

Harston Landscape Character Appraisal

Final report April 2024



Prepared in autumn 2023/spring 2024 as part of the evidence base for Harston's Neighbourhood Plan

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope of study

This landscape appraisal considers Harston Parish, but also takes account of land beyond the Parish boundary, where it contributes to the setting of the village.

This study responds to the desire of local residents to protect the rural character of the village and surrounding landscape (as evidenced in the result of the Residents Questionnaire *).

The overall aim of the study is to provide a sound evidence base for the preparation of policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. In particular, the study aims to:

- Identify the local characteristics of the Parish landscape which contribute towards Harston's sense of place.
- Identify village character areas.
- Identify significant landscapes/views, Local Green Space and village gateways to be protected/enhanced.
- Identify opportunities for biodiversity enhancement including the creation of nature networks.
- Understand the sensitivity of land adjacent to the village for housing development and to inform a village Design Code.
- Inform the route and design of the proposed East West Rail (EWR).

1.2 Approach

This appraisal has been carried out by local residents and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and has included a number of key stages as follows:

Community Involvement – identifying what matters

In spring 2023, local residents were encouraged to identify valued village views and provide a justification as to why they are important. These views were displayed with photos and maps at the village Jubilee event in May for feedback. Many included important open land within the views and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG) identified these and other Local Green Space (LGS) within the village on maps along with the display.

Desk Study

A desk top study identified and summarised information/data already available to help identify draft village and landscape character areas and produce background historical, physical and landuse maps of the parish.

Village Character Assessment

Field and desk top assessments were undertaken in April/May by members of the NPWG to define distinct village character areas using a standard character assessment sheet (Appendix 1). This provided a checklist for gathering data and a consistent form for recording data about the village form, layout and character. Information on the history and evolution of the village was also gathered. AECOM (consultants engaged to prepare the Harston Design Code & Guide) were then consulted and the boundaries of the draft character areas were refined to reflect those of the Design Code & Guide (September 2023).

* <https://harstonvillage.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Results-for-Jan-2023-all-household-survey-questionnaire.pdf>

Landscape Character Areas

Field assessment to consider the wider Parish landscape was undertaken on the 15 July 2023 by around 15 village volunteers. The volunteers were divided into 5 groups, each covering a different part of the parish. A basic habitat/biodiversity survey was undertaken noting land use, hedgerows, woodlands, trees and orchards, and a landscape character assessment was undertaken using a standard field survey form adapted from Foxton's Neighbourhood Plan survey, supplemented by photographs, sketches and annotated maps. The standard form looked at factors which influence and have informed landscape character, including physical influences such as geology, soils, topography, hydrology; and human influences such as land use, vegetation cover and field patterns. Also important were views and perceptions, scale, enclosure, diversity, balance, tranquillity and key views.

Workshops

Interactive Landscape Character Appraisal workshops were then held in September and early November 2023, with landscape architect Alison Farmer, to discuss how to draw together the evidence to robustly identify and describe what matters and why.

At the first workshop time was spent identifying key landscape qualities which define the Parish, as well as analysis identifying built and natural landmarks and village gateways.

At the second workshop time was spent looking at assessing sensitivity and also the structure of the landscape appraisal report, setting out key chapters on describing the baseline and evaluation/judgements. This included an interactive session considering 5 peripheral areas adjacent to the village in terms of their condition and intactness, role and function, value and sensitivities.

1.3 Location and context

Harston parish lies five miles south of Cambridge, to the east of the River Rhee. The River Rhee and its tributary Hoffer Brook form its western boundary, while its southeast boundary is defined by a ridge of low chalk hills. To the northeast the Parish is defined by hedgerows and a small section of the M11.

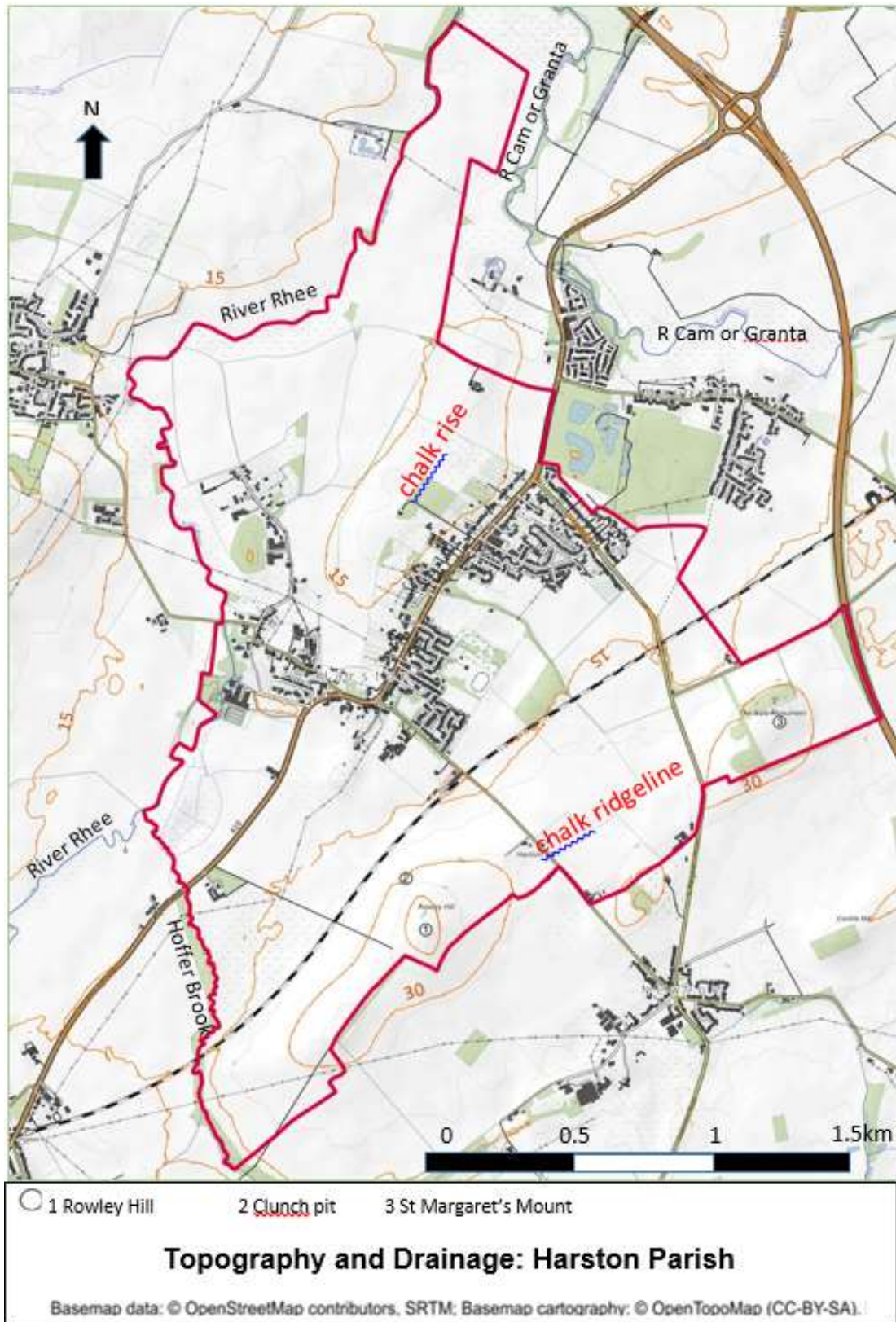
The A10 passes through the village connecting Foxton and Hauxton and southeast of the village is the Cambridge to London mainline railway. The nearest railway station is located in Foxton, 1.6 miles southwest.

Harston village comprises a main settlement along the A10 and a small but separate cluster of dwellings to the northwest called Button End. To the north of the Parish is the village of Hauxton and to the northwest on the other side of the River Rhee is the village of Haslingfield.

The village is set within the Cambridge Greenbelt and is surrounded largely by low lying arable farmland, with small scale pasture fields found on the village edge, and floodplain meadows along the Rhee in the west.

2.0 Physical Influences on Harston

The Harston landscape is a product of both its natural features, such as geology, topography, hydrology and the changes that man has made on the environment over time. Understanding how and why the landscape has changed informs future management and decision making.



Map1: Topography and drainage

2.1 Solid and Surface Geology

Chalk bedrock underlies the majority of the parish while to the northwest there is an area of Upper Greensand and Gault Clay. This bedrock geology has provided a local resource including chalk as a building material (known as clunch) and in lime kilns while the heavy clay was used in two local brick yards in the 19th century in the area to the west of Hill Top Farm (once called Brickfield House).

Surface geology includes river terrace deposits of sand and gravel found in the northern half of the parish and alluvium deposits along the River Rhee. The extraction of sand and gravel as a local resource is evident at Button End in the form of disused pits which have become overgrown with vegetation, providing valuable habitats.

2.2 Topography and drainage

Much of the parish is low lying, relatively flat land, below 15 metres AOD. The lowest lying areas occur along the length of the River Rhee where there are narrow linear meadows which flood in winter/spring after heavy rains. To the east of this floodplain the land rises slightly 3-4 metres onto the river terraces forming a natural location for settlement close to the river. Hoffer Brook, a tributary of the River Rhee runs along the parish's southern boundary.

Where the land is underlain with chalk, there is greater topographic variety including a slight rise in land to c. 20m between Button End and the main village to the east. Further south the land rises more noticeably to c. 50m forming a line of low chalk hills including St Margaret's Mount (43m) and Rowley's Hill (50m). Beyond the Parish to the west the land rises again forming another area of chalk hills at Money Hill.

The chalk acts as an aquifer and many artesian springs still run in the village.

2.3 Land use and habitats

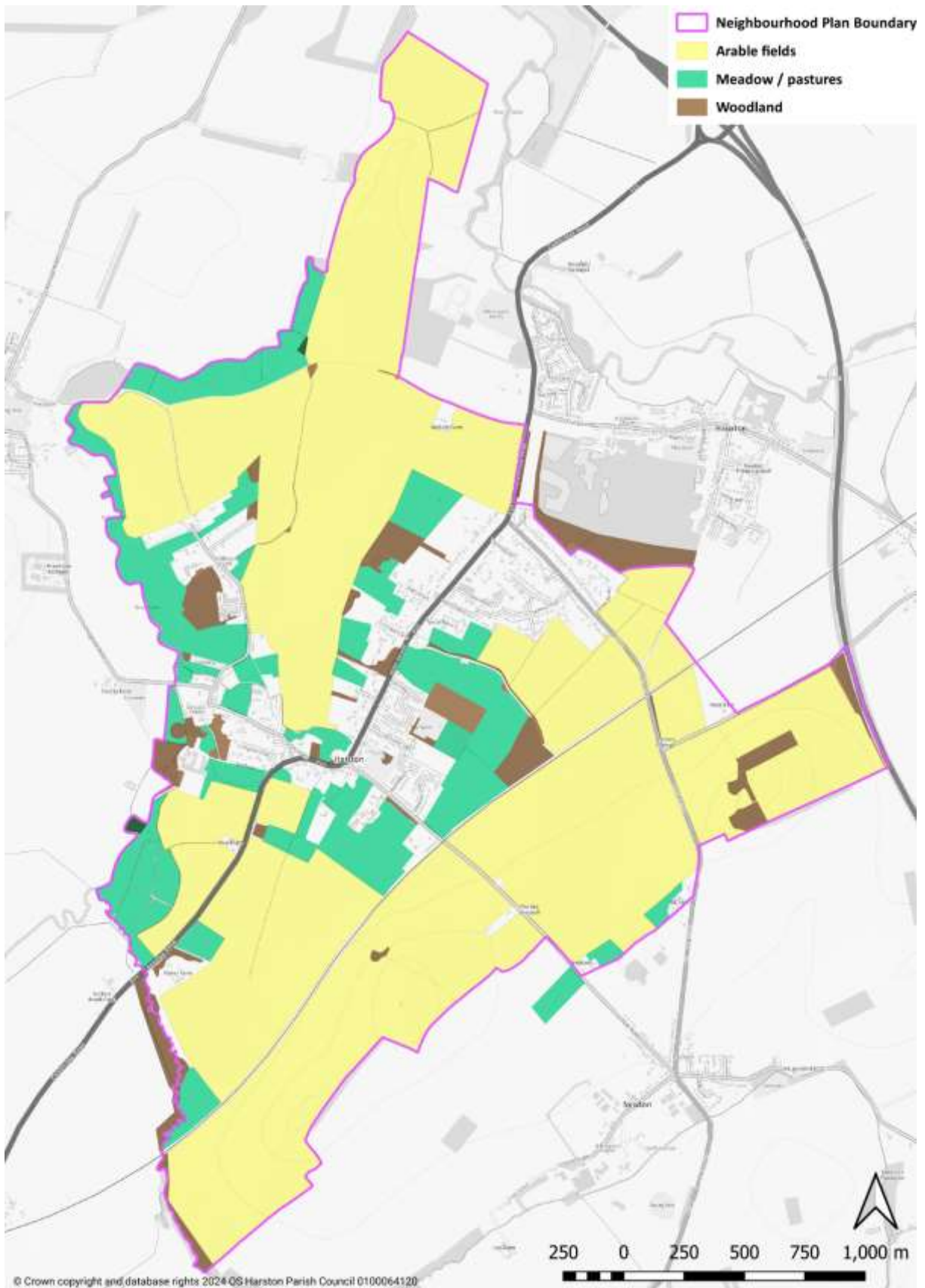
The Parish supports a range of land uses and habitats. The predominant land use is arable farmland set within large scale fields and a smaller scale pattern of pastures around the edges of the village defined by hedges. Along the margins of the Hoffer Brook and River Rhee there are significant areas of grazing marsh (priority habitat). These meadows have been extended to the north through reversion of arable to pasture as part of environmental stewardship schemes. A small area of lowland fen habitat can be found in Button End in an area of former sand extraction.

Woodland is relatively sparse although there is a distinct woodland clump on St Margaret's Mount associated with a disused chalk/lime pit. Another small clump of trees can be found on Rowley's Hill, while to the south there is a linear stand of trees along the ridge top.

There are a few small areas of woodland on low lying land including:

- Established woodland at The 'Rookery' just below 15m contour west of the railway;
- Regenerated woodland on disused gravel pits in Button End;
- Community Orchard (County Wildlife Site) off The Limes; and
- Private woodland near Hill Top farm, west of the High Street.

There are also several spinneys planted along Hoffer Brook Meadows, with the tree belt opposite on the Foxton side of the brook. Elsewhere in the parish, there are numerous substantial hedgerows with isolated clumps of mature trees along field boundaries.



Map 2: Harston's Landuse

Within the village are numerous individual and groups of mature trees which make a contribution to the street scene. They include trees within the former 'parkland' grounds of Harston Manor, a long narrow stand of trees along Station Rd by Beech Farm and trees surrounding the grounds of Harston House.

3. Historical Evolution

3.1 Prehistoric

Evidence (in the form of ditches, pits, postholes and three sunken-featured buildings) (H) reveals Bronze Age, Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon settlements & field system in the vicinity of Harston Mill where settlers took advantage of flat river terraces above the Rhee, drier chalk lands to the east and a river crossing point. At this time, the main routeway ran east-west linking the important prehistoric Mare Way on the chalk ridge to the west with villages to the east.

Nearby Button End was also the location of several excavated burials, which may be Anglo-Saxon in date, reinforcing the location of settlement in this western area by the river.



Map 3: Prehistoric Trackways -Source: An Atlas of Cambs & Hunts History

The remains of three kilns, probably used by a late Roman fine ware producer, just east of the chalk ridge (St Margaret's Mount) was probably more connected to travel routes. However, in the south of the parish, either side of the A10, cropmarks showing field system with ditches and pottery, indicate prehistoric barrows and Romano-British settlement next to Hoffer Brook. The site is a scheduled monument and is managed as permanent pasture (refer to Map 13).

3.2 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

The Domesday Book in 1086 recorded 4 manors, the main one by the river, and in total only 29 peasant householders comprising 7 villagers, 6 smallholders, 16 cottagers and their families with an estimated population of 160. Although the population fluctuated and increased slowly in medieval times, with 55-65 dwellings, there was no significant change until the 19th century and by 1801 the population totalled 412.

As indicated above the main routeway through Harston village was east-west. During the medieval period the route connecting the growing settlements of Royston and Cambridge developed forming the current A10 and High Street through the village. This change in the hierarchy of routes is reflected in the distinctive 'dog-legs' associated with the High Street and the creation of the two village greens at The (Swan) Green and (War Memorial) Green.

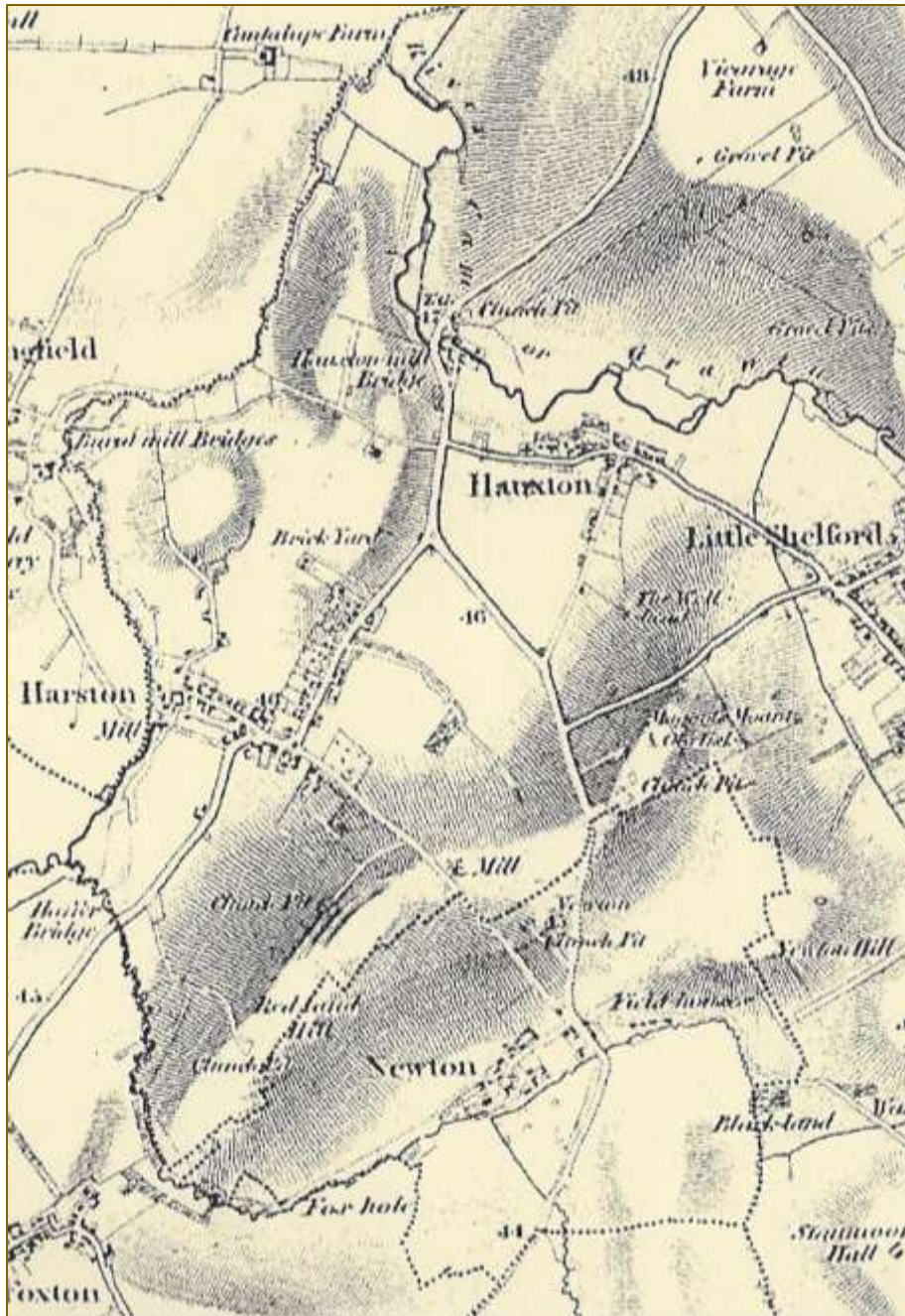
Change was more obvious in the 18th century (with traffic growing on the main road to Cambridge), resulting in the appearance of inns and turnpike, and an influx of labourers resulting from the exploitation of local minerals and gravels, and building of the railway.

The 1799 map produced to identify land to be enclosed and swapped by landowners in 1802 shows that it introduced many smaller strips for small landowners, in Button End, Station Rd (then Baggot Rd - the railway came in 1850s) and particularly along the east side of High Street which previously had been the Moor/Green. Building on the east side of the High Street occurred only after enclosure of fields (1802) with initially a few large, detached houses. Those with existing enclosures on the west side of the High Street gained large front gardens giving rise to a leafy character, where properties are set back from the main road.



Map 5: 1799 Inclosure Map for Harston, Hauxton & Newton - Fields numbered were already enclosed before 1799 (source: Cambridge Archives).

The 1799 map highlights the drainage pattern which still exists today, including two ditches to the east of High Street. The most significant of these drains westwards along the Drift (D on map) and turns south to flow alongside the High Street to meet the town ditch. From here it flows northwest of Church Street and crosses Button End to reach the Rhee. The Drift is the name given to this footpath along the drainage ditch that divided two new fields allocated at Inclosure and remains an important footpath today. In the northwest of the parish another ditch flows north, draining surrounding farmland and is lined by trees and hedgerows. Many of the ditches alongside the High Street were culverted in the second half of 20th century.



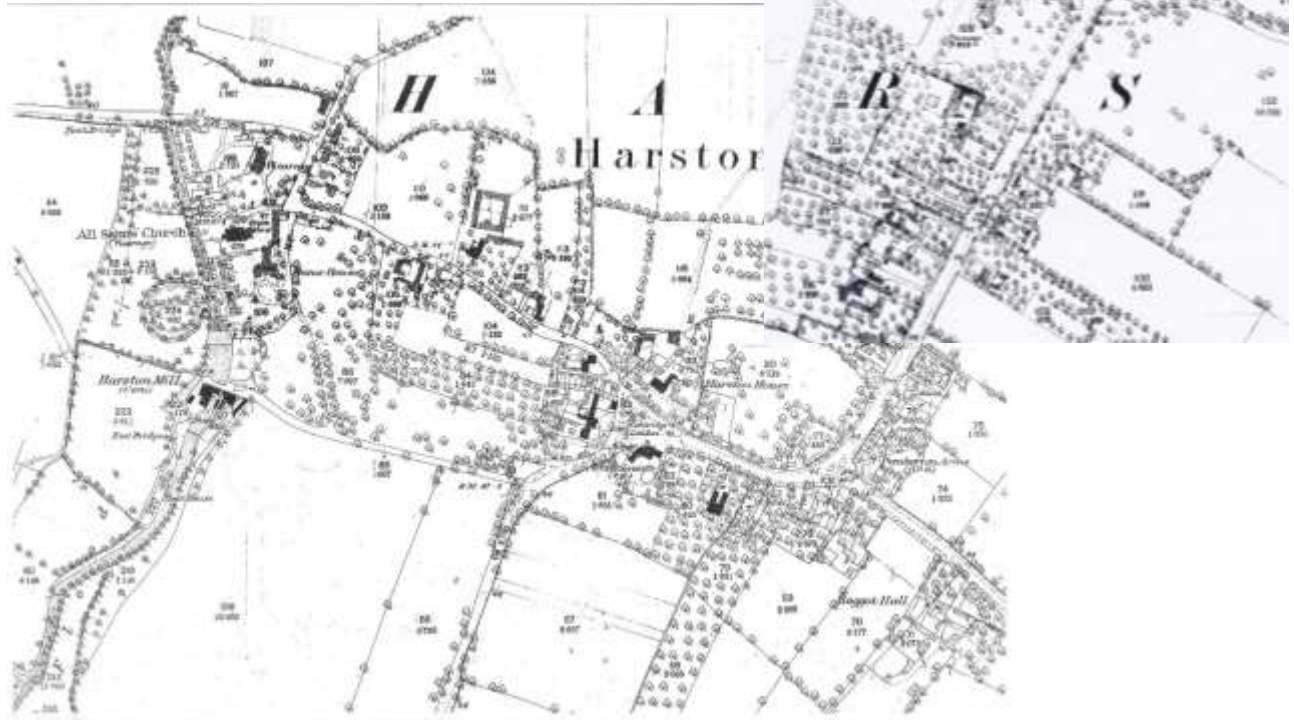
Map 6: 1805 map created from OS map series

The 1805 map shows the rough location of a Brick Yard to the north of the High Street where the field still has heavy clays. This was the northern extent of the village until about 1900.

Several clunch pits are also shown along the chalk ridge line and are still visible features today. The river crossing beside the Mill is still in use and Rowley's Hill appears to have originally been

called Redland Hill and was probably renamed after the Rowleys who took over the Manor in 1840s.

Map 7: 1885 OS map showing historic core, with some old enclosures:



The 1885 map shows a significant change comprising a new bridge across the Rhee, creating a new village road called Haslingfield Road. This meant that vehicle movement across the river was no longer next to the Mill, which was rebuilt 1880s, with little change in the position of its buildings. The footbridge by the Mill remained and was used by locals until about the late 1980s/90s when the Mill was redeveloped for new businesses.

From 1885 map you can see the village was well wooded, particularly along boundaries of enclosed fields. The regular rows of trees in some fields showed the emerging local orchards, the first recorded fruit dealers mentioned in Kelly's directory in 1875, with 4 growers mentioned in 1896 mostly located in southern part of village, around the historic core. Most cottages had some fruit trees within their grounds. Only a few remnants of these apple trees remain today.

Since enclosure in 1802 there have been some changes to farm buildings, particularly those of the main landowners. The farm buildings once next to the Manor changed location in 1850 to the south by the A10 and Manor Farm was rebuilt along with New Farm cottages. A few stable buildings remain today for non-agricultural use. This left land by the Manor to be landscaped for pleasure in addition to an existing circular moat and old fish ponds and it still retains this parkland. Beech Farm also removed old farm buildings from adjacent to the house to behind the house with a landscaped/pleasure garden in front & 20th century tennis court.

Park House was built by the Hurrells in 1854 with landscaped gardens around it as well as stables & barns. They also owned Manor Farm on the east side of High Street. The open land opposite in their ownership remains as pastures.

Harston House and lands were sold off at end of 19th century, the house becoming the residence of the Greene family, village benefactors for the next 55 years, and different fields were sold off enabling change.

The number of outlying farms & dispersed settlements increased within the parish, although Rectory estate and farm existed to the north of the parish at least by the 17th century – held originally by Bishopric of Ely, now by Jesus College. The windmill and cottage on Newton Rd was built around 1800 and the mill ruin remains, along with an overgrown orchard and small field. Enclosure/Gamekeepers Cottage and Moor Barn appeared on Shelford Rd.

Building on the east side of the High St happened only after enclosure of fields (1802) with initially a few large detached houses with areas of land, the new school in 1871, and a little north of that mid-19th century, two terraces of six labourers cottages either side of the High St. A further terrace of 12 had been built off the Green, although this may have been an extension of a smaller terrace. Apart from Victoria Terrace by Green Man Lane, two terraces remain and were gradually restored and improved once they had been sold off, rather than being rented, and provide smaller housing for the village.

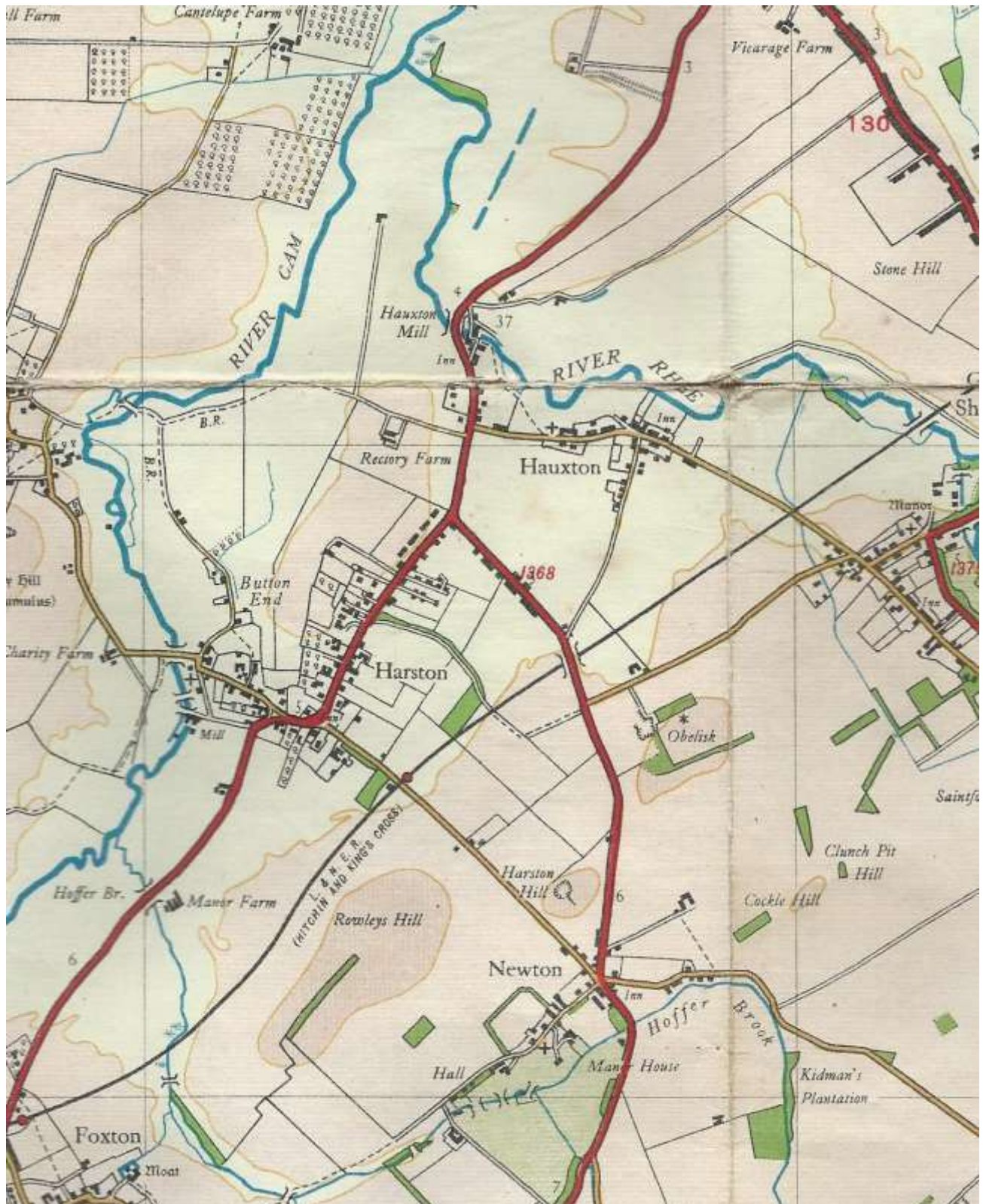
Harston Station had been built in 1850, with a large goods yard and sidings, as shown on 1901 map. It had a special raised platform to the east of the level crossing to make it easy to load horses on the train that were taken aboard in WW1. The railway chose the route along land below the lower part of the chalk hills and roughly parallel to the chalk ridge, marking the separation between lowland farmland and chalk hills, as seen on 1936 map. As it was a little way along the rural road, we know villagers would have a Sunday stroll to the station to watch the maids return by train to Cambridge after a day off. As now, the road had a long stretch of trees on the south side from Baggot Hall farm.

3.4 20th Century



Map 8 1901 OS map

The 1901 map shows little change but in meadows along The Rhee, some of the areas are marked liable to flood. Inset shows Rail Station and sidings



Map 9: 1936 OS Map

The 1936 map clearly shows the brideways and footpaths in the village that still remain, although for some reason the Button End path is now designated a footpath rather than brideway. The few woodlands are also shown. Only the wood near the station was largely cleared in 1930s when Birnham, now Tiptofts, house was built.

The topography is clear with chalk hills to the east, with the Obelisk to Gregory Wale (previous Lord of the Manor) erected after his death in 1739. It was visible from his family home in

Shelford, though not visible from Harston village, but can be reached by a public footpath from Shelford Rd.

There was further dispersed settlement. Hill Farm was located to the east on the parish boundary (London/Cambridge Rd) below St Margaret's Mount. Another residence was added to Newton Rd hill area. These dispersed areas on Newton Road remain largely residences today, some still enjoying producing their own food, as they did initially when small holdings/chicken farms. Their plots reflect their more rural setting, being well landscaped with mature trees, hedgerows, old orchards and veg plots.

The map shows the new line of larger detached houses/ribbon development built along north-west and north-east side of High St from 1900s onwards, and those in London Rd, many built 1930s onwards although a few earlier.

A few more houses had been built in Button End, with the large plots more clearly marked out in the 1946 map.

Also included along the southern side of Church St are a line of council houses built as a result of the 1919 Addison Act with relatively spacious layout inside and outside in comparison to old labourer's cottages that were in poor condition. Large gardens provided the means to grow vegetables and helped improve living conditions. Many are now owner occupied and well sought after.

The Swan Inn had been the main coaching Inn by The Green but burnt down in 1928, and in 1930 was replaced by 4 council houses and a detached house, designed by Sir W G Greene's architect to fit in with the historic character of the area. Other services (saddlers, bakers, butchers, Post Office) that had been found around the Green and War Memorial Green until early-mid 20th century gradually disappeared by which time shops and pubs were largely centred in southern half of High St near the Village Hall which had been erected in 1923. As the Greene family of Harston House owned most of the properties around the Green until the mid-20th century, the historic character has been retained but with renovated and updated buildings.

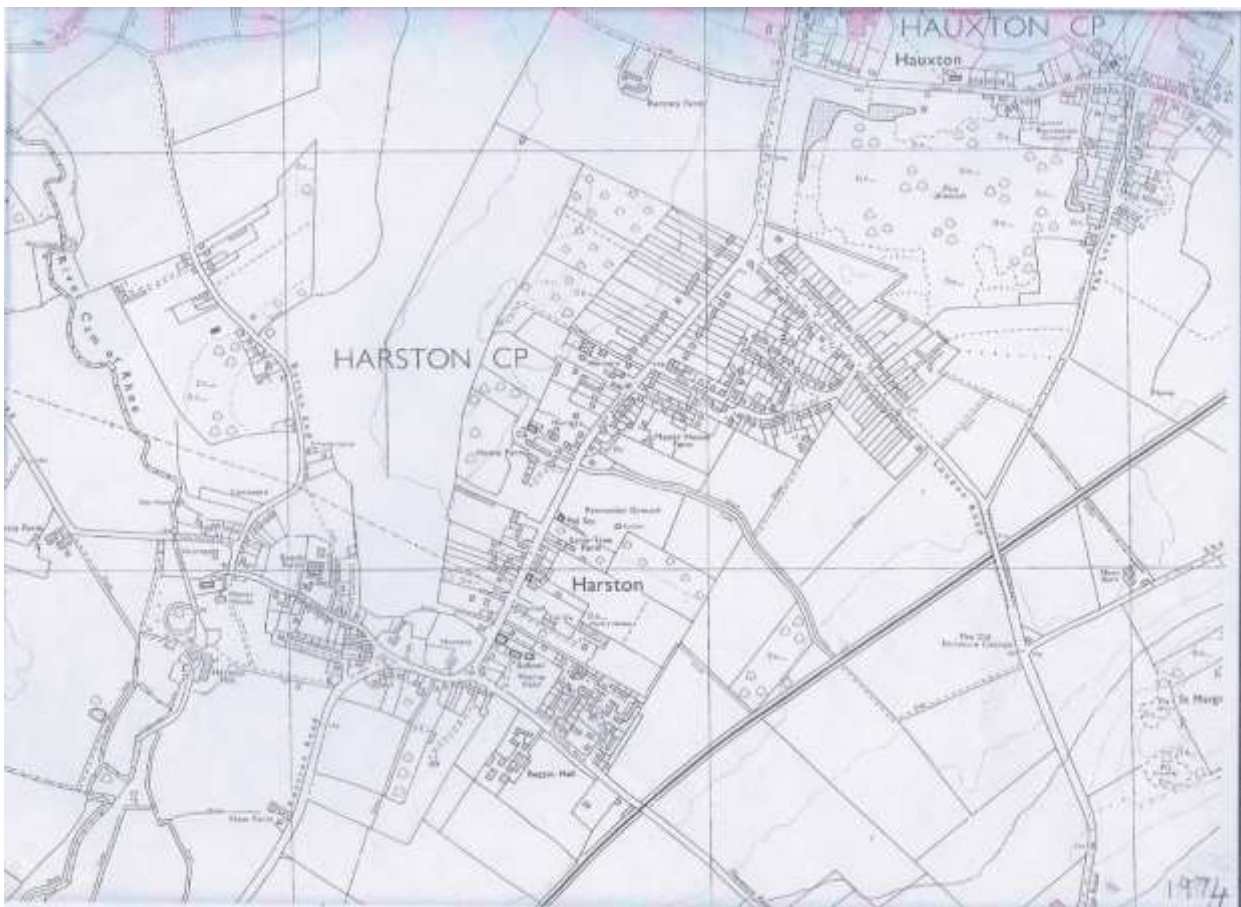


Map 10: 1946 OS map (source: Cambridge Collection)

The 1946 map shows the increase in orchards to the north and east of the High St with continued established fruit & veg growers/nurseries that took and sold produce in Cambridge as well as sending it as far afield as Dundee by train.

Many of the large residences set back from the High St on the west side were on long plots, once small farms or small holdings with chickens and orchards until mid-20th century. However, increasingly in 19th century, better off people moved out of Cambridge or elsewhere and retired to these larger residences. The small holding activities gradually disappeared and became residences only, but most retained very large gardens and numerous outhouses.

The 1946 map includes more council houses provided in the Footpath as a result of 1924 Act, and more at the beginning of Button End, again with large gardens but not quite so spacious. Still well sought after as they provide attractive, valuable smaller sized properties within the village. Particularly those in Button End retain a rural look with landscaped front gardens, despite adaptations to include driveways, and with a significant wide grass bank below the front gardens.



Map 11: 1971-4 OS Map

The 1971-4 map shows the arrival of housing estates rather than individual houses being built as in the past, to the east side of the village. Queen's Close was built from 1951 onwards, reached off London Rd but situated behind New Road off the High St. This provided a uniform large area of semi-detached houses around a triangular Green, with bungalows at the end of spurs and later development of higher density Meadow Way. While Queen's Close had large gardens that have gradually been converted to provide car parking spaces, Meadow Way have very small gardens with shared communal spaces and parking areas, the latter not quite sufficient.

The Paddock was built off Station Road in 1969 with semi and detached houses and then Lawrance Lea from 1971 onwards with detached houses. The large Limes estate, with detached houses, was built mid-1970s off the High Street, where the smaller Harston is labelled on map and a recreation ground created off it, south of the orchard in Dec 1988. Orchard Close was also built off the High St near the Village Hall, started in early 1990s.

The north side of London Road, previously within Hauxton parish was included within Harston parish around 1980.

3.5 21st Century

Due to the tight village framework around the village and Greenbelt restrictions the lack of available land meant further development has been concentrated on existing house plots or brownfield sites. A significant number of houses, particularly bungalows, in large plots, on the north side of London Rd were gradually demolished over 10 years from about 2010 onwards and replaced with two to three new houses on the same plot, with some very large houses set at the back of the plots. Orchard Close was extended back with 19 new houses built 2011-14. Further back garden developments have occurred near the southern edge off Royston Rd and a few more have permission to build.

Local farm buildings have been sold off and barns or stables have been converted to high-end residences adjacent to Park House, off the High St and those next to Beech Farm have permission to be demolished and replaced with 8 houses on Church St.

Key landmarks have been altered. The Three Horseshoes was renovated/almost completely rebuilt, but mostly in keeping with its surroundings to create Neptune furniture store, although two new houses are now being built behind. The Old English Gentleman/Vujon, which was a landmark at the northern gateway, has been demolished and replaced with a relatively high-density development with limited landscaping.

Opposite the War Memorial Green, with its listed War Memorial, a modern development of two semi-detached houses was built on the disused Pemberton Arms carpark. Permission has also been given to demolish and redevelop the pub, a 19th century local landmark.

11 houses were built to create The Pastures off the northern end of the High Street from 2016 onwards on green land within the village framework.

Harston's village sign, erected on the Green to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977, reflects the historical evolution and heritage of Harston. The millstone base is from the old mill provided by a long term landowner. The Beehive reflected the past importance of honey production, orchards behind in blossom providing the source for the bees' nectar. A rook on the sign indicated the presence of rookeries - we have a mature wood named the Rookery. At the bottom of the sign the chalk layers act as an aquifer, with artesian wells bored down or springs that appeared and the wells are still a feature of the village. The overlying flat fields are shown with the chalk ridge behind, and the rail line between the two going over the level crossing.



3.6 Summary of General Trends

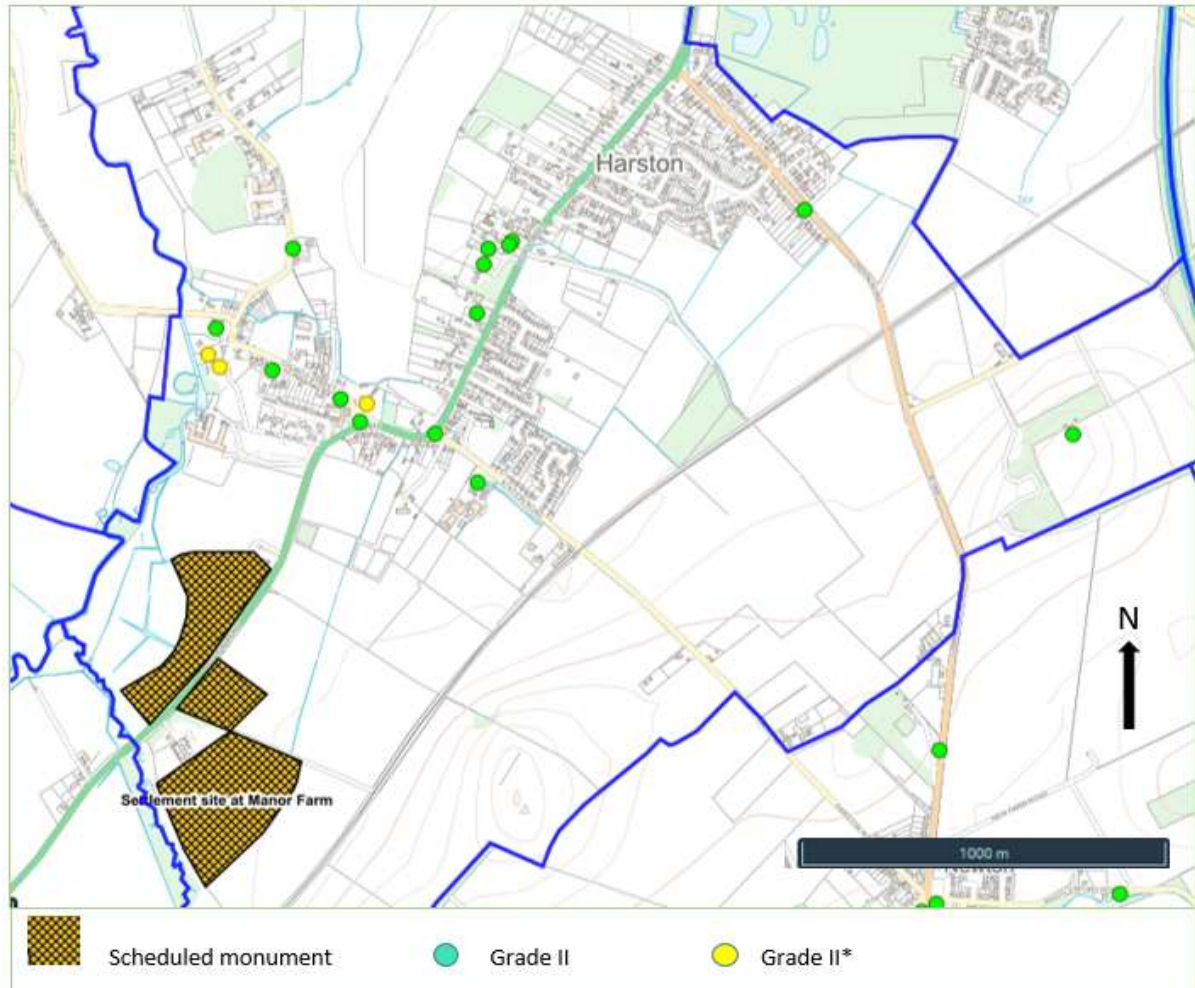
The analysis of historic maps helps to explain why the village is located where it is, why the settlement has its current form and also the geometry of the road network. It also explains the positioning of buildings along the High Street and the enclosure pattern of small fields surrounding the village with larger fields beyond.

The main period of growth and change associated with the village occurred in the 20th century with the building of large residential estates to the southeast, and northeast. In the 2021 census the population was 1,831.

4.0 Existing Designations and Policy Context

4.1 Cultural Heritage

Harston village does not have a Conservation Area, nevertheless it has a distinct historic core and 17 listed buildings or structures, a scheduled monument and 49 local heritage assets which have been submitted to the Cambridgeshire's Local Heritage List (between Mar 2022 and Dec 2023). These assets are listed in Appendix 4.



Map 12: Listed buildings & scheduled monument (Source: parishonline)

Other undesignated historic assets include the disused clunch/lime pits along the chalk ridge and two disused gravel/sand pit areas on the river terraces. The pattern of enclosure across the parish is also distinctive and contributes to local character comprising the small scale piecemeal enclosures/crofts close to the settlement and larger fields which were enclosed at a later date from former common and open fields.

4.2 Natural Heritage

Natural heritage designations are limited to two County Wildlife Sites. The first is located at Button End and comprises disused gravel/sand pits which have naturally regenerated to create a lowland fen habitat. The second is the Community Orchard next to the Recreation Ground. Both are shown on Local Policies plan map for Harston (Map 14).

Along the River Rhee the meadows are a priority habitat which have been extended to the north through environmental stewardship schemes which have encouraged reversion of arable to pasture.

Group and individual trees occur throughout the village, many with Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) as illustrated on Map 13.



Map 13: Tree Preservation Orders (Source: S Cambs district website)

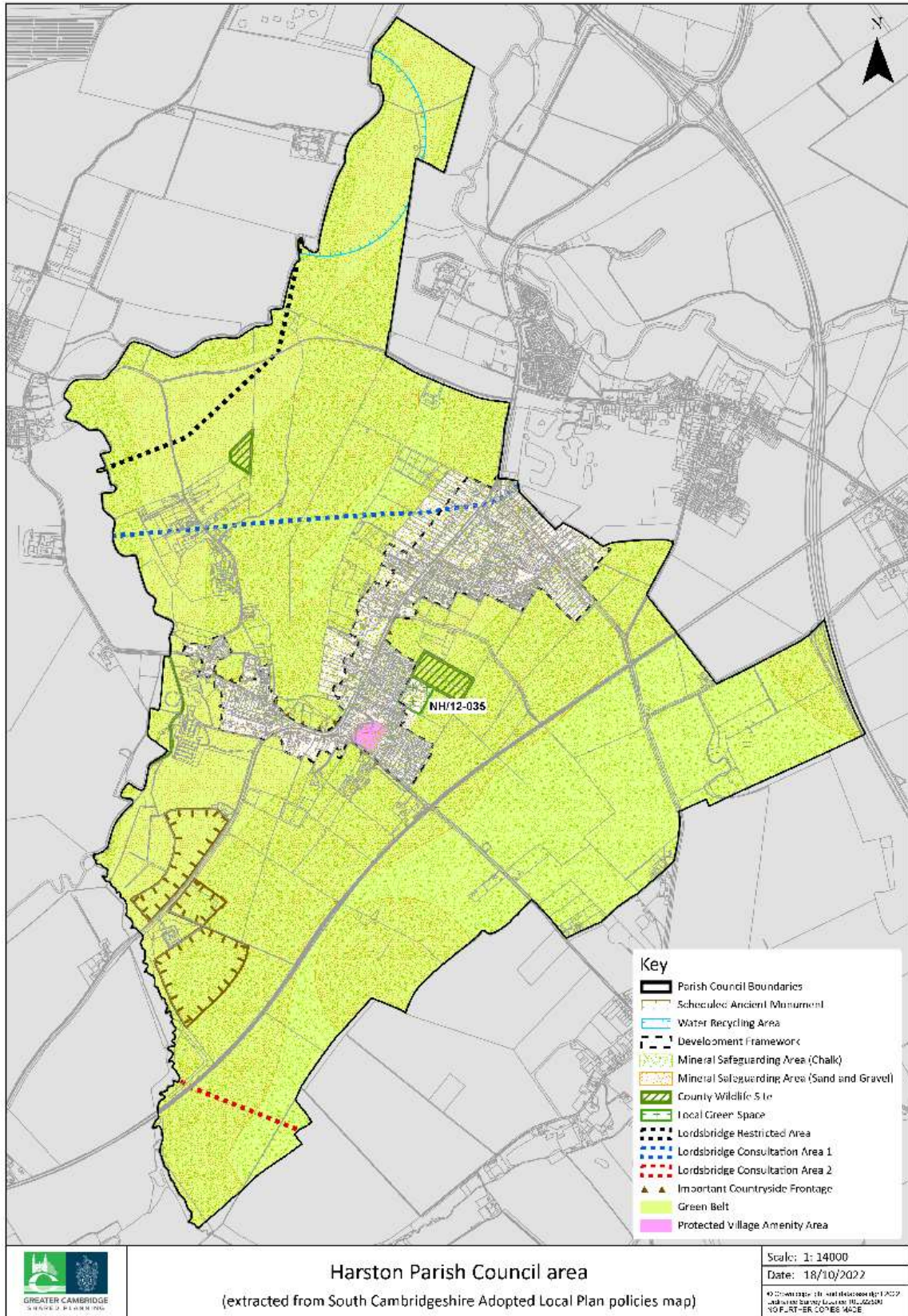
4.3 Local Plan Policies

The South Cambridgeshire 2018 Local Plan is the current adopted Local Plan and includes a number of policies relevant to Harston Parish which are illustrated on Map 15 below.

These policies include the following which are relevant to this landscape appraisal:

- **Greenbelt** (Policy No S/4)
- **Important Village Frontages** (High St, Station Rd, and Church Street) where countryside penetrates into the village (Policy NH/13)
- **Local Green Space** associated with the recreational ground (Policy NH/12)
- **Protected Village Amenity Area** associated with the school playing field (Policy NH/11)
- Extent of the **Village Framework** (Policy No S/7))

The South Cambs 2018 Adopted Local Plan designated Harston as a group village where development of only 8 houses, up to 15 on brownfield sites, would be allowed. However, there are no allocated housing or employment sites adjacent to the village or within the wider Parish within the adopted Local Plan.



Map 14: South Cambridgeshire Local Plan polices for Harston

The new Greater Cambridgeshire Local Plan (for South Cambs and Cambridge City combined) is currently under preparation. Consultation on the Housing and Economic Land Availability

Assessment (2021) included seven sites for the Harston Parish are illustrated on Map 15 and listed below:

- H16 corner High St/London Rd- already developed
- H13 & H14 High St west; H5 High St east
- H11 Royston Rd, H9 & H12 Station Rd

Other responses to Neighbourhood Plan call for sites included:

- H15 Button End,
- H7 & H8 by Manor,
- H10 Cambridge Rd, north of village
- H1, 2, 3, 4, 6 east of London Rd



Map 15: Call for sites - Harston NP 2023 blue, greater Cambridge HELAA 2021 red

These sites have been reviewed by AECOM (as part of locality for the Neighbourhood Plan) through desktop assessment and site assessment in October 2023. The desk top review discounted many as unsuitable and only 5 sites were looked at during site assessment namely H8, H12, H13, H14, H15. Apart from H8 all the others were brownfield sites or partly so.

Their final report showed H8 could be considered as possible infill for one house, while the other four were potentially suitable for allocation for housing, subject to the mitigation of identified constraints such as location in the Greenbelt.

H13 High St was within the village and not in the Greenbelt, but with some land outside the village framework. Site constraints included a highways constraint on vehicle trips on the

strategic road network and the need for a better access road, the present one being too narrow. To improve this would require knocking down a local heritage asset adjacent to a listed building.

H14 High Street likewise was not in the Greenbelt, was largely within the village framework or white land, and is already surrounded by residences so would not impact on the wider landscape. Site constraints included a highways constraint on vehicle trips on the strategic road network. A 6 dwellings estimate was deemed acceptable.

H12 – SIG Roofing site, Station Road is in the Greenbelt but comprises of previously developed land. AECOM report estimated 10 dwellings would be suitable and the development would need to retain visual enclosure so it doesn't affect the openness of the Greenbelt.

H15 – Centenary Works, Button End comprised of previously developed land but is in the Greenbelt where there is a very low density of housing, characterised by small 1-2 storey residences in individual large plots. Because of this the report suggested potential for 1-2 dwellings as more in keeping with the surrounding character & density, as long as it doesn't affect the openness of the Greenbelt area.

The following six sites below were considered unsuitable for allocation, as they are in the Greenbelt, but they all, **except H9**, have a part of them that potentially meet the South Cambridgeshire criteria for rural exception housing (RES):

- H5 – The Drift, Harston Land to the south of Shelford Road
- H6 – Pinder land (In trust for village), London Road, adjacent to No 67
- H8 – Harston Manor Grounds, Mill Rd
- H10 – Land south of Rectory Farm
- H11 – Land at Royston Road
- H9 – Land south of Station Road

Sites for Rural exception housing will be considered by the Parish Council & South Cambs once the results of the housing survey are made available.

There are several extant planning permissions relating to new residential development in the village - behind the Granary, Royston Rd, on Beech Farm off Church Street and above the Pemberton Arms on High St/Station Road.

4.4 East West Rail Proposals

EWR summary of proposals supplied to Harston Residents Group in Feb 2024: The proposed route of EWR will go south of Haslingfield village, passing through Chapel Hill, and crossing over the River Cam and its floodplain. It would then pass south of Harston village. This might necessitate an elevated track of up to (10-) 12m above ground level from Chapel Hill, Haslingfield, over the A10 to Rowley Hill/Newton Road, Harston where it would join the (King's Cross) Royston Branch Line via a new grade-separated junction. Presently EWR preferred configuration has the Kings Cross Line rising over the westbound EWR lines. The westbound EWR lines are likely to be cut into the northern side of Rowley's Hill.

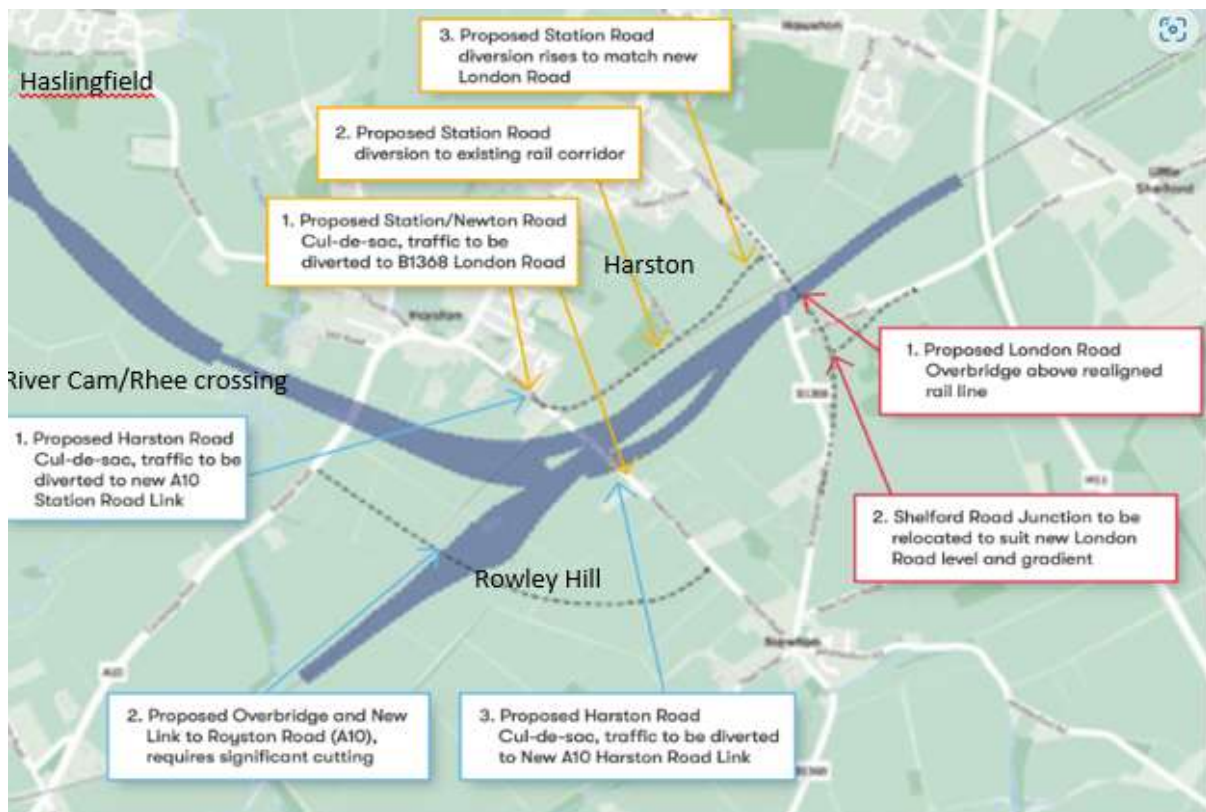
Map 16 shows the route of the proposed EWR.

Map 17 shows that to accommodate motorised traffic two new roads are being proposed; firstly from the A10 south of Harston bridged over the line to the top of the hill on the existing Newton Road. The second from Station Road along the proposed redundant line onto London Road. London Road and Shelford Road would need to be realigned to accommodate a new bridge over the line. EWR are currently revalidating alternative road highways alignments and connections in this area, and they expect to present their proposed road alignments at the next public statutory consultation, mid-2024. This includes taking into account feedback received on the potential diverted road link between Newton and Harston villages, including the visual impact of a road highway over the new railway.



Map 16: The proposed route of EWR (Source EWR Feb 2024)

During EWR 2021 non-statutory consultation, they presented outline details about where the new railway might need to be ‘in cutting’ or ‘on embankment / viaduct’ and displayed the ‘reasonable worst case’ scenario. Since local feedback they have been looking at potential opportunities to reduce or remove viaducts and embankments, by: Taking the railway under roads in cuttings instead of building viaducts over them. Making minor diversions to potential route alignments to allow the railway to be lowered. Diverting the roads over the railway on smaller overbridges instead of building viaducts over existing roads.



Map 17: Shows the full extent of the proposed East West Rail route past Harston

4.5 Other Supplementary Planning Guidance and Initiatives

Green Infrastructure in South Cambridgeshire

The Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) highlighted a number of issues and opportunities for South Cambridgeshire. Those which are relevant to Harston Parish include:

- Intensive modern agriculture has resulted in gappy or no hedgerows and fragmented wooded areas reducing biodiversity habitats and fragmented the remaining links between them. Landscape and biodiversity should be strengthened by managing, planting and linking woodland and reinforcing the surrounding landscape of hedged fields and parkland.
- Many villages feature small fields and paddocks and remnants of early enclosure, which provide a local landscape setting and opportunity for people to experience biodiversity and enjoy open spaces and other benefits. They should be considered to be an important part of local Green Infrastructure.
- More traditional approaches to land management – sustained over long periods or created more recently through initiatives such as environmental stewardship schemes – create landscapes and habitats of high quality that make a strong contribution to Green Infrastructure. These approaches should be supported and the areas created expanded and linked to others of similar value.
- Areas of calcareous grassland have become fragmented and need to be expanded and linked together in order to produce sustainable blocks of habitat.

- The chalk streams and tributaries of the River Cam are particularly important features of the district. Together with wetlands, the rivers provide opportunities for conservation, enhancement and increased public access and enjoyment.
- The land around watercourses and water bodies provide opportunities to help manage flood risk. This can be an integral and crucially important part of Green Infrastructure though it can also impose some constraints on what can be achieved.
- There is an opportunity to enhance the role of gateway sites, which attract visitors and provide a way into the countryside, integrating them with the Green Infrastructure network and exploiting their collective value.
- Rights of way, and similar public routes, provide opportunities for recreation as well as sustainable movement, and may act as wildlife corridors. Connecting settlements to the wider network of routes is important and gaps in the network around Cambridge have been identified.
- A large part of the district's population will continue to live in the rural areas and there may be local opportunities to enhance Green Infrastructure around and between villages which will serve the village community and enhance the wider strategic Green Infrastructure network.
- Heritage opportunities exist in some areas. Sites often combine historic and wildlife interest and form part of a wider historic pattern of routes, fields and other land uses. Heritage can also increase public understanding and enjoyment of an area through information boards and signs.

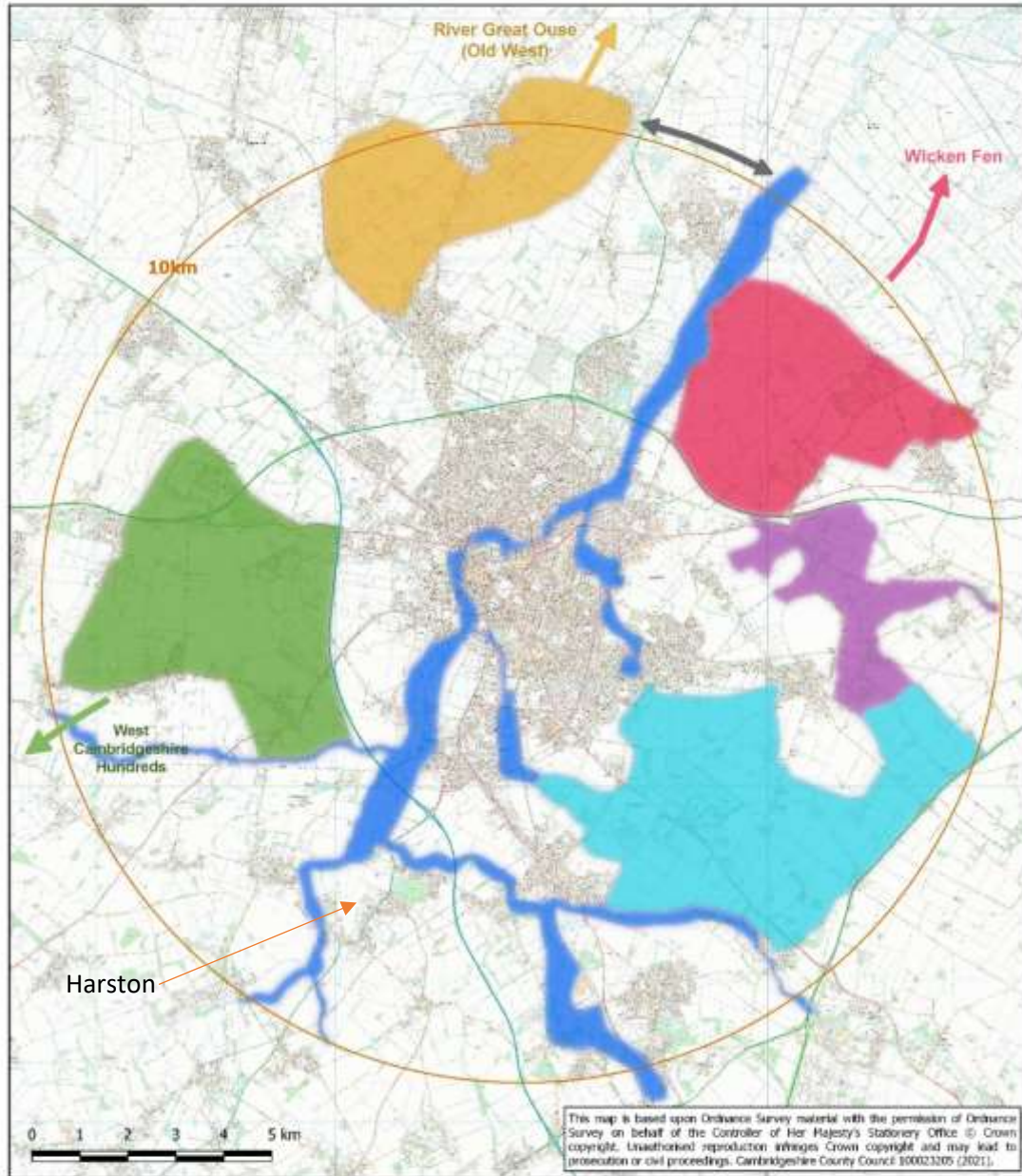
The Green Infrastructure priorities for South Cambridgeshire include:

- Providing Green Infrastructure to meet the needs of the expanding population of the district, Cambridge and sub-region.
- Securing new and enhanced Green Infrastructure and improved links to the wider network as part of the major developments on the Cambridge fringes
- Seeking opportunities with all new developments to incorporate and link to Green Infrastructure.
- Connecting and reinforcing habitats and landscape features.
- Conserving, enhancing and increasing the enjoyment of the district's rural and historic character.
- Improving access to Green Infrastructure across the District.

4.5 Cambridge Nature Network

Cambridge Nature Network

February 2021



Map 18: Extract from: The Current Priority Area Habitat Network (page 10 of report)

Nature Recovery Network

- Gog Magog Hills Priority Area
- Cambridge Fens Priority Area
- Boulder Clay and Woodlands Priority Area
- River Cam Corridor Priority Area
- Wicken Fen Vision South Priority Area
- Fen-edge Orchards and Drovers Opportunity Area

The Cambridge Nature Network report (2021) was prepared by the Wildlife Trust and Cambridge Past Present and Future, working with many local partners including South Cambridgeshire, Cambridge City, in discussion with landowners. It suggests how improvements within the 10km radius around Cambridge City can be made focusing on:

- a. Green infrastructure habitats, and how to create new stepping-stones to link up a nature network
- b. Accessibility to natural green spaces for public recreation and refreshment – vital needs for the health and wellbeing of the human population, as we have come to understand fully during the Covid-19 crisis. Natural England has defined an accessible natural greenspace standard (ANGSt)<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/65021>) although these are focussed on large towns or cities.

For nature networks to have financial sustainability the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) aims to encourage landowners and farmers to be part of improvements to biodiversity, flood protection, carbon storage or public access. Farmers are likely to diversify their approach to farming and provision of 10% farm habitats alongside food production, as well as regenerative farming practices to improve soil carbon, are likely to become more widespread, if not the new normal. Within Harston parish a number of farmers are interested in becoming involved in Farmer Clusters and several of the institutional landowners are also meeting to share knowledge and experience.

Five priority areas were identified in the Cambridge Nature Network report within the 10km radius around Cambridge City. Harston parish falls within The River Cam corridor priority area (as illustrated on Map 18).

The study identified existing large core habitat areas and locations for new core habitat or stepping stones within 2 Km of each other, aiming to achieve at least 30% land cover of wildlife-rich habitats across each Priority Area (refer to map 18). The core area nearest to Harston parish is Trumpington Meadows, just beyond its northern boundary and linked by a footpath/cycleway.

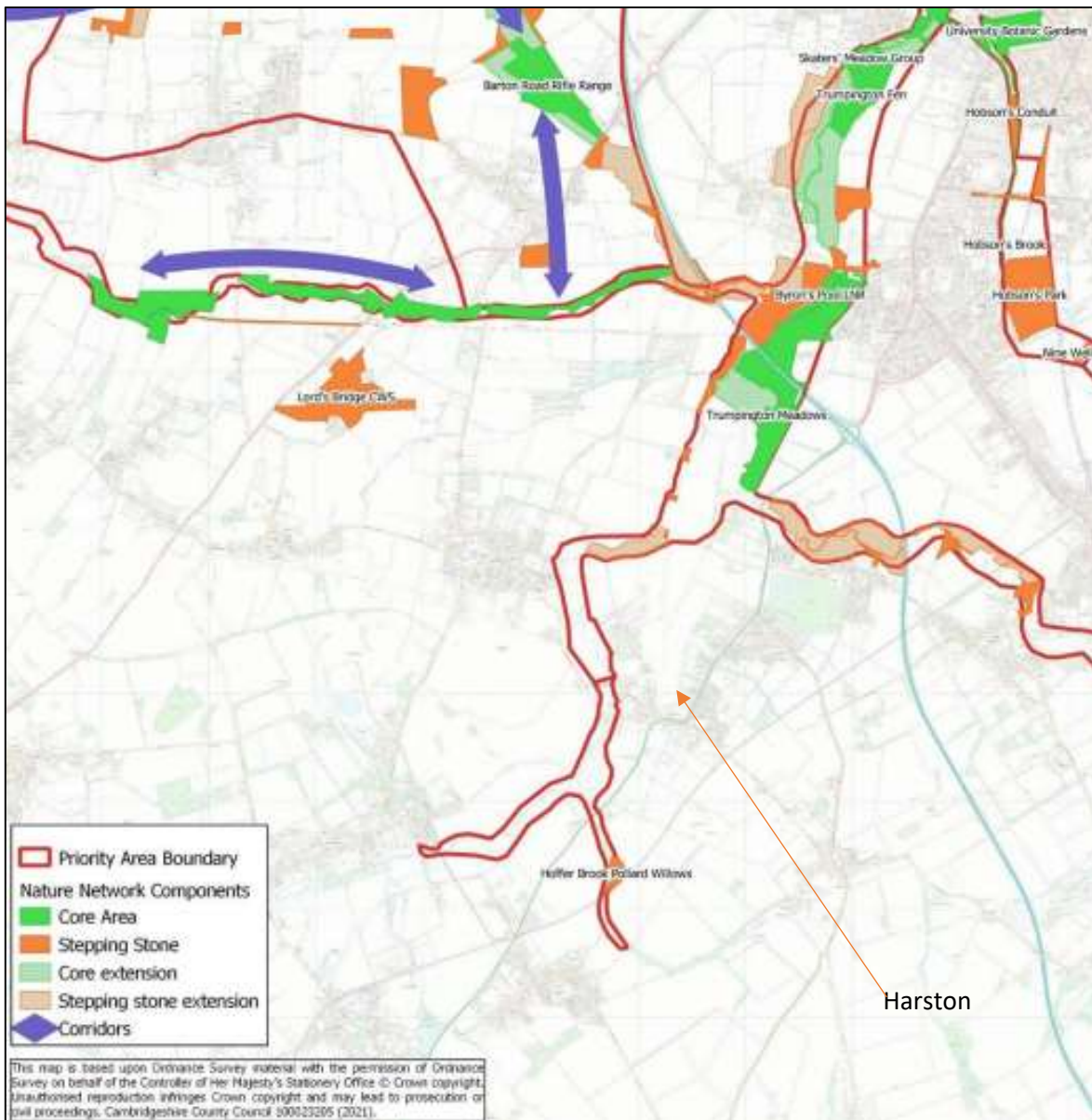
For the River Cam Corridor Priority Area, the report highlights that:

‘The approach to creation of an ecological network design for the River Cam Priority Area is best thought of as the river being the “chain” of a necklace, with high quality floodplain wetland or grassland habitats and more natural stretches of river habitats being the “beads” along the necklace.

*Creation of wetland habitats will be best in locations where a connection between the river and floodplain is present or can be re-created. The focus should therefore be **upstream of Cambridge** and the Trumpington Meadows core area. The most obvious and best locations for the creation of wetland stepping stones would be at the confluence of the Cam & Rhee where some fields previously converted to arable production, have not in recent years been used to grow crops.’*

It goes on to note that the river and its tributaries also suffer from a multitude of environmental degradation and ongoing problems including low flows, siltation, lack of sinuosity, lack of variation in the channel and flows etc. It states that:

*‘There is potential for **river restoration projects** to occur anywhere upstream of Cambridge, where the river has a less engineered channel with the potential for connectivity between the river and floodplain. However, the priority rivers within the Cam catchment remain the chalk streams of the upper Rhee, due to the internationally importance of chalk streams and their local highly degraded state’*



Map 19: Stepping Stone habitats in Harston along the River Rhee and Hoffer Brook

More broadly the report makes reference to significant areas of riverside land in arable production, with scope for increasing the extent of extensive floodplain grassland or woodland habitats, as part of a nature friendly approach to farming.

It also highlights the opportunity for improved access along the River Rhee corridor and the creation of circular routes of different lengths linking the villages south of Cambridge, including sections of the river.

Given that the River Rhee forms the western boundary to Harston Parish the vision for the river corridor is of relevance to this landscape appraisal and identification of environmental enhancement initiatives. Importantly the report states that the identified stepping stones are not the only locations where actions could be taken.

5.0 Landscape Character

5.1 Introduction

Landscape character assessment provides a framework for understanding ‘sense of place’ and informs the management of change in a way which positively contributes to the character of the area. Variations in the character of the landscape can be identified and described to help explain how the unique combination of elements and features make the landscape distinctive. Landscape can be classified as character areas¹ or character types.²

5.2 Existing landscape assessments (NCA and GCLCA)

National Character Areas (NCAs) have been developed by Natural England and cover the whole of England. The NCA relevant to Harston is **NCA 87: East Anglian Chalk** which is described as follows:

‘The underlying geology is Upper Cretaceous Chalk, which is covered in a surface deposit of ice and river-deposited material laid down during the last ice age. This creates a visually simple and uninterrupted landscape of smooth, rolling chalkland hills and large regular fields enclosed by low hawthorn hedges, with few trees, straight roads and expansive views.’

At a regional level the **East of England Landscape Typology** provides a more detailed classification of landscape types across the region. It therefore provides a fine-grained classification and divides Harston Parish into three landscape character types.

The **Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment** (2021) is the most recent character assessment covering Harston Parish and utilises the typology defined in the East of England assessment which are illustrated on Map 19). Detailed descriptions relating to the three landscape types within the parish can be found in Appendix 5 and are summarised below.

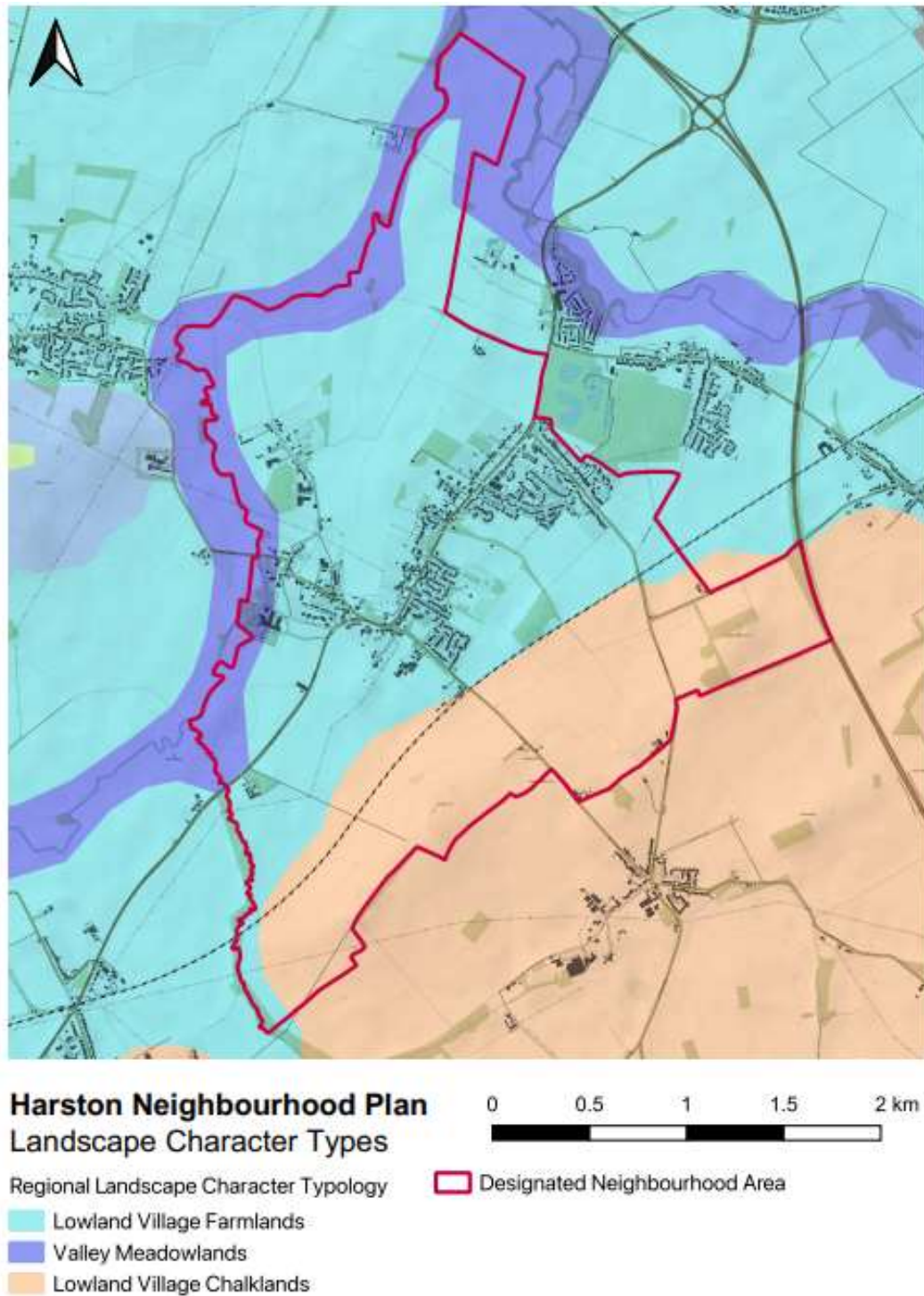
Lowland Village Farmlands: a well settled, low lying landscape that covers a large part of Greater Cambridge; extending from the north, around the west of Cambridge and through the south of the Study Area. The high density of settlement, intensive agriculture and major transport infrastructure contribute to an often busy, rural landscape.

Valley Meadowlands: flat, low lying valley floors that extend through the landscape south of Cambridge. The Valley Meadowlands support pastoral land use, associated with notable watercourses/rivers. They are generally unsettled, with occasional areas of carr woodland and gravel extraction lakes or ancient meres.

Lowland Village Chalklands: a low lying, but gently rolling arable landscape through the south and east of Greater Cambridge. It is dissected by small streams and has a distinctive pattern of nucleated villages and patchwork of woodlands and shelterbelts.

¹ Landscape Character Areas are unique and specific to one place. They focus on difference and distinctiveness, and are given a specific place name, such as the Rhee Valley meadowlands. For Harston there are four distinctive character areas shown on map Harston landscape character areas.

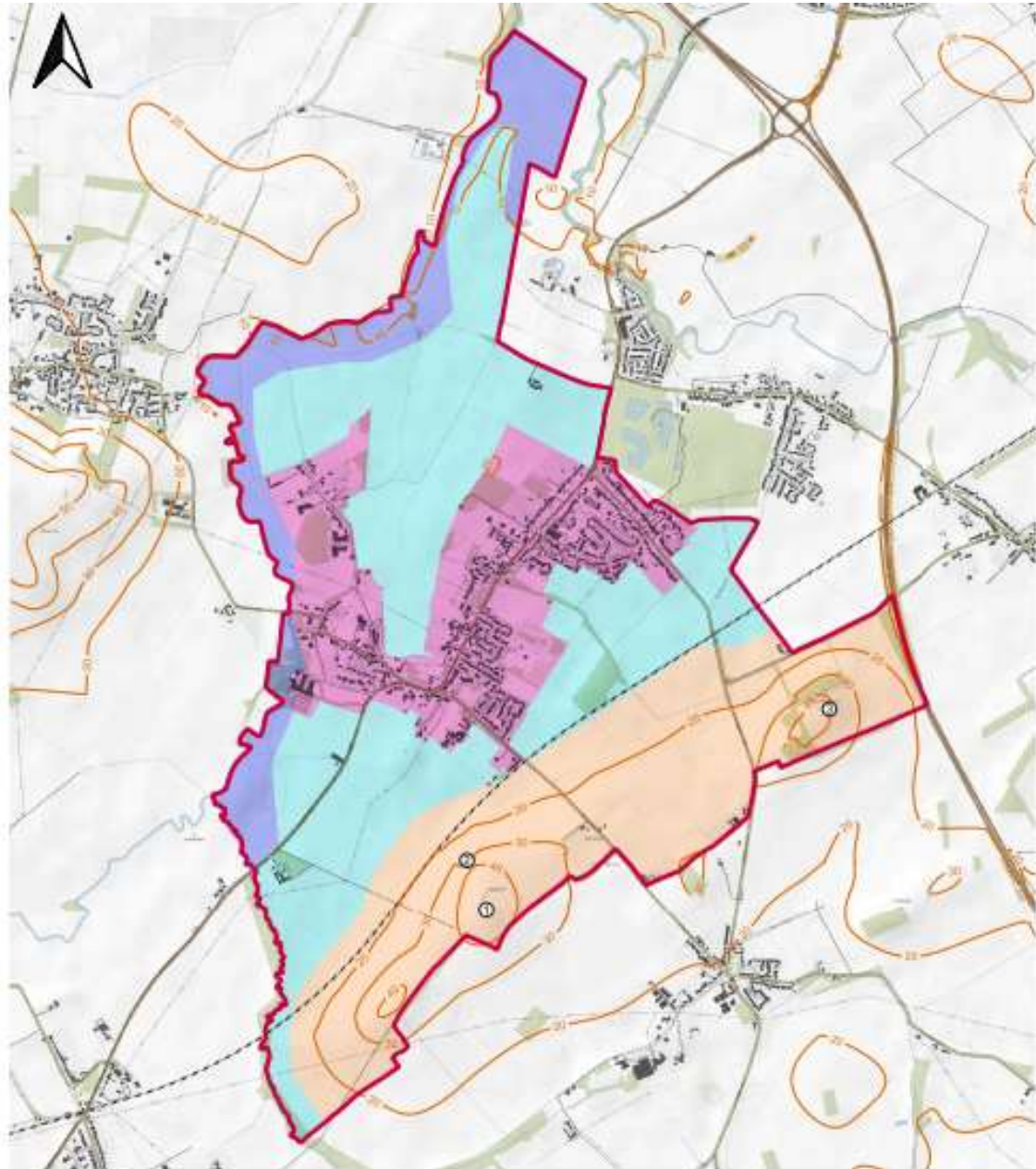
² Landscape Character Types are generic terms, so they can occur in different places. They allow different landscapes to be compared and have descriptive names such as valley meadowlands.



Map 20: Landscape character types defined in the East of England Typology and Greater Cambridgeshire Landscape Character Assessment

5.3 Local Character Areas

Local landscape character areas have been described for the parish based on the landscape types. Detailed descriptions of the unique local character areas has drawn on material from all of the above assessments and further site work. The character areas are illustrated on Map 20 and descriptions are provided below supported by photographs, sketches and the work of local artists. The built-up area of the village has been separately considered as part of the village landscape assessment.



Harston Neighbourhood Plan Harston Landscape Character Areas

0 0.5 1 1.5 km

- Harston Chalklands
- Harston Farmlands
- Harston Village
- Rhee Valley (Meadowlands)

- Designated Neighbourhood Area
- ① Rowley's Hill (50 m)
- ② Disused Clunch Pit
- ③ St Margaret's Mount (43 m)

Basemap data: © OpenStreetMap contributors, SRTM; Basemap cartography: © OpenTopoMap (CC-BY-SA). Harston Character Areas adapted from regional landscape character typology data from Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment © Chris Blandford Associates 2021.

Map 21: Harston Local Landscape Character Areas

Rhee Valley Meadowlands

The western boundary of Harston parish is delineated by the sinuous path traced by the River Rhee and its tributary the Hoffer Brook which flow northwards towards Cambridge. The chalk watercourses are slow flowing, meandering along the narrow floodplain between Harston, Barrington and Haslingfield. The River Rhee can only be seen by the public at limited viewpoints, from the bridge on Haslingfield Road and by Burnt Mill Bridge on the footpath to Haslingfield, introducing intermittent localised noise and movement. Views of this generally tranquil, rural landscape are restricted by the number of riparian trees (e.g. Willow and ash) that line its banks and these can be seen from across the adjoining farmland landscape to the east.



River Rhee by Joy Richardson (looking north from Haslingfield bridge), which captures the intimate enclosed character to the watercourse, riparian vegetation and patterns of dappled light.

Harston meadow lands are found in the narrow flat floodplain of the Rhee, although the majority are not accessible to the public and lie below a river terrace of some 3-5 metres in height in places, with hedgerow and tree boundaries. Settlement has been on land above the river terrace.

The meadows with their network of hedgerows and riparian trees (large willows, ash and other trees (group listed) provide an important eco-system and a wildlife sanctuary and are used for hay and grazing. They are also home to otters, kingfishers, marbled white butterflies, blue damselflies, water voles and black caps amongst other species which reside on this stretch of the river.

Most of these meadows flood during heavy rains in winter or spring, often for several months at a time when grazing animals are moved to slightly higher ground. Photo below of meadows (priority floodplain grazing marshes) looking north from cemetery, with tree-lined River Rhee meandering to left and hedgerow and scrub on top of river terrace to right. The meadow is enclosed by all the trees and a small block of woodland and cannot be seen from the pastures and settlement to the east creating a simple, small scale landscape so views are generally short.



Photograph below of the 'Chestnuts' meadow to the west of the River Rhee. This forms part of Harston Manor grounds. It regularly floods in the spring, sometimes across the road into the village. The row of 25 chestnut trees (group TPOs), along the western boundary of the meadow, line the well-used footpath to Barrington and can be seen in the distance in the winter.



Photograph showing view from the church yard across the river to Chestnuts meadow. The churchyard which runs down to the river is maintained in an eco-friendly manner, e.g. leaving patches of grass unmown in the summer months to encourage pollinating insects.



View of flooded meadows from Haslingfield Rd bridge south towards historic church and grounds of Rhee House (old vicarage Grade II listed), show the historic character of this river landscape area that changes with the different seasons. John Sutton copyright. www.geograph.org.uk/photo/7446448,

This part of the village's historic core bordering the meadow lands also contains the Mill and Manor (Grade II listed) which has landscaped gardens that slope down to the river. Sagentia, a scientific and technology innovation and consultancy company, at Harston Mill also have 15 acres of campus environment that employees can benefit from that allows access across the river at the river's original crossing point.



Meadows by the river in north-west of the parish have been put under environmental stewardship schemes, some sown with wildflowers and left as wild areas, with permissive or public footpaths or rides along the farmland, but not river, edges (left photo). A meadow field by Burnt Mill Bridge encourages access by the public to enjoy the river and nearby weir (right photo).



View of flooded land (April 2023) with rising slopes of Money Hill in Haslingfield parish beyond.

South of the village, near New Farm are priority floodplain grazing marshes along the Rhee which are grazed by cattle. Both the River Rhee and Hoffers Brook have had riverbank restoration projects to prevent silt entering the rivers and to limit bank damage by cattle.

East of A10 along Hoffers Brook is a private nature reserve, Hoffers Brook Meadows, which is occasionally open to the public when snowdrops are carpeting under the trees. In places young willows and other trees have been planted along the brook including spinneys of birch and oak, while meadows have been sown with wildflowers on land not sprayed in 30 years. Meadows are cut for hay, then grazed for a few months. Lines of old chestnut trees similar to those in the Manor's Chestnut field still exist at the northern end, as this land was also once owned by Harston Manor. This preserves a valuable habitat that reinforces the character of this meadow land area.

Harston Chalklands

Harston chalklands lie southeast of the village and comprise a series of gently rolling hills, forming a significant visual ridge aligned SW-NE. This rising land provides an important backdrop and setting to the village. It has a low point of 15m AOD in the north, 43m at St Margaret's Mount and a high point of 50m AOD at Rowley's Hill to southeast. The railway line sits discretely at the lowest point of the hill, running largely along the 15m contour, separating the chalklands from the village.

From Newton Road, tall trees and hedges, along with a small scrubland area transition to managed, large scale arable fields and the gradual, smooth flowing slopes of Rowley's Hill to the south, with its distinctive trees groups atop and with the occasional field of poppies that add to the qualities of the scene.



View of Rowley's Hill which is a distinctive land feature that can be seen from the farmlands in numerous places within the parish, showing its importance to the character of the area.



View south over chalklands from Shelford Road footpath towards Rowley's Hill.

These open and expansive chalk slopes with their large and low cut hedgerows form a sweep of changing arable crops which provide visual interest throughout the seasons. The distinctive profile of the ridge is set against an ever-changing vast sky and has inspired local artists.



Rowley's Hill has also inspired local artists reflecting its importance in terms of local sense of place. Painting by Mark Williamson.



From Rowley's Hill there are elevated views across Harston village which is cloaked in woodland to the rising hills of Barrington in the distance. Painting by Joy Richardson.

Historic and cultural interest ancient woodland around disused chalk pits and the obelisk monument on top of St Margaret's Mount, which has links to Harston Manor's history but is not visible from within Harston parish. On the summit of Newton Hill are the remnants of a historic windmill [built c 1802] and an antiquated Royal Observer Corps (ROC) bunker, adding allure to the character of the area.

There are no nature conservation designations in this landscape but the grass verges and field margins reflect calcareous grassland assemblages and wildlife, including roe deer, muntjak, hares, rabbits, foxes, partridges, pheasants, red kites and woodpeckers are regularly seen.



View of St Margaret's Mount ENE from Newton Road, beyond the level crossing.

This landscape has a strong tranquillity in part due to its limited settlement which comprises just a few dispersed residences with captivating architectural features on the summit of Newton Hill. The relatively quiet roads and emptiness of the landscape means that the sounds of the wind and birdsong add to a feeling of tranquillity. Overall, this area is considered to be a calm and peaceful rural landscape.

Harston Farmlands

Harston farmlands are on low-lying almost flat land to the north, south and east of the village, providing the wider setting to the village. A slight rise in land occurs between Button End and the main village of Harston, creating visual separation between these two parts of the settlement.

This area is an intensively farmed landscape with medium to large rectangular arable fields, open in character and often with extensive views to rising land beyond. Fields are enclosed by a network of mature hedgerows bounded by a few straight ditches, with numerous large trees especially along the A10. Views can be seen through gaps in the hedgerows on the A10 to the rising land at Rowley's Hill to the northwest. To the southwest the views over the flat fields are foreshortened by the river Rhee tree line, with the Barrington-Haslingfield chalk hills and ridge in the distance. Despite the busy, noisy A10, walking alongside on the cycleway gives a surprisingly rural feel as there are wide grass verges either side, and the road corridor is flanked by established, well maintained hedgerows and some tall trees.

Many of the smaller scale fields found at the edge of the village have been included in the village character area, but those pastures to south and north east of Baggot Hall farm give a localised intimate character and visual enclosure for this part of the farmland.



View looking northwest across the tree line of the River Rhee to the rising land at Money Hill beyond.



View along the A10 showing verges which have been cut in stages to encourage wildflowers .



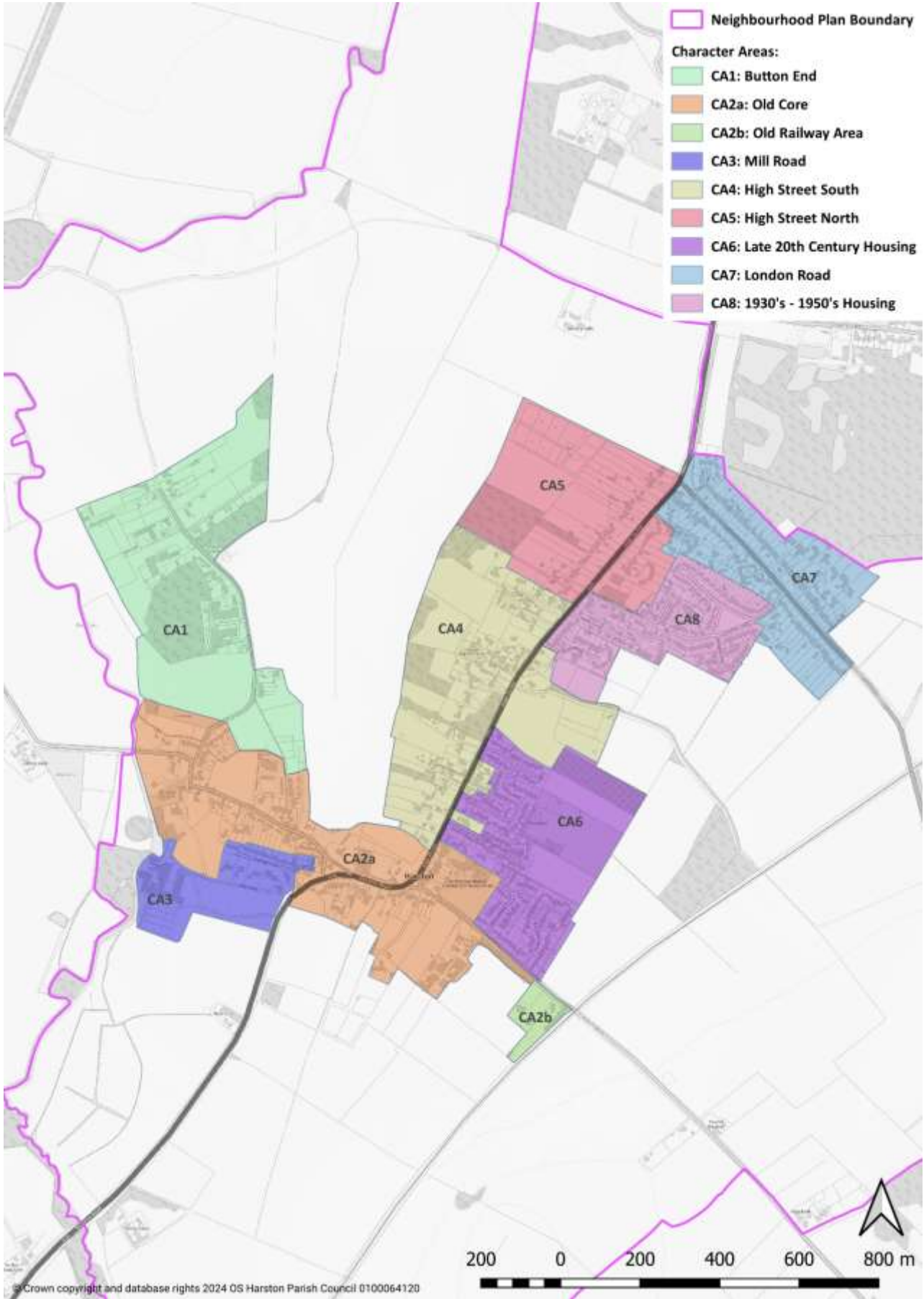
Painting by Joy Richardson illustrating how the tree-lined ditches and field edges add to the character of the area, as well as the vibrant crop colours. Ms Richardson described this view 'I was captivated by this April view of trees feathering into green while the oil seed rape blazed golden'.

To the north of the village is a large area of farmland, part of Beech Farm, and although the buildings of the latter are no longer used (soon to be redeveloped as residences off Church St), arable crops are grown on the long fields aligned in north-south direction by a tenant farmer from the next village. These fields are divided by tree lined ditches with wide grass field edges, providing important habitats for wildlife. Some of the grass edges have permissive paths which have been walked by villagers for many years and allow for circular walks in this area connecting to several public footpaths- from Button End (Harston), Haslingfield & Hauxton. This area is particularly important to local people, in terms of enjoyment, access to nature and mental health benefits.



View from the east west bridleway between the A10 and River Rhee which traverses the northern part of this character area. The noise of the A10 is quickly left behind as views open up across the river corridor to the west and north. To the south the northern edge of the village is fairly well screened with trees, bushes and hedgerows but some houses or parts of them are visible.

5.4 Harston Village Character Areas



Map 22: Harston Village Character areas

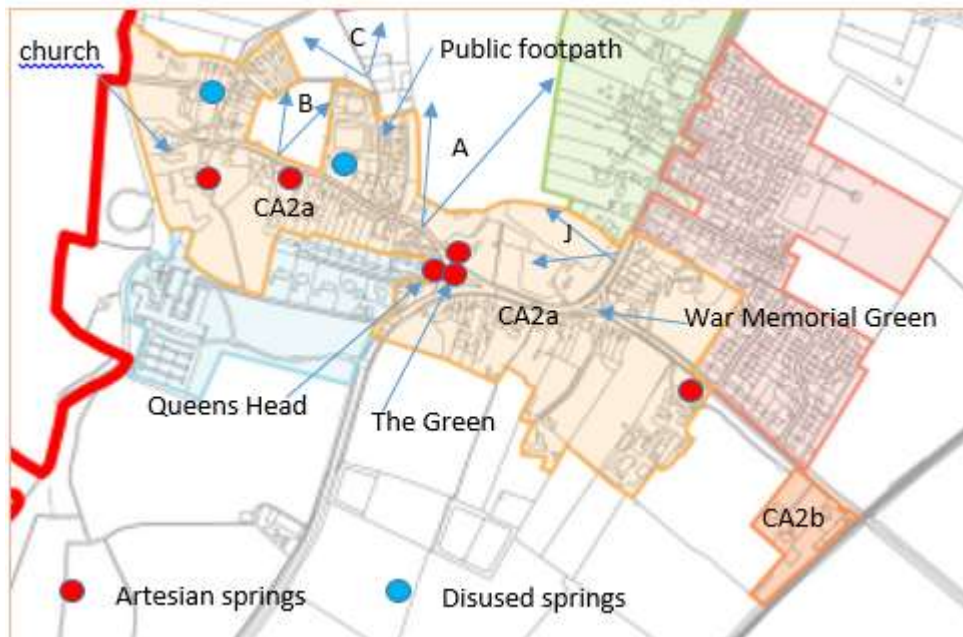
The built-up area of Harston Village has been considered at a finer grain and individual character areas within the settlement have been identified to help articulate its areas of distinct character. It has been sub-divided into eight village landscape character areas (CAs), as shown on Map 22 reflecting the age, design, style and size of the housing. These distinct areas have also been used in the Design Code/Guide.

Several of these village character areas have been extended beyond the built-up area to include small scale pastures or crofts which form open land close to the community. These areas are historically and culturally connected to the village and provide landscape which contributes greatly to the character of the eight village areas. In particular the High Street, the historic core and Button End still show the influence of historical boundaries, plot size and shape, on the residential plots, and present-day activities are often a continuation of the old.

Historic core (CA2a & b)

The historic core is found along Church St and around the Greens on Royston Rd due to the evolution of routes, the east west route being initially more important. The area is characterised by predominantly old buildings of various ages and vernacular styles, only set back a little from the road, but some with long back gardens. Throughout there is a loose and varied arrangement of properties. Along Station Road sub-area 2b includes an area that once held the railway goods yard, removed after the Beeching cuts. Station House and a commercial area remain.

Key features of the historic core are the Greens and artesian springs. There is probably the highest concentration of flowing artisan springs in this area - in gardens around, and on the Green and along Church Street.

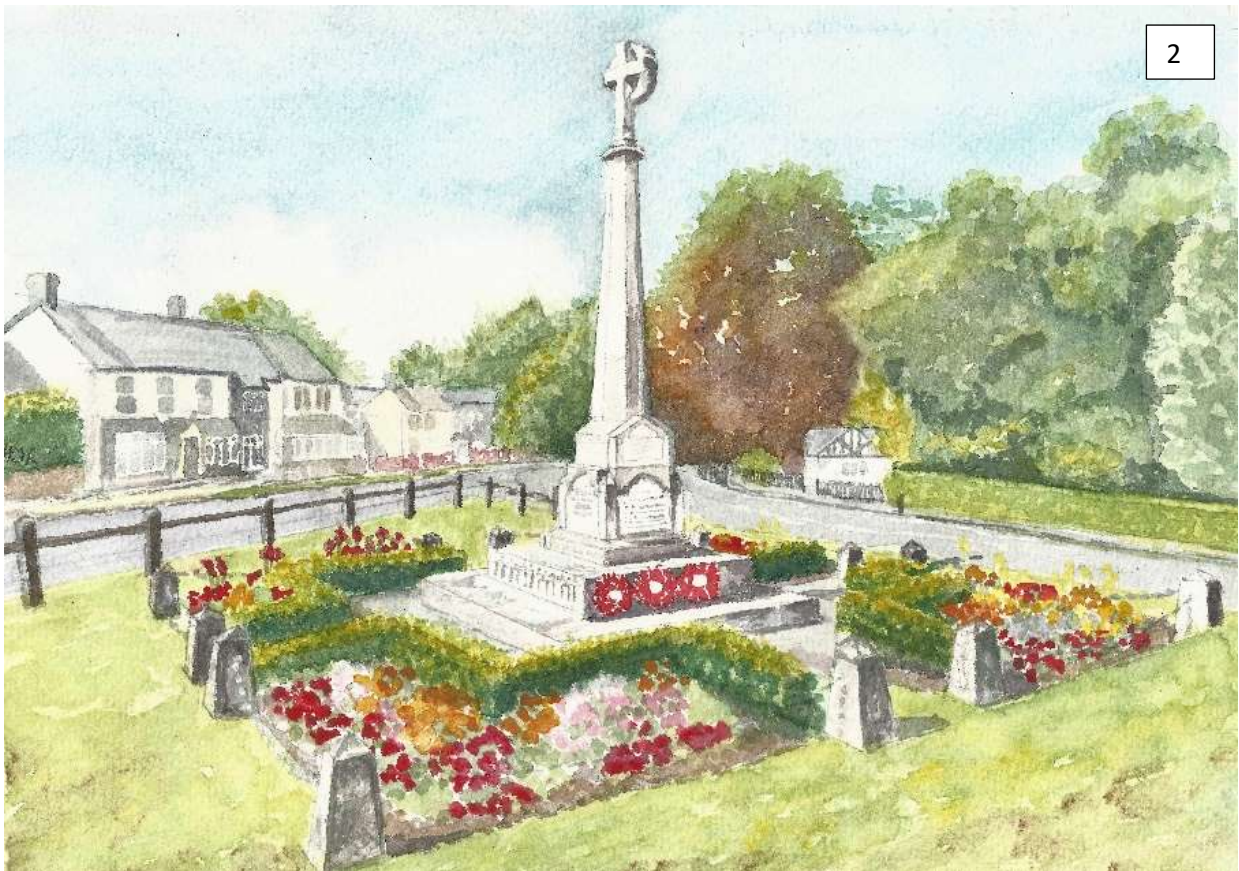


Map 22 CA2 area

Mature trees are also a key features of this area. Photo 1 below shows they help frame views on Royston Rd between the two Greens with a few strips of grass verge retained alongside the relatively new cycleway and as the road veers down Station Rd. Trees line most of Station Road past an Important Countryside Frontage with a tall hedgerow and Grade 2 listed Baggot Hall creating a leafy rural feel to this road before it leaves the village.



War memorial Green: The painting (2) shows the historic street scene around the war memorial composed of mainly 19th century properties or earlier, several of which once ran local businesses until mid-20th century. This area is an historic focal point for the village and is the site of the War Memorial (erected in 1920). A remembrance service is still held on the Green each year. The disused Pemberton Arms faces the green on its north side and is planned for demolition.



The painting by Hilary Roadley looks west back along tree-lined Royston Road towards The Green. The War Memorial garden planted by local volunteers enhances the area as a focal point.

The Green (formerly Swan Green). Royston Road divides either side of the triangular Green with the largely 18th and 19th century buildings facing it on three sides, many local heritage assets, forming a significant part of the historic core which has retained its integrity. On the Green, the village sign, listed milestone, well head monument and old pine trees, seen in photo 4, are all evidence of Harston's past historical development and connections.

Photo 3 looking west over The Green. The row of rendered and brick built old residential properties still retain the original designs of the buildings that once held businesses such as saddlers and are valued for their contribution to the street scene.

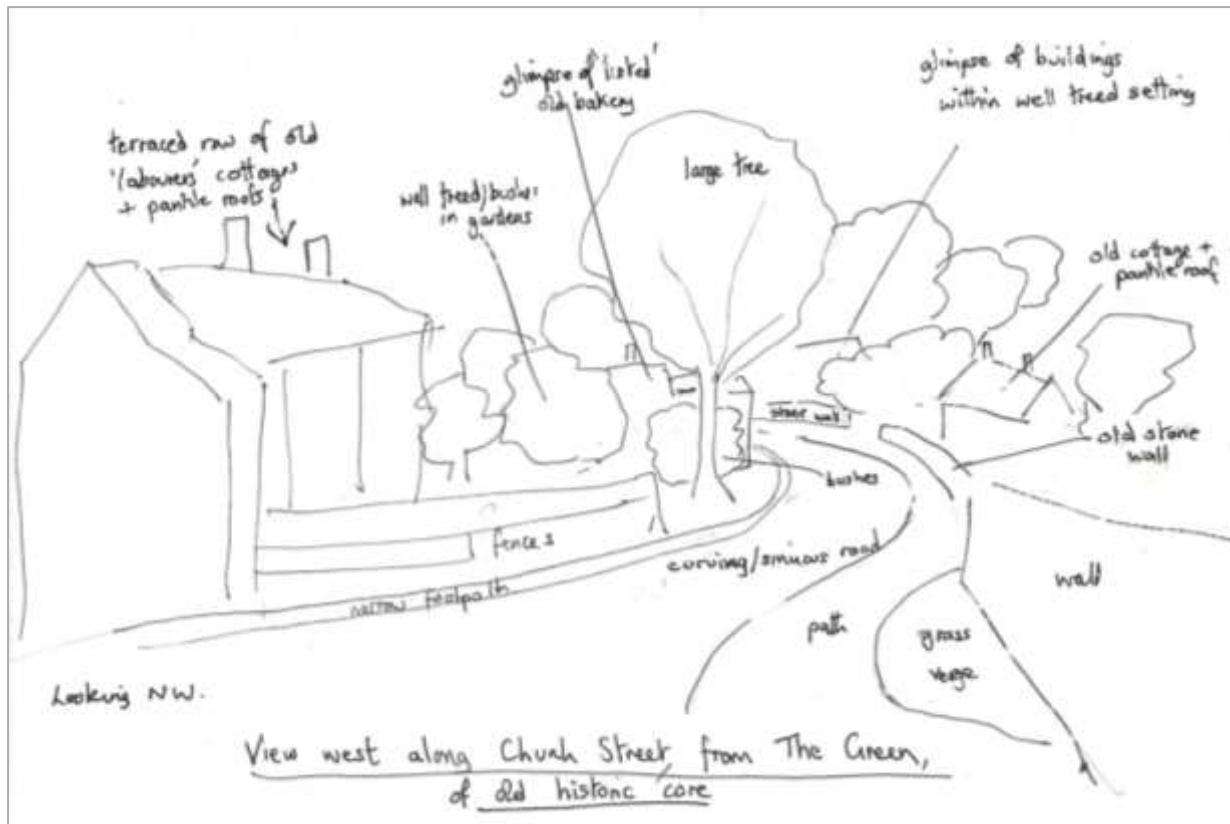


Photo 4 looking north over the Green with listed Harston House in background provides a well-known landmark feature built of red brick and local clunch, more visible in winter once the trees have shed their leaves.



The Green is generally well looked after and enhances the street scene although signage creates visual clutter. The spring from the artesian water monument has flowed since it was built in 1922 by the benevolent Greene family of the nearby Harston House, as well as sometimes flooding the road! Residents enjoy the rural feel and view of this green space from many directions, despite the sometimes heavy flow of traffic alongside.

Church St winds from the Green along a relatively narrow road round a gentle bend, as shown in the following sketch. It has a well treed setting helped by the long plots belonging to the varied houses along it and the retention of original hedgerows. These houses – from 18th century labourer's cottages to 1920s council houses- were built at different times and reflect a range of building materials, some with low walls bounding small front gardens. The few newer houses have been set back, with sympathetic architecture, so there is little impact on the street



scene.

Because of the variety of houses there are a number of local heritage assets and Grade 2 listed buildings in Church St, including the Manor, Church, Rhee House (old rectory), old bakery, and Fountain Cottage, all towards the western end which is much less built up and more rural.

Photo 5 The church in particular provides an attractive landmark in the village, seen as you enter from Haslingfield, and the church yard provides a quiet oasis away from busy Church Street traffic as it slopes down to the tree-lined River Rhee. The churchyard is maintained in an eco-friendly manner, for example, leaving patches of grass unmown in the summer months to encourage pollinating insects.



The north side of Church Street has open frontages behind three Important Countryside Frontages emphasising its rural character. Views are afforded (A, B & J shown on CA2 area

map) over small enclosed pastures and to the farmland beyond and allow the countryside to penetrate into the street.



6

Photo 6 Shows ICF to right of wall opening up view A.

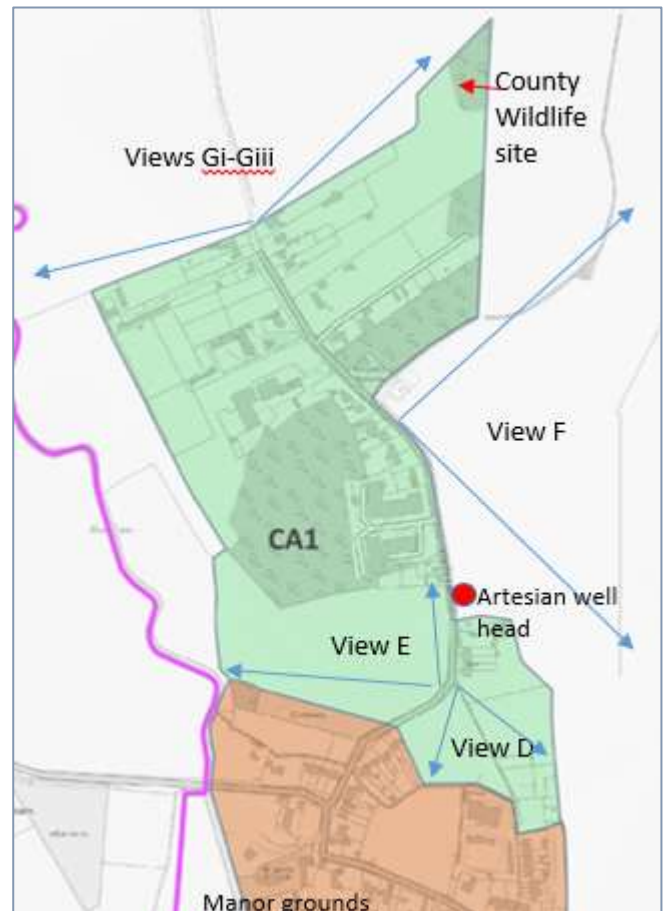
Beyond the white house in the centre of photo is a narrow wall/hedge-lined old public footpath off to the right. Called, originally, The Footpath, it is fronted by a row of council houses that were built in 1920s before car access was thought of and is a reflection of old field boundaries and plots. It is a well-used historic rural short cut that links Church Street with Button End.

Button End (CA1)



7

Photo 7 looking south (of artesian well head) along Button End lane past Grade 2 listed Hope Cottage towards the footpath fields and treed boundary of historic core area



Map 22: CA1 area

This character area is where the village transitions into a more dispersed settlement pattern, producing a more rural character with many open spaces and large well-landscaped plots. Some of these plots reflect past industries and rural activities, as well as supporting present ones. This area comprises an eclectic mix of horse pastures, stables, farms, abandoned gravel

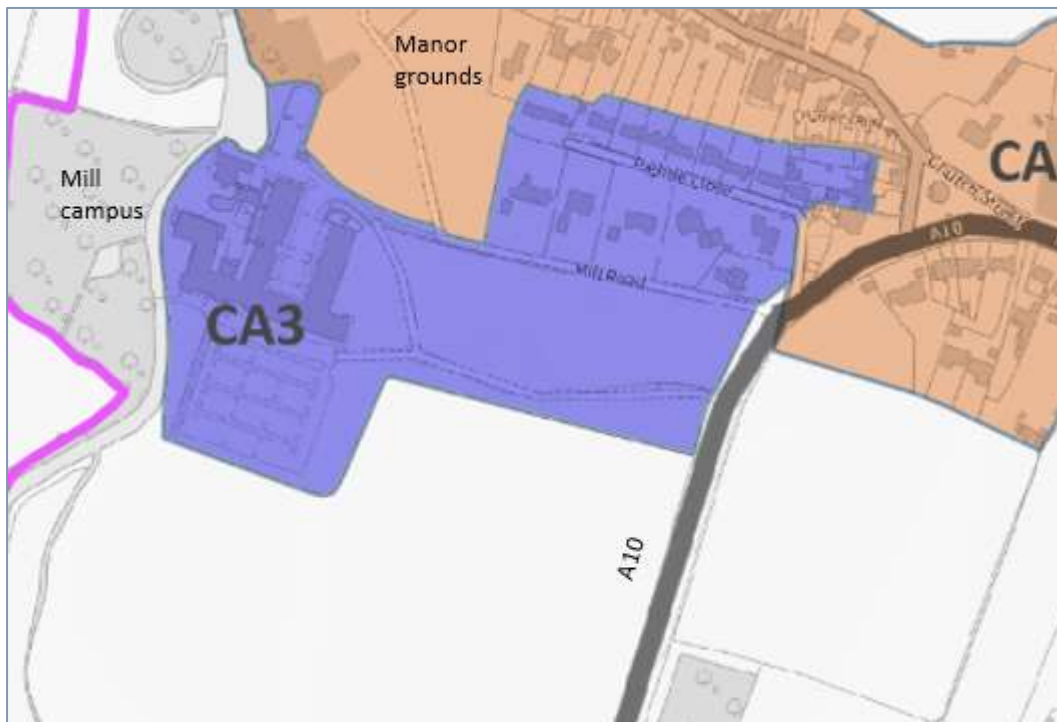
pits and an industrial estate as well as a significant number of residences which add to the mixed character of the area. Development is linear in form along a rural narrow unclassified country lane which winds along to the North, rising gently towards its end, with little definition to the road. There is only kerbing and a footpath on a very small stretch of the road. There are older 18th century dwellings, farm labourers' cottages and an artesian water monument fronting the southern end nearer the historic core, with more 1-1.5 story 20th century dwellings located set back behind high often non-native hedgerows further north. Within and on the boundaries of these plots are many mature trees, shrubs and protected species & habitats. There is a Country Wildlife Site- lowland fens priority habitat – on what was an old sand extraction area.



Photo 8 Looking north along northern end of Button End where high hedgerows and valued wide grass verges create attractive more tranquil areas of greater biodiversity, either side of this narrow lane used by walkers, riders and the occasional car, leading on to open countryside beyond.

The openness of the surrounding Greenbelt can be seen from numerous places along Button End (as shown on CA1 map) and at its end there is an expansive 180 degree panoramic view of the countryside from Haslingfield on the North-west swinging round to the North-east.

Mill Road (CA3)



Map22: CA3 area

Both Pightle Close (1960s- 2 storey) and Mill Road (1990s – 3 storey) cul-de-sacs are characterised by fairly uniformly designed detached houses found along straight parallel lanes running east west from the main road on old enclosed land that originally was part of Harston Manor at the edge of the village, bordering farmlands to the south. As such they still have a rural feel as they are enclosed with tall hedgerows and many large older trees have been protected with TPOs.

Although the business area around the old Mill has expanded, landscaped mounded up slopes limit the view of buildings from the A10 gateway into the village. Modern buildings that were added created a courtyard focused on the Mill in a campus like environment within 15 acres of countryside alongside the well treed river environs.

Photo 9 Pightle Close looking west towards the Manor parkland in the background.

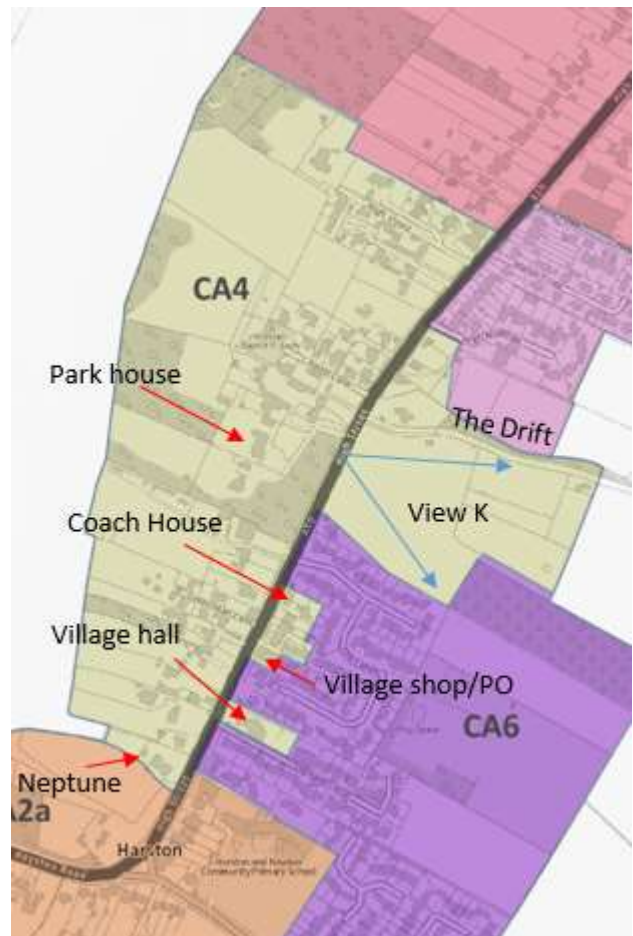


High Street south (CA4)

The High St runs straight North NE- South SW, with the west side characterised by low density detached houses set in long narrow ancient 13th & 14th century closes that may have been enclosed from ancient strips. The Greenbelt meets the western boundary of these long strips, which are set well back from the road as their front gardens were part of the old Green enclosed in 1802. The front gardens contain many trees which screen the houses behind but are also important in helping the High Street retain its rural feel.

A few narrow lanes have developed in the long E-W plots. Green Man Lane and Sheepshead Lane are old existing narrow lanes where a few old 19th century labourer's cottages had been built but many have been replaced by 20th century developments. There has been a little development further back on some long plots with small access lanes which impact little on the character of the area and usually are tightly within the village framework.

A number of businesses have been lost, particularly, public houses, but in two cases (Three Horseshoes/Neptune & Coach House)



these have been re-used for other businesses with no great detrimental impact on the character of the area. There has, however, been a loss of amenity. The local village shop, built mid-19th century remains important and visible.

Photo 10: Shows the tree lined High Street, many trees with TPOS on them, and continuing into the distance giving a rural feel despite the sometimes noisy busy road. One of the two small carefully designed outbuildings in front of the attractively designed 100year old Village Hall can be seen to right- the village hall a focal point visually and for community activities.

There are a small number of Grade 2 listed buildings along the High St reflecting its heritage/past .



Photo 11a Park House wall, backed by trees, is a significant landmark in the village

The field opposite Park House has been included within this character area as if forms part of the setting for Grade 2 listed Park House and although Park House Stables have been converted to residences, for many years horses were led across the road to the fields to graze. This retains the old field pattern and use; the area used to be common grazing land pre 1802 enclosure. In the 1930s the owners of Park House signed an agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council to keep this area undeveloped for the amenity of the village, allowing these fields to be used for cricket, football, and other village events like the occasional gymkana or fair.

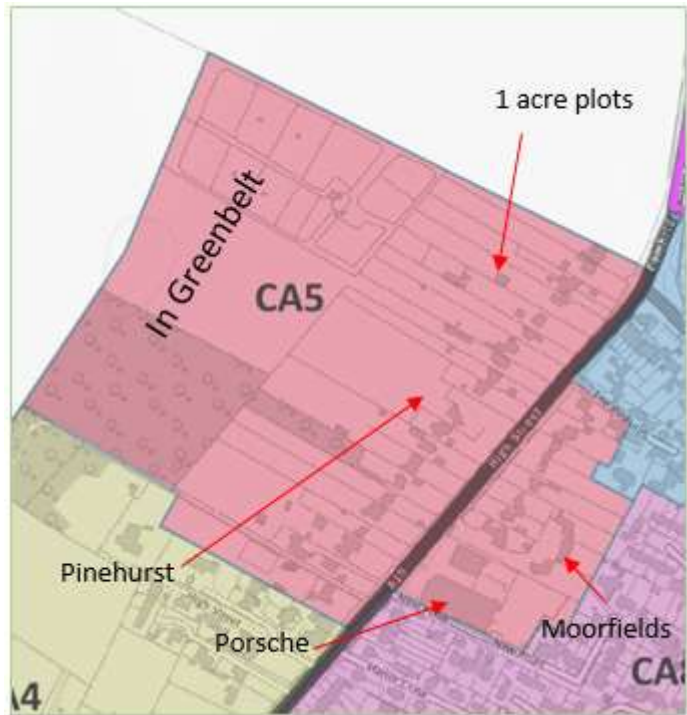
Photo 11b Field opposite Park House. People continue to enjoy seeing local horses in the fields continuing tradition. To left, alongside the open pastures is the attractive wooded entrance to the Drift, a tree-lined public footpath directly off the High Street, one of the most used walks in the village as it is easily accessible.



High St North (CA 5)

Either side of the High St (North) are long narrow plots with mostly large detached brick houses with varied architecture (see Design Code), set well back behind hedgerows and mature trees in front gardens with relatively long gravel driveways and parking areas. Those on west side are 2 storey houses in plots of 1 acre built from early 1900s onwards, so some are of local historic interest such as Pinehurst (Photo 12). The fields behind the long plots act as a transition zone into the arable fields behind - also in the Greenbelt.

Map 22:CA5 area



On the east side the plots are around half an acre and contain large detached houses built steadily over 20th century. Although the area is predominantly residential the site on the southern edge of this area owned by Porsche has been expanded over the years and visually has a big impact on the character of the area. Moorfields new detached housing area developed at same time at the back of the plot was named after the historical moor that existed on east side of High St.

Photo 12 Pinehurst, built between 1911-1920, with original architecture preserved. This contrasts with newer build to left.

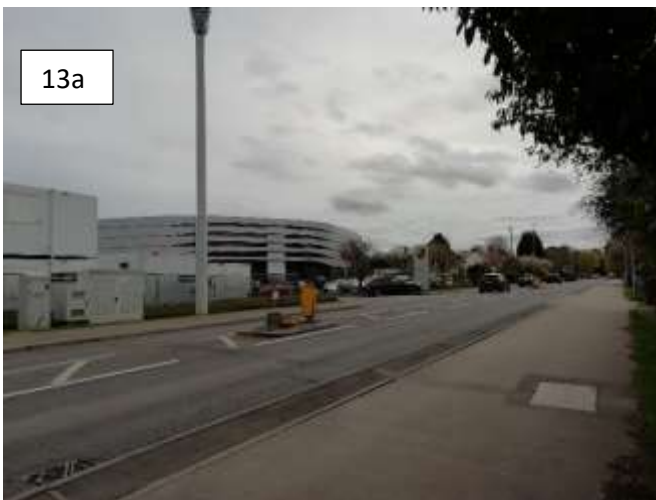
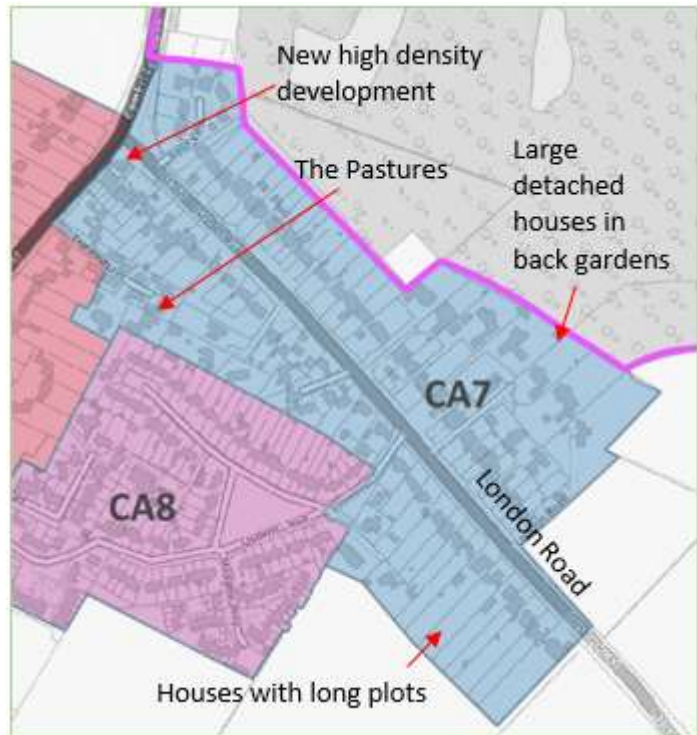


Photo 13a & 13b The large Porsche building and sign stands out in the street scene, recently added to which is a tall communications tower by the road.

London Road (CA7)

This area is characterised by ribbon development, initially in 1930s with groups of similar design detached houses, well set back from the road on long plots, with attractive landscaped gardens and long driveways with ample off street parking. Later houses filled in other plots and a series of bungalows existed along the northern side until a developer gradually bought and developed their plots building 2-3 large detached houses and occasional semi in each plot in a modern, attractive, more suburban style. Although this has altered the character of the north side, the designs fit in well, and the front gardens of plots remain well landscaped with trees and wide grass verges remaining to give a more rural feel.



Map 22: CA7 area

The new development built to replace the public house at the corner of London Rd and High St, in contrast, is much denser than earlier development, and creates a jarring impression on the character of the area, partly due to a lack of space for much if any landscaping, with gardens small and front areas for parking. This fares poorly against the varied style developed in The Pastures, off the High St, where one vacant plot was developed in 2016 onwards with 11 houses.



Photo 14 The Pastures with its winding road shared with pedestrians. The Design Code has identified this as similar to London Rd in style.

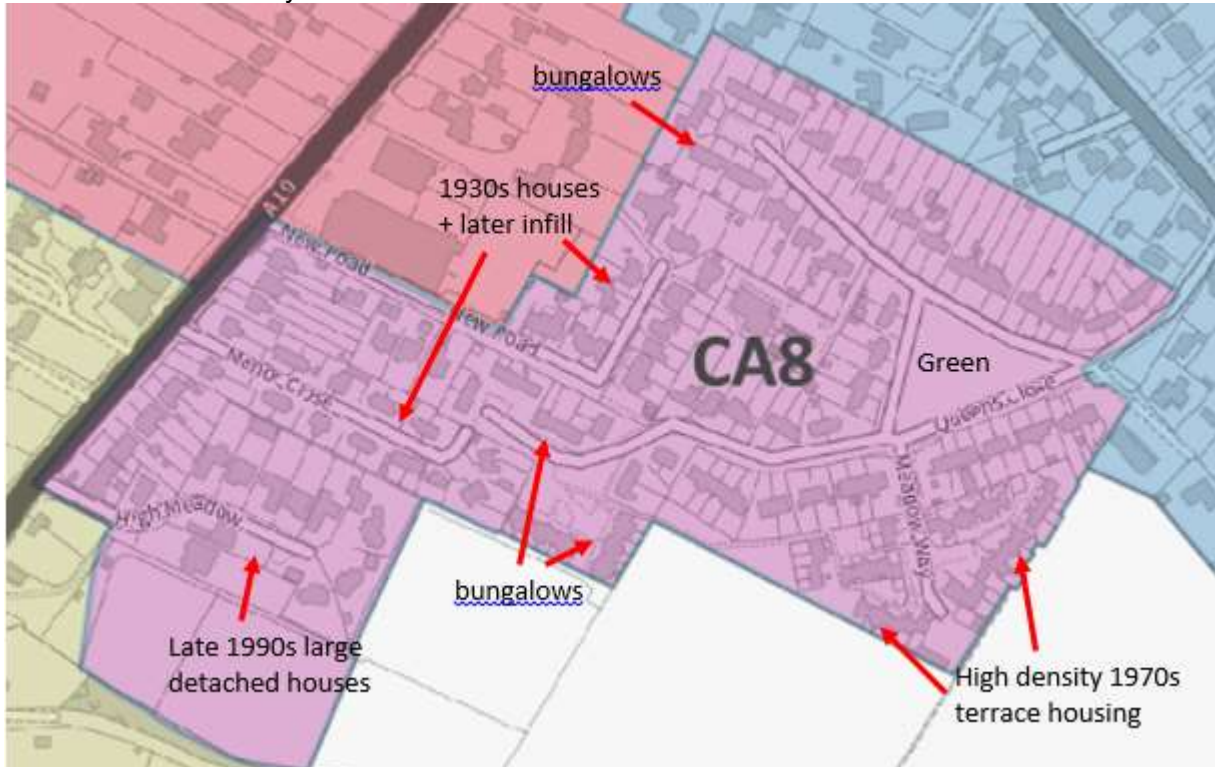
Hedging and tall trees near the roadside behind a wide grass verge give a very leafy, rural feel to the road and which helps it blend into the distant landscape towards Newton. Although the road is wide with paths each side it is important to retain the grass verges, often with mature landscaping/trees in the often long front gardens behind, to retain the rural character of the area.

Photo 15 view looking south east along London Road towards the edge of the village **from** outside No 29 London Road



1930s & 1950s housing (CA8)

This area is characterised by early roads of similar housing, largely semi-detached, initially (market & council) built in 1930s off the High St then followed by a large uniform council estate, Queens' Close in early 1950s.



Map 22: CA8 area

Manor Close's 1930s 2 storey houses initially had good size gardens but later council developments infilled the spaces in-between them. New Road running parallel provided semi-detached market housing but again there was later infill reducing size of plots and gardens, but still very desirable.

Linked to Manor Close by a small pedestrian alley way is 1950s Queen's Close. Two storey semi-detached houses, relatively dense by village standards, surround a triangular Green with 3 cul-de sac offshoots - two of the latter with bungalows. Reasonably spacious front gardens are well landscaped, despite driveways and parking space being added.



Photo 16 The Green remains largely grass, providing an appreciated informal open space with a few trees. Generally a quiet area with the narrow roads around the Green limiting speed, as well as providing parking in two laybys.

Meadow Way, off Queen's Close has higher density council terrace dwellings built in 1970s with communal grass areas, communal off street parking, a community centre and sheltered housing, all accessed by small paths amongst the houses.

A late 1990s isolated cul-de-sac of large detached houses was built on one plot along the southern edge of this area and has no impact on the street scenes in the rest of the area.

Late 20th century housing (CA 6)

This area is characterised by detached & some semi-detached housing built 1969 onwards in a similar style with a limited number of designs, with relatively small front gardens and parking off street. The roads twist around bends to eventually end in cul-de-sacs creating an attractive layout with a couple of narrow passageways linking areas.

Low-medium density of houses with gardens with mature trees and shrubs, on reasonable regular size plots, create an attractive area to live in and the many house extensions have added variety to the streetscape.

The Recreation Ground with carpark, created in 1986, and later a Community Orchard added around 1990 create a green space between the housing and surrounding farmland which allows residents to enjoy the countryside next to them. Later developments of Orchard Close and a lane by the school consolidated the housing area in the east.

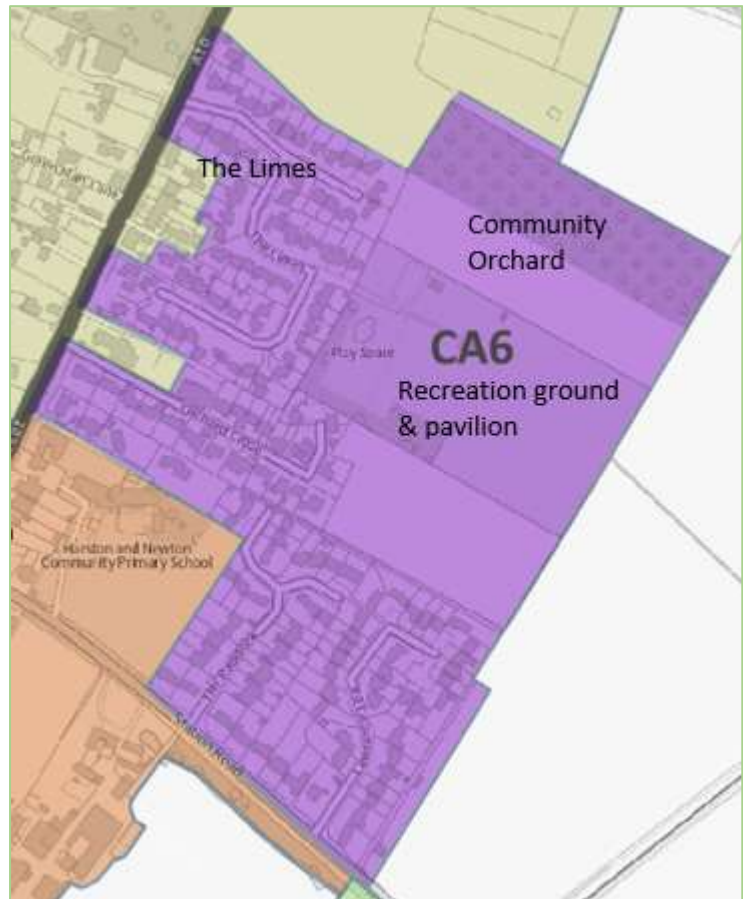


Photo 17 Entrance to the Recreation Ground in distance off The Limes housing estate

6.0 Detailed Analysis

6.1 Introduction

This section of the Landscape Appraisal sets out an analysis of the **parish** highlighting features and characteristics which help to explain why it has distinctive qualities. In particular, the appraisal has looked at built and natural landmarks, important views, settlement edges, gateways, visually important open land and local green space. This stage in the assessment has been informed by previous assessments and the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire found at: <https://harstonvillage.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Results-for-Jan-2023-all-household-survey-questionnaire.pdf>.

Capacity Study

A Village Capacity Study for Harston was carried out in May 1998 by Chris Bland Associates for South Cambridgeshire and forms a useful starting point for analysis. A key output from the study was the preparation of two maps (map 23 and map 24 – see below). The study concluded that despite substantial newer development in the 2nd half of the 20th century, the linear character of the village had been retained. It noted that Harston had a wooded setting, together with some open views from the main roads towards open countryside. The large, detached houses set back from the roads were noted as a key characteristic of the village along with the long gardens and paddocks which provided a transition between the settlement and the wider farmed landscape. It also noted that part of the historic core along Church Street provided an area of tranquillity in contrast to the busy Cambridge-Royston road through the village.

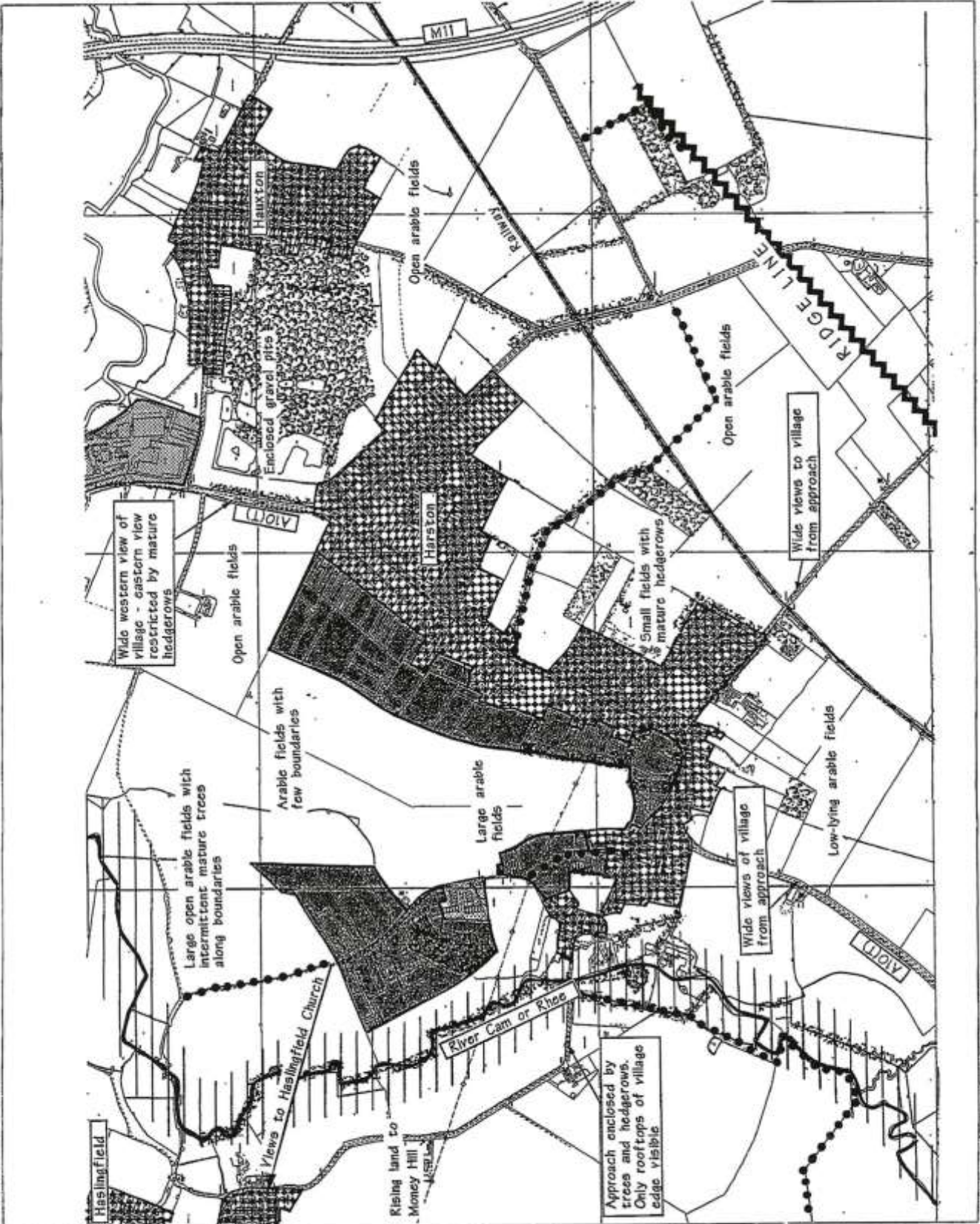
The conclusion from the study was that capacity of the village was limited, only being capable of absorbing very low levels of change, of limited type and that any future development was to be sympathetic to existing village character.

This appraisal updates the findings of this previous study.

Harston

Village Context

- KEY
- Footpath
 - Village
 - Enclosed pasture and gardens
 - Industrial area
 - Wooded area/hedgerow
 - Well-wooded river valley
 - River
 - Open farmland



Not to Scale



Map produced by the 1000 Open Spaces Trust, in partnership with the Harston Parish Council. The map is a simplified representation of the landscape and does not show all details. It is not to scale and is for information only. © 2010 1000 Open Spaces Trust.

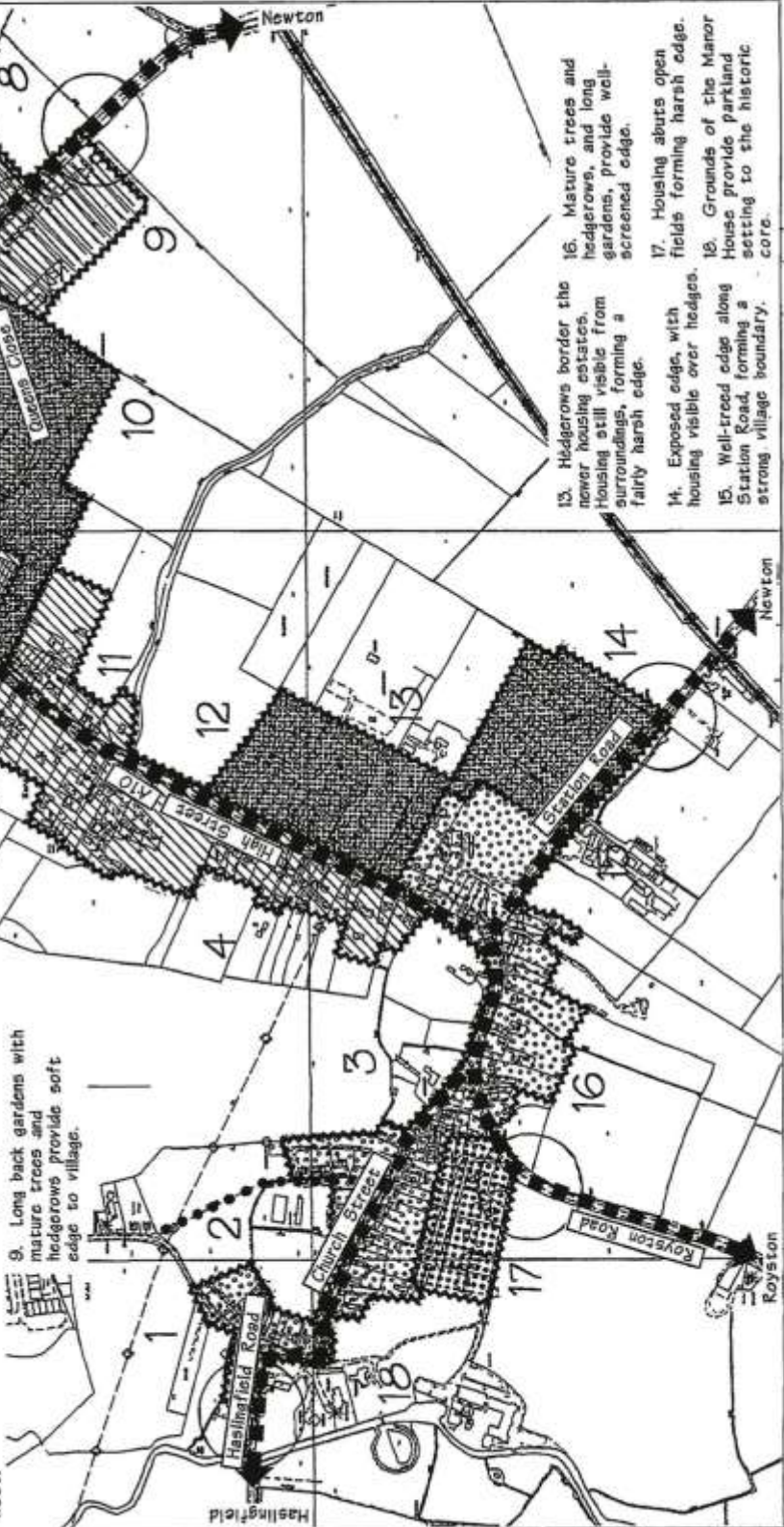
Harston

Village Character - Settlement

1. Small enclosed fields with mature tree and hedgerow boundaries provide strong rural edge
2. Views from Church Street across open fields
3. Views from Church Street across small fields with hedgerows provide transition between the village core and the large open fields to the north
4. Long back gardens, outbuildings, paddocks and small fields provide intimate rural edge to the village, emphasising the linear form, and forming a transition between Harston and the open fields to the west.

5. Combination of long rear gardens and small enclosed fields and paddocks with mature hedgerows provides soft edge to village.
6. Strong hedgerow along Cambridge Road, behind which lies woodland and lakes. Also small fields behind houses fronting London Road.
7. Long gardens and hedgerows form separation of village from open fields to the east.
8. Fields about housing along London Road, creating a fairly exposed eastern edge, despite hedgerows and property boundaries.
9. Long back gardens with mature trees and hedgerows provide soft edge to village.

10. Harsh edge, with housing abutting the open fields to the south and sparse hedgerows.
11. Small enclosed fields to the rear of the High Street, together with well-wooded tract, in marked contrast to open fields to the west.
12. Open views from the High Street bring the rural edge directly onto the village heart.



13. Hedgerows border the newer housing estates. Housing still visible from surroundings, forming a fairly harsh edge.
14. Exposed edge, with housing visible over hedges.
15. Well-treed edge along Station Road, forming a strong village boundary.
16. Mature trees and hedgerows, and long gardens, provide well-screened edge.
17. Housing abuts open fields forming harsh edge.

18. Grounds of the Manor House provide parkland setting to the historic core.

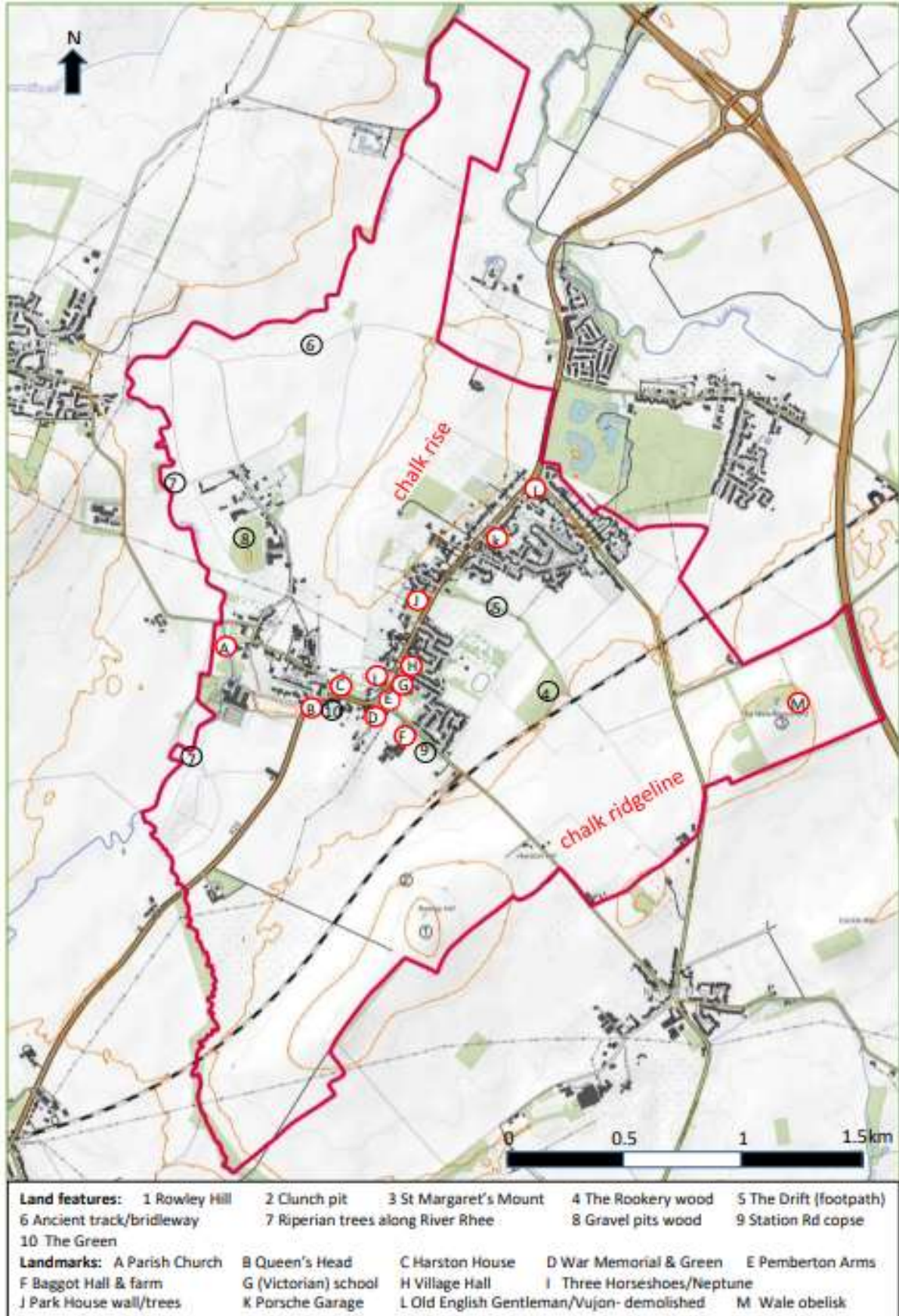
KEY

	Footpath linkages
	Key roads
	Historic core
	Post-war estate development
	Low density modern housing
	Linear development
	Village gateway

Not to Scale



6.2 Built and Natural landmarks



Map 25: Built and natural landmarks/features

Built features/landmarks

Built features become landmarks because they are:

- Located at key focal points and vistas as a result of road geometry
- Express unusual architecture/uniqueness

Built landmarks can occur at key junctions and gateways and make a particular contribution to sense of place. Landmark buildings do not need to be listed or historic although this can also contribute to their value. Key buildings which align with vistas along streets or at gateways are vulnerable to being lost or altered. Three recent examples in the village are detailed below:

- **Vujon, formerly the Old English Gentleman pub**, was a key focal point at a junction at the north gateway into the village at the junction of the A10 and London Road. This was a single building with a distinct roof which sat within its own grounds. The site has recently been redeveloped for housing comprising a high-density group of buildings, with no clear focal point or distinction and lack of landscaping. This has resulted in a loss of the rural character of the village at this northern gateway.
- **The Three Horseshoes**, was renovated by Neptune furniture store with a well-designed extension adjacent to an Important Countryside Frontage. It remained the well vegetated plot and thus the rural leafy context. More recently the construction of two houses to the rear of this plot have resulted in a loss of the rural setting of the area and a more densely developed area with loss of the soft edge to the Important Countryside Frontage (photo below).
- **The Pemberton Arms** is a focal point at the junction of the A10 with Station Road. Its former carpark has been developed into two new houses resulting in a loss of the its vegetated, spacious, grounds. Although the building has been boarded up for many years, it has recently been given permission to be demolished and replaced with new development. This new development reflects the character of adjacent houses resulting in an intensification of residential development and loss of landmark buildings and leafy street scene.

These examples demonstrate how ad hoc loss of landmark buildings at key focal points and spaces can impact on local distinctiveness and street scene.

Photo shows recent building of two large houses along the eastern boundary (to right) where there has been a removal of the soft edge of the field boundary behind Neptune.



Buildings which express an unusual architecture or uniqueness include the **Porsche Garage** buildings on the High St. These are landmark buildings due to their size and modern design which contrast with the small scale character of the village. Their singularity ensures their unique contribution to the street scene. **W**

Public artisan wells are other built features which are unique to the village of Harston and form landmark features in the street scene. Many of the springs can be seen in the historic core when passing on foot, contributing to the distinctiveness of the area, and have been shown on the Village Character section map for CA2.

Four well-head monuments of varied design survive today (photos below), identified by the Local History Group as local heritage assets, who along with a local volunteer Group, Greener Harston, have tried to maintain and protect them. At least two of the monuments have been damaged at some point, with one causing flooding around it.



Photo to left on The Green dated 1921, provided by Graham Greene & Edward Greene, local philanthropists. Flow of water has now been controlled with ugly modern tap & notice drilled into the fabric. **Photo to right**, with Greek inscription, thought to be in association with water source for the village provided by Dr Young, another 20th century philanthropist who lived on the adjoining land near the passage way to The Limes



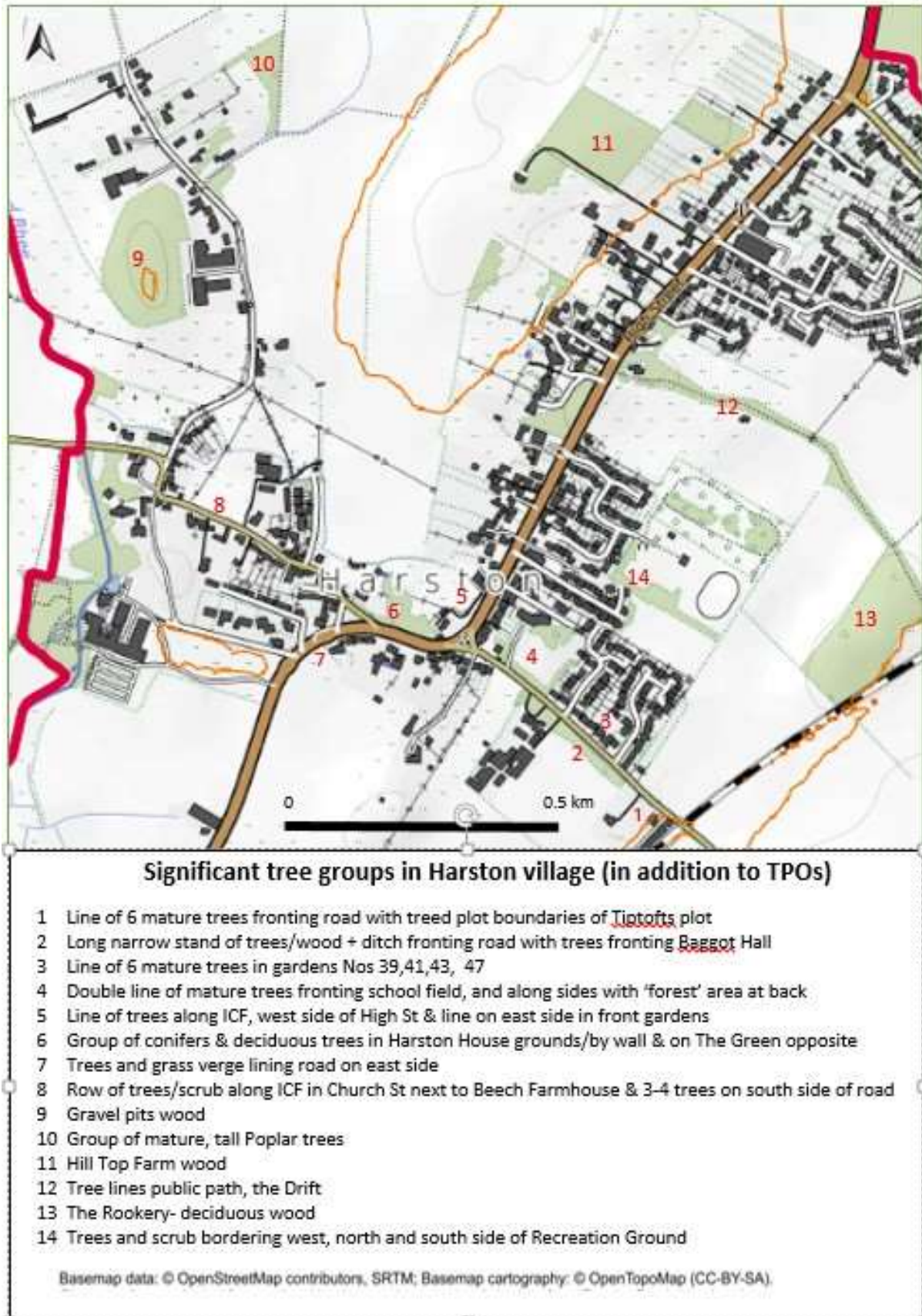
Photo left, Water source still flowing provided by Greene family to commemorate death of Lucy Greene in 1928. This provided water to drink and wash for residents who lived in group of labourers cottages (Greystones – local heritage asset) opposite, half way along Button End lane, as well as for coprolite workers in late 19th century. New top added in 2023 after farm worker damaged original top with ditch clearing.

Photo to right, Well head monument to Alice Greene, 1927, provided by Greene family for those who lived in Church End as then known, on wall of old vicarage (now listed Rhee House). No longer a water source. Surrounding ivy has to be kept in check.

Another distinctive built feature which contributes to local distinctiveness is **Park House wall along the High Street**. Its distinctive brick detailing, long length and association with garden vegetation has a significant influence on the character of the High St. It has been subject to damage in recent decades due to falling trees.

Natural/landscape features

In addition to trees protected by TPOs, there are other visually important tree groups within the village that contribute to the streetscape and wider setting of the village as shown on [Map 26](#) and some are described below.



Map 26: Significant tree groups in Harston village (in addition to TPOs)

- The **front gardens of the long residential plots to the west of the High St** contain many trees and hedgerows which help retain the village's rural leafy feel despite some loss due to the introduction of the High St cycleway in recent years. Trees and hedgerows help absorb some of the pollution and mask some of the noise from traffic moving along the High St, which is rarely empty.
- Along **Station Road there is an Important Countryside Frontage** on the southern side, with the school field opposite. Here lines of trees flanking the road contribute greatly to its rural feel (4 on map 26)
- A **long stand of old trees beyond Baggot Hall Farm** is important in creating a rural well wooded landscape that borders the pasture fields beyond and provides a soft village edge (2 on map 26)
- **The Green** including pine trees (associated with the Greene family of Harston House) and other deciduous trees. Issues include a lack of long term management of the green and its trees as well as flooding from the artesian well-head.
- **Rookery Wood** is one of the few areas of mature wood of any size so is important for wildlife and as a landscape feature providing the backdrop to the smaller fields which penetrate the village opposite Park House.
- **The Drift** public footpath is a wooded route (12 on map) which links to Rookery Wood and is considered by residents to be one of the most important land features in the village, linking London Road, Shelford Road and ultimately to Newton or Hauxton. It provides a soft edge to adjacent small open fields and affords views of open land beyond. It is a natural green corridor providing a quiet oasis away from the noise and pollution of the A10 and a haven for wildlife. It has well wooded ditched boundaries with the northern side bounded by a wider strip of woodland and large ditch (shown D on 1799 Inclosure map). As the track winds its way eastwards towards The Rookery and the railway line, it eventually loses its wooded boundary, cutting across open fields and a glimpse of Rowley's Hill. One resident said "The view from the Drift looking at the paddock (horses) gives a sense of space, quiet and nature". The Drift is one of the most used tracks in the village as it is easily accessible and offers opportunities to link south along a field edge to reach the corner of the Community Orchard.
- **The ancient green track/bridleway** with wide grass area between hedgerows or trees running east-west along the north part of the parish is an invaluable link between Hauxton and Haslingfield. It offers opportunities to enjoy the wide open views in a quiet part of the countryside. This bridleway is connected to Harston via Button End and enables circular walks around the parish, with views of open surrounding arable fields and of neighbouring parishes and other landmarks and features.



Looking east along The Drift

- Regenerated deciduous wood (9 on map) provide a significant wooded area established in the **old Gravel Pits, Button End**, abandoned for about 70 years. This natural area includes a field edge boundary of beech trees and other mature trees as well as dips and hollows creating slightly wetter areas where the odd tall willow tree grows. Overall, this area lacks management and has an overgrown character although there are opportunities to bring it into active management and improve access.
- **Riparian trees** (large willows, ash and other trees) along the river Rhee banks create an important linear landscape feature that can be seen from across the tranquil, adjoining rural/farmland landscape to the east. The meadows next to the river with their network of hedgerows and riparian trees provide an important eco-system and a wildlife sanctuary and are used for hay and grazing. These are priority habitats.
- **Hoffer's Brook Meadow**, is a private nature reserve found on the southern boundary of the parish and is available habitat that reinforces the character of the riparian landscape. Part of it is designated as a Stepping Stone in Cambridge's Nature Network plan shown on Map 19.
- **Hilltop tree groups** on St Margaret's Mount and Rowley's Hill which are visually important, contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place, with the former also a much larger wildlife habitat area.

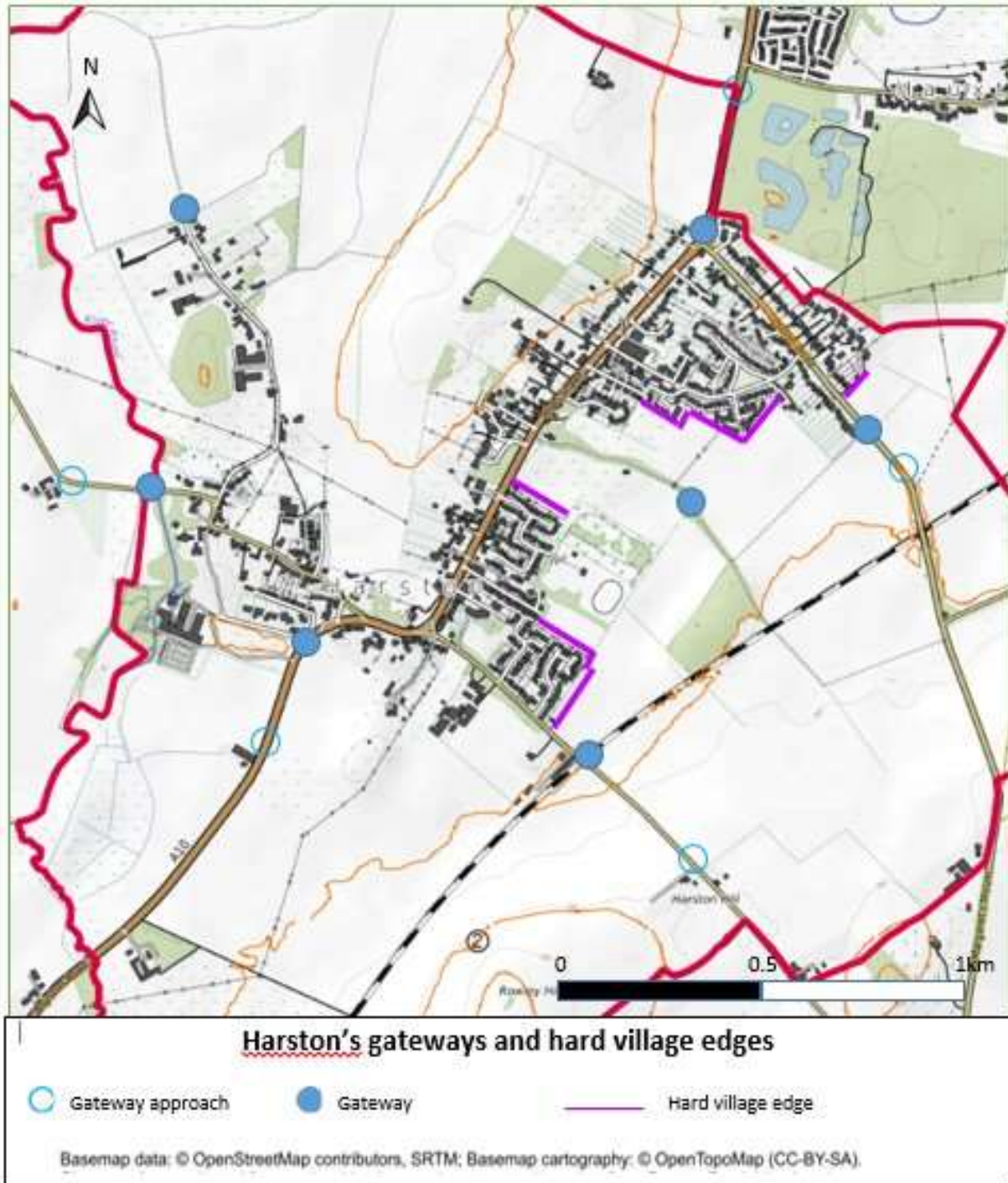
6.3 Settlement edges

Harston's settlement edge is indented, reflecting piecemeal enclosure and gradual development over time. This provides a soft vegetated edge to most of the village which generally screens built form from the wider landscape creating an established character. However, there are a few areas in the east where later 20th century residential development abuts the wider arable farmland and there are no intervening, small-scale pastures. Here the combination of higher density, two storey housing and mixed property curtilages creates a visually abrupt edge, uncharacteristic of the rest of the village.



Hard eastern edge (photo left) where fairly dense housing estates with small gardens and few hedgerows, visibly abut the open fields.

6.4 Approach and Gateways



Map 27: Harston's gateways and hard village edge

This section considers the main approaches into the village along the A10 (north and south) and from Haslingfield (west) and Newton (east). It distinguishes from the first signs of approaching the village to the gateway at the start of built form.

Southern gateway on Royston Road

When approaching from the south along the A10 the line of trees/woodland along Hoffer Brook marks the start of the parish. The road is lined with wide grass verges and hedges with open arable fields beyond and rising chalk hills forming the skyline to the west and east. Buildings at New Farm mark the approach to the village imparting a rural character beyond which is the well treed edge of the village.

Photo: well- treed southern gateway, past the Sagentia entrance, you get a strong sense of arrival at the landmark Queen's Head, by the Green, part of the historic core.



The southern gateway is reached where vegetation along the route focuses a vista to the Queen's Head on the village green. Grass verges add to the rural feel as do the surrounding well-kept gardens with mature vegetation. This gateway is valued as a rural approach with immediate arrival at the historic core.

On leaving this gateway there is a clear sense of departure with views quickly opening up towards Rowley's Hill (View H). This relationship between gateway and Rowley's Hill landmark is of great value and reinforces the gateway and sense of place.

Northern gateway on Cambridge Road

Photo: Vista looking south framed by vegetation.

The approach from the north starts at the parish boundary. Here the tall coniferous trees to the east and hedgerow to the west create a narrow view. The grass verges help reinforce a rural approach despite street furniture. The gateway is reached at the junction with London Road. Here development at the corner of London Road and the A10 is the focal point, its form, scale, materials and density giving rise to a suburban character with little street scape planting. This contrasts with the more rural tree lined character of the High St which is reached just beyond.



Eastern gateway on London Road

The approach from the southeast begins on crossing the railway bridge and as the road swings left towards the village. Here overgrown hedgerows funnel views to glimpsed views of housing on the edge of the village.

Photo: Overgrown hedgerows with trees funnel the view until the field edge becomes open leaving a view of the houses on the village edge, particularly on the northern side.



The gateway is reached at the start of garden vegetation and housing along the southern side of the road and more open views of properties on the northern side. However, because houses are set back and lack distinction this gateway is relatively weak. .

On leaving the gateway heading southeast there are views towards the chalk ridge which make an important contribution to sense of place and rural village setting.

Eastern gateway on Newton Road



Photo: Approach – View along Newton Road towards the village. Well maintained hedgerows and wide grass verges create an attractive rural approach.

The approach begins once over the crest of Newton Road hill where there are wide views over Harston seen as a well wooded village on lower lying land, with further chalk hills at Haslingfield visible beyond. The gateway is reached at the level crossing and there are views of modern housing fronting the road on the north side with estate cul-de-sac roads leading off. Along the south side of Station Road the edge of the village is bounded by a long stand of trees. A

stronger sense of arrival is reached at the historic core/War Memorial Green, where there is a higher concentration of 19th century buildings and distinctive open space.

On leaving this gateway there is a clear sense of leaving the village as the road ascends the open chalk ridge.

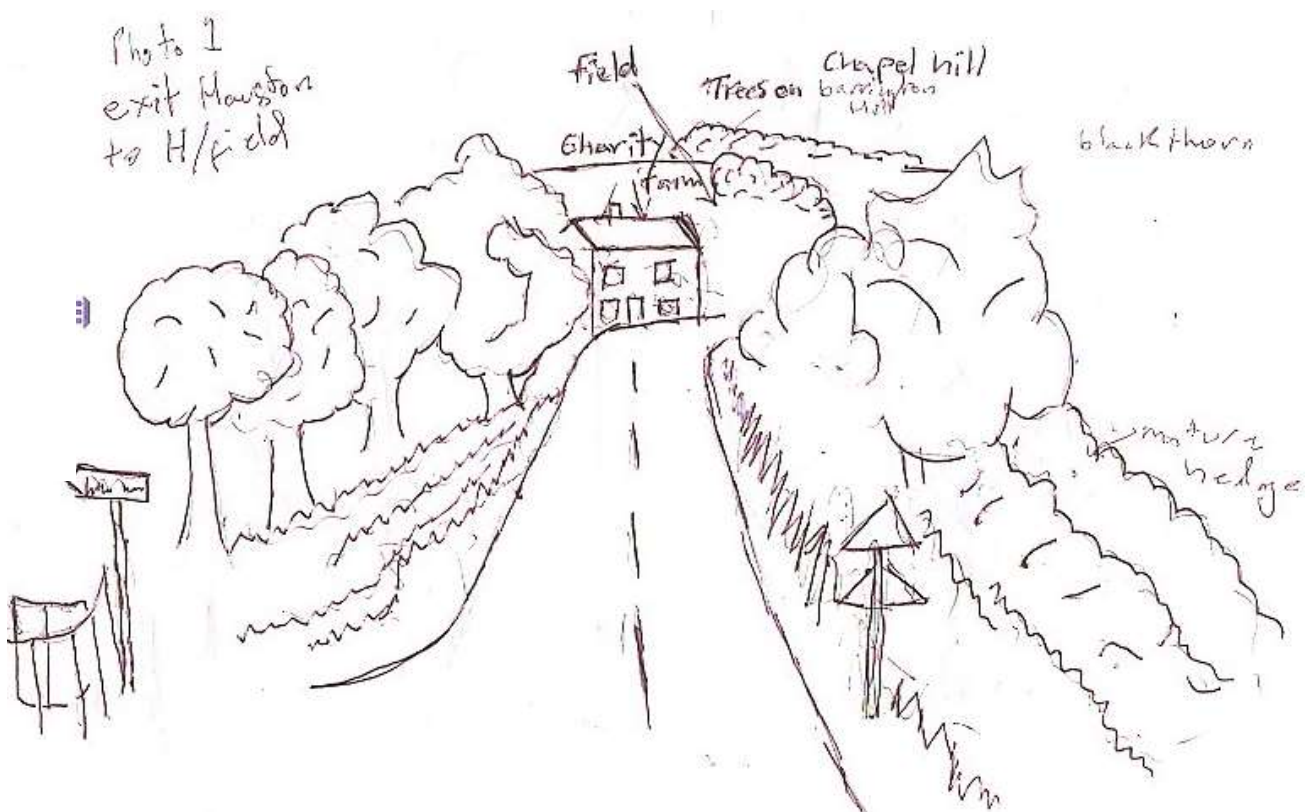
Western gateway into Harston

The approach begins along a narrow, rural road, lined by overgrown hedgerows with trees, which funnel the view east towards the bridge, over the river Rhee at the parish boundary. The gateway is reached at the narrow bridge which reflects its rural character with only a glimpse of housing in the distance. The first built form comprises historic buildings reinforcing the distinctive character of the village.

Photo: View looking east on reaching the gateway at the narrow bridge over the river Rhee.



On leaving the gateway, the sketch below shows the continuation of Haslingfield Road and the vista towards Charity Farm, with the rising chalk hill (Chapel Hill) behind. This is a distinctive view which imparts a strong sense of place.



Two public footpaths allow Harston village to be approached - one from north, another to east-creating two other countryside gateways into the village.

Eastern gateway on public footpath to the Drift.

Photo: This gateway is approached from Shelford Road walking west along the public footpath through the arable fields until the railway line, with Rookery Wood blocking the view into the village. The village edge can be seen in the distance over arable field to the northwest/right.



Once the railway line is crossed the path continues within a tree lined track (called the Drift) so the actual gateway into the village is not until the High St/A10 is nearly reached, although gaps in the wooded sides allow views of the village. It is important to retain this footpath link from the

chalklands into the farmlands and ultimately straight into the busy part of the village.

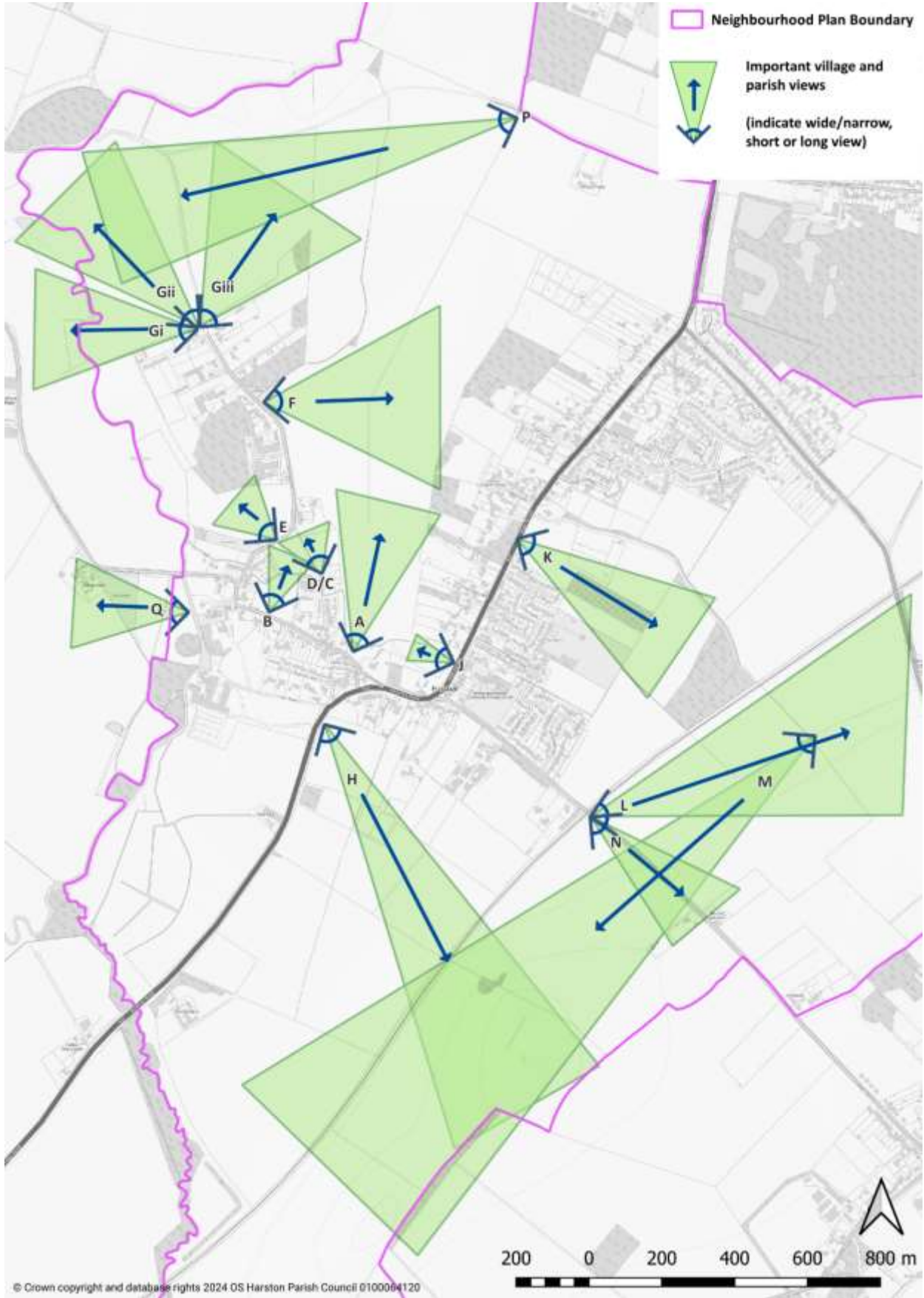
Northern gateway along footpath to Button End



Photo left: Approaching along the public footpath from north the view is of the west side of the village edge with the top half of a couple of bungalows visible, but well vegetated around. Arrival is when the barred gateway at the end of Button End is reached and you can see a green lane with wide grass verges and tall hedgerows ahead.

Photo right: Departure north from this gate gives an immediate sense of entering wide open countryside as there are views in all directions

6.6 Important Views



Map 28: Important views in Harston village and parish

For the purpose of this study a view is considered to be sight of a landscape from a public vantage point and may vary in depth, width and function, but helps to affirm or reinforce our sense of place.

The following views have been identified by the local community. The majority relate to views out of the village to the surrounding countryside – Map 28. In all views the openness of the land, elevation, land use and vegetation are important considerations.

View A

Location: This view looks north from Harston House wall, Church Street.

View looks over an old, enclosed pasture, with historic buildings and walls framing either side. Beyond, in the middle ground the land rises to form the skyline and encloses views. In winter filtered views of property back gardens on the High St (right half of photo) are visible.

Both winter and summer views are valued as they allow the feel of the countryside to enter the built village and local residents enjoy the changing vegetation and colours.



This view is from an Important Countryside Frontage and contributes to the rural setting of the historic core as well as being significant to the village form – separating the High St from Button End. The rising land, whilst subtle, creates visual and physical separation.

This view is sensitive to development which introduces built form and undermines the separation of the High St and Button End as well as loss of vegetation which undermines perceptions of ruralness.

View B

Location: Church St to west of Beech Farm through the thinly tree lined stretch along the road.

The view is relatively short, seen through different gaps in the vegetation and is less visible when trees are in leaf. It extends across a small historic pasture enclosure occasionally grazed by sheep. Beech Farm Cottages can be seen in the distance in Button End.

This view is valued as it emphasises the increasing ruralness of the western end of Church Street. The pasture field is a visually important open space and contributes to the rural and tranquil feel. It physically and visually separates the core of the village from Button End, whilst the intervisibility reinforces the historic connection between Beech Farm in the historic core of the village with Beech Farm cottages in Button End (which used to house farm workers).



This view is sensitive to loss of boundary vegetation especially in relation to proposed re-development at Beech Farm.

View C

Location: View north, northwest from the southern end of The Footpath, Church St.

A relatively short view over flat enclosed pastures towards the wooded abandoned gravel pits in the distance which screens views to the industrial estate. Beech Farm Cottages can be seen in the distance on the edge of the woodland.

This view is locally valued as it reflects traditional grazing and small holdings within the village. It also contributes to perceptions of the rural setting of the village and is also historically linked with the former Nightingale fair.



This view is sensitive to development which undermines the rural character of the pastures on the edge of the village and which separate the historic core from Button End.

View D

Location: Public footpath south of Beech Farm Cottages seen in view C looking south towards the historic core and properties at the southern end of Button End lane.

This view is enclosed by vegetation with glimpsed views to properties on Button End lane. There are also some filtered views to Beech Farm.

This open view over the old pastures is valued as written for view C, providing both a separation and connection between Button End and Church Street, as well as important for biodiversity. It is also valued as it shows part of the historic core, with the church, manor & Rhee House, all grade listed buildings that are in a well landscaped setting in the distance.



This view is sensitive to loss of hedgerow boundaries and vegetation which will increase visual intrusion of development on the edge of the village or would undermine the perceived separation between the core of the village and Button End.

View E

Location: View from Button End lane looking west and northwest across open pastures towards the tree lined river Rhee and deciduous woodland which has regenerated on the old disused



gravel pits. Cottages on the edge of Button End and visible in the distance and the vegetation on the left separates the pastureland from the village cemetery. The middle ground vegetation foreshortens views and provides a treed horizon. The open pasture is an area of valued archaeological importance as a site of possible Saxon burials. It is also valued for enhancing perceptions of separation between the historic core and Button End.

This view is sensitive to visual intrusion from development which undermines village form and rural setting and also has scope for enhancement in terms of biodiversity enhancement and access.

View F

Location: View east towards High St from an open, unhedged section of Button End lane.

This relatively long view is over arable farmland to the east with Hill Top Farm visible in the distance on the rising land which separates Button End from the High St. The rear of properties on the High St are barely visible due to significant vegetation along boundaries and within large garden plots.

This view is valued for its countryside view which separates Button End from the High St.



This view is sensitive to infill development along Button End lane which may undermine the rural character of the lane and low density development and block views to wider countryside.

View G

Location: Panoramic view from the northern end of Button End. This is illustrated in the photograph below and in the three separate viewpoints Gi-Giii. These views are valued as they are more expansive where the rising land at Haslingfield forms a distant horizon, and linear vegetation flanks the course of the river Rhee forming a distant tree horizon. The lack of overt development, riparian vegetation, varied topography and rural character make these views distinctive and highly valued. These views are sensitive to the introduction of built development, loss of vegetation and alteration of distinctive topography which may undermine composition and tranquil rural qualities.



Panoramic view looking northwards from Button End into the countryside.

Gi

This view is looking west along a wide grassy field edge permissive path, bounded on left (south) by hedgerow & trees which soften the village edge and with treeline of the river Rhee ahead, bounding the western edge of the field, with open arable farmland to right/NW. Rising above the open farmland the chalk hill (Money Hill) above Haslingfield can be seen in distance.

This view and area provides enjoyment for local walkers where nature can be seen and enjoyed. Beyond the Rhee treeline is one of the very few hills in this flat area so it is highly valued.



Improvements to the Cam/Rhee green corridor south of Cambridge seen along the treeline should be encouraged and supported, including better access, in addition to the Environmental Stewardship agreements existing to improve the biodiversity and riverside environment.

Gii

This view is looking north along the tree/ditch lined public footpath which bounds the open arable farmland along its (eastern) right side. The tree line in the distance that swings to the left follows the footpath, (sometimes called the Baulks) linking Harston to Haslingfield. Glimpses of the latter amongst trees can be seen in the distance to NW over arable farmland.



A line of trees has grown up in the ditch over last 25 years which not only helps to divide up the panoramic view and make it more interesting but provides a valued more varied habitat than the open arable fields.

The open farmland creates a clear separation between Haslingfield and Harston and walkers have said the area can feel quickly remote and tranquil. In contrast the paths linking the villages should be maintained/improved allowing for a circular route which cyclists, walkers and horse riders can all use to appreciate the scenery the travel through.

Giii This fairly long and wide view looks north east over open arable farmland, although the large field feels enclosed by the hedgerow/treed boundaries to north and east in the distance. The permissive footpath, with a wide field margin, continues along the field edge to the east swinging south around a clump of trees, including some large willows (County Wildlife site of lowland Fen).



Again this view is valued highly as it feels the countryside goes on for some distance and paths through it have been well-used for many years as it provides a rural and quiet route for walkers and horse riders to explore the fields, hedgerows and the lowland Fen area.

Retention of permissive paths in this area is very important to local residents for the above reasons but also as it links to other field edge permissive paths helping create more circular walking routes amongst the countryside.

View H

Location: View looking southeast from Royston Road on departing the village.

This view looks over a wide grass verge, through a gap in the treed hedgerow across flat arable farmland towards the distinctive group of trees on Rowley's Hill. The disused clunch pit can be seen as a crater just below the summit. The railway line is not visible as it is at grade and is partially screened by vegetation.



This view is from the southern gateway of the village and is iconic and highly valued. The distinctive form of Rowley Hill and its group of trees provides a rural setting to the village. This view is sensitive to development which undermines the rural character of this view, alters

perceptions of departure from the village and /or visually interrupts views to Rowley Hill altering scenic compositions.

View J

Location: View looking west from High St.

This view looks across an old pasture where horses still graze. The pasture is framed to left by The Cottage (Local Heritage Asset), to the right by Neptune store and by hedgerows and trees bounding the field to the west in the distance.

This view is from an Important Countryside Frontage and provides the setting for the adjacent Grade II listed Harston House which is located to the left.



It is valued for its open rural character and its location, penetrating the built up area of the village. It is also valued for its intimate, small-scale character.

This view is sensitive to change which would interrupt the flow of countryside into the village or the loss of vegetation which would undermine the smaller scale pastures at the fringes of the built up areas.

View K

Location: View looking east from High St opposite Park House.

This view looks over a ditch and low hedgerow across a horse pasture with a strong line of trees to north (The Drift) and to Rookery Wood which forms the skyline. The rising land of the chalk ridge is barely visible above this woodland.

This view is from an Important Countryside Frontage and allows the countryside to come right up to main road. It is also valued as forming a physical open

separation between areas of more recent 20th century residential development to the north and south. Given the vegetation along The Drift, residential development to the north is not visible in this view. This view is also valued for its historical links to the community comprising former common land until 1802 enclosure and has traditionally been grazed by cattle and horses, reflecting a continuation of the once rural business connected to the old Park House Stables. This land has been used for cricket or football as well as for fairs or gymkhanas and was formally known as Park field



This view is sensitive to development or land uses which interrupt the flow land rural landscape into the village, adversely affects the tranquil characteristics of the area and/or adversely affects the Important Countryside Frontage.

View N

Location: View south east from Newton Rd.

This wide open view looks east up Newton Road hill towards the chalk ridge with wide grass verges with arable fields either side beyond the hedgerows. A group of trees on the skyline screen a small group of residences beyond, which contain buildings of architectural merit including the old windmill ruin and cottage.

This is considered one of the most important gateway views and contrasts with the flatter and smaller scale views on the fringes of the village.



This view is sensitive to built development which affects the gateway arrival or departure to the village and/or disrupts the rural setting and perceptions of the rising land to the south east of the village.

View L

Location: View northeast from Newton Road.

This view looks over a rolling wide open landscape of different colour arable fields with more intermittent field boundaries, to the wooded top of St Margaret's Mount in the distance. The hedgerow line across the view disguises London Rd in the middle distance.

This view is valued for its wide open vista, distinctive hill topography, sense of scale and large skies, all of which contribute to sense of place.



It is sensitive to development which interrupts the open vista towards St Margaret's Mount through alteration of topography of increased enclosure.

View M

Location: View south from the public footpath between Shelford Rd and the Drift

This wide, long view looks south along the chalk ridge towards Rowley's Hill. It is open with little tree/hedgerow vegetation and wide arable fields.

Rowley's Hill in the distance is an important landscape feature contributing to sense of place and as the highest point on the chalk ridge provides a valued rural setting for Harston.

This view is sensitive to development which disrupts perceptions of the rural landscape and the topography of Rowley's Hill.



View P

Location: View looking west from slightly elevated land on the bridleway at Rectory Farm

This wide view looks across to the distinctive profile of Money Hill at Haslingfield which forms the distant skyline.

This view is valued as the raised ground allows for a much longer view that connects the eye to the neighbouring village, with church tower visible, in the wooded distance. It also allows for appreciation of the tranquil, almost isolated, countryside between, despite the wide, hedgerow lined, well-used bridleway that connects them.

This view is sensitive to change which undermines its rural tranquillity.



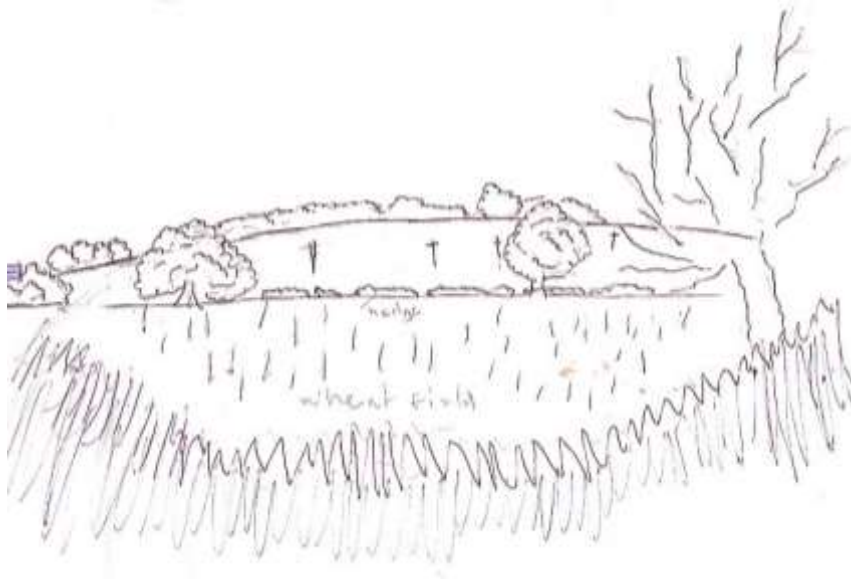
View Q

Location: View looking west from the footpath to Barrington on Harston's western boundary, west of the river.

This view looks west from the footpath on flat meadow land towards with the chalkland landscape between Barrington and Haslingfield, with views across to Chapel Hill and the clunch pits beyond.

This view is highly valued as the higher land contrasts with the flat land below creating a beautiful, distant landscape to enjoy.

It is sensitive to change which adversely affects the rural character and tranquillity.



Sketch of view from footpath by meadows beyond 2nd circular metal gate, looking across open farmland with crops and occasional trees towards Chapel Hill. A beautiful view.

6.5 Important Open land, Open space and gaps



Map 29: Important open land and green spaces

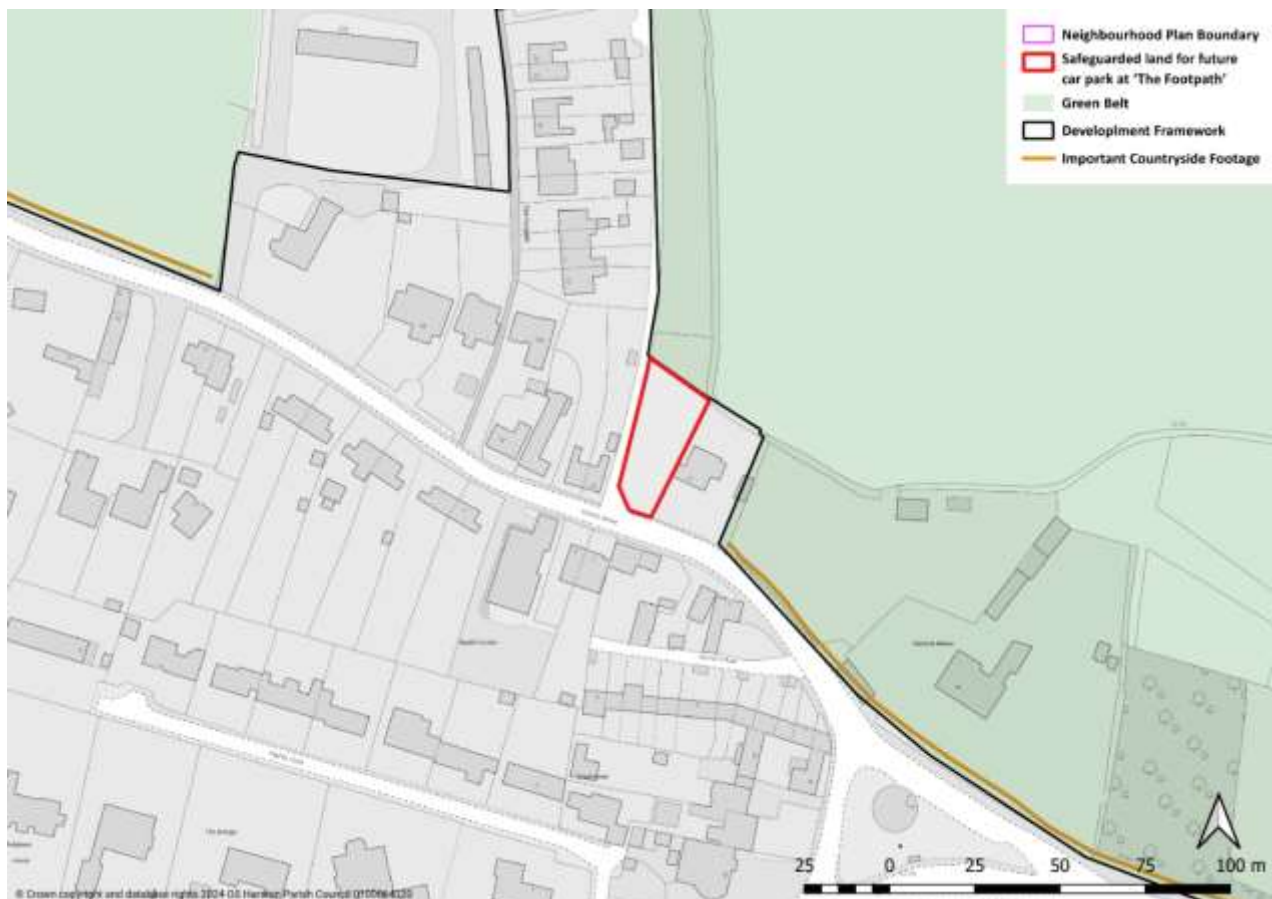
As noted in section 4.3, the Local Plan already identifies Important Countryside Frontages, Local Green Space (LGS) and County Wildlife Sites. The only existing LGS in the village is half of the Recreation Ground (which sits outside of the Greenbelt). All other areas of open space already fall within the Greenbelt and therefore LGS designation does not apply to them. Nevertheless, open spaces within the Greenbelt have great significance for village character due to historical and cultural influences and are visually part of important views (as noted above). On this basis this Landscape Appraisal has sought to identify other areas of open land which are also considered important to protect (albeit not as LGS). These are considered in more detail below:

Land behind Important Countryside Frontages

Open land behind Important Countryside Frontages is of particular value as it forms areas of open land allowing the countryside to come into the village, as well as providing gaps in the built areas along the roads and the settings for several Grade 2 listed buildings. Development of this land would fundamentally alter streetscape and village character as well as village setting. Map 29 illustrates the location of these areas (A, B, J, K) of important open space/land behind Open Countryside Frontages.

Open lands between Button End and Harston historic core (areas B, C, D and E) along Church Street are also identified as important openspaces that contribute to both important views and village form, character and setting. These open pastures supporting animal grazing, historically old enclosures, provide the transition between the more densely built Church Street and that of the more rural dispersed settlement along Button End.

The area alongside The Footpath access road, has its southern half inside the village framework shown in red on Map 30, but the larger northern half in the Greenbelt. All of this area is being reviewed by the NP, South Cambs and Harston PC to improve the area. The northern area was once allotments; the other appears to be storage areas for houses opposite and not well maintained. In future the southern half of this area may form parking for Surgery patients with the northern half contributing to nature recovery.



Map 30: Land alongside The Footpath access road

Proposed Additional Local Green Space

Within the village itself, a separate LGS assessment has identified three areas in addition to those already identified in the Local Plan. These are:

- The Green on Royston Rd
- War Memorial Green at the junction of Royston Rd, Station Rd and High St
- Queen's Close Green.

Their locations are shown on Maps 31 & 32 below with details given in Proposed Local Green Spaces in Harston (additional document) identifying their importance to the local community.



Map 31: Location of proposed Local Green Spaces- the Green and War Memorial Green



Map 32: Location of proposed Local Green Space – Queen's Close Green

7.0 Sensitivity to change

7.1 Introduction

The sensitivity of a landscape is ‘the extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character’³. Landscape sensitivity is understood through the evaluation of landscape character and value, and selected sensitivity criteria.

Harston is under pressure for more housing to sustain village services and amenities, but has limited land available within the village framework. Much recent development has been in back gardens not favoured by South Cambs Local Plan policies or Harston as it impacts village character, soft village edges and habitats/biodiversity.

A call for sites by Harston NP/PC resulted in 16 sites being assessed by an AECOM team in Sept/October 2023 to see whether any sites had the potential for housing bearing in mind existing policies and restrictions, such as the Greenbelt.

The proposed EWR route would additionally impact the landscape setting of Harston that is so important to the character of the area and the wellbeing of its residents and wildlife.

Future change may be beneficial to Harston as there may be opportunities for enhancement of river corridors and gateways, improved nature networks and increased access to the countryside.

7.2 Sensitivity assessment for fringe areas

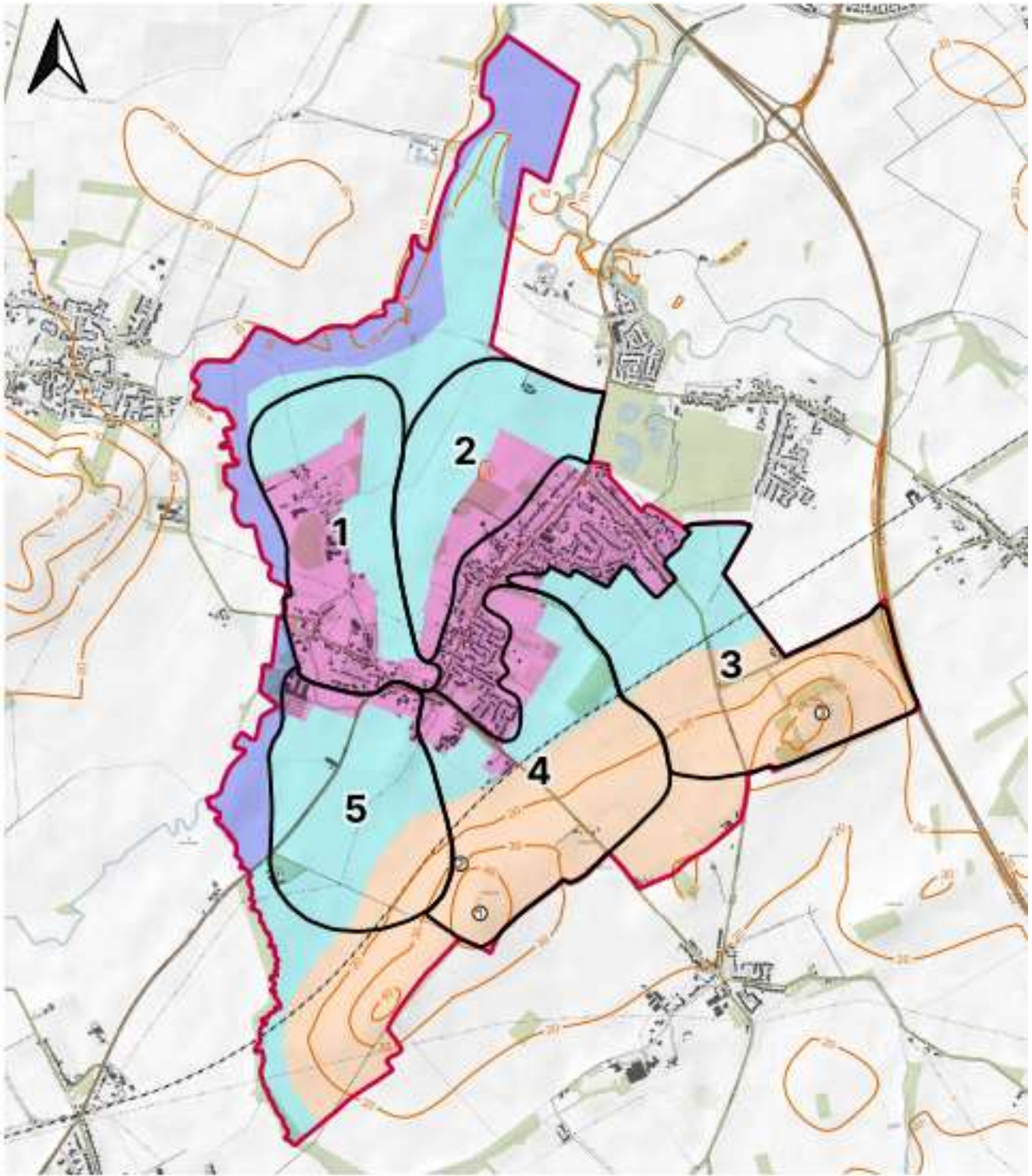
The sensitivity assessment has focused on areas where change is most likely to occur on the fringes of the village which have been divided into 5 areas for evaluation purposes, as illustrated on Map 33.

- Area 1: Button End / River Rhee Fringes
- Area 2: Northwest High St Fringes
- Area 3: Northeast Fringes
- Area 4: Southeast Fringes
- Area 5: Southern Fringes and A10

The criteria used to inform sensitivity judgements are based on best practice and draws together information on landscape character and analysis contained in this report.

A summary for each area is given below the following map.

³ This definition is taken from Swaffham Bulbeck Landscape Study: Part 2 Fringe Sensitivity assessment, based on best practice and is compliant with the definitions given in the published guidance ‘Landscape Character Assessment: Topic Paper 6’



Harston Neighbourhood Plan
Harston's Settlement Fringe Sensitivity Areas

- Harston Chalklands
- Harston Farmlands
- Harston Village
- Rhee Valley (Meadowlands)
- Designated Neighbourhood Area
- Indicative Approximate Fringe Sensitivity Areas

Basemap data: © OpenStreetMap contributors, SRTM; Basemap cartography: © OpenTopoMap (CC-BY-SA). Harston Character Areas adapted from regional landscape character typology data from Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment © Chris Blandford Associates 2021.

Map 33: Village sensitivity assessment areas

Peripheral Area 1: Button End / River Rhee Fringes

Relevant Planning Sites	Centenary Works, Button End - H15 previous planning applications for more industry, housing or traveller sites. H8 Church St – 2 houses. Sites assessed by AECOM, Oct 2023. Beech Farm - permission given to replace farm buildings with 8 houses of mixed design- not yet built.
Physical Character	Low lying flat large open arable fields, bounded by wide grass edges, ditches & overgrown hedgerows, trees and scrub that surround numerous small enclosed pastures, paddocks and meadows amongst low density settlement in Button End, and along the northern edge of Church St. This whole area is adjacent to, and above the river Rhee floodplain meadows, priority habitats, with wooded banks, found along the western edge. Substantial regenerated wooded area of old disused gravel pits
Existing Settlement Edge	Small, enclosed fields with mature tree and hedgerow boundaries provide strong rural edge. Although north and northeast edges of Button End plots have fairly straight/curving tree lined boundaries, the non-manicured overgrown hedgerows and variations in tree height reinforces a natural edge where vegetation is visually dominant. The northeast corner of fen with willows and a visually significant stand of poplar trees at eastern edge supports this unique variety. Although there was much change to area in 2 nd half of 20th century most buildings are low in height and don't register in the landscape so the rural character has not been lost compared to greater changes in the core of the village. Breaks in tree-lined eastern edge opposite houses & industrial estate leaves buildings visible from fields. The western gateway into Harston is screened by trees and/or hedgerows either side of road with just a glimpse of a rooftop. The tree-lined river Rhee obscures the view of Harston's west edge.
Views and Visibility	As shown on views map there are several important views (D, E, F and G) from Button End, some of which retain the easy link between Button End lane and the village core, others to the wider landscape, two behind Important Countryside Frontages. Because of the low density of development in Button End there is a flow of landscape in and out which makes it very sensitive to development which would lead to loss of character of this area.
Designation/ Condition	All Greenbelt outside village framework for large part of Button End. County Wildlife Site – lowland fen priority habitat at northeast edge boundary and disused gravel pits are significant areas of natural regeneration due to past disturbance from gravel extraction on river terrace. Field edges, pastures, meadows important for flora & provide numerous habitats for wildlife. There is an intact habitat network of small pastures & hedgerows around development which could be linked up. Important countryside frontages on Church St. Linear historic core & Button End contains a number of grade II listed buildings & local heritage assets.
Perceptual Qualities	Open aspect of the arable fields surrounded by tree lined river & ditches gives a discernible air of remoteness to an area relatively close to built-up villages and a unique area to appreciate the wildlife. There is always a sense of peace and quiet in this landscape and the huge sunsets can be spectacular! Open countryside is very accessible from Church St historic core for walkers, dog walkers and horse riders making it the most used area within the parish. Farms and historic labourers' cottages give rural feel but of mixed uses linked to old industrial heritage in Button End – joiners, gravel workings, Fleece Inn brewing- an area that has seen change and adaption. Considered part of the village Button End is a quiet lane but intermittent vehicles accessing the industrial estate disturb the quiet. Scattered low density properties of random, varied design are set back from the lane behind hedgerows and trees so they are not seen from the lane or the wider landscape.
Function	Pasture and arable fields allow retention of rural activities & farming. Easily accessible countryside for locals via public footpath and permissive paths to enjoy key views of river, over to Haslingfield chalk hills & farmland. Allows open countryside to come into village in places.

	Small fields provide a physical separation of rural Button End from the historic core. Cambridge nature network provides nature stepping stone to north along river with more stepping stones proposed around Button End.
Sensitivity/ Capacity	Rural character is slightly remote, so it is sensitive to infill development that would result in loss of qualities that make it important, such as interspersed green spaces and providing a most used recreational route or open quiet landscape. It is sensitive to more employment uses that generate more and/or heavy/speeding traffic or buildings of height that might be visible from the surrounding landscape
Mitigation/ Guidance	Encourage appropriate uses on existing sites in Button End that don't generate more business vans/lorry traffic. Active management of gravel pits habitats for enhancement of biodiversity and extend habitat network to connect to river terrace meadows, hedgerow network and groups of trees within wider arable landscape but also give some/better access to this more varied habitat. Encourage links to create or maintain circular routes amongst the countryside. Retain perceived openness between Church St and Button End.

Peripheral Area 2: Northwest High St Fringes

Relevant Planning Sites	H10 land between north edge of village framework and bridleway to Rectory Farm NP call for sites H14 disused nursely brownfield site off High St west H13 land behind 57 High St & behind Ducati High St west
Physical Character	Large open arable fields bounded by wide grass edges, ditches & overgrown hedgerows, intermittent trees and scrub on slightly elevated chalk land running north-south towards isolated Rectory Farm, sloping down west to Area 1. This transitions to the long E-W aligned back gardens, outbuildings and small enclosed pastures/paddocks of the village on west side of High St. The latter reflect historical strip field pattern. Wooded area next to Hill Top Farm and E-W bridleway are key land features.
Existing Settlement Edge	Same as 1998 study with hedgerows and trees along back garden and small field boundaries provide soft edge to village, with grass fields in long plots providing a transition zone from buildings in the High St. Only Hill Top Farm visible from Area 1 as it is located right on western boundary of plot. At northern edge of village, the end buildings can be seen above the boundary hedgerows, although surrounding garden trees cushion the impact. The new development at the junction with London Road /High St is clearly visible although the surrounding backdrop of mature trees lessens the impact from a distance.
Views and Visibility	Area viewed from bridleway/footpath (View P), a key land feature, running E-W along higher northern edge of area with views narrowed between N-S vegetated boundaries. Tall hedgerow on A10 limits view west from it as do mature tall conifers on eastern side. Views west across to Money Hill and Haslingfield Church from bridleway on higher land near Rectory farm which is a key well vegetated landmark. Park House chimneys seen from Button End as this building is higher than usual.
Designation/ Condition	Arable fields and small enclosed grass fields behind gardens are in the Greenbelt. Park House is Grade II* listed and Grade II listed No 55 High St is an example of 16th century house/cottages found in long strips on west side of High St. Long plots are well landscaped & set back from A10 (due to front garden land being previous common land until enclosure).
Perceptual Qualities	From Button End & from permissive track and northern bridleway within area, there is very little view of any settlement as the village appears only as a well vegetated area beyond the gentle chalk ridge of arable farmland, enhancing its rural qualities. Important connectivity with Haslingfield and Hauxton on bridleway for walkers & horse riders at northern end of Area 2 and Harston to Hauxton along cycle path but no access along the back garden edges for walkers so those open arable fields which transition to

	small enclosed grass fields appear more remote and tranquil, in considerable contrast to the busy and noisy A10 in east.
Function	Large areas of open arable land actively farmed, although by tenant farmer from next village. Long back gardens and small enclosed grass fields, some used as paddocks, (once orchards, but no longer) provide settings for houses and village and transition to farmland. Arable fields provide a separation between Harston and Hauxton and between linear High St and Button End. This land contributes to the northern approach to the village.
Sensitivity/ Capacity	Limited land available for infill housing behind present High St building line and quiet back gardens may suffer from overlooking, light pollution and more housing will have impact on safe use of cycle way adjacent to A10. Western boundary of long E-W plots sensitive to development as would be seen from Button End and from the north as on higher land, particularly if development removed soft edge and habitats reducing its rural qualities, as has already occurred along boundary behind Neptune where large new buildings appear dominant.
Mitigation/ Guidance	Houses need to sympathetic to the aesthetics of the village. Consideration should be given to development which remains subservient to existing houses. Keep existing vegetated boundaries and small wooded areas, eg near Hill Top Farm & around Rectory Farm. Land to the north should remain open farmland to separate Harston from Hauxton and to retain rural setting and northern approach. Small enclosed pastures along west village edge need to be kept open providing a transition zone to Greenbelt. Wider views of cycleway needed from residential driveway exits.

Peripheral Area 3: Northeast Fringes - London/Shelford Rd

Relevant Planning Sites	H1,2,3,4,6 along northeast side of London Rd, part of H5 north of the Drift footpath. EWR proposed route at height with lines merging and new raised bridge.
Physical Character	Flat open arable land with some water courses and ditches with few or gappy field boundary hedgerows rising to east above railway line up to rolling and undulating chalk ridge with important land feature of St Margaret's Mount with its wooded top. Well maintained hedgerows with some mature trees line the roads through the chalklands. The railway line is not a dominant feature in the landscape as it is at grade and views are filtered by vegetation.
Existing Settlement Edge	The eastern edge of the village is very indented following the rectilinear shape of various fields with one projecting out at the London Rd gateway. At London Rd gateway to village fairly exposed eastern edge above low hedgerows, with housing abutting and new housing in recent back-garden developments visible. To southwest of gateway long back gardens with mature trees and hedgerows provide soft edge, but harsh edge further west where dense housing estates abut the open fields with few hedgerows. The Drift wooded trackway provides a soft edge along the southern boundary of the flat open fields near the village.
Views and Visibility	The views of the village nestling below are good from higher chalkland, on the road below St Margaret's Mount, but not spectacular at the gateway into the village as the hedgerows peter out. Lovely views over rolling chalklands from the Drift footpath, both to St Margaret's Mount and Rowley's Hill. Pedestrian crossing on the railway line is considered the point where you enter the village and can see the village edge over the flat arable fields to north.
Designation/ Condition	Greenbelt area, with public footpath along southern edge giving access to wider landscape and another linking to Hauxton. Grade 2 listed milestone on London Rd as you enter village. Grade 2 listed Obelisk at St Margaret's Mount links it to Harston Manor history.

Perceptual Qualities	Landscape is varied with a strong visual appeal with contrasts between wooded areas, track and open fields, so is an important part of the village, due to the rural nature of the area. The landscape in and around The Drift is very important as it provides a real sense of peace and tranquillity and affords excellent views of the surrounding elevated chalkland area. It also gives the freedom to walk through the area, and along with grass verge footpaths provides walking and riding links with both Hauxton, Newton and Little Shelford. The open chalk farmlands feel exposed and windswept with a few isolated houses, and the more remote St Margaret's Mount, but emphasizes the setting of the village which gives it its sense of place. Lower chalkland area is generally tranquil but with intermittent noise from railway line or fast cars on London Road before enter village. Popular rural cycling route away from main roads.
Function	Arable and pastoral farming. Recreational access – walking, cycling on roads, horse riding to maintain good health. Provides setting for village and contributes to the eastern approach and gateway. Important wooded areas provide habitats and variety in landscape.
Sensitivity/ Capacity	Character is more remote and isolated from village, so would be very sensitive to development which would threaten the qualities of this generally peaceful rural area. An important recreational route may be affected. Visually any development would have noticeable impact on this open landscape, especially to chalk ridge - an important land feature. Area provides rural buffer zone between northern edge of Harston & Hauxton which would be threatened by development in that area.
Mitigation/ Guidance	Provide improved access to the Drift from London Road and potentially a route through to the orchard. Gateway along east edge of London Rd could be improved with more tree or hedgerow planting. Retention and enhancement of wooded Drift footpath and Rookery wood are important to character of landscape.

Peripheral Area 4: Southeast Fringes - Station Rd /Newton Road

Relevant Planning Sites	H9 behind countryside frontage Station Rd, H12 Tanner & Hall/Sig Roofing site by Station House, Pemberton Arms boarded up for many years. Planning permission given to rebuild on but no progress. EWR route at height with one line over the other.
Physical Character	Flat land gently rising to SE with large arable fields above existing low-lying railway line up to NE-SW aligned chalk ridge, with prominent land feature of tree topped Rowley's Hill. Newton Rd hill is lined by low well-kept hedgerows, and separates large rectilinear arable fields on sloping land either side, which are bounded with gappy hedgerows and the odd tree. Smaller enclosed fields close to village with Recreation Ground and Community Orchard adjoining. The Rookery, a significant woodland feature west of the railway, separates pastures from arable fields, as does the Drift, a wooded path running E-W alongside a ditch, an important land feature along the northern boundary of this area. The railway line is not a dominant feature in the landscape as it is at grade and views are screened by vegetation.
Existing Settlement Edge	A tall, well maintained hedgerow at Important Countryside Frontage, and long narrow stand of trees create a strong soft edge along southwest side of Station Rd, screening the pastures and arable fields beyond. Pastures provide a transition to the arable fields which rise up above the railway line. Linden House stands out in its own grounds outside of the main village area, reached by a short lane but cannot be seen from any public viewpoint. At eastern level crossing gateway tall conifer trees screen the industrial buildings to the southwest but to the northeast estate houses are visible above field boundary low hedgerows with intermittent trees, softened by mature trees in back gardens. Further north hedgerows around Recreation Ground and Community Orchard, and trees within, screen estate houses from the surrounding pastures but estate houses visible from pastures behind ICF along High St. The wooded Drift path provides an attractive soft northern edge to these pastures. A satellite group of houses around Sunbourn & Sarek, on Newton Rd Hill have soft landscaped edges.

Views and Visibility	There are extensive 'open' unobstructed views from the top of the Newton Road Hill into the well wooded southern end of Harston village, west over to Barrington (Chapel Hill), northeast to Hauxton, and southeast to Newton. Long and wide views (L) east to St Margaret's Mount can be seen from village gateway and as you rise up the hill (N). From village behind High St ICF is view east (K) over open pasture land enclosed by Rookery Wood bringing feel of countryside into village. From gaps in the Drift and public footpath (View M) you can see Rowley's Hill.
Designation/ Condition	All Greenbelt land, with Grade II listed Baggot Hall Farm and Important Countryside Frontages on Station Rd and the group of buildings on Newton Hill which are local heritage assets.
Perceptual Qualities	The Drift provides a well-used but quiet, wooded, enclosed oasis away from noise and pollution of busy A10 so people immediately feel part of the countryside. From Station Rd gateway the sweeping views across farmland of a green and pastoral setting, give the perception of being in the open peaceful countryside, with only occasional noise from the railway or road, There are no street lights on the initial approach to the village so light pollution levels are low with high night sky visibility, further emphasizing the feeling of being in a rural landscape. The view into the village from Newton Rd is predominantly of mature trees, with the community nestled amongst them. This tranquil area has a very diverse range of wildlife traversing it or living in the fields, gardens, associated native trees and hedgerows, encouraged by the land being well managed. Newton Rd Hill is a focal point linking Harston to neighbouring villages and gives the village a sense of place within the overall landscape. On the hill a small, satellite cluster of residential properties with unique architectural styles and historically significant windmill provide visual interest.
Function	Arable farmland with some grass fields for silage. Small enclosed fields retain old enclosure patterns, providing pastures for local horses and a separation between different areas of village. Drift and Rookery provide diverse habitats. Rec and Community Orchard are important recreational areas, with Drift and Newton Rd well-used walking and cycling links to Newton or Hauxton. Rising land to east forms an important rural and distinctive setting to the village and contributes to the eastern approach and gateway to the village
Sensitivity/ Capacity	Sensitive to infill where small enclosed pastures would lose open countryside quality if developed, views may be lost, especially of chalk ridge or important recreational route affected. Open arable farmland on chalk hills are sensitive to developments that would obstruct the skyline and open landscape, losing the qualities that make it important, including habitats for wildlife.
Mitigation/ Guidance	Retain views to landmark hills which form important setting to village. Retain distinction between open chalk arable fields and smaller scale enclosures close to the settlement as part of approach and gateway. Maintain important open land- pastures but ensure their soft field edge boundaries are maintained or improved. Retain the character of the current agricultural landscape and accessibility for the farmer.

Peripheral Area 5: Southern Fringes and A10

Relevant Planning Sites	H11 arable field, pasture & small woodland south; Granary, Royston Rd- has planning permission, not yet built. EWR proposed route south and east of village.
Physical Character	Flat open arable land is part of the wider landscape either side of hedgerow-lined A10 which is flanked by chalk ridge to east & tree-lined river to west with another chalk ridge beyond. Distinct land feature of Rowley's Hill with small group of trees on top. Hedgerows surround large, mostly rectilinear open arable fields with boundaries established since enclosure and river meadows to west, grazed by cattle. Small wooded area just before immediate approach to village as well as wooded area around Manor Farm.
Existing Settlement Edge	The southern approach goes through continuous area of working hedgerow-lined arable farmland with indented soft field edges along the back garden boundaries of houses to the east. Many mature trees close to the village obscure rooflines and houses

	of the village on entering. Some vegetation has been removed where there has been back garden development. To west side of A10 tree-lined edge curves around The Mill & Science Park site only showing tops of houses and Mill when in leaf, but more exposed in winter. Mill site raised landscaped mound also softens edge.
Views and Visibility	Hedgerows along A10 with only a few gaps giving distant views of wider landscape, especially up to chalk ridge with Rowley's Hill and clunch pit below, important land features, reinforcing the sense of place and sense of departure as the hill comes into view (View H). Long views, partially obscured by hedgerows, towards the SW across small arable fields to the chalk hilled ridge line at the edge of Haslingfield and Barrington. On entering the village, the gateway retains a strong reminder of Harston's rural setting with large trees providing the backdrop to the Queen's Head as it becomes visible with adjacent Green, part of the historic core - affirming sense of arrival.
Designation/ Condition	As you enter the parish you pass Manor Farm which has a large area designated a scheduled monument with many archaeological finds in the landscape which future change could affect. All farmland is in the Greenbelt, with meadows associated with river corridor priority habitats. Hedgerows, well maintained along A10, delineate the field pattern and 400 yr old ancient hawthorn hedgerow near Linden House, off Station Rd. Queens' Head & adjoining houses, The Green with wellhead are Local Heritage Assets with Grade 2 listed milestone.
Perceptual Qualities	Farmland perceived as rural, natural, beautiful and valued countryside with a sense of space and light, and is intermittently quiet. The hedges, trees & wide grass verges with some wildflowers lining the road act like a corridor with the chalk hills visible either side above and through gaps in the hedgerows. The open unspoiled prospect across arable fields NW towards the river rising to gentle land features of Chapel Hill and towards Rowley Hill in NE with open skies are key to the overall sense of ruralness to the approach to the village. New Farm buildings increases the perception of a rural farming area.
Function	Open productive arable and pastoral land with hedgerow & tree boundaries comes right up to the village providing a setting for it, especially the historic core. Provides a network of linked habitats- hedgerows, trees, small wooded areas. Open land allows views of the surrounding countryside and important land features. Harston Mill Science park site on west village edge, occupied by innovation based companies, probable employment around 200-300 people. This land makes an important contribution to the approach to the village from the south.
Sensitivity/ Capacity	Meadows associated with river corridor are priority habitat that could easily be damaged by change. Openness of land which is part of its quality would be sensitive to change – particularly if raised embankments added. The loss of Rowley's Hill view would change the character of the village as it is key to the tranquil welcome/arrival and departure from this village gateway. Soft village edge boundaries are susceptible to removal by back garden developments as has already happened. Agricultural viability and landscape function is sensitive to change if field sizes and access is altered.
Mitigation/ Guidance	Trees & priority habitat meadows associated with river corridor need conserving. Soft village edges should be protected. The introduction of EWR should give consideration to alteration of the approach and gateways and the rural fringes to the village. Any mitigation should seek to retain key views and rural character. Ensure well-treed gateway entrance to Queen's Head & Green is conserved and setting of this landmark is retained in its own space.

8.0 Summary of findings

8.1 Special Qualities to Conserve and Enhance

The above analysis has demonstrated that Harston is a special place, not just due to its history and the extent to which historic features remain visible and tangible but also because of its unique landscape setting. More widely the village has been found to sit within a highly valued productively farmed agricultural chalk landscape of gentle hills and slopes, with wide skies, contrasting with flat arable farmlands and river Rhee meadows. In terms of open space and open frontages these have been found to make a particular contribution to the character of the village.

The following conclusions can be reached as to the special qualities of Harston Parish which, wherever possible, should be retained and enhanced. Special qualities include:

- Distinct open nature of SW-NE aligned chalk ridge with two noticeable hill tops/high points
- Wooded banks of river Rhee/Cam and adjoining meadows
- Important Countryside Frontages with enclosed fields behind with pastoral character within the village
- Well-defined, indented village edge with enclosed fields and tree groups providing transition between village and open fields
- Linear form of two E-W green/well vegetated (with trees & hedgerows) tracks – The Drift public footpath and Hauxton to Haslingfield Bridleway
- Easily accessible countryside from village via Button End and High St, via the Drift
- Several patches of woodland of reasonable size close to village - Rookery and Gravel Pits provide biodiversity refuges and enclosure
- Tree-lined roads with grass verges and mature vegetated back gardens contribute to street scene
- Large detached houses set back from road frontages
- Open frontages/gaps allowing views out of the village to open countryside
- Views into the village from the higher ground important in landscape terms and for local people to enjoy
- Lack of visibility of development from the wider landscape
- Historic core in rural setting, with two village greens at road junctions
- Distinct character in terms of different parts of the village with a wide range of buildings, including heritage assets
- Gateways on the edge of the historic core which reinforce small scale, rural and established character of the village.

8.2 Changes to avoid

Harston village has evolved gradually with some of the most significant change occurring in the last century as a result of large areas of estate development of similar style on the east side of High St, filling out the linear shape. This has resulted in a varied mix of housing styles and ages. Shortage of space has led to more recent development of back gardens and the remaining brownfield sites and loss of landmarks.

Based on this understanding, the following changes should be avoided in future:

- Back land and cul-de-sac developments where possible
- Removal of mature trees and other vegetation prior to application for development, if plot bought with intent to develop
- Creation of abrupt edges to development with little vegetation or landscape on the edge of settlement

- New infill housing which appears out of scale in terms of height and mass and blocks important gaps between buildings/connections to the landscape
- Large scale features which interrupt the unfettered skylines
- Housing development with single housing types which contrast with the organic and eclectic styles and orientation of buildings in the village
- Planting of leylandii hedging and trees or other urban curtilage treatments such as fencing and high gates
- Boarding up of local heritage assets until the buildings decay and need to be demolished
- Loss of landmark features at key locations/junctions/gateways
- The loss of key historic built landmarks and their settings
- Development within the setting of important heritage assets which undermines the landscape setting and historic significance of these features
- Incremental development which substantially reduces these gaps between built areas or blocks important views to the surrounding landscape or intensifies urban character
- Development which disrupts or pushes out gateways away from the historic core

Not all areas are equally sensitive to development and this assessment has indicated that the areas which have greatest capacity to accommodate some small-scale development lie in small plots or small enclosed fields largely away from public view. Where it is concluded that areas have some capacity for development it should not be assumed that these areas are free from sensitivity.

The land beyond the village is also sensitive to development, especially the chalk ridge. Its open character, and distinctive skyline and hilltops, is sensitive to development which may disrupt the strong sinuous lines and unfettered skylines of the chalk ridge and interrupt views and scenic compositions. Whilst the small fields around the village are more enclosed in character, this area is vulnerable to change which undermines its rural, pastoral and tranquil qualities, and results in the loss of the transition these pastures provide between the built up form of the village and wider arable productive farmland.

8.3 Management and Development guidelines

The landscape management and development guidelines contained in the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment aim to safeguard the character of the countryside and settlements of the chalkland landscapes by ensuring new development integrates positively with the existing character. It therefore provides a framework of broad principles that all development in the countryside will be required to follow.

In addition to these guidelines, this assessment has highlighted a number of additional local initiatives which could be taken forward and seek to safeguard the special qualities of Harston village and its setting. These initiatives are set out below.

Landscape Character Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the tranquillity, distinctive sense of rural isolation and rural qualities of the farmland, river and chalk landscapes.
- Maintain distinctive linear features eg the Drift footpath and riparian vegetation.
- Conserve and enhance the regular small-scale pastoral fields, shelter belts and hedgerows at village edges.
- Recognise areas of open land and open frontage, such as those small enclosed pastures identified on the Green spaces map, which make a contribution to the settlement character, and have a sensitive visual relationship with the village, and protect their openness and rural feel.
- Conserve and enhance areas of woodland as important landscape sites – especially The Rookery and Gravel Pits.

- Undertake a detailed veteran tree survey and prepare a management strategy to ensure longevity of important tree groups.
- Protect sites and features of historic and cultural value, including their setting in the historic core.
- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerows on farmland, along roads and garden boundaries.
- Enhance village gateways and, where appropriate, encourage appropriate planting on village approaches.

Development Guidelines

- New development proposals coming forward should respect, enhance and not significantly adversely impact important, locally valued views that contribute towards landscape character, setting and a sense of place in the parish.
- Ensure new developments integrate/connect with existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) within development layout.
- Ensure new developments reflect the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings and pick up on traditional local building styles, height, materials, colours and textures.
- Ensure new development reflects the character and form of the village and does not adversely affect the character of the gateways or the historic core.
- Ensure new developments are integrated with sufficient space for garden and street tree planting/landscaping where applicable .
- Encourage appropriate uses on existing sites in Button End that don't generate more business vans/lorry traffic.

Access Initiatives

- Improve footpath connections and access to the chalk landscape setting of the village to enable enjoyment of extensive views from the chalk hills.
- Provide information relating to artisan well heads and their settings to emphasize their significance and provide interest on walks to and around the village.
- Seek improvements to the condition of existing footpaths which can become muddy in winter.
- Seek opportunities to enhance access between Rookery Wood, The Drift and the community orchard.

Nature Enhancement Initiatives

- Seek opportunities to bring Gravel Pits wood into active management and consider designating it as a Local Nature Reserve
- Ensure all open spaces and land within the village contributes to Green Infrastructure and Cambridge Nature Network for the benefit of nature but also access to rural countryside.
- Conserve, enhance and link, where possible, areas of river meadows, woodlands and hedgerows to benefit biodiversity (seeking to deliver the aspirations of the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and Nature Networks for the River corridor).

8.4 Conclusions

This landscape character appraisal has identified what is important about the special character of Harston, with its lack of uniformity, historic character and more recent developments that gives it its sense of place, and indicated how this can be conserved and even improved in future. Its unique setting has been described in detail and ways to protect, conserve and enhance the special landscapes that surround it have been suggested. There is little space left

for future development due to the Greenbelt but proposals to find Rural Exception sites should take great care to protect village edges and maintain transition zones from village to countryside.

Appendix 1: Harston (townscape) village character assessment proforma

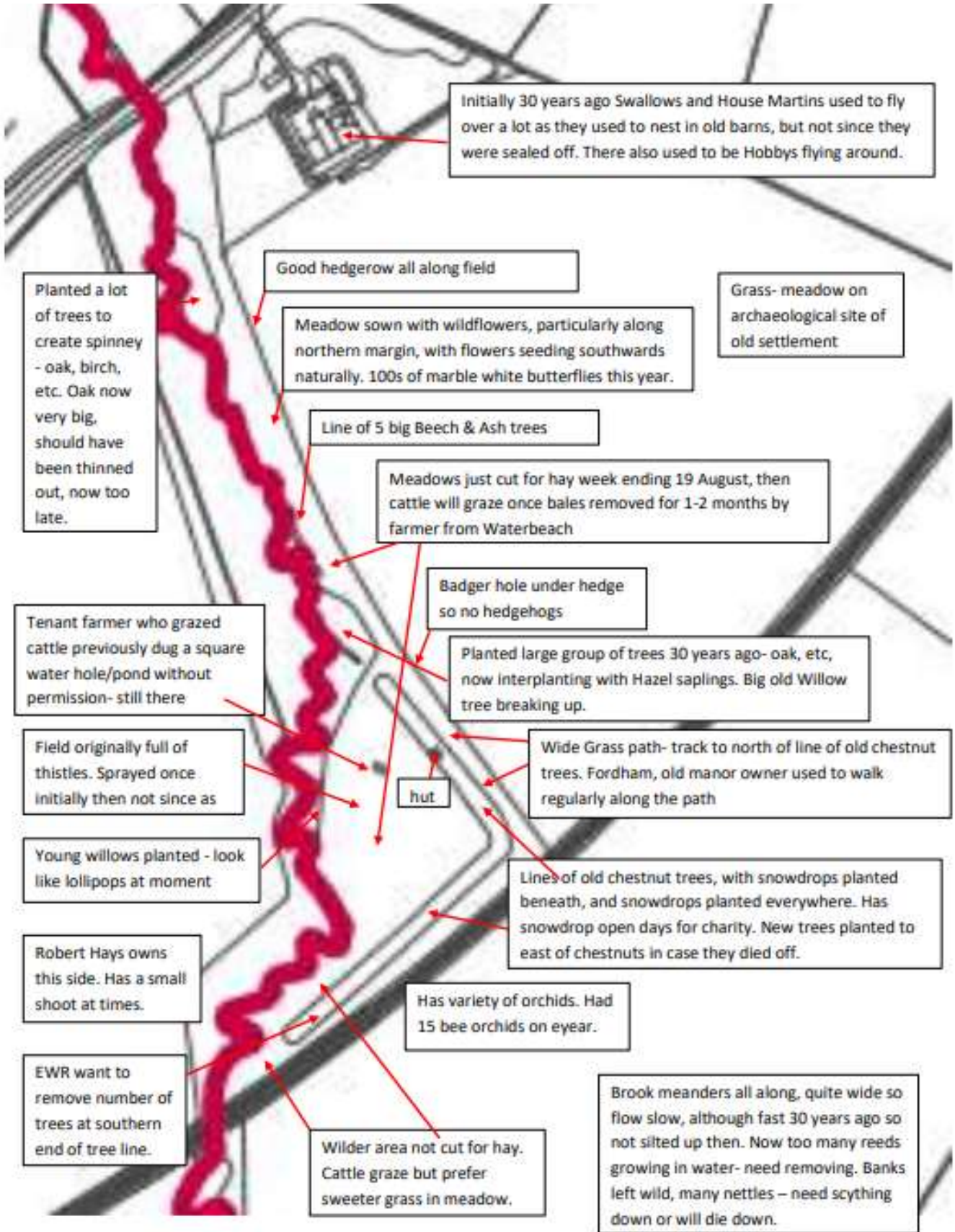
Character Area Assessor(s)..... Date

Topography Landscape setting/gradient of local area	flat, sloping, rolling, hilltop	other
Land uses How have land & building uses changed over time?	Residential Retail Leisure & recreation Commercial Employment Community,	
Spaces	Parks Playingfields Allotments Cemeteries Village greens Carparks etc	
Roads, streets, routes	Vehicular routes railway Cycle paths Pedestrian pathways Shared surfaces Rights of way Bridleways Alleyways	
Layout Regularity and density of street pattern; Building plots: shape & size How are buildings arranged in relation to spaces, routes, street width, boundaries, plots and sight-lines	Straight angular curved sinuous dense sparse (few streets) Wide narrow long short small large On road edge set back a little set back a lot soft curtilage walls hedges railings	
Buildings Building heights Arrangement- type	1 storey 1.5 storey 2 storey 3 storey detached, semi-detached, terraced, apartments bungalows	

<p>Building density</p> <p>Materials</p> <p>Predominant architectural features</p> <p>Construction era (rough dates)</p> <p>Condition</p>	<p>Dense spread out</p> <p>Red brick Cambridge brick render clunch wood</p> <p>Window types</p> <p>Roof types</p>	
<p>Heritage assets: name below</p>	<p>Grade National Listed Group</p> <p>Local listing</p> <p>associated with historic events/people</p>	
<p>Landmarks</p> <p>Distinct & instantly recognisable locally significant features, both built & natural</p>		
<p>Green and natural features</p>	<p>Trees hedgerows ditches ponds wells</p> <p>woodland landscaped areas</p>	
<p>Streetscape</p>	<p>Lamp posts Benches & seating Signage</p> <p>Street surfacing materials</p> <p>Boundary treatments</p>	
<p>Views</p> <p>Important views in and out of the character area (record location of viewpoint and direction and extent of view)</p>		
<p>How did the area develop and what are the principal stages in its development?</p>		

<p>What were the main drivers behind development eg pattern of ownership, developing communications</p> <p>What other changes outside the area shaped its development?</p>		
Summary of Key defining characteristics/other observations		

Appendix 2: Annotated map of Hoffer Brook Meadows Environmental Management (c 12 acres – Aug 2023)



Appendix 3: Biodiversity areas in Harston

Type of Land	Examples in Harston	Biodiversity supported
Unimproved pasture	The horse paddocks off the High St	<p>Birds & animals: Rooks, magpies, rabbits, moles</p> <p>Plantlife: grasses, daisies, clover, buttercup, dandelion, nettles</p> <p>Benefits for wildlife: nectar for insects and seeds for birds.</p>
Rough grassland/scrub/derelict land	Land at top of Button End	<p>Birds & animals: rooks, magpies, rabbits, moles</p> <p>Plantlife: grasses, daisies, clover, buttercup, dandelion, nettles</p> <p>Benefits for wildlife: sites for ground nesting birds, habitat for insects and small mammals.</p>
Meadows	Behind the recreation ground, next to the river by Rectory Farm, along the river on way to Haslingfield, next to the weir, and along river parallel to Button End.	<p>Birds & animals: nesting skylarks, barn owl, buzzard, red kite, swallows.</p> <p>Plantlife: ox-eye daisy, common knapweed, groundsel, ragwort, field scabious, grasses, hogweed, cow parsley, common mallow, rosebay willowherb, red clover, common vetch, cornflower, poppies.</p> <p>Insects: demoiselles, small skipper butterfly, orange tip butterfly, peacock butterfly, marbled white butterfly, bees.</p> <p>Benefits for wildlife: lots of nectar-rich plants supporting a variety of insect life and providing seeds for birds. Nesting for ground nesting birds and cover for small mammals and reptiles.</p>
Woodlands	Small woodland – The Rookery - behind the field behind the Rec	<p>Birds and animals: rooks, green woodpecker, wood pigeons, rabbits.</p> <p>Plantlife: hawthorn, oak, beech, elder.</p> <p>Benefits for wildlife: nesting site for birds, roosting for bats, shade for plants and mammals.</p>
Hedgerows and scrub	Surrounding the Drift, surrounding the Rec and orchard, the path up to Rectory Farm and on to Haslingfield	<p>Plantlife: hawthorn, hazel, blackberry, blackthorn, dog rose, elder</p> <p>Birds & animals: sparrow, chiff chaff, chaffinch, blue tit, great tit, blackbird, wren, robin, yellow hammer, blackcap, hares, rabbits.</p>

		Benefits for wildlife: vital nesting site for birds and creates a safe corridor for birds and small mammals to travel along.
Native Trees	Rec and High Street	Rookery on High Street in ash trees Bats can roost in cracks in yew and oak trees. Benefits to wildlife: nesting and roosting spot for birds and bats. Trees also provide breeding grounds for a variety of insects.
Rivers, streams & ditches	River Rhee, ditches along High Street, ditches by Rectory Farm, ditch next to the Drift. Hoffer Brook – see annotated map	Birds & animals: kingfisher, swans, ducks, moorhen. Plantlife: bulrushes Benefit to wildlife: breeding ground for insects, provides water for birds and mammals to drink, supports water birds.
Churchyard	Harston Churchyard and Baptist Churchyard	Insects and birds, lichen and mosses on gravestones Benefits to wildlife: secluded and quiet green space for wildlife.
Disused quarry	Clunch Pits	Rich chalk grassland flora, a habitat which has become scarce in eastern England. Herbs including kidney vetch, horseshoe vetch, spiny restharrow and wild thyme. Benefit to wildlife: rare habitat for plants and insects.
Old roads and green lands	The Drift & the path to Haslingfield	Shady lanes for shade-loving plants
Traditional Orchards	The orchard	Apple, pear and plum trees support lots of insects. Benefit to wildlife: nectar rich fruit trees for insects and apples, pears and plums provide food for birds.
Arable Fields	Behind the High Street	Wheat fields provide places for skylarks to nest.
Lowland fens	County wildlife site - Button End	Sedge and rushes, rare landscape important for insects such as dragonfly.
Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh	Meadow by river on way to Haslingfield	Cowslips, grasses and salsify. Pyramid orchids; pipistrelle and horse shoe bats! Benefits to wildlife: habitat for insects.

Appendix 4: Harston's Heritage assets- grade listed and local (last updated 12.11.23)

Grade listed heritage assets		
1	CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, Church St	Listing Grade: II*. List UID: 1331060
2	OLD VICARAGE. Renamed Rhee House, Church St	Listing Grade: II. List UID: 1331078
3	MANOR HOUSE, Church St	Listing Grade: II*. List UID: 1127877
4	41, CHURCH STREET, Fountain cottage, originally Fountain Farm	Listing Grade: II. List UID: 1164608
5	53, HIGH STREET, The Lodge – old PO	Listing Grade: II. List UID: 1127836
6	MILESTONE ON THE GREEN	Listing Grade: II. List UID: 1127835
7	THE OLD BAKEHOUSE, 1 Church St	Listing Grade: II. List UID: 1127876
8	HARSTON HOUSE AND PART OF GARDEN WALL, 38 Royston Rd	Listing Grade: II*. List UID: 1317695
9	WAR MEMORIAL – junction of Royston Rd, High St & Station Rd	Listing Grade: II. List UID: 1392385
10	BAGGOT HALL, Station Rd	Listing Grade: II. List UID: 1331081
11	PARK HOUSE, 87 High St	Listing Grade: II. List UID: 1390071
12	COACH HOUSE AND STABLE BLOCK TO NORTH OF PARK HOUSE, 87A High St 89 is Home Farm (Has buildings 1-5) within curtilage of other listed buildings complex so counts as listed)	Listing Grade: II. List UID: 1272419
13	PARK HOUSE STABLES, No 91 High St (previously known as Oak Tree cottage)	Listing Grade: II. List UID: 1331079
14	YEW TREE COTTAGE, 93 High St	Listing Grade: II. List UID: 1127837
15	HOPE COTTAGE, Button End	Listing Grade: II. List UID: 1472164
16	MILESTONE OUTSIDE No 60 London Rd	Listing Grade: II. List UID: 1331080
17	OBELISK, St Margaret's Mount, Shelford Rd, Harston (Memorial to Gregory Wale)	Listing Grade II:
Scheduled monument		
18	(Archaeological) Settlement site at Manor Farm	Scheduled monument List UID: 1006809

Local heritage assets- buildings, structures & open space of local interest & significance

Selection criteria by Historic England/**Cambridgeshire Local Heritage List:**

Age **(A)**

Rarity **(R)**

Aesthetic interest **(AI)**

Group Value **(G)**

Archaeological interest **(Ar)**

Archival Interest **(Ac)**

Historical association **(H)**

Designed Landscape interest **(DL)**

Landmark status **(L)**

Social & communal value **(SC)**

More details of each asset can be found on:

<https://www.harstonhistory.org.uk/content/overview/harstons-local-heritage-assets>

	Location building	Significance
1	Hill View Cottages – 72-76 Church St	(G, A, R, AI, Ac,H)
2	Hill View Cottages, 2-6 Button End ,	(G, A, R, AI, Ac,H)
3	Nos 37-39 Church St Group	(A,R,AI,G,Ac,H)
4	No 34 Church St Beech farm house and estate	(H, Ac, SC)
5	Nos 15-25 Church St Group, 1920 row of 6 Council Houses	– (H, AI, R, G, SC)
6	Lilac Cottage- 22 Church St	G, H, SC - may include as group with 20 Church St)
7	The Old School & House 20 Church Street.	(A,R,AI,G,Ac,H,SC)
8	No 5 Church St: 'Dormer Cottage'	(A,R,AI,G,Ac,SC)
9	Stag Villas, 7 & 9 Church St	(R,AI,G,Ac,SC)
10	Pantile Cottage, 12 Church St	(A,R,AI,G,Ac,SC)
11	1-11 Hurrell's Row cottages	(A,R, AI,G,H,SC)
12	No 50 Royston Rd Manor Lodge/Mill Cottage	(SC, H, AC)
13	Harston Mill, Royston Rd	
14	40-48 Royston Rd Group Melbourn House Weaving House Saddlers Cottage Camping Close House	(A,R,AI,G,Ar,H,SC)
15	The Queens Head	(
16	Orchard Cottage, No 25 Royston Road - Helen Greene's	(AI, G, H, Ac, SC)

17	No 13 Royston Rd, the Granary	(AI, Ac, H,)
18	No 11 Royston Rd, Roebourne House	
19	No 7 Royston Rd, Ditton cottage - old butchers	(A,G,H,SC)
20	No 5 Royston Rd – old PO, haberdashery	(A,G,H,SC)
21	No 3 Royston road, Byron Lodge - bakers	(A,G,H,SC)
22	No 1 Royston Rd- Fountain Cottage – originally 4 cottages	(A,G,H,SC)
23	The Pemberton Arms, 2 High St	(A, R,AI,G,Ac,H,SC)
24	No 1 High St, the Cottage part of historic core facing Memorial Green	(A,R,AI,G,H,SC)
25	Old school house, 8 Station Rd & School	(A,R,AI,G,Ac,H,SC)
26	The Old House, No 25 High St	(A,R,AI,Ac,H,SC)
27	No 29 High St	(H, SC)
28	Village Hall, High St	(A,R,AI,Ac,H,SC)
29	No 56 High St, Coach & Horses public house	(SC, H, Ac)
30	57 High St- Lincoln House (once Walman’s farm) & 59 farm buildings	(A,R,AI,G,Ac,H,SC)
31	Old Police House, 70 High St	(R,AI,Ac,H,SC)
32	Baptist Chapel, Chapel Lane	(A, R, AI, G, Ac,H,SC)
33	The Old Manse, 94 High St	(A,R,AI,G,H,SC)
34	No 102 High St, Walnut Cottage- Wheelwrights	(SC,H, AC, G)
35	Nos 108 – 118 High St ‘Pest houses’	(G, Ac, H poss A)
36	Pinehurst, 153 High St	(A,R,AI,Ac,H,SC)
37	Tiptofts, formerly Birnam, Station Rd	(R,AI,Ac,SC)
38	Sunbourn, Newton Rd	(R,AI,Ac,H,L,SC)
39	Windmill Cottage, mill ruin & water pump Newton Rd	(A,R,AI,Ac,L?,SC)

40	1-2 Fleece Cottages, Button End	(H, Ac, SC, G)
41	Greystones group, Button End	(H, Ac, SC, G)
	Structures	
42	ROC post, Newton Rd	(R,AI,Ac,H,L,SC)
43	Artesian well head Button End	(A,R,AI,Ac,H,L,SC)
44	Artesian well head on Rhee House brick garden wall, Haslingfield Rd	(A,R,AI,Ac,H,L,SC)
45	Artesian well head on The Green- Royston Rd	(A,R,AI,Ac,H,L,SC)
46	Wellhead brickwork by ditch to the right of shop – High St	(A,R,AI,Ac,H,L,SC)
	Historical open spaces	
47	The (Swan) Green, Royston Rd	(A, G, H, L, SC)
48	War Memorial Green	(A, G, H, L, SC)
49	The Drift	(A, R, H, SC)

Appendix 5: Extract Summary of the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment in 2021.

This Landscape Character Assessment identified and described variation in character of the landscape, explaining the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive. They mapped and described both character types and areas.

Landscape Character Types are generic terms, so they can occur in different places. They allow different landscapes to be compared, and have descriptive names such as valley, meadowlands.

Landscape Character Areas, by contrast, are unique and specific to one place. They focus on difference and distinctiveness, and are given a specific place name, such as the Rhee Valley meadowlands. For Harston there are four distinctive character areas shown on map Harston landscape character areas.

The Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment summarised the three character **types** relating to Harston Parish surrounding the village:

Lowland Village Chalklands: a low lying, but gently rolling arable landscape through the south and east of Greater Cambridge. It is dissected by small streams and has a distinctive pattern of nucleated villages and patchwork of woodlands and shelterbelts.

Lowland Village Farmlands: a well settled, low lying landscape that covers a large part of Greater Cambridge; extending from the north, around the west of Cambridge and through the south of the Study Area. The high density of settlement, intensive agriculture and major transport infrastructure contribute to an often busy, rural landscape.

Valley Meadowlands: flat, low lying valley floors that extend through the landscape south of Cambridge. The Valley Meadowlands support pastoral land use, associated with notable watercourses/streams. They are generally unsettled, with occasional areas of carr woodland and gravel extraction lakes or ancient meres.

The Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment further characterised these landscape character types into more detailed sub categories that relate to Harston's parish:

Area 7D: Newton Chalk Hills

Area 3D: Cam and Granta Tributaries Lowland Farmlands

Area 9C: Rhee River Valley

1. Harston's Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)

Relevant details from the sub categories have been extracted for Harston.

2.1 Harston chalklands (Area 7D: Newton Chalk Hills)

This includes the countryside in the eastern part of Harston parish which separates Harston village from the village of Newton.

The Newton Chalk Hills LCA is formed by a small outcrop of chalk between the valleys of the Granta and the Rhee. It is the least prominent of all the Chalk Hills. It is a typical chalk landscape, containing a series of gently rolling hills. In Harston it has a low point of 15m AOD in the north, 43 m at St Margarets Mount and a high point of 50m AOD at Rowley's Hill to south east. On lowland to the east of the chalk ridge a small stream, Hoffer Brook, runs south west through Newton then swings northwest to the River Cam, adjacent to Harston's southern boundary.

Key characteristics are as follows

- *Large arable fields are generally rectilinear and organised in an irregular pattern which becomes more regular in the east, and are enclosed by low trimmed, gappy hedgerows. There are a number of smaller fields with a localised more intimate character on Newton Road where there is some scattered settlement on the hill.*
- *The landscape is generally large scale and open. Views from elevated locations are long and framed. There are views to north and east across the 9A: Granta River Valley and well treed 8A:*

Pampisford Lowland Chalklands from an obelisk on St Margaret's Mount, but otherwise public access is limited. Built form of Harston is visible from within the wider landscape, and there is a sense of separation between Harston & Newton.

- *Vegetation is limited to shelterbelts and blocks of woodland, often on high ground, notably St Margaret's Mount. The predominant species is beech. There is a simple, unified landscape with a mostly strong rural character.*
- *The limited minor road network consists of predominantly straight roads, or roads which 'dog leg'. The M11 forms part of Harston parish's eastern boundary and the railway, separating the chalks hills from the lowland farmlands of Harston, are major transport links which pass through the area, locally disrupting tranquillity.*

The LCA sets out specific landscape sensitivities and specific landscape guidelines which are applicable to parts of Harston parish:

Key & specific Landscape Sensitivities

- Distinctive, elevated landscape that forms locally prominent hills and ridges that contrast with the surrounding, low lying landscape that is characteristic of Greater Cambridge
- Open, long distance, panoramic views across Greater Cambridge and beyond from this upland landscape
- Scattered woodland including ancient woodland on summits and slopes
- Network of historic routes and earthworks that contribute to the area's sense of place
- Wooded and undeveloped ridgelines are visually sensitive
- Tranquil, often remote rural landscape away from major roadways
- Sparse settlement pattern with sense of separation between Newton and Harston

Landscape Guidelines

The overall management objective for the Chalk Hills is to conserve the tranquil, generally uninterrupted character of the rural landscape. This will include management and enhancement of features including woodlands, pasture and historic features associated with parklands and vernacular of villages. There is also opportunity for enhancement of chalk grasslands and creation of new woodland areas.

Specifically:

- Conserve the distinctive sense of rural isolation and separation between Newton and Harston
- Ensure new development is integrated into the landscape sympathetically and enhances views towards villages from the wider landscape

Guidance for Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance areas of ancient woodland as important landscape, historical and nature conservation sites
- Enhance landscape character by planting new beech hangers and woodlands on carefully sited hill-tops/ridges and scarps to form focal points and reinforce the chalklands landscape
- Conserve and restore important areas of unimproved grassland as important landscape, historical and nature conservation sites
- Conserve the tranquil and largely uninterrupted rural character
- Manage the agricultural landscape and soils both for production and opportunities to improve biodiversity
- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerows and consider opportunities for re-planting hedgerows where these have been lost/become fragmented
- Protect the sites and features of archaeological and historic interest
- Encourage opportunities to expand and link woodland, hedgerows, grassland and other semi-natural habitats to benefit biodiversity whilst managing the open character of the landscape

Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape

- Maintain the distinctive settlement pattern of the area and its local context
- Ensure any extensions to springline villages are located along the bottom of steeper slopes and along lanes
- Maintain the linear, or rectilinear form of the settlements
- Ensure density and pattern of new developments reflect that of existing villages and hamlets
- Avoid backland and cul-de-sac developments where possible
- Ensure buildings are arranged in continuous frontages within village cores and are arranged in loose knit patterns facing the street on more peripheral sites
- Ensure new developments are integrated with sufficient space for garden and street tree planting where applicable

- Enhance village gateways and, where appropriate, appropriate planting on village approaches
- Take opportunities to create new village greens and/or wildlife areas within new developments
- Ensure new developments integrate/connect with existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) within development layout
- Ensure new developments reflect the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings and pick up on traditional local building styles, height, materials, colours and textures
- Enclose boundaries facing the street in village cores by low, or high, flint walls with brick detailing, simple decorative railings, picket fencing or hedging
- Retain hedges along roads
- Enclose boundaries facing the street on village peripheries with hedge and tree planting
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate
- Ensure new agricultural buildings, such as large storage sheds, are sited and designed to reduce their apparent mass, minimising their impact on the wider landscape by the appropriate use of texture, colour and planting
- Protect prominent hills and ridges and their skylines by avoiding locating tall structures including masts and wind turbines in visually prominent locations, and by using topography and the landscape's woodlands to reduce the visual impact

2.2 Harston (lowland) Farmlands (Area 3D: Cam and Granta Tributaries Lowland Farmlands. + small northern part 3C Rhee tributaries lowland farmland)

Geology: Chalk bedrock under most of village to east and south, with Upper Greensand and Gault Clay on farmlands north of Church St eg Jesus College land. Surface geology is mostly river terrace deposits around the small chalk mound with Rectory farm at its northern end and alluvium next to R Rhee.

Observations applicable to Harston include: *The LCA is fragmented by several key busy routes- A10 into Cambridge as the village is well suited for commuting to Cambridge and London, via the nearby M11 and the train line through Harston parish. The village has a strong, historic linear form, though Harston has expanded through cluster or ribbon development, and this has led to a more suburban feel on the approaches to the city through this area. Several isolated farm buildings remain outside the village settlement, towards the edges of the parish.*

Key Characteristics that apply to Harston parish

- Low-lying gently rolling topography crossed by river corridors and drained by small streams and ditches (10m AOD by river, rising to 15m to south east and east along route of railway, with a gentle rise to 20 m between river and railway)
- Productive, intensively farmed, predominantly arable landscape comprising medium to large, generally rectangular fields with sinuous edges where they are enclosed by waterbodies to west. They are organised in an irregular pattern, and enclosed by a fragmented network of low, mature hedgerows or straight ditches. Open character and often extensive views over farmland with few trees.
- Small scale fields found at the edge of village, including pastures to east, south and west, with fragments of orchards east of Harston, give a localised intimate character and visual enclosure.
- There is a fragmented network of low trimmed hedge boundaries along village streets and roads
- Priority Habitats within the Lowland Farmlands include scattered deciduous woodland; small patches of good quality semi-improved grassland, There are County Wildlife Sites (CWS) of lowland Fen in Button End and Community Orchard & Meadow bordering east of village
- Ecological richness including lowland meadows, lowland fen and floodplain grazing marsh
- Generally sparse woodland cover with groups of trees around the settlement edge and farmsteads. These groups increase the "greenness" of the landscape setting, restricting views towards built form and contributing to localised, more intimate landscape scale. A number of trees within the village are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). There are scattered, small blocks of mixed woodland, such as The Rookery wood on east side of village, many of which have lost their connectivity.
- A well settled landscape with a relatively dense rural settlement pattern, intensive agriculture and major transport routes that pass through it mean that it is often a busy, rural landscape.
- Tranquillity and rural character is maintained away from major transport routes
- The main building materials through the Lowland Farmlands include Gault Clay, brick, clay tile, render with a very small amount of thatch remaining. Stone church is a characteristic feature.

Key and specific Landscape Sensitivities

- Rural tranquillity
- Hierarchy of water courses, including ditches that provide valuable networks of wetland habitat.
- Scattered blocks of deciduous woodland and shelterbelts providing some visual enclosure
- Dispersed, rural settlement pattern outside of village
- Historic parkland at Harston Manor
- Small scale fields often found at the edge of villages

Landscape Guidelines

The overall management objective for the Lowland Farmlands LCT is to conserve the tranquil, rural landscape with its network of scattered small woodlands and dispersed pattern of rural villages and to strengthen its character through measures to minimise the urbanising influence of large villages, new settlement and transport routes. Enhancements to woodland and linking vegetation features should also be encouraged to retain or enhance biodiversity and visual character.

Specifically:

- Ensure development enhances existing landscape features, creates links between villages and recreational assets and is in keeping with the rural character
- Conserve and manage woodland to maintain a visually enclosed character and separation
- Conserve parkland and enhance the specific features that give character and its context within the wider landscape
- Conserve and enhance the regular small-scale pastoral fields, shelter belts and hedgerows at village edges
- Maintain distinctive linear features eg the Drift footpath, bridleway Hauxton to Haslingfield

Guidance for Landscape Management

- Manage the agricultural landscape and soils both for production and opportunities to improve biodiversity
- Conserve and enhance existing watercourses to enhance the ecological value of the farmed landscape
- Conserve areas of grazing marsh, and scattered deciduous woodland and orchards of high ecological value
- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerows and consider opportunities for replanting hedgerows where these have been lost/become fragmented
- Protect the sites and features of archaeological and historic interest
- Encourage opportunities to expand and link woodland, hedgerows and other seminatural habitats to benefit biodiversity and managing key views across the rural landscape

Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape

- Conserve the historic villages through avoidance of ribbon development and coalescence with nearby settlement
- Manage the scale, siting and design of settlement expansion to avoid incongruous development in the rural landscape
- Maintain the distinctive settlement pattern of the area and its local context
- Ensure density and pattern of new developments reflect that of existing villages and hamlets
- Avoid backland and cul-de-sac developments where possible
- Ensure buildings are arranged in continuous frontages within village cores and are arranged in loose knit patterns facing the street on more peripheral sites
- Ensure new developments are integrated with sufficient space for garden and street tree planting where applicable
- Enhance village gateways and, where appropriate, consider provision of appropriate planting on village approaches
- Take opportunities to create new village greens and/or wildlife areas within new developments.
- Ensure new developments integrate/connect with existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) within development layout
- Ensure new developments reflect the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings of the area and pick up on traditional local building styles, height, materials, colours and textures
- Retain hedges along roads
- Enclose boundaries facing the street on village peripheries with hedge and tree planting
- Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate

- Ensure new agricultural buildings, such as large storage sheds, are sited and designed to reduce their apparent mass, minimising their impact on the wider landscape by the appropriate use of texture, colour and planting

2.3 Rhee Valley Meadowlands (Area 9C: Rhee River Valley).

The underlying geology of the River Valleys is largely formations of chalk.

The surface geology is largely alluvium with river terrace deposits of silt, sand and gravel within the river beds and also above them along much of the river course.

Biodiversity The River Valleys LCT supports a variety of habitats including Priority Habitats such as floodplain grazing marsh, deciduous woodland, semi-improved grassland, and pockets of lowland fens and lowland meadows. The river channels of the River Rhee, River Cam and River Granta are all designated as County Wildlife Sites (CWS), including some of the tributary streams that feed into them. There are no statutorily protected sites within the River Valley landscape,

Deciduous woodland is dispersed through the River Valleys, along the river channels and often on the edge of settlements. There are lower levels of woodland within the clay landscape of the River Valleys. Trees and scrub including willow and poplar are scattered through the area, particularly along the course of the rivers.

The River Rhee Valley LCA is the narrow floodplain of the River Rhee. The short chalk stream is slow flowing, meandering and narrow. The sinuous watercourse is joined in this LCA by several tributaries including Hoffer Brook. The valley drops from a high point of c. 20m AOD in the southwest to less than 10m AOD in the northeast as it nears its confluence with the River Cam.

Riparian trees along the watercourse combine with grazing meadow and infrequent blocks of scattered woodland to create a simple, small scale landscape which is largely visually enclosed. Ecologically rich floodplain grazing marsh, deciduous woodland and a pocket of good quality semi improved grassland largely define the extent of the LCA. Views are generally short and contained by trees. North of Button End open, arable fields contrast with the intimate landscape immediately adjacent to the river. In these locations there are longer views out of the LCA into arable fields in the neighbouring Lowland Farmlands.

Key Characteristics:

The landscape is of strong character with a largely unsettled, flat, low lying valley floor that extend through the landscape south of Cambridge supporting pastoral land use, with occasional areas of carr woodland. *Mill, manor house and church along the riverbank in the south* providing local built features. *The overall character is tranquil and rural.* The adjoining meadows and parkland are important features that contribute to the setting of Harston village.

A minor road and footpath cross on inconspicuous bridges, linking to neighbouring Haslingfield, introducing intermittent localised noise and movement. Access to the river valley is limited to Public Rights of Way (PROW) between Haslingfield and Hauxton and Barrington and Harston .

Forces for Change

- Nutrient pollution from riverside arable land plus road and urban run-off affecting the water quality of the streams and rivers
- Intensification of farming leading to drainage and improvement of permanent pasture and meadows on the floodplain and loss of riparian vegetation and hedgerows
- Potential changes in farming practices including loss of livestock with remaining pastures and meadows no longer being grazed, with consequential scrub encroachment
- Presence of major transport corridors has brought pressures for development and associated amenity planting and signage
- Pressure for development, particularly for new housing including expansion of existing villages in adjoining LCTs that would intrude on the valley landscape and weaken the historic character of existing settlements
- Increasing road use which will diminish the rural tranquillity of the valleys
- Climate change could lead to increased risk of flooding along the river valley, and/or more frequent drought periods that would alter the river flows and related ecological networks, resulting in shift in species composition and requiring alterations in land management

Key & specific Landscape Sensitivities

- Small scale, enclosed landscape

- Rich, floodplain landscape of small-scale, grazed pastures, riparian vegetation and valley woodlands
- Tranquil, rural landscape away from the main roadways that cross it
- Variety of historic/cultural features including remnants of historic parkland and former mills related to nearby historic settlement core
- Sense of separation between villages in the Lowland Farmlands

Landscape Guidelines

The overall management objective for the River Valleys LCT is to conserve the tranquil, intimate and rural character of the landscape. This will include management of key features including grazing meadows, wet woodland and riparian trees, historic features associated with the former mills, historic parklands and nearby historic village cores. There are opportunities to enhance the management and restoration of meadowland and grassland, and replanting and management of hedgerows and riparian woodland.

Guidance for Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance the tranquillity and rural qualities of the river landscape
 - Conserve and enhance existing hedgerows
 - Consider opportunities for re-planting hedgerows and woodland where these have been lost/become fragmented
 - Protect sites and features of historic and cultural value
 - Identify, conserve and consider opportunities for restoring wetland habitats such as wet woodland, grazing marsh, grasslands and lowland meadow
 - Conserve the distinctive sense of rural isolation and separation between the Lowland Farmland villages
- Guidance for Integrating Development into the Landscape**
- Ensure built form and associated changes to roads are well integrated with the existing character and structure of settlements, and do not disrupt visual unity along the valleys
 - Ensure any extensions to river valley villages are located along the line of the river, or at right angles to it, depending on the direction of the main transport route
 - Maintain the linear, or rectilinear form of the settlements
 - Ensure density and pattern of new developments reflect that of existing villages and hamlets
 - Avoid backland and cul-de-sac developments where possible
 - Ensure buildings are arranged in continuous frontages within village cores and are arranged in loose knit patterns facing the street on more peripheral sites
 - Ensure new developments are integrated with sufficient space for garden and street tree planting where applicable
 - Enhance village gateways and, where appropriate, consider provision of appropriate planting on village approaches
 - Take opportunities to create new village greens and/or wildlife areas within new developments.
 - Ensure new developments integrate/connect with existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) within development layout
 - Ensure new developments reflect the form, scale and proportions of the existing vernacular buildings and pick up on traditional local building styles, height, materials, colours and textures
 - Enclose boundaries facing the street in village cores by low, or high, flint walls with brick detailing, simple decorative railings, picket fencing or hedging
 - Retain hedges along roads
 - Enclose boundaries facing the street on village peripheries with hedge and tree planting
 - Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate
 - Ensure new agricultural buildings, such as large storage sheds, are sited and designed to reduce their apparent mass, minimising their impact on the wider landscape by the appropriate use of texture, colour and planting

Appendix 6: Local Green Spaces in Harston

Local residents in Harston consider certain green spaces of particular importance for a variety of reasons, from historical to environmental. They could be a village green, recreation ground, an allotment, informal green spaces in housing areas, woodlands or meadows. As there is a spectrum of green spaces the information collated should help to determine whether formal recognition of the areas can be achieved under the protected category (based on the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan) of;

- Local Green Space (LGS – SCDC Local Plan Policy NH/12)
- Protected Village Amenity Area (PVAA – SCDC Local Plan Policy NH/11)

Designation as a **Local Green Space** affords them the same level of protection as Greenbelts. They are for green areas of particular importance to local communities which once designated can prevent new development other than in very special circumstances and can protect land **outside of a development framework**. Half of the Recreation Ground has already been designated as a LGS, the other (football pitches) half is protected as it is in the Greenbelt.

Designation as a **Protected Village Amenity Area** is for sites **within the village framework** to safeguard areas of undeveloped land which are important to retain. The school playing field has already been designated as a PVAA. Not all PVAAs have public access as some undeveloped areas which are important may be private gardens.

They also vary from those which are very open to visual penetration to those which may be enclosed or semi-enclosed. PVAAs often appear to be relatively modern areas of green space, not particularly demonstrably special to village apart from contribution to character & community appreciation

The key characteristics are that the Green Space should be:

- Reasonably close to the community it serves eg within easy walking distance
- Local in character
- Not an extensive tract of land.
- Demonstrably special to the local community/ hold a particular local significance

Supporting evidence for designation might include;

- Importance to the local community
- Beauty
- Tranquillity
- Historical or cultural value
- Recreational value
- Wildlife, ecological significance, connectivity to other green areas
- Other local significance

Below is a useful fuller consideration of the supporting evidence produced by Corby which we used to assess our Green spaces

Supporting Evidence Criteria (From Corby guidelines)

National policy states that to be designated as a Local Green Space the area should be reasonably close to the community they serve. The proximity of a Local Green Space to the community it serves will be dependent on local circumstances including why the green area is seen as special. For example if public access is a key factor, then the site would normally be within easy walking distance of the community served. Sites should feel part of the local area, sites which are entirely isolated from the community will not be considered appropriate. Natural England has set a range of accessibility standards for natural sites and areas within easy reach of people's homes. The 2010 ANGSt guidance recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural green space no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home which is considered to be an appropriate walking distance.

Is the proposed Local Green Space designation ‘local in character’? Consider the following questions: Does the site feel as though it is part of the local area and can it be explained why? Can you provide robust evidence to demonstrate successfully that it connects physically, visually and socially to the local area?

The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its beauty. This would include the visual attractiveness and aesthetic value of the site; and its contribution to townscape, landscape, character and/or setting of the settlement. Features on sites such as woodland and water could also contribute to the overall value of the site. It would be expected that the area contributes significantly to the local identity and character of the area and plays an important role in defining the sense of place of the area.

The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its historical significance. The site is viewed to be of local significance because of its historic importance to the community. For example

- There are recognised historic assets on site
- The site links back to a historic person or event
- The site has retained historical features and boundaries

The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its recreational value. The site holds a local significance for recreation providing an important asset for the community for a particular activity or for a range of activities. Although most green and open spaces will fall within this category and offer some form of recreational value, the aim is to identify why a particular area offers something unique and could not realistically be accommodated on the sites that would serve the community. National guidance states that there is no need to designate linear corridors as Local Green Space simply to protect rights of way, which are already protected under other legislation.

The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its tranquillity. The site submitted is viewed to be of importance to the local community because of the tranquillity it provides, offering a place for quiet reflection and peaceful enjoyment. It would need to demonstrate the following qualities:

- A feeling of remoteness or quiet contemplation
- A general inability to see man-made structures such as roads, power-lines or excessive lighting
- Has a general lack of artificial noise from vehicles or industry

The proposed space is of particular local significance because of its richness of wildlife. For a site to be considered suitable for Local Green Space status for its richness of wildlife, it would need to relate to one or more of the following:

- Be designated for its wildlife value (e.g. Local Wildlife Site or Pocket Park)
- Include a combination of important landscape features such as ancient hedgerows, ancient woodland, veteran trees, pockets of woodland and wildflower meadow
- Support a unique and/or diverse range of wildlife. This would need to be evidenced by records, ecological surveys and/or expert advice.

Proposed Local Green spaces

1. The Green, Royston Road

Description

Name: The Green (once Swan Green)

Location: Where Church Street meets with Royston Rd which splits to go either side of the Green

The area of the proposed site covers a triangle of land with mown grass area and some trees

It is currently owned by Cambridgeshire CC and maintained by Harston Parish Council

Justification (why **demonstrably special** to local community)

Proximity to the Community

It's position is at the core of village connectivity with Church St leading off to the church, residences & industrial area in Button End, and Royston Rd on main route connecting to High St and shop/services; very much part of the local area. Local people pass the Green regularly on foot, bike or by car and there is a bus stop along the eastern side.

Local Character & beauty (visual attractiveness)

The Green is part of a key village scene as it is surrounded by Grade 2 & local listed traditional buildings/heritage assets and provides an attractive green setting for these, contributing to the townscape and rural character of the village. Although some original tall pine trees have been lost others have been planted adding variety to the area and providing a wider habitat for wildlife – areas under and surrounding trees are left unmown. Areas planted with daffodils are left unmown in spring time, adding to the attractiveness of the area. It retains a wellhead where a local artesian spring emerges; the village relied on artesian supplies before mains water arrived.

Historical, Cultural, Recreational & Community Significance

This area was part of the historic core of the village with services such as saddlers, blacksmiths, inns and public houses along the main routes through and across the village. It is still busy with traffic passing on all three sides of the Green, but all buildings apart from the Queen's Head are now residential but retaining their 18th and 19th century architecture. The Green is no longer called Swan Green as that Inn burnt down in 1928. However, the Green was chosen as the site of the village sign put up to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee and the sign itself includes artesian wells, and a millstone base to reflect the importance of the nearby mill as carts would pass regularly past the Green on the way there. There is a listed milestone on the Green. There were once 5 pine trees planted by the owners of Harston House to represent the 5 sisters who lived there.

Before the road got too busy pageants and fairs were held on the Green in 1920s & 30s and the celebration for the end of WW2 saw people gathering there. Locals can remember swingboats and stalls.

There is a permanent history display board on the Green showing the importance of its location within the old historic core.

Ecological Significance (richness of wildlife)

The green is also part of the village ecological network as the group of varied trees on the Green virtually connect at a tree crown level to trees alongside the gardens of Harston house. It can be considered to form part of the 'green network' comprising green spaces, gardens and verges that enables wildlife to traverse the built environment.

The small semi-wild area under and around trees provides a habitat for invertebrates and small mammals in the rough mown part and the trees provide further habitats.



Overall Justification

The Green exists as a well-loved village space that has been a characteristic part of the area for hundreds of years. It provides an insight into the past appearance of the village through the concentration of Grade 2 & local listed buildings/heritage assets and represents a shared history of local activities. It is placed at cross roads within the village, spans a main thoroughfare and is easily accessible to all residents. As part of the local 'green network' it contributes to the ecological diversity and mobility within the area and is believed to be making a positive contribution to the environmental health of Harston. It is considered important to ensure that this area is protected for the future and being designated as an LGS would achieve this.

2. War Memorial Green

Description

Name: War Memorial Green (once Post Office Corner))

Location: Where Royston Rd meets High Street along one side and road splits either side of the green triangle to go down Station Rd.

The area of the proposed site covers a small triangle of land with mown grass area and the war memorial surrounded by flowerbeds.

Ownership of Memorial Green has not been registered but Harston Parish Council act as custodians of The Green and maintain it for the village, aided by the Greener Harston volunteer group.

Justification (why demonstrably special to local community)

Proximity to the Community

Its position is at the core of village connectivity at a cross roads on a main route in the village, by vehicle and on foot, where High Street, Royston Road and Station Road meet. It was significantly chosen as the site for the war memorial, and is close to the village centre and school, making it very much part of the local area.

Local Character & beauty (visual attractiveness)

The green is part of a key village scene as it is surrounded by older traditional 17th & 19th century buildings that face on to it, retaining the historic feel of the area. The Memorial Green can be seen from three directions providing iconic views with its backdrop of traditional buildings, protected village frontages and tree-lined roads, emphasising the visual attractiveness and ruralness of the area. It very much contributes to townscape, character and setting of the settlement. The flowerbeds around the Green are well maintained by volunteers and many locals and outsiders comment on the vibrant colours and attractiveness of this well maintained area.

Historical, Cultural, Recreational & Community Significance

The War Memorial Green has always been important to local people, originally as a source of water from a pump, with the Pemberton Arms alongside providing a meeting places for Comrades of the Great War before the memorial was erected. People continue to gather yearly for a Remembrance Day parade, showing it is of personal relevance and symbolic. The Green always looks good as it is maintained by local people who care, showing its significance to the local community.

Ecological Significance (richness of wildlife)

The area forms part of the 'green network' in the village that enables wildlife to traverse the built environment. Flowers and the box hedge attract insects but the grass is regularly mown, so providing limited habitats for wildlife. The grass is untreated so there is some flowering of native species of flora such as daisy, white clover and creeping buttercup which are of benefit to invertebrates. Birds can feed on invertebrates within this area.

Overall Justification

War Memorial Green is a significant, attractive and well-loved village space that has changed through time to reflect changes in the village over several hundred years. It represents a shared history via the war memorial and a site for contemporary community gatherings. It is centrally placed within the village, at a convergence of roads and is easily accessible to all residents. It is important to locals who volunteer to maintain it. It is considered important to ensure that this area is protected for the future and being designated as an LGS would achieve this

3. Queen's Close Green (LGS)



Description

Name: Queen's Close Green

Location: Within Queen's Close housing estate, towards northern end of village

The area of the proposed site covers a triangle of land with mown grass area and a few, relatively young trees

It is currently owned and maintained by South Cambs District Council

Proximity to the Community

Located within a large housing area in the north part of the village with three narrow lanes located on its sides allowing many people passing on their daily journeys on foot, by bike and car from one part of the village to another.

Local Character & beauty (visual attractiveness)

Large well-kept green area with a few trees which reflect the rural nature of the village, along with the surrounding front gardens found on its three sides.

Historical, Cultural, Recreational & Community Significance /appreciation

The area is valued by the local community as it provides a visually important, reasonably large open area within an old dense housing area (built early 1950s) that surrounds it on three sides. It is easily

accessible to all residents in northern part of the village and is used as a meeting area for occasional community events, eg street parties to celebrate coronations, jubilees. There are no formal recreational facilities associated with the site but consideration should be given to the provision of a small play area for young families and a few seating benches to enable residents and pedestrians passing through to spend time appreciating this attractive small area.

Ecological Significance (richness of wildlife)

Large well-kept grass area with some trees located at different ends providing a limited habitat for wildlife but forming part of the 'green network' within the village linked to surrounding gardens.

Overall Justification

Attractive Green Space within a densely built up housing area that is appreciated locally for its openness and setting.

It is considered important to ensure that this area is protected for the future and being designated as an LGS would achieve this