</td>
<td>To historic core</td>
<td>To historic core</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** VEGETATION**</td>
<td>Important hedgerows</td>
<td>Important hedgerows</td>
<td>Important hedgerows</td>
<td>Hedgerows, unusual heath plants</td>
<td>Hedgerows, trees and hedgerows</td>
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<td><strong>EXISTING LAND USE</strong></td>
<td>Arable</td>
<td>Arable</td>
<td>Arable</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Arable</td>
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<td><strong>LAND QUALITY</strong></td>
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<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
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<td>Not known</td>
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<td><strong>AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION</strong></td>
<td>Clay Wildlife Site, Important Hedgerows</td>
<td>Clay Wildlife Site, Important Hedgerows</td>
<td>Course of Kernbrook</td>
<td>Hedgerows and copses</td>
<td>Hedgerows, nearby Clay Wildlife Site</td>
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<td><strong>ECOLOGY</strong></td>
<td>None known</td>
<td>None known</td>
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<td>SCDC</td>
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<td>VERY HIGH</td>
<td>VERY HIGH</td>
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<td>HIGH/MEDIUM</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>AVOID COALESCENCE IF DEVELOPED</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<td>POTENTIAL TO IMPROVE EDGE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>BROWNFIELD / DAMAGED LAND</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>SEVERED BY TRANSPORT SPINES</td>
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<td>CONSTRAINTS</td>
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<td>AQUIFER AREA</td>
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<tr>
<td>DENSITY INDICATED BY CHARACTER AND LOCATION</td>
<td>Low density development indicated by local character</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low density development indicated by local character</td>
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<tr>
<td>APPROPRIATE LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK</td>
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<td>CONCLUSION</td>
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<td>GREEN BELT Consider amenity/environmental value for local residents</td>
<td>GREEN BELT Consider amenity/environmental value for local residents</td>
<td>GREEN BELT Consider amenity/environmental value for local residents</td>
<td>GREEN BELT Consider amenity/environmental value for local residents</td>
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3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study methodology involves a broad appreciation of the planning context and issues, linked with a range of landscape and townscape appraisals aimed at analysing the landscape setting of Cambridge, its urban structure and character, and the characteristics of the urban margins. It uses a variety of well-established assessment techniques drawn from published guidance and widely used practice. In addition, as matters of professional judgement are involved, the findings of the study are underpinned by the experience and expertise of the Consultant; Landscape Design Associates’ projects are featured as case studies in national guidance on both landscape and townscape assessment (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002) and landscape and visual impact assessment (The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2002), and its relevant work has been recognised through Landscape Institute Awards. The practice has undertaken many studies of settlements and their landscape settings in order to inform planning and development strategies and decision-making for both public and private sector interests. It has also worked on many projects concerned with historic towns and Green Belts and associated development issues.

The Consultant’s study team has drawn on a range of expertise from within the practice, ensuring a full range of relevant professional skills were brought to bear on the project. The senior team was as follows:

- Professor Robert Tregay, BSc (Hons), Dip LD, FLI, Senior Partner, a Landscape Architect and Environmental Planner: Partner in Charge of project.
- Nick Shute, BSc, DipTP, MRTPI, Director of LDA Urban Design: a Planner and Urban Designer.
- Philip Brashaw, BSc (Hons), BLD, MLI, Principal Consultant, a Landscape Architect: Project Leader.
- Alison Farmer, BA (Hons), MLD, MLI, Principal Consultant, a Landscape Architect: responsible for overseeing the specialist aspect of the Study concerned with the application of the ‘Winchester Methodology’.
- Marion Frandsen, BSc (Hons), DipLA, MSc and Fiona Fyfe, BSc (Hons), DipLD, MA: specialists in townscape and landscape assessment.

This senior team has specialist experience in the fields of landscape and townscape assessments, historic environments, development and Green Belt appraisals, and was supported by further landscape architects and assistants responsible for research, detailed desk studies and field appraisals.

The consultants met on a regular basis with senior personnel, including the Planning Director, at South Cambridgeshire District Council to ensure regular briefings and inputs from a planning perspective.
3.2 Methodology

The methodology for this study has been shaped by the planning policy context as set out in section 2. The landscape, and also the townscape, character assessment follows guidance set out in the Countryside Agency’s *Landscape Character Assessment (2002)*. The assessment of landscape and townscape role and function broadly follows the approach adopted by Landscape Design Associates in its study on *Winchester and its Setting (1998)* which is described in and implicitly endorsed by the Countryside Agency in its Guidance (page 70).

The sequence of baseline studies and analysis make specific reference to key planning statements in RPG6 (DETR and Government Office for the East of England 2000) and PPG2 (DETR 2002). The highlighted sections of the following extracts are the key references.

Policy 24 of RPG6 states:

“A review of the Cambridge Green Belt should be carried out and any proposals for changes to its boundaries included in development plans. The review should start from a vision of the city and of the qualities to be safeguarded.”

One of the five purposes for including landing Green Belts set out in PPG2 is:

“To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.”

Whilst Cambridge clearly includes areas of more modern development, most would agree that it falls within the definition of an historic town.
The study methodology, therefore, is structured broadly as follows:

**STAGE ONE**

**Baseline Studies**
Establish an understanding of the existing conditions of Cambridge and its setting.

**STAGE TWO**

**Setting and Special Character**
Drawing in particular on the 4th purpose of Green Belts as set out in PPG2, this analysis seeks to establish what factors contribute to the setting and special character of Cambridge.

**STAGE THREE**

**Qualities to be Safeguarded**
This considers which qualities in the setting and special character of Cambridge need to be safeguarded.

**STAGE FOUR**

**Vision of Cambridge**
The vision of Cambridge and its setting is based on preserving the qualities to be safeguarded and on the identification of strategic initiatives which could enhance the city and its setting.

**STAGE FIVE**

**Green Belt**
The city edge and landscape east of Cambridge are analysed in more detail, and recommendations are made for the Green Belt boundary in this area.
The process set out above is described in more detail below. The analysis process is explained by reference to a sequence of plans, supported by explanatory text. The plans are grouped into the five stages:

**Stage One: Baseline Studies**

A series of six plans (drawing numbers 1641LP/01 to 06) have been prepared to illustrate the baseline conditions applying to Cambridge and its setting. The studies are intended to identify the key townscape and landscape features which help us to understand Cambridge and its setting. The six plans are as follows:

- **Policy Context: Environmental Designations**: This plan illustrates key environmental planning policies as statutory environmental designations.
- **Policy Context: Cultural and Access Designations**: This plan illustrates a range of historic and other cultural designations as well as public rights of way.
- **Topography**: This plan illustrates the topographic context of Cambridge.
- **Townscape Character**: This plan illustrates townscape character types and areas in order to understand the variations in character across the built up area of Cambridge.
- **Landscape Character**: This plan illustrates the range of landscape character types and areas in the Green Belt based on a study by Landscape Design Associates.
- **Visual Assessment**: This plan represents a typical landscape analysis, helping to understand the visual factors which contribute to the special character of Cambridge and its setting, including its approaches.

These plans set out the baseline factual information about Cambridge and its setting that is then analysed in Stage Two.

**Stage Two: Analysis of Setting and Special Character of Cambridge**

This analysis draws on the baseline studies and relies on further studies to understand the factors which contribute towards the special character and setting of Cambridge. Two plans are used to present this analysis (drawing numbers 1641LP/07 and 08):

- **Landscape and Townscape Analysis**: This focuses on how Cambridge is experienced through the process of arrival. The analysis focuses on routes through the setting of the city, on gateways and on changes of character from the outer rural areas through to the historic core. This is fundamental to understanding the significance of scale in contributing to the special character of Cambridge and in appreciating how the character of routes to and through the city play a fundamental role in giving Cambridge its special and historic character.
- **Townscape and Landscape Role and Function**: This method of analysis uses the “Winchester Methodology” as set out in Box 8.7 (page 70) of the...
METHODOLOGY

Countryside Agency’s Landscape Character Guidance (2002). The purpose of the analysis is to identify, in a fully integrated way, the role of different areas of townscape and landscape in contributing to the distinctiveness and setting of the historic city.

Stage Three: Qualities to be Safeguarded

This stage brings together the analysis in Stage Two and focuses, specifically, on identifying which are the qualities of the setting and special character of Cambridge which most need to be safeguarded. Whilst this stage of the analysis draws logically from the studies in Stages One and Two, it inevitably involves the strong degree of professional judgement.

The assessment team works extensively in the development field for both private and public sector interests and, in making judgements about the qualities of the setting and special character of Cambridge which need to be safeguarded, have been fully cognisant of the planning and development context and, specifically, the need for Cambridge and its sub-region to accommodate significant levels of new development, as set out in RPG6.

Significant roles have been played in making these judgements by Senior Partner, Professor Robert Tregay, a landscape architect with extensive Green Belt, development and assessment experience, and also Nick Shute, Director of Urban Design, a qualified Planner who has also been involved in many Green Belt studies.

Stage Four: Vision for Cambridge

This stage of analysis represents a creative step forward from Stage Three, specifically involving the identification of strategic initiatives, which could enhance Cambridge and its setting. These initiatives cover the edges of the city and its setting, and relate to Green Belt purposes and to the potential uses of land within the Green Belt, as set out in paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6 of PPG2.

Stage Five: Green Belt

RPG6 makes it clear that the review of the Cambridge Green Belt should arise from the process set out above.

It is not the purpose of this study to recommend any detailed changes to the Cambridge Green Belt. However, the studies are intended to inform any Green Belt review which might be considered. The exception to this generalisation is East Cambridge, where the analysis has been undertaken at a greater level of detail, yet based on the strategic study of Cambridge and the methodology set out above. In making the recommendations on the Green Belt boundary in East Cambridge, we have taken account of:

- The potential role of development allocations on the edge of the city in providing for housing development, as set out in RPG6 (the sequential test).
- Support that South Cambridgeshire District Council has given to the concept for development on the Cambridge Airport site, west of Airport Way.
• More detailed site appraisals of East Cambridge undertaken by Landscape Design Associates, as set out in section 7 of this report.
3.3 RURAL LOWLAND MOSAIC

Cambridge sits in arable lowland that can be further divided into the following Character Areas.

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3.3.1 RURAL LOWLAND MOSAIC - NORTHERN FRINGE

This area sits between the hard urban edge of King's Hedges Road and the A14. It stretches from Fen Road in the east to the Histon Road in the west. The land is generally between 10 and 15 m above sea level and gradually falls away to the east and north towards the River Cam and the fens.

The area has a mixed land use with disused railway sidings, sewage works, Business Park and Science Park, Cowley Road industrial units, a Park and Ride Site, Cambridge Regional College, and open fields with some ancient hedgerows, all dominated by the noise, proximity, pollution and visual intrusion of the A14 which is elevated along a major part of its length along this stretch. However, the slight elevation has advantages for the road user, as there are wide panoramic views across Cambridge. Church spires, notably the Catholic Church and St Luke's, King's College...
3.3.2 Rural Lowland Mosaic - West Cambridge Claylands

This area encompasses a large arc of land from the north west of Cambridge from NIAB land through to Grantchester and towards the River Cam. The M11 corridor dominates the western edge.

The area is underlain by chalk and limestone till which gives rise to cold, calcareous clay soils. The land rises to the north towards Madingley Rise, but is generally between 10 and 15m above sea level and is gently undulating. Fields tend to be of medium size, sometimes bounded by ditches and often thorn hedges.

The area is bisected by small brooks flowing east - Bin Brook, Bourne Brook and Washpit Brook. Most of these brooks take the form of steeply cut man-made channels. They often form field boundaries. Water features including storm water retention ponds have been created along an east-west corridor following the line of the Coton footpath.

The field pattern is post Enclosure, when the Coton footpath was realigned along with the field boundaries.

There are a number of hedgerows in the area. Many of these form substantial linear landscape features that are an important resource in the landscape. Substantial lengths of hedge suffer from Dutch Elm disease.

There is mixed use in the area, with College playing fields, farmed land and research buildings. The soft, well treed urban edge of the generally large, individual residences within large mature well treed gardens is very evident and works to separate the city from its rural hinterland.

The Schlumberger building is very prominent on the western side of Cambridge, partly due to its bulk and distinctive skyline, but also because of its elevated position.

From several locations there are panoramic views east, towards the historic city skyline, especially from the motorway. The University Library and Addenbrooke’s chimney and various church spires are important landmarks of Cambridge. The views across to the City from the area between Grantchester and the motorway and from Grantchester Road are exceptional. Extensive roadside tree planting along Barton Road will in the long term obliterate the fine views from Barton Road towards Cambridge over the open countryside.

- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type in visual and cultural terms and which, where appropriate, benefit wildlife.
The elevated land to the west around Madingley Wood and Barton is also a prominent feature of the landscape here. There are some exceptional views from this area back towards the City Centre.

The University is planning an extensive development on their West Cambridge site, east of High Cross and north of the Coton Footpath to facilitate expansion of university facilities. The scheme is being developed in accordance with a carefully considered Masterplan document which should direct design issues, and will bring major gains in the biodiversity of the area.

There are a number of Definitive Footpaths in this area, including the Harcamlow/Wimpole Way/Coton footpath and the footpath from the A603 past Laundry Farm. There are also a number of Permissive Footpaths. There are a number of City Wildlife Sites which lie beside the footways or which follow ditches and hedges forming wildlife corridors to the west of the City, with the Coton Footpath and Bin Brook important extensions, and which run towards the City core.

A Wildlife and Farm Reserve centered around Coton to the west of the M11 is currently being proposed. There is a possibility that the area will extend east of the M11, but certainly access improvements between the City and this area are being considered. Part of this area has been designated in the past as an Area of Best Landscape.\[32\]

**ISSUES**

- parts of Rural Lowland Mosaic - West Cambridge Claylands area, where they fit the criteria for Defining Character in terms of green fingers, water courses, setting, views to the City skyline and separation, are Defining Character.

**Defining Character**

- urban edge characteristics;
- brooks ditches and wetlands;
- views; and
- hedgerows and field pattern.
Pressure

- pressures from development;
- noise, visual intrusion and pollution from nearby motorway traffic; and
- agricultural utilisation of land for maximum commercial output.

VISION

The vision is to ensure that landscape features of importance and biodiversity is conserved or enhanced. Access opportunities, along with opportunities for informal recreation should be promoted.

Opportunities

- Any extended edge to Cambridge should seek to replicate the current edge of City landscape;
- create further wetland habitats such as ponds ditches and field drains to augment existing water systems;
- create recreation opportunities using brooks and ditches as a green network of paths, increasing the existing network of paths;
- take opportunities to reduce noise and visual intrusion of motorway where appropriate;
- increase biodiversity through appropriate management regimes such as having headlands on arable crops, wildlife sensitive management of ditches and where appropriate replacing dead elm;
- work in partnership with Cambridge Preservation Society with regard to the proposed Coton Countryside Park; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type in visual and cultural terms and which, where appropriate, benefit wildlife.
4.7.6 Target Area 6.3: Cambridge

Background

Cambridge is a compact City with an historic core and riverside that attracts over 4.1 million visitors a year, and is surrounded by attractive and accessible green spaces. The City sits within arable lowland, with the landscape allowing a number of key views into and out of Cambridge.

Cambridge has a distinct character and landscape setting and is renowned for its history and architecture. The variety of listed buildings and conservation areas, the colleges, river and the commons, residential areas, open spaces and gardens (such as The Backs), archaeological and historic sites, natural features and habitats all contribute to the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the City’s landscape. The rural hinterland is especially close to the west of the City, although nowhere in Cambridge is very far from the countryside or the green corridors that run into the City. The green spaces strongly define and encircle the central area, allowing the historic core of Cambridge to be seen across open ground. The transition between the relative peace and space of the open space and the bustle and intimacy of the densely packed City streets is very marked. These qualities are fragile, finite and irreplaceable, and should be safeguarded. The City is enclosed by a Green Belt, the boundaries of which have been the subject of recent planned changes to allow for more sustainable growth focused on Cambridge to support the success of the economy, both locally and nationally. The distribution, physical separation, setting, scale and character of the necklace of villages surrounding the City are essential to the Green Belt designation.

The City has just over 1500 listed buildings, of which approximately 10% are Grade I and just under 4% are Grade II*. Cambridge has five Scheduled Monuments and 11 Historic Parks and Gardens. There are 11 Conservation Areas\(^{40}\) designated in the City, with Conservation Areas covering a significant proportion of the central part of the City. Over 1000 buildings are designated as being of Local Interest.

Cambridge is the main settlement within a rapidly growing sub-region, which encompasses over 471,000 people living in surrounding villages, new settlements and market towns. There is a high demand for housing (particularly affordable housing) in Cambridge, and there is a need to ensure the prosperity of the local economy. Average house prices in Cambridge are around nine times the average income of Cambridge residents, placing home ownership out of the reach of many of the City’s residents and workers\(^{41}\). In order to provide new homes close to jobs, a significant level of growth is proposed on the edge of Cambridge. This growth will provide more homes

\(^{40}\) Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

\(^{41}\) Hometrack monitoring data, March 2010.
for key workers and other groups, increasing the population of the City and the demand for access to high quality Green Infrastructure. The City's urban expansion will provide opportunities to improve quality of life and to upgrade essential infrastructure, including Green Infrastructure.

A key aspect of the development strategy for the Cambridge area is a number of major new urban extensions to the City. The 2003 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan required a review of the Cambridge Green Belt to release land for the long term development needs of Cambridge, in specified locations and subject to the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt (Structure Plan policy P9/2b).

The required review of the Cambridge Green Belt has already been completed through the development plans of the City Council and of South Cambridgeshire District Council. These plans have released land to meet the long-term development needs of Cambridge at the southern fringe, at northwest Cambridge and at Cambridge Airport. Many of the urban extensions include land in both Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council’s administrative area, and are reviewed within this section. They are dealt with in various different planning policy documents and are at various stages of implementation. These sites are on the southern, northwest and eastern fringes of Cambridge, partly within the City’s boundaries and partly within South Cambridgeshire.

In addition to providing the setting for the City, South Cambridgeshire District includes some land in the built-up area of Cambridge. Orchard Park and a small part of Cherry Hinton are physically part of Cambridge, but currently lie within South Cambridgeshire’s administrative boundary. The urban extensions to Cambridge are particularly relevant to the Green infrastructure Strategy as they create additional demands for access to Green Infrastructure at the same time as providing opportunities to deliver new areas of Green Infrastructure, both strategic and local. These areas of Green Infrastructure play a key role in linking the urban area with the surrounding countryside.

The major developments are at various stages of development and whilst all are expected to provide new Green Infrastructure, some are still at the planning stage whilst others have permission and specific projects have been identified.

**Cambridge Southern Fringe:**

**Trumpington Meadows**

Trumpington Meadows comprises 1200 new homes alongside supporting facilities. It lies within both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils’ areas, and is allocated in the Cambridge Local Plan and South Cambridgeshire’s Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan. Planning permission was granted in 2009.
Throughout the residential development there will be ‘green fingers’ - areas of open space that extend into the development from the arable fields to the south and country park to the west. All ‘green fingers’, except one which runs above the main gas pipeline, will be planted with two rows of trees to create avenues. Pocket parks and greens will also be provided throughout the development.

A new riverside community park (Country Park) is to be provided along the River Cam extending north and south of the M11 motorway. It will include a variety of habitats, including wet and dry meadowland and woodland alongside tussocky grassland at the river edge. There will be two balancing ponds within the Country Park, sited on land to the north of the M11 and east of the River Cam, and new planting around the balancing ponds.

Shared cycle and pedestrian routes will be provided, linking the Country Park to the built up area. The two parts of the Country Park on either side of the M11 will be linked by a cycle and footpath using the existing bridge over the motorway, and there will be a good network of informal footpaths across the park.

Land directly to the south and south west of the built up area will remain in arable use and be rented out to local farmers. The illustrative landscape strategy within the Design and Access Statement accompanying the planning application seeks to break up these large fields between the M11 and the development edge into smaller fields that replicate the old pattern of field boundaries. New trees will be planted within the new hedgerow boundaries to break up the expanse of arable fields and improve biodiversity.

The site contains archaeological remains from the Palaeolithic period through to the Second World War. Several areas of remains are sufficiently important to warrant designation as scheduled ancient monuments, including an area of Iron Age and Roman British Settlement remains within the site close to the River Cam.

Bell School
This site lies entirely within Cambridge’s administrative area and comprises 347 residential units and 100 units of student accommodation. It is allocated in the Cambridge Local Plan and received planning approval, subject to a Section 106 agreement, in 2008. Bell School has informal open space centred around two balancing ponds along the southern edge, the provision of allotments, play areas and pocket parks together with a central linear informal space ending in a crescent on its southern end and a landscaped area adjacent to Greenlands on its northern end. The layout provides an

42 A Section 106 agreement is a package of funding, land, or other contributions from a developer to help set up and support the local community. For example, S106 money is used to fund transport improvements, build community centres and provide land for green spaces.
opportunity for an attractive pedestrian link with views out to the
countryside beyond the site, including the Gog Magogs to the south. The
open spaces on Bell School are not in themselves strategic in nature. As a
part of the greater offer of the Southern Fringe, Bell School’s open space
forms a local part of the strategic provision of open space for the South of
the City.

**Clay Farm**
This site lies entirely within Cambridge’s administrative area and provides
2300 new homes and a mixture of other supporting uses. It is allocated in
the Cambridge Local Plan and planning permission was granted in 2010.
This site is an important gateway to Cambridge and will form a new edge to
the City. Landscape and open space are key elements of overall character of
the proposed development, with the existing trees, plantations, hedges,
Hobson’s Brook and associated ditches characterising the development, and
providing the background around which the new landscape will be designed.

The green corridor provides the transition between the urban fabric and the
open countryside to the south, and remains in the Green Belt. A transition is
proposed within this corridor from more formal recreation/open space
adjacent to Long Road to more informal open space further south to merge
with the countryside character beyond. This is achieved with the majority of
active uses located north of the Busway’s Addenbrooke’s spur. South of The
Busway spur will comprise wet/dry balancing ponds, a permanent wetland
feature, informal species rich grassland and tree planting primarily along
the western and southern edges. An allotment site of 1 hectare is included
on the western edge of the southern section. This is acceptable in landscape
terms provided appropriate boundary treatment is included.

**Glebe Farm**
This site lies entirely within Cambridge’s administrative area and provides
for residential development of just under 300 homes. It is allocated in the
Cambridge Local Plan and planning permission was granted in 2010. The
public open space is spread across three main areas: a central open space, a
western open space and an eastern open space, each of which contains a
play area. These three spaces are subject to a similar palette of street
furniture. The layouts and play specification for the spaces provide for a
range of different ages, from toddlers to teenagers. The open space on the
northern side of the site, which has previously been referred to as the ‘Zone
of Integration’, is much less animated and smaller in scale and seeks to
implement a native tree planting mix with a wildflower seeded area along
its northern edges. Along the sides of the site that face Hauxton Road and
the Addenbrooke’s Access Road is a buffer of native structural landscaping
arranged in a series of thickets. The allotments are provided at the very
eastern side of the site and are sub-divided by a roadway and potential
strategic pedestrian/cycle link to Exeter Close. A number of pedestrian and
cycle links are provided at regular intervals, and a strategic link is provided
centrally that meets with Bishop’s Road and crosses to meet Hauxton Road
further north. Along the western side of the site adjacent to Hauxton Road,
the proposal extends the off-road pedestrian/cycleway provided as part of
the Addenbrooke’s Access Road further northwards, connecting to the existing Park and Ride crossing. The open spaces on Glebe Farm are not in themselves strategic in nature. As a part of the wider Southern Fringe, Glebe Farm’s open spaces form a local part of the strategic provision of open space for the South of the City.

**Addenbrooke’s 20:20**

The site lies within Cambridge’s administrative area but is highly visible from public vantage points beyond the City to the south and the west and is flat, exposed and relatively featureless. The Cambridge Local Plan allocates this area for enhancements to Addenbrooke’s Hospital as part of the creation of a wider Cambridge Biomedical Campus, which received planning permission in 2009. It is set against the backdrop of the existing hospital, which appears as a mass of institutional buildings with minimal landscaping. Long distance views of the site are most evident from the Gog Magog Down to the south. The Addenbrooke’s site has a number of areas of public realm within it and provides scope for informal areas for relaxation. The site links with the wider City and the surrounding countryside via strategic footpath and cycleway routes.

Whilst there are recognised opportunities to green the wider site, the open spaces are not likely to be of such a size to warrant definition as a strategic project. As with Bell School and Glebe Farm, smaller open spaces will contribute to the high-quality sustainable environment being created in the Southern Fringe.

**North West Cambridge:**

**Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (NIAB 1)**

A park is proposed in the centre of this development of 1780 dwellings within Cambridge’s boundaries and a green corridor is proposed along the outer boundary of the development that runs between Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. The site is allocated in the Cambridge Local Plan and planning permission was granted in 2010 subject to a legal agreement, although the frontage area has a separate permission and construction began in Spring 2010. The green corridor along the boundary will include the retained hedgerows and additional planting, the existing definitive footpath linking Huntingdon Road and Histon Road, an additional cycle route and new drainage facilities which take the form of swales, ditches or ponds. A park will be provided in the centre of the development, near the community centre and linked to two of the green corridors that cross the site. This park will contain sports pitches, landscaped areas for informal play and recreation, drainage facilities including drains or swales along the edges of the park and wetland areas. Children’s play areas will be provided throughout the site. Some of the open spaces are purely local in nature, whilst the green corridor has a more strategic role.
Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (NIAB 2)

A second phase of development at NIAB is proposed for 1100 dwellings within South Cambridgeshire in its Site Specific Policies Development Plan Document. The development must enhance the landscape, biodiversity and public access in the open countryside area adjoining the development, including hedgerow management and enhancement, measures to protect and enhance wildlife habitats and new links to the countryside via the existing farm bridge over the A14.

Land between Madingley Road and Histon Road

Land in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire has been released from the Green Belt specifically to address the long-term development needs of the University of Cambridge. The joint North West Cambridge Area Action Plan provides for academic and research and development facilities, accommodation for 2000 students and 3000 dwellings, half of which will be for University key workers. A large central area of open space will be provided in the strategic gap between the two parts of the site, which will be retained as Green Belt. There will also be a substantial open landscaped area between the development and the M11, retained in the Green Belt. The Plan requires improved linkages into the wider countryside and other areas of publicly accessible open space such as the Coton Countryside Reserve and the NIAB 1 and 2 developments. The open spaces which make up the green corridor and the strategic gap are of strategic importance.

Cambridge East

The joint Cambridge East Area Action Plan sets out the planning requirements for this site which lies within both Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and which plans for 10,000 to 12,000 new homes in the area based on the Cambridge airport site. Whilst the urban quarter as a whole requires the airport to relocate, the Plan identifies potential for early development north of Newmarket Road and north of Cherry Hinton with the Airport remaining on site. In addition to the creation of strategic routes connecting Green Infrastructure in the City with the surrounding districts and key projects such as Wicken Fen, a Country Park is proposed to the east of Airport Way, as part of the development of this site as a new urban quarter for Cambridge. An urban park is also proposed on the existing Park and Ride Site, along with a range of smaller open spaces and allotments. A Green Corridor will be retained through the new urban quarter, linking Coldham’s Common with the wider countryside. This corridor is retained as Green Belt.

Cambridge Northern Fringe

Orchard Park

Development of Orchard Park is bounded by the A14, Histon Road and Kings Hedges Road and was allocated in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 on land that was originally in the Green Belt. Situated in South
Cambridgeshire, this high density urban extension to Cambridge was originally granted planning permission for 900 dwellings and employment uses with supporting services and facilities in 2005 and about two thirds of the development has been completed. The South Cambridgeshire Site Specific Policies Development Plan Document provides for a further 220 dwellings in place of some of the employment uses and requires the creation of cycle and footpath links to the rural area to the north of the A14.

**Cambridge Northern Fringe East**

A joint Area Action Plan will be prepared to address the redevelopment potential of this area lying largely in Cambridge, with a small part adjoining the railway line located in South Cambridgeshire.

**Cambridge Nature Conservation Strategy**

The Cambridge Nature Conservation Strategy, adopted in 2006, provides a technical document to guide the nature conservation activities of all departments and partners across the City of Cambridge. The vision is that over 10 years (2006 to 2016) Cambridge will see a “net gain” in biodiversity, both within the city and its immediate hinterland. Wildlife will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. Everyone who lives or works in Cambridge will have access to high quality natural green spaces within walking distance of their home or place of work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity.

Within the strategy, a number of actions and projects have been proposed covering:

- The designation of new Local Nature Reserves (LNRs).
- The favourable management of County and City Wildlife Sites.
- Restoration of Cambridge Commons and floodplain.
- Enhanced biodiversity management of public parks and open spaces.
- Improved public access to, interpretation and promotion of Cambridge’s natural Green Spaces.

Many of these actions are local in nature, whilst the majority of strategic schemes are already underway or are outlined in the Green Infrastructure Strategy as future projects, both in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

See also the Byron’s Pool case study on page 155, the River Cam Habitat and Access Enhancement case study on page 156 and the Coton Countryside Reserve case study on page 129.

**Opportunities within the target area to inform future project development**

- Biodiversity: there are opportunities for enhanced management of and linkages between Cambridge’s commons and riverside meadows, including via green corridors to the wider countryside. Floodplain habitat restoration is also an excellent opportunity to improve biodiversity in the area. On the City fringes there are specific opportunities available, and several projects are being progressed
including the Gog Magogs Countryside Project, Trumpington Meadows County Park and Byron’s Pool Local Nature Reserve. There are deficits in the existing levels of parkland habitat in the north of Cambridge and in Queen Edith’s ward.

- Climate Change: there are opportunities around remediation of the urban heat island effect and flood alleviation. The whole of the City forms an urban heat island. Surface water drainage needs to be a key consideration for the City, given its densely built-up nature. Existing open space should be protected and planting regimes for open spaces should consider climate change.

- Green Infrastructure Gateways: the growth areas provide opportunities for enhanced linkages between the City, the surrounding countryside, the navigable river and Green Infrastructure sites. Examples of linkages between the City and the surrounding countryside include Cambridge East, northwest Cambridge, Grantchester Meadows, Trumpington Meadows and Haslingfield, and examples of Green Infrastructure sites are Coton Countryside Reserve, Wandlebury/Gog Magogs and Milton Country Park.

- Heritage: by the protection and enhancement of the historic built and natural environment.

- Landscape: by ensuring that the growth of Cambridge protects and enhances the setting of the historic City and enhances the character of the City through maintaining and contributing to green corridors linking the wider countryside with the heart of Cambridge.

- Publicly Accessible Open Space: the provision of open space and linkages to the strategic Green Infrastructure network and Public Rights of Way forms one of the key elements of the growth agenda for Cambridge. Significant levels of high quality open space are required by planning policies. These open spaces must link well with the surrounding built-up area. The ANGSt analysis indicates that there are particular areas of deficiency for 2ha plus in the north and south/south-east of the City, for 20ha plus in the northern and southern fringes, for 100ha plus on the eastern side of Cambridge and at the 500ha plus standard the majority of the City except the very northern edge near Milton.

- Rights of Way: by ensuring that all communities have access to sustainable modes of movement and enhanced links to the wider countryside as required by the plans for the major developments to provide for countryside recreation. A number of the growth sites are required to enhance or provide green corridors, reflecting the existing green corridors that run from the surrounding countryside to the heart of Cambridge. There are also opportunities to provide linkages between growth areas, the existing City, the river and nearby villages and the surrounding countryside, such as from
Trumpington Meadows into the City along the River Cam, to Grantchester Meadows, and out via the new Country Park to nearby villages such as Haslingfield. The north of the City has a limited Rights of Way network, whilst the network in the south-east of the City is fragmented.

**Current Projects** (see Appendix 15 for further details)

**Cambridge Southern Fringe**
- Trumpington Meadows:
  - Country Park
  - Haslingfield to Trumpington Meadows Footpath Link
- Clay Farm Green Corridor

**North West Cambridge**
- Land between the two parts of Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (NIAB 1) and (NIAB 2) - Green Corridor

**Cambridge ‘Necklace’ projects**
- Coton Countryside Reserve
- Gog Magog Countryside Project (including Wandlebury Country Park)
- North Cambridge Heritage Trail (including Worts Meadow, Landbeach Roman sites, Carr Dyke and Waterbeach Abbey)
- Cambridge Sport Lakes

**City Centre**
- Restoration of Cambridge Commons and floodplain meadows

**Future Projects** (see Appendix 15 for further details)

A number of future projects are identified by the planning authorities to come forward as part of the new developments, although others may also be identified.

**North West Cambridge**
- Land adjoining Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (NIAB 2) - Countryside Enhancement.
- Land between Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road - Green Corridor and adjoining development.

**Cambridge East**
- Country Park and Green Corridor to City centre via Coldham’s Common.

**4.7.7 Target Area 6.4: Cambourne**

**Background**

The new settlement of Cambourne is located in South Cambridgeshire District, and lies on former farmland near Bourn to the west of Cambridge. The new community comprises three linked villages - Upper Cambourne,
(Haslingfield). Views towards the City reveal that Trumpington church tower can clearly be seen. Parts of the zone are Defining Character to Cambridge.

The adjoining areas outside the City administration boundary were released from Green Belt and the area inside the City boundary was retained as Green Belt. The outline permission for Trumpington Meadows remains mainly on the flat higher ground adjacent to the existing village, but does extend partially down the slope southwest towards the M11.

As with other zones which expand the City edge further into the countryside and moving it closer to a major transport route (M11), it will result in the urban area being more visible than it is at present. In turn this will make the land between the M11 and the urban edge more important to the setting of the City and to Green Belt.

4.8 Zone 9 – Land between Madingley Road and the River Cam and the M11 and Trumpington Road)

The 2002 Study found that all areas within this zone were of medium to very high importance to the setting of the City and medium to very high importance to Green Belt purposes.

The majority of this zone is on flat farmland with some slight elevation to the north and south of the area. The land is mostly arable and divided into relatively small fields with managed hedgerows and ditches. Grantchester Village is located in the southern part of this zone. Also in the southern part of this zone is the river Cam and its associated river valley landscape. The elevated parts of the zone create small plateaus that are sometimes screened by their landform and by vegetation.

Views are usually open and of abrupt urban edges with a soft green foreground. There are distant views from the rolling clayland hills to the west of Cambridge, particularly around Haslingfield. The tower of Haslingfield church can be seen from the edge of the City and there are clear views of the historic collegiate core of Cambridge seen above the urban edge in the near distance.

The land between the River Cam and Trumpington Road rises up gently from the river and includes sports and recreational uses as well as arable land and tree cover. There is a mature tree belt along the eastern boundary with Trumpington Road and several tree belts within the site and along the River Cam which forms its western boundary. On the opposite (western) side of the river lie Grantchester meadows
and village. There are some some interrupted views over the river valley to the west.

This part of the western edge provides separation between the City and Grantchester and is also part of the rural river corridor that reaches into and through the City. The river corridor is a Defining Character.

This Green Belt western edge of Cambridge is one of the most sensitive areas of landscape around the City because of a combination of topography, open views and the proximity of the historic core of Cambridge to the edge of the City. All of these factors result in a landscape which very important to the setting of the City and for the purposes of Green Belt.

4.9 **Zone 10 – Land between Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road - University Northwest site**

The 2002 Study found that areas within the zone ranged between medium to very high in terms of importance to the setting of the City and high to very high for the importance to Green Belt. One area at the top of the slope and towards Huntingdon Road was found to be low in importance to Green Belt and setting. This was due to the landform protecting views into the area.

The majority of the land is on a western facing slope and clearly seen from the M11 and areas to the west (Madingley Hill). Views of the zone are mainly from the west and are of a well treed, abrupt urban edge at the top of an incline. Also included in the view is Girton College tower. Parts of the zone are Defining Character to Cambridge.

All areas except the area immediately adjacent to the M11 were subsequently released from Green Belt for development. The effect of developing this section will be to move the urban edge westward and closer to the M11. It will have a significant effect on the view from the elevated land to the west and from the motorway and will change the view from agricultural and pastoral fields to developed land and create a new urban edge to the city.

This will result in the strip of land between the M11 and the developed edge increasing in importance to the setting of the city and to Green Belt.

**5 CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 The most important factors that arise from this broad appraisal are summarised below:
Figure 3.5: Broad Location Options
and the sub-region is also an important factor.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY**

**Option 9 – Development within the urban area of Cambridge**

The Council has undertaken a SHLAA. This looked for sites with potential for residential development in Cambridge. The SHLAA identifies potential capacity for up to 2,060 new homes within the built up area of Cambridge.

One option would be to allocate some, or all, of these sites for development. This source of supply would help to meet the housing need in Cambridge without any changes to the current Green Belt boundary.

These homes would be on top of existing commitments of 10,612 (e.g. sites with planning permission or sites already allocated for development).

3.66 The following options set out the ten potential broad locations for development at the edge of Cambridge. As mentioned previously, broad locations 8, 9 and 10 fall outside the City boundary in South Cambridgeshire District Council. Any comments received will also be shared with that council. Broad location 3 falls only within the City boundary and all the other broad locations straddle the boundary.

3.67 Figure 3.5 indicates the ten broad location options.

**Option 10: Broad location 1: Land to the north & south of Barton Road**

**District:** Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council

**Ward/Parish:** Newnham, Coton and Grantchester

**Description:**

There is potential capacity for between 2,000 and 3,000 dwellings between the urban area and the administrative boundary, with significant additional land also in South Cambridgeshire.

**Context:**

Land on the western edge of the city up to the M11. A series of large agricultural fields and recreation grounds, mostly surrounded by hedgerows and occasional hedgerow trees, giving an open appearance when viewed from the west.

**Designations/constraints:**

- Whole area is designated as Green Belt;
- Adjacent to Cambridge West Conservation Area;
- University sports fields to east are protected private open space;
- Archaeological remains of various dates;
- Hedgerows east of M11 are a County Wildlife Site and several hedgerows within this location are designated as a City Wildlife Site;
- Parts of the location around Barton Road are within Flood Zones 2 and...
3a (medium to high probability of flooding);

- Part of the location would be affected by noise and air quality issues from the M11 and mitigation would be required;

- The location needs to be carefully considered in conjunction with ongoing development on the West Cambridge site, which was designed to create a new city edge;

- The uses alongside the edges of the area would raise potential overlooking issues; both within and out of the location;

- There are public rights of way to the north, to the west and through the centre.

**Planning history**

Land in this location has been previously considered for Green Belt release by a series of inspectors since 2002 (Structure Plan, Cambridge Local Plan and South Cambridgeshire Site Specific Policies Plan). In all cases Green Belt release was rejected because of the importance of the land to Green Belt purposes. Inspectors have accepted that the Barton Road approach to Cambridge is important because it is undeveloped, that development would impinge on views, and sometimes be directly in front of historic features, and that it would spoil the setting of the city even if set back and landscaped.

**Green Belt/landscape/townscape**

- The 2002 Inner Green Belt Boundary Study found that all areas within the zone were of medium to very high importance to the setting of the city and medium to very high importance to Green Belt purposes.

- The majority of this zone is on flat farmland with some slight elevation to the north and south of the area. The land is mostly arable and divided into relatively small fields with managed hedgerows and ditches. The area to the south of Barton Road provides separation and setting to Grantchester. The southern part of this zone comprises the River Cam and its associated river valley landscape. The elevated southern parts of the zone, nearer to the M11, create small plateaus that are sometimes screened by their landform and by vegetation.

- Views are usually open and of abrupt urban edges with a soft green foreground. There are distant views from the rolling clayland hills to the west of Cambridge, particularly around Haslingfield. The tower of Haslingfield church can be seen from the edge of the city and there are clear views of the historic collegiate core of Cambridge seen above the urban edge in the near distance.

- This section of Green Belt on the western edge of Cambridge is one of the most sensitive areas of landscape around the city because of a combination of topography, open views and the proximity of the historic core of Cambridge to the edge of the city. All of these factors
result in a landscape, which is very important to the setting of the city and for the purposes of Green Belt.

- In townscape terms the sites would represent a challenge to design in respect of achieving good points of access. Access points from either the Barton Road, Clerk Maxwell Road or from the High Cross part of the West Cambridge site would be necessary in order to enable a more comprehensive site layout and sufficient connectivity to the west side of the city. Access to existing minor residential streets e.g. Cranmer Road or Herschell Road, would need to be limited to pedestrian and cycling use only.

- Development could feel isolated from existing communities unless overcome with good urban design, connectivity and appropriate community provision to aid integration.

Supporting Infrastructure:

Beyond 400m from existing local facilities. New school provision necessary. Improved utilities required. Large scale development would require new neighbourhood centre to be provided.

Transport:

- The Highways Agency has commented that as it currently stands the A14 corridor cannot accommodate any significant additional levels of new development traffic. Furthermore, travel demand to/from this location is likely to be largely Cambridge-centric, although a significant number of journeys could impact upon the M11 at J12 and J13.

- The County Highways team has commented that access onto Barton Road is feasible but requires modelling. New public transport services would be required. A significant level of infrastructure would be required to encourage more sustainable transport links. Transport modelling would need to be undertaken to understand the full implications as a whole of further development on the transport network.
Figure 3.6: Broad location 1: Land to the north & south of Barton Road

Option 11: Broad location 2: Playing fields off Grantchester Road Newnham

District: Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council
Ward/Parish: Newnham and Grantchester

Description:
There is potential capacity for between 450 and 700 dwellings between the urban area and the administrative boundary, with additional land also in South Cambridgeshire.

Context:
The location comprises a number of college playing fields along with Wests Renault Rugby Football Ground located to the south of Newnham off Grantchester Road. The area is relatively level with views into open countryside to the south towards Grantchester and along the River Cam immediately east. The land is slightly elevated above the land to the east that forms part of the Cam river valley and Grantchester Meadows. The southern section of the Pembroke playing field is located in South Cambridgeshire.

Designations/constraints:
- The whole area is designated as Green Belt.
**SHLAA SITES 2012**

**Site ID:** Site 916  
**Site Name:** Grange Farm  
**Ward:** Newnham  
**Site Area in Hectares:** 44.03  
**Number of Units (constrained):**  
**Owner:** Owner known

### AVAILABILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</th>
<th>SCORE (GREEN, AMBER, RED)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site in use:</strong> Agriculture and Recreation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buildings in use:</strong> None</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Any legal issues:</strong> Not Known</td>
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### SUITABILITY  
**LEVEL 1: STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS**

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<tr>
<th>SITE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</th>
<th>SCORE (GREEN, AMBER, RED)</th>
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<td><strong>In Green Belt:</strong></td>
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Ten years ago, two studies were undertaken of the Green Belt surrounding Cambridge. These studies were the Cambridge City Council, ‘Inner Green Belt Boundary Study’ 2002 and the South Cambridgeshire District Council, ‘Cambridge Green Belt Study’ (prepared by Landscape Design Associates) 2002.

Ten years on the Council has produced a 2012 appraisal of the inner Green Belt. This specifically reconsiders zones of land immediately adjacent to the City in terms of the principles and function of the Green Belt. It does not identify specific areas with potential for further release.

The sites lies in Zone 9. The 2002 Study and the 2012 appraisal found that all areas within this zone were of medium to very high importance to the setting of the City and medium to very high importance to Green Belt purposes.

The majority of this zone is on flat farmland with some slight elevation to the north and south of the area. The land is mostly arable and divided into relatively small fields with managed hedgerows and ditches. Grantchester Village is located in the southern part of this zone. Also in the southern part of this zone is the river Cam and it associated river valley landscape. The elevated parts of the zone create small plateaus that are sometimes screened by their landform and by vegetation.

Views are usually open and of abrupt urban edges with a soft green foreground. There are distant views from the rolling clayland hills to the west of Cambridge, particularly around Haslingfield. The tower of Haslingfield church can be seen from the edge of the City and there are clear views of the historic collegiate core of Cambridge seen above the urban edge in the near distance.

The land between the River Cam and Trumington Road rises up gently from the river and includes sports and recreational uses as well as arable...
land and tree cover. There is a mature tree belt within the site and along the River Cam which forms its western boundary. On the opposite (western) side of the river lie Grantchester meadows and village. There are some interrupted views over the river valley to the west.

This part of the western edge provides separation between the City and Grantchester and is also part of the rural river corridor that reaches into and through the City. The river corridor is a defining Character to Cambridge.

This Green Belt western edge of Cambridge is one of the most sensitive areas of landscape around the City because of a combination of topography, open views and the proximity of the historic core of Cambridge to the edge of the City. All of these factors result in a landscape which very important to the setting of the City and for the purposes of Green Belt.

**In Area Flood Risk:** The location lies entirely within Flood Risk Zone 1 (the lowest level of river flood risk).

**European Nature Conservation Site:** No

**SSSI:** No

**Involve Demolition Listed Building:** No

**Affect Scheduled Ancient Monument:** No

**Affect Historic Park & Garden:** No

**Level 1 Conclusion:**
The site is within the Cambridge Green Belt. It is not the role of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Study to determine if land should be released from the Green Belt.

**Does the site warrant further assessment? Yes**

### LEVEL 2: SIGNIFICANT LOCAL CONSIDERATIONS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SITE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site designated Protected Open Space or meets criteria: No. However, the University Athletics Track to the east of the site is protected open space.</td>
<td>g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Nature Conservation importance:</strong> Site includes a number of hedgerows designated as City Wildlife Sites and supporting communities of declining farmland birds. Any development should seek to mitigate against loss of farmland by creating new lowland habitat for key species. Farmland bird populations may require off site mitigation. Full protected species surveys have yet to undertaken. Badgers, Otters, Bat species, Great Crested newt and others are all possible on this site. Area currently forms a good link between the network of City wildlife sites, gardens and the wider countryside.</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is the site Protected Industrial Land Policy P7/3 or in B1c, B2, B8 use:</strong> No</td>
<td>g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protected Trees on site:</strong> No</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relevant Planning History:</strong> Land in this location considered for Green Belt release by a series of Plan Inspectors since 2002 (Structure Plan, Cambridge Local Plan and South Cambs Site Specific Policies Plan). In all cases Green Belt release was rejected because of the importance of the land to Green Belt purposes. Part of this site was previously proposed the University of Cambridge for faculty development, including the construction of New West Road, but</td>
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was turned down at the 1996 Local Plan Inquiry primarily on Green Belt grounds, and led to the development of the West Cambridge site.

Cambridge Local Plan Inspectors Report 2006: Omission Site No.10 - Land South of West Cambridge Site (small site on northern edge of Site CC916) - The Inspector rejected this site for a new college and innovation centre on the basis it had been already been rejected by the Structure Plan Examination in Public panel, on Green Belt grounds. He found no reason to disagree with this despite the fact it adjoins the West Cambridge site. The Council's Inner Green Belt Boundary Study identified this site as being of high or medium importance to Green Belt in terms of its contribution to character and setting. He did not recommend its release for the following reasons:

- its contribution to the character and setting of the City;
- the site lies beyond the existing high visible and firm boundary to the built-up area to the north of the site (West Cambridge site);
- however carefully designed it would cause intrusion on views from the west towards the City centre and have a particular impact from the Coton footpath in narrowing available views from the west;
- would narrow views of the countryside to the west from the built up area reducing the green corridor that penetrates the built-up area; and
- there being no evidence of any need for College development, or innovation centre/employment land that could not be met through other allocations in the Plan.

The Section 106 Agreement attached to the West Cambridge planning permission in 1999 outlines in clauses 9 to 11 and 13 a number of triggers for improvements to pedestrian/cycle routes, including the Coton Footpath, based on the number of predicted and actual cycle movements in the area. Clauses 9 and 13 were exceeded 2008. Action is being taken to address Clause 9 whilst Clause 13 was completed in 2009. It is predicted that the development of the Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology building will trigger Clauses 10 and 11.

The northern boundary of the site appears to overlap with the planning application boundary of around 28 applications, primarily relating to the West Cambridge University development (including Plot B which is proposals for a Sports Centre), as well as cutting across a planting belt (triangle which is part of the West Cambridge site) and the pedestrian/cycle route to Coton.
Level 2 Conclusion:
Development of this site was turned down at the 1996 Local Plan Inquiry primarily on Green Belt grounds.

Planning Inspectors have collectively highlighted the importance of the following in the area;
- its contribution to the character and setting of the City;
- it lying beyond the existing high visible and firm boundary to the built-up area;
- intrusion on and narrowing views of towards the City Centre from the west (however carefully designed) - especially Coton footpath;
- reducing the green corridor that penetrates the built-up area; and
- there being no evidence of any need for College development, or innovation centre/employment land that could not be met through other allocations in the Plan.

In addition, if development was to proceed it will need to take account of the ecological value of the site and the wider area. This should be protected and enhanced as part of any development scheme and links to the network of ecological sites, and the impacts of wildlife in particular should be mitigated.

Does the site warrant further assessment? Yes

LEVEL 3: OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is there potential contamination on site?</strong> Major Development Environmental Impact Assessment required to assess site for contamination as a result of historic usage.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Any potential noise problems?</strong> Part of the site will be affected by noise from the M11. Noise survey and design and mitigation almost certainly required. Noise mitigation could involve landscaped bunds, physical barriers, site layout and use of specially designed dwellings.</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Could topography constrain development?</strong> The northern part of the site is fairly flat. The southern edges are at the top of a gentle slope down to the south.</td>
<td>g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affected by Air Quality Management Area?</strong> Major Development Environmental Impact Assessment required to assess likely major transport impact. Outside the Air Quality Management Area but air quality assessment required.</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCESS &amp; TRANSPORT CONSIDERATIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issues with car parking in local area:</strong> The site is not within the Cambridge controlled parking zone. Car parking will be an important design consideration for any new development and may then generate issues for further consideration.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Access meets highway standards:</strong> Highways Agency: As it stands the A14 corridor cannot accommodate any significant additional levels of new development traffic. There are proposed minor improvements to the A14 in the short term (within 2 years), which are expected to release a limited amount of capacity, however the nature and scale of these are yet to be determined. The Department for Transport are also carrying out a study looking at improving things longer term, in the wake of the withdrawn Ellington to Fen Ditton Scheme.</td>
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</table>
These sites are likely to be closely related to the M11 at Junctions 12 & 13, but are also very well related to the City Centre. As such they would warrant a robust transport assessment before the Highways Agency could come to a definitive view.

County Highways: This site could accommodate around 1,500 dwellings (all in the City). Based on the West Corridor Area Transport Plan this would generate approximately 12,750 all mode daily trips. The impact on the M11 junctions 12 and 13 along with the local network would need to be modelled. Any development would need to consider how it would interlink with the Cambridge North West development and the infrastructure that will be implemented. A full Transport Assessment and Residential Travel Plan would be required. This is a main Cambridge radial route for cyclists so any development would need to ensure that cyclists are fully taken into account. NB: County is currently updating the trip rate formulas.

It is not clear how this site would be accessed by vehicular traffic. Major works would be required on the Clerk Maxwell Road Bridge if it was to be converted to a vehicular access as long as it could be demonstrated that the junction could accommodate the additional traffic.

Improvements to the existing cycle way that the runs along the edge of the site between Coton and Madingley Road would be required.

S106 contributions and mitigation measures will be required where appropriate. Any Cambridge Area Transport Strategy or other plans will also need to be taken into account. NB: Also see Planning History column regarding S106 Agreement and cycle movement triggers on Coton Footpath.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the site provide access to other properties/highway?</th>
<th>g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The site is surrounded by a network of pathways, but there is no vehicular access through the site. The pathways will need to be taken into account in the urban design. As well as providing a constraint to development they offer a potential opportunity for sustainable development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Within 400m of high quality public transport route?</th>
<th>a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Citi 4 and Uni 4 bus routes run to the east and north of the site to Madingley Park &amp; Ride. However, no part of the site is within 400 metres of these bus routes and neither service meets the Local Plan (Policy 8/7) definition of high quality public transport.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DESIGN & IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nearby buildings overlook the site:</th>
<th>a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The uses alongside the edges of the site will raise potential overlooking issues; both within and out of the site.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site part of larger site or prejudice strategic site development?</th>
<th>a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This site does not in itself prejudice the development of another site, but it has access difficulties of its own. It could potentially be developed as a larger area in conjunction with Site 921 and other South Cambs sites to the south.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development would impact on setting of listed building:</th>
<th>g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site in or adjacent to Conservation Area:</th>
<th>g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development affect any Locally Listed Buildings?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development affects archaeological remains? National Grid Reference 542770 258530. Medieval cultivation and field remains of West Field cross entire area (09612). Unknown potential for this block - no archaeological remains have been recorded here. This was the case with an area to the north at the West Cambridge site, but recent archaeological works ahead of development along Charles Babbage Rd. reverted the understanding of the area. Thus, to the immediate north of the allocation area are Early and Middle Iron Age enclosed settlements and Romano-British settlements are known (Monuments in Cambridge - eg MCBs 15913, 14534). A programme of archaeological works should be undertaken prior to the submission of any planning application.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site shape impacts on developability?</td>
<td>No, unless key parts of the site can not be developed for other reasons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites integration with existing communities:</td>
<td>Development could feel quite isolated from existing communities, although any issues could be overcome with good urban design, good connectivity with West Cambridge, and appropriate community provision to aid integration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCESS TO SERVICES &amp; FACILITIES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site within 400m of City Centre:</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site within 400m of Local Centre:</td>
<td>No. The developer will need to liaise with the relevant service provider/s to determine the appropriate provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site within 400m of Doctors Surgery:</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site within 400m of Nursery School:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site within 400m of Primary School:</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site within 400m of Secondary School:</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site within 400m of public open space:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of site associated with a community facility:</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is site allocated in Local Plan?</td>
<td>Green Belt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the site allocated in Minerals and Waste LDF?</td>
<td>Site is not allocated for a minerals or waste use in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Site Specific Proposals Plan Feb 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the site in an area of major change?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will development be on previously developed land?</td>
<td>No (greenfield)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is site identified in the Council’s Employment Land Review?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER CONSIDERATIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other constraints on site? West Cambridge Site: The site needs to be careful considered in conjunction with ongoing development on the West Cambridge site, Site 921 and other potential South Cambs District Council sites, which may raise access and capacity constraints. The West Cambridge site was designed to create a new city edge and will need to be considered as part of any development proposals in this area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights of Way: The site is bordered on three sides by Rights of Way, which would need to be considered in any future development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities: Utilities upgrades required. The developer will need to liaise with the relevant service provider/s to determine the appropriate utility infrastructure provision.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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1 MCB is the CHER (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record)
Townscape Comments: The only obvious potential access to the site is via Clerk Maxwell Road from the north. The site is not an evenly shaped parcel and stretches very close to the eastern boundary of the M11. On its own e.g. without Site 921 or South Cambs site SC232, the whole of Site 916 would create an elongated, inefficient shape for a development site and push a considerable portion of development very close to the M11 (though it is relevant that it is partly in a cutting in this location). A second means of access to accommodate this number of units would be essential; though there is no obvious location for where this could be found, other than possibly from the westerly end of the West Cambridge site e.g. from High Cross.

Level 3 Conclusion:
Development of this site will need to address a wide range of issues including contamination, noise, air quality, access and other transport considerations, overlooking, other related development sites, potential archaeological implications, integration with existing communities, appropriate provision of local facilities, the fact the site is neither in an area of Major Change nor Previously Developed Land, relationship with West Cambridge, public rights of ways, utilities improvement, and wider urban design and townscape considerations.

Overall Conclusions:
The Council is not concluding on the suitability, availability, and achievability of this site as the principle of releasing any further land from the Green Belt has not been decided at this stage.

Questions relating to the principle of whether there should be more development on the edge of Cambridge and whether exceptional circumstances exist to justify the release of further land from the Green Belt to meet the housing and employment needs of the area are raised in the Issues and Options Report, which will be subject to six weeks public consultation.

The SHLAA will then revisit the conclusions on this and other strategic sites on the edge of the City.