

Strategic Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Land North and West of Hethersett, Norfolk
Pigeon Land 2 Ltd

November 2018

Site Location: **Land North and West of Hethersett, Norfolk**

Local Planning Authority: **South Norfolk District Council (SNDC)**

Approximate Site area: **111ha**

Client: **Pigeon Land 2 Ltd and the Hethersett Consortium**

Landscape Character Assessments	
National ¹	National Character Area (NCA) Area 84: Mid Norfolk
County ²	Landscape Character Area C1: Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland Landscape Character Area D1: Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

Designations	
Landscape	<p>Only a small number of Public Rights of Way are present within the study area, including PRoW Great Melton FP4 which passes through the Site from the west at Great Melton towards the western edge of Hethersett. Also, PRoW Little Melton FP2 meets the sites northern edge, east of Beckhithe. Another important route is PRoW Wymondham FP26, approximately 1.3km southwest of the Site, which lies within the Wymondham – Hethersett strategic gap.</p> <p>There are no long distance footpaths or cycle routes within the study area. Refer to Figure 3: Landscape and Heritage Designations with Public Rights of Way</p>
Environmental	<p>The Site is not covered by any environmental designations, nor are there any within the 2km study area. Located northwest of the Site are the Bowthorpe Marsh and Earlham Park Woods Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), approximately 2.6km and 2.4 km from the Site.</p> <p>Refer to Figure 2: Statutory Designations</p>
Heritage	<p>There are no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments listed on the English Heritage register within the Site; however, the Grade II Listed Hill Farmhouse (List Entry Number: 1050733) lies immediately adjacent to the southernmost parcel of land, on the edge of Hethersett. The Grade II listed Barn at Elm Farm (List Entry Number: 1373135) lies 0.25km north of the Site on the southern edge of Little Melton. Wong Farm, Grade II (List Entry Number: 1050772) lies approximately 0.3km southwest of the Site within the Wymondham – Hethersett Strategic Gap.</p> <p>Other notable listed buildings include Grade II listed Whiterails Farm House (List Entry Number: 1050730) and Circle Cottage (List Entry Number: 1050773), off Melton Road approximately 0.7km west of the Site. Also, the Grade II* listed Remains of Church of St Mary (List Entry Number: 1050732) and Church of All Saints (List Entry Number: 1050731) off Market Lane, are located approximately 0.6km west of the Site.</p> <p>Other designated heritage assets within and beyond the wider 2km study area are shown on Figure 3: Landscape and Heritage Designations with Public Rights of Way.</p>

¹ Natural England; Landscape Character Assessments; Area 82: Suffolk Coast and Heaths

² South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (Reviewed in 2012); Landscape Character Area C1: Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland Landscape Character Area D1: Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

Element	Appraisal/ Review
National Character Area Profiles	
<p>Key Characteristics of the National Character Area (NCA 84: Mid Norfolk)</p>	<p><i>“Mid Norfolk NCA is a rural area, with a long-settled agricultural character, with gently undulating arable land, interspersed with woodland and heath, and enclosed by winding lanes and hedgerows. It is a terrain of gentle variation which becomes more rolling within the Wensum Valley close to Norwich. Elsewhere it is flat to gently undulating, so that the land cover becomes more or less dominant as the relief changes, with distant wooded horizons and prominent church spires giving way to spectacular big skies.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Broadly flat, glacial till plateau dissected by river valleys which create a more intricate landscape to the west of Norwich.</i> • <i>Chalk bedrock overlain by gravels, sands and glacial till left behind by the retreating ice of Anglian glaciations, and the resulting complexity of soils, determine natural vegetation patterns.</i> • <i>Underlying chalk aquifer; small, fast-flowing chalk streams and biodiversity-rich, wide, lush river valleys with wooded valley slopes, including the internationally important chalk-fed River Wensum.</i> • <i>Tranquil agricultural landscape with extensive areas of arable land, dominated by cereals with break-cropping of sugar beet and oilseed rape, and some pastures along valley floors.</i> • <i>Ancient countryside, much of it enclosed in the 14th century, with a sporadically rationalised patchwork field system, sinuous lanes and mixed hedges with hedgerow oaks.</i> • <i>Largely fragmented, isolated mixed deciduous and pasture woodlands, with a notable area of ancient woodland at Foxley Wood.</i> • <i>Important alkaline valley fen communities and areas of remnant heathland.</i> • <i>Large number of 18th-century estates with their associated parkland, and a great density and stylistic variety of churches which are prominent features in the landscape.</i> • <i>Coherent vernacular architecture – marked by distinctive red brick and flint buildings with pan-tiled roofs, much dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, with some earlier timber frame – is an inherent component of the area’s character.</i> • <i>A mix of villages and many isolated farmsteads within a complex minor road network, with a traditional pattern of market towns connected by main roads, and the city of Norwich providing a centre for cultural and economic activity.</i> • <i>Dense network of public rights of way including bridleways and the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail.”</i>
South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (2001, revised 2012)	
<p>Key Characteristics: Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland (C1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Shelving landform with a gently undulating topography created by the presence of small tributary stream valleys cutting through the landscape providing a variety of open/more intimate landscape settings and long/framed views;</i> • <i>Transitional landscape occupying the mid ground between the upland plateau of the Wymondham-Hethersett settled plateau farmland and the principal Yare Valley and forming part of the transition between the rural and urban landscape;</i> • <i>Peaceful farm land with small farm woodlands and intermittently wooded tributary valleys creating a quiet rural atmosphere;</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of large parkland estates particularly associated directly with the tributary valleys. Estate railings, boundary fences, tree-lined avenues and traditional wooded park land contribute to landscape character; • Sparsely settled landscape of small clusters of farmhouses, small villages and rural dwellings interspersed with large manorial buildings and halls; • A sense of impenetrability and remoteness despite the presence of major transportation corridors. The Norwich Southern Bypass and A 11 Wymondham Road trisect the landscape and the area is also traversed by the main Norwich London railway line. These routes create corridors of movement and noise in this otherwise peaceful landscape. Elsewhere, there is an intricate network of narrow rural roads and lanes; • Yare Minor Tributaries Streams elusive - evident but usually hidden within the landscape by topography or trees noticeable only at fording points or at close-range; • Arable and pastoral farmland of cereals and sugarbeet with more pastoral land uses within the immediate tributary valley corridor. Fields surrounded by sparse hedges and hedgerow trees, with occasional mature/veteran oaks forming a distinctive feature alongside the lanes; • Vernacular architectural character, predominantly of rural buildings and estate dwellings. More modern dwellings are found in the larger villages; • High number of large dwellings set in extensive grounds including characteristic large detached halls and manor houses, usually constructed of brick, of high architectural quality, associated with the parkland estates of Keswick, Thickthorn and Colney. These are frequently screened by woodland, and therefore visible only at close range; • Intermittent long views towards the City of Norwich; • Presence of large institutional buildings including the new hospital and areas of the Research Park at Colney.” <p>Refer to Figure 4 : Landscape Character Assessment</p>
<p>Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities: Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland (C1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Proximity to Norwich and loss of rural farmland character through expansion of the urban edge of the City beyond the Yare Valley, development associated with the Southern Bypass/A11 or to the west of Cringleford; • Loss of clarity of the rural/urban divide created by the Yare Valley; • Incremental change including upgrading of the rural lane network (e.g. kerbing and lighting) plus isolated developments (e.g. institutions) resulting in a more urban character; • A gently shelving topography from the plateau and long views making this area especially sensitive to the location of any new development/ infrastructure – and potential impact on views to the City; • Infill development within Cringleford and new development at the western edge of the village, which has the potential to be visually intrusive in views across the character area; • Loss and degradation in the character of the historic parkland and designed landscapes, particularly with changing uses and demands; • Loss of mature tree boundaries (without replacement) resulting in further ‘opening up’ of views plus loss of woodland; • Suburbanisation of field and parkland boundaries.”
<p>Landscape Strategy: Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland (C1)</p>	<p>“The overall strategy is to conserve the peaceful rural character of the Yare Tributary Farmland and Parkland landscape and to maintain the clarity and distinction with the urban edge of Norwich. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation of the narrow tributary corridors with their areas of grazed

	<p><i>pasture and wet woodland;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conservation and enhancement of the historic parklands and designed landscapes and in particular ensuring that provision is made for appropriate long term management of these landscapes as new uses for sites come forward;</i> • <i>Management of the small farm woodlands which contribute to the more enclosed character, plus renewal of boundary hedgerow trees;</i> • <i>Maintenance of the character of the rural lane network;</i> • <i>Enhancement of the transportation corridors (Norwich Southern Bypass and A11) in this area and minimisation of their adverse impacts upon landscape character.</i> • <i>Protection of the remnant historic churches and their settings.”</i>
<p>Development Considerations: Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland (C1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Any development must respect the character of the Yare Tributary Farmland and Parkland Character Area, and conserve and enhance the key landscape assets as described in the landscape character assessment. In particular it must seek to maintain the peaceful farmland landscape and a clear rural/urban transition. This will include reference to the following key criteria:</i> • <i>Respect the sparsely settled character of the area with small villages, isolated buildings of vernacular character and large institutional buildings in extensive grounds;</i> • <i>Protect the quality, character and setting of the key landscape assets, notably the tributary corridors and the historic parklands which characterise the Yare Tributary Farmland and Parkland;</i> • <i>Seek to ensure the restoration and management of historic landscapes as a condition of permission for new uses/development with in these areas;</i> • <i>Consider impact of proposals on the intricate rural lane network – avoid widening and kerb lighting which will quickly impart a more urban character;</i> • <i>Consider impact on key views from the higher plateau landscape, the adjoining character areas (particularly the Yare Valley Urban Fringe) and views towards the City;</i> • <i>Ensure that the rural character of the landscape of the Norwich Southern Bypass Protection Zone is maintained and that differential development North and South of the road do not erode the unity of the Character Area.”</i>
<p>Key Characteristics: Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland (D1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“A settled landscape with large edge-of-plateau towns (including market towns and those of more modern origin) and villages plus smaller, nucleated settlements which are dispersed across the plateau;</i> • <i>Large expanse of flat landform with little variation over long distances with strong open horizons – the archetypal ‘Norfolk’ landscape of popular imagination;</i> • <i>Large-scale open arable fields including sugarbeet, cereal and oilseed rape monocultures creating simple, often monotonous, character;</i> • <i>Large town of Wymondham, with its strongly historic core and a high number of historic buildings from the 15th-19th centuries, dominates the western edge of this character area;</i> • <i>Highly cohesive and well-preserved medieval settlement pattern within Wymondham;</i> • <i>Long views from plateau edge, including to Norwich from the northern plateau edge;</i> • <i>Poor hedgerows generally, which accentuates the openness of the landscape. The resulting wide verges beside roads often contain attractive wildflowers. Some mature hedgerow trees are found,</i>

	<p><i>particularly beside roads, which are a distinctive feature. Areas of more intact hedgerow network sometimes occur around settlements;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sparsely wooded but with occasional woodland blocks, sometimes associated with former parkland areas, creating a more wooded character and wooded horizons in parts of this generally open landscape;</i> • <i>Vernacular buildings particularly brick built, timber-framed, and stepped gables. Some isolated churches, sometimes hidden by dense screening churchyard vegetation;</i> • <i>A number of landscaped parks and associated halls to the west of Norwich show that this was a favoured area for the city's wealthy and influential to build convenient country residences."</i> <p>Refer to Figure 4 : Landscape Character Assessment</p>
<p>Sensitivities and Vulnerabilities: Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland (D1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Erosion of historic buildings and features/loss of historic settlement pattern as a result of infill development, particularly within Wymondham and Hethersett;</i> • <i>New large-scale developments at the north-eastern edges of Wymondham which extend urban influences into the surrounding landscape and are potentially visible in views from the surrounding plateau landscape;</i> • <i>Imposition of insensitive developments and tall structures such as masts/grain silos and other large scale farm or industrial/commercial buildings that break up the skyline and intrude upon the sense of openness;</i> • <i>Loss of vernacular character, particularly as a result of sprawl from the edge of the existing plateau top settlements;</i> • <i>Developments that intrude upon the view to important landmarks e.g. Wymondham Abbey or the City of Norwich;</i> • <i>Further 'opening up' of the landscape through loss of woodland, hedgerows or hedgerow trees;</i> • <i>The potential for settlement coalescence, particularly associated with the vulnerable A11 corridor or B1172 between Wymondham and Hethersett;</i>
<p>Landscape Strategy: Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland (D1)</p>	<p><i>"The overall strategy for the Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland is to maintain its open agricultural landscape character, with its distinct pattern of concentrated settlement on the plateau edge with more dispersed nucleated villages and isolated farm buildings across the plateau top. At the same time there is an opportunity to enhance landscape character through conservation and restoration of features including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Restoration of hedgerows and field boundaries, particularly at settlement edges where vegetation could help integrate settlement into the landscape;</i> • <i>Woodland management (including former parklands) and, where appropriate, woodland creation to screen intrusive developments and enhance the 'wooded horizon' whilst retaining the positive aspects of openness;</i> • <i>Restoration and enhancement of the landscape adjacent to the A11 corridor."</i>
<p>Development Considerations: Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland (D1)</p>	<p><i>"Any development must respect the character of the Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland. This will include reference to the following criteria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Respect the distinctive settlement pattern comprising concentrations of development at plateau edge locations, and smaller nucleated village</i>

	<p>settlements and dispersed buildings across the plateau;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the nucleated clustered character of the settlements and limit edge sprawl out into the adjacent landscape; well-planned infill and edge development may be acceptable; • Consider (cumulative) impact of all tall structures such as masts, energy developments, farm buildings on skyline views and sense of ‘openness’ and particularly on views to the plateau skyline from the surrounding lower tributary farmland; • Maintain key views from the plateau edge to/from the City of Norwich; • Maintain strategic gaps between settlements, and in particular prevent further growth of Wymondham and/or Hethersett which would lead to coalescence of settlement along the A11 leading to the merger of Wymondham/Hethersett or Hethersett/Norwich; • Ensure that any new infill development respects the historic settlement pattern and vernacular built character, particularly within, or in proximity to, the historic cores of Wymondham and Hethersett; • Consider the visual impact of new large-scale settlement edge developments in views from adjacent landscapes and Landscape Character Areas.”
<i>South Norfolk Local Landscapes Designations Review – Strategic Gaps/Important Break (2012)</i>	
<p>Landscape Context : Wymondham – Hethersett Strategic Gap</p>	<p>“The gap/break between Wymondham and Hethersett is approx. 2-2.5km long, 1-1.5km wide and is located in a predominantly rural area southwest of Norwich. The B1172 passes through the centre of the gap/break and the A11 passes along its southern boundary.</p> <p>The gap/break lies within the D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland Landscape Character Area (LCA), as defined by the South Norfolk Landscape Assessment”.</p>
<p>Vegetation : Wymondham – Hethersett Strategic Gap</p>	<p>“Vegetation within the gap/break is dominated by arable fields and small blocks of woodland. Field sizes are generally large to medium in scale. Field boundaries are generally defined by trimmed hedgerows and some hedgerows have been removed for field enlargement. There are few hedgerow trees. There are several small blocks of woodland scattered across the western and southern parts of the gap/break, including The Wong, a linear block of woodland associated with former parkland. The A11 is lined by a dense tree/shrub belt.”</p>
<p>Land Uses : Wymondham – Hethersett Strategic Gap</p>	<p>“The principal land use in the gap break is arable agriculture. The fields, hedgerows and woodland blocks all contribute to the setting and separate identities of the adjacent settlements and provide an essential contribution to the purpose and effectiveness of the gap in terms of conserving openness and preventing settlement coalescence.”</p>
<p>Access and Movement : Wymondham – Hethersett Strategic Gap</p>	<p>“A network of footpath and bridleway routes has been developed in the local landscape to connect communities and to provide recreational access to the local countryside. Some of these pass through the gap/break and these comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Public Footpath 26, which connects the B1172 with Melton Road further to the north; and • a permissive bridleway that passes along the B1172; and • a permissive bridleway that connects the B1172 with Melton Road in the form of a circular route.”
<p>Visual Characteristics : Wymondham – Hethersett Strategic Gap</p>	<p>“View looking east towards the far eastern parts of the gap/break [from permissive bridleway near the south-west corner of The Wong]. Glimpsed views of housing on the western edge of Hethersett may be seen over the tops of intervening trees and hedgerows.</p> <p>Views of a water tower within the village may also be seen from nearby sections of bridleway. Any new built development in the central or far</p>

	<i>eastern parts of the gap/break would detract from gap/break openness and the strongly rural and open character of the gap/break landscape that may be appreciated by recreational bridleway users."</i>
Sense of Leaving/Departing from a Settlement : Wymondham – Hethersett Strategic Gap	<i>"In terms of appreciating the openness of the gap, it is important that (1) there is a visual break when travelling from Wymondham to Hethersett and (2) it is perceived, as far as possible, in the travellers' minds that they are leaving one settlement and passing through open countryside before arriving in another settlement."</i>
Review of the Strategic Gap : Wymondham – Hethersett Strategic Gap	<i>"The eastern gap/break boundary abuts either the edge of New Road or the boundaries of residential properties on the edge of Hethersett. This gap/break boundary is clearly defined and generally abrupt as it abuts open arable fields that are defined by trimmed hedgerows with few hedgerow trees. Any development alongside Hethersett in the far eastern parts of the gap/break would detract from the landscape setting of Hethersett and erode the essential rural character and openness of the gap/break landscape."</i>
Landscape Context: Hethersett – Cringleford Strategic Gap	<i>"The gap/break between Hethersett and Cringleford (Figure 5.1) is approx. 2.5-3.5km long, 1.8-2.0km wide and is located in a predominantly rural area southwest of Norwich. The A11 and A47 roads pass through the southern and eastern parts of the gap/break respectively and a Park and Ride facility is located at the A11/A47 intersection. The B1172 passes through its central parts in an approximate east-west alignment. A network of unclassified roads radiate out from the B1172, including Colney Lane/Hethersett Lane which heads north-eastwards. The eastern gap/break boundary is approximately defined by Round House Way on the western edge of Cringleford. The London to Norwich Railway abuts the southern gap/break boundary</i> <i>The gap/break lies within the C1: Yare Tributary Farmland With Parkland LCA, as defined by the South Norfolk Landscape Assessment"</i>
Vegetation: Hethersett – Cringleford Strategic Gap	<i>"Vegetation within the gap/break is dominated by a mixture of arable and pastoral fields, areas of parkland and small blocks of woodland that are typically located either at lower levels in the stream valleys or in association with the historic parkland. Fields sizes are generally large to medium in scale but with clusters of smaller scale fields located near Hethersett. Field boundaries are generally defined by intermittent trimmed hedgerows and there are few hedgerow trees. Field boundary hedgerows have been denuded in some places, particularly in the north-eastern parts of the gap. Robust tree/shrub belts are located alongside the A11, the A47 and Colney Lane/Hethersett Lane."</i>
Land Uses: Hethersett – Cringleford Strategic Gap	<i>"The principal land use in the gap break is arable agriculture. The fields, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland blocks all contribute to the setting and separate identities of the adjacent settlements and provide an essential contribution to the purpose and effectiveness of the gap in terms of conserving openness and preventing settlement coalescence."</i>
Access and Movement: Hethersett – Cringleford Strategic Gap	<i>"A network of public footpaths has been developed in and around the gap/break to connect communities and to provide recreational access to the local countryside. These include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Suckling Lane (a byway open to all traffic), which passes through the far south-western part of the gap/break, connecting Station Lane with Ketteringham Lane;</i> • <i>Sections of public footpath originating near the Church of St. Remigius near the south-eastern edge of Hethersett;</i> • <i>The Upper Tas Valley Walk (a national trail), which connects the south-eastern edge of Hethersett with Suckling Lane before heading south out</i>

	<p><i>of the gap/break;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public footpath along the northern edge of the London to Norwich railway; • A section of public footpath that heads south from the section of A11 located east of the A11/A47 intersection.
<p>Visual Characteristics: Hethersett – Cringleford Strategic Gap</p>	<p><i>“In terms of appreciating the openness of the gap, it is important that (1) there is a visual break when travelling from Hethersett to Cringleford, and (2) it is perceived, as far as possible, in the travellers’ minds that they are leaving one settlement and passing through open countryside before arriving in another settlement.”</i></p>
<p>Review of the Strategic Gap: Hethersett – Cringleford Strategic Gap</p>	<p><i>“The robust tree/shrub belt along Colney Lane is a significant feature in the gap/break landscape and helps enclose views from one side of the gap to the other. It is recommended, in the absence of any inter-visibility issue, that some of the land located west of this tree/shrub belt should be removed from the gap/break. However, any new built development in the fields adjacent to the western edge of Colney Lane is likely to be seen in westwards views above this tree/shrub belt. It is therefore recommended that a corridor of fields on the western edge of the lane should be retained within the gap/break”</i></p> <p><i>“A minor amendment is recommended east of Colney Lane to align this part of the gap/break boundary with recognisable field boundaries.”</i></p>

Element	Assessment
Site Appraisal	<p>The Site is formed of five parcels of land consisting of agricultural land to the north and west of Hethersett. Refer to Figure 1: Site Location</p> <p>Throughout all parcels the agricultural fields are a broad mix of scales from the larger, open fields to the more intimate, smaller fields which is typical of the wider landscape. They all display regular, rectilinear form defined internally and externally by mature hedgerows with varied densities of hedgerow trees. Some of the larger fields also contain clusters of mature trees, remnants from former field boundaries. A notable urban introduction in the landscape is the large-scale electricity pylon which cuts a swathe east-west across P2, P4 and P5, but can be seen readily in many views in the wider landscape as well.</p> <p>Parcel 1 (P1) lies immediately west of the urban edge of Hethersett, south of Hethersett Road and west of New Road. The high densities of hedgerow trees throughout the internal and external boundary hedgerows are notable. The eastern boundary of P1 wraps around the Grade II listed Hill Farmhouse and further east is the urban edge of Hethersett. Further north, west and south is an open, rural landscape. The southern half of P1 falls within the Wymondham –Hethersett Strategic Gap.</p> <p>Parcel 2 (P2) lies northwest of Hethersett, stretching from Hethersett road, along the southern boundary, to Little Melton Road, east of Beckhithe. Immediately adjacent to the southeast boundary is the current urban edge of Hethersett, with further development approved along the eastern boundary. Further north and west of P2 is a typical rural landscape with a number of woodland blocks scattered through which restrict the view.</p> <p>Parcel 3 (P3) lies north of Hethersett at Beckhithe. Immediately east is Little Melton Food Park, a rural foods production, processing and storage base. This is formed of a carpark, hard standing and large storage warehouses. Immediately south is an agricultural site, Woodlands Farm, with small scale farm buildings. Little Melton Road runs around the western and northern</p>

	<p>boundaries of the parcel (P3). The road has occasional residential developments which display a mix of ages and architectural styles.</p> <p>Parcel 4 (P4) lies north of Hethersett and east of Beckhithe. Immediately west is the Woodlands Farm site and immediately south will be the proposed urban extension to Hethersett. Little Melton Road runs along the northern boundary. Burnthouse Lane runs down the eastern boundary with further agricultural land extending to the east towards Colney Lane.</p> <p>Parcel 5 (P5) lies northeast of Hethersett, between Burnthouse Lane and Colney Lane. There are several notable gaps in the boundary hedgerows which afford open views across the land, such as along Colney Lane. Immediately south and west, across Burnthouse Lane, is the emerging extension to Hethersett. The landscape extends east towards the A47, whilst it is noted that the southern part of P5 falls within the Hethersett - Cringleford Strategic Gap. (Nearby, the strategic gap is already being significantly altered by the presence of new development).</p> <p>The presence of significant settlement growth at Hethersett, in surrounding commuter villages as well as businesses such as the Little Melton Food Park has resulted in a significant amount of traffic passing through the Site or the immediate surroundings, resulting in audible and visual disturbance from vehicular (car and HGV) movements and consequently, a reduction in tranquillity and increased light levels. The minor roads provide fast connections to the B1172, Colney Lane and on to the A11 and A47, which are major roads in the wider landscape.</p>
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Landscape Qualities	
Representativeness/ consistency with wider character judgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly Consistent - Mostly consistent - Some key characteristics present - Not representative of wider character
Landscape character attractiveness judgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly attractive - Attractive - Pleasant - Unremarkable
Remoteness and tranquillity judgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remote - Peaceful - Some interruption - Not tranquil
Landscape qualities general description	<p>The Site is mostly consistent with the character of the wider area, as it is large open and agricultural in nature and provides a degree of tranquillity away from the main settlement. However, the large-scale electricity pylons which cut through the Site and wider landscape to the North of the Hethersett are imposing, urban intrusions. Additionally, the proposed future developments to the North of Hethersett will continue to introduce vehicular movements and activity, altering the perceptions of tranquillity and the local roads are already well used commuter routes and for HGV access to the food park.</p>

Visual Qualities	
Visual Prominence judgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High - Moderate high - Moderate low - Low
Nature of the urban edge judgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No visible urban edge - Soft well vegetated urban edge limited views of principally rooflines

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partially visible urban edge - Hard urban edge with no screening
Settlement setting and views of settlement judgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly attractive features or views - Some attractive features of views - Few attractive features of views - No attractive features or views
Public accessibility within and immediately surrounding the potential development site judgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many public views - Some public views - Limited public views - No public views
Visual qualities general descriptions	<p>Beyond the immediate Site edges, the Site is considered to have a moderate low visual prominence in the wider context, due to a combination of its gentle landform, combined with the wider screening vegetation on the more undulating land beyond.</p> <p>PRoW Great Melton FP4 passes through three of the fields in the south of P2. Overall the views from these locations are very restricted by the mature boundary hedgerows, trees and surrounding woodland blocks with agricultural land in the foreground dominating the view. (Viewpoints 1 - 4) The flat elevation of the plateau landscape also restricts long distance views beyond the Site, with the wider landscape appearing as a narrow band in the view built up from layers of mature vegetation. The electricity pylons are notable features throughout the views. Weaker boundaries to the southwest provide glimpsed views to the adjacent Hethersett Road, neighbouring agricultural land and distant rural properties. (Viewpoint 1). Views to the east are also afforded clear views to the new residential development immediately adjacent to the Site (Viewpoint 3).</p> <p>Views from PRoW Great Melton FP4, west of the woodland block are open and direct, dominated by the gently rising agricultural land in the foreground. The flat plateau of the wider landscape restricts visibility of the Site behind layers of mature woodland, hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Occasional ridgelines of residential properties on western edge of Hethersett and the Water Tower are glimpsed through the vegetation (Viewpoints 5-8).</p> <p>Consecutive views from PRoW Great Melton FP3 and Great Melton FP4 through a field west of Site are dominated by the gently rising agricultural land in the foreground and the electricity pylons which run across the north of the Site. The generally flat plateau of the wider landscape restricts visibility of the Site behind layers of mature woodland, hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The pylons create a break in the woodland allowing for potential glimpsed views east to land within P2 (Viewpoints 9 –15). Weaker field boundaries and a gently rising elevation allow filtered views towards the southern end of P2 and to the modern development along the eastern edge of Hethersett and the water tower (Viewpoint 14).</p> <p>Views of the Site are not afforded from public paths within the Wymondham – Hethersett strategic gap due to the layers of mature hedgerows and trees creating a linear barrier within the flat plateau landscape. Views are dominated by the large agricultural fields in the foreground with occasional rooftops of rural dwellings and structures glimpsed through the vegetation. (Viewpoints 16 - 22) The Site does not form a notable part of the openness of the strategic gap. Development of the rugby ground (Viewpoint 22) and along the B1122 (Viewpoint 17) are visible signs of urban development on the fringes of the strategic gap.</p>

	<p>Views from High Green and Market Lane, north west of P1 and P2 are restricted to breaks within the mature hedgerow. The flat plateau of the wider landscape restricts visibility of the Site behind layers of mature vegetation. (Viewpoints 23 - 29) When there are open views across the stream valley, areas of land within P1 are visible due to a slight rise in elevation and limited intervening vegetation. It is possible to see rooftops of urban development along the western edge of Hethersett and the water tower (Viewpoint 24). Views from the Grade II* listed Church of All Saints, to the wider landscape are screened by mature boundary vegetation (Viewpoint 26).</p> <p>Long distance views from the north are dominated by the open, rural landscape in the foreground with glimpsed views of residential properties in and around Little Melton. Layers of mature vegetation screen distant views to the Site, with only the top of the water tower and the electricity pylons visible beyond the tree tops (Viewpoints 30-31).</p> <p>Views from Little Melton Road and PRoW Little Melton FP2 are very limited due to the mature hedgerows along the boundaries. Views are only afforded where there are breaks in the hedgerow. (Viewpoints 32 - 36). However, these are very short distance, contained views with no notable connection to the wider open, plateau landscape. All views show urban intrusions from the electricity pylons, private dwellings, storage buildings associated with Little Melton Food Park and agricultural buildings associated with Woodlands Farm.</p> <p>Consecutive views from Burnthouse Lane, looking south towards P4, are dominated by the agricultural field in the foreground and contained by the mature boundary hedgerow, restricting any long-distance views to the wider, open plateau landscape. However, it does afford filtered views to the large warehouses at Little Melton Food Park to the west and the ridgelines of new homes to the south, which will get closer to the Site as that scheme is built out. (Viewpoints 37-39) Moving south the view is diverted to the open agricultural land to the east, with mature hedgerows restricting any long distance views to the wider landscape beyond, including to P5. (Viewpoint 40) Further along the road the view is diverted back to the west, due to the open field boundaries affording longer distance views, however the encroaching residential development is visible and will extend very close up to the view (Viewpoint 41).</p> <p>Views from Burnthouse Lane, adjacent to P5, are initially open and rural in character; however there is a notable presence of the electricity pylons cutting across the landscape. The views from this road are experiencing a major change from an open rural landscape, to an urban, residential landscape with encroaching development and associated construction works visible to the east and south. The road is also being upgraded from a small country lane to a standard width urban road with footpaths (Viewpoints 42 - 44).</p> <p>Consecutive views along Colney Lane, to the west of P5, are towards open, agricultural land, however intervening vegetation and the level elevation of the land restrict any long-distance views to the wider plateau landscape. New homes, construction works and upgrades to the local road network are notable changes emerging in the view, and upon completion will be very prominent in the area. Views from along Braymeadow Lane are heavily restricted by intervening boundary hedgerows, affording only occasional, glimpsed views towards the Site (Viewpoints 45-47).</p>
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	Refer to Figure 5: Viewpoint Locations and Figure 6 : Photographic Sheets
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Scope for mitigation	
Scope for mitigation?	<p>Yes – The Site is flat sitting on the plateau at approximately 47m AO and is remarkably contained from the wider landscape by layers of hedgerows and trees.</p> <p>A sensitive design approach would ensure areas with weaker boundaries, and opportunities for visibility, are enhanced with stronger boundary treatments. Also, design should ensure development retains a gap with the village of Little Melton and consideration should be given to provide stronger landscape boundaries in this location as a buffer, as well as an offset. Designs should also provide a softer street scene to allow development to settle into the landscape.</p>
Land Management Guidelines: Selected notes for the Settled Plateau Farmland (D1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Restoration of hedgerows and field boundaries, particularly at settlement edges where vegetation could help integrate settlement into the landscape;</i> • <i>Woodland management (including former parklands) and, where appropriate, woodland creation to screen intrusive developments and enhance the ‘wooded horizon’ whilst retaining the positive aspects of openness;”</i>

Landscape Capacity	
Is there Capacity within the landscape to absorb change?	<p>Yes - Given the contained nature, character and visual quality of the Site and its lack of connection with the strategic gaps, it is considered that the Site has a relatively High Capacity to accommodate change; this is for mixed use residential led development of up to 2.5 storeys in height, with typical employment/ commercial uses, as well as a sports / education campus, subject to a sympathetic design approach.</p> <p>There are few constraints or issues in landscape and visual terms that prevent the Site being considered for development.</p>

Recommendations if the Site is to be developed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings, structures and hard-standing should avoid tree protection areas for existing trees and hedgerows, either on or off-site. • The Site offers the opportunity to retain the positive street frontage along New Road that reflects the current alignment and allows for the set back of properties along the road. • The boundaries of the Site could be planted with a strong boundary edge, including indigenous hedgerows and trees to provide a softer more integrated and defensible edge of settlement. Especially along visible areas in the south of P2 and around P4 and P5. • The existing public footpath amenity could be protected by providing an offset from the built development and retain a rural character. • The internal street pattern should allow for the integration of planting, including street trees to help integrate the development and soften its appearance and provide visual amenity for residents. • The development should retain some offset with the village of Little Melton, by providing a gap (to the north of Little Melton Road), combined with a set back from Little Melton Road and Burnthouse Lane behind adequate soft landscaping within P4 – development in P3 should be commercial to complement the adjacent Little Melton Food Park. • Development should generally not encroach into the Strategic Gap – however, P5 which falls partly within the Hethersett-Cringleford Strategic Gap is suitable for the provision of open space and buildings associated with the proposed sports/ education campus.

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