

Stowupland Neighbourhood Plan

Landscape Appraisal

Final Report



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1: Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Alison Farmer Associates was appointed by Stowupland Neighbourhood Plan Group to undertake a landscape appraisal of the Parish of Stowupland in order to provide a robust evidence base to support the development of policy within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.1.2 Stowupland is a small Parish including the village of Stowupland and the linear dispersed settlement of Saxham Street and is located to the northeast of Stowmarket and the A14. Historically it has comprised a loose, dispersed pattern of dwellings and farmsteads with a strongly rural character. Overtime Stowupland village has grown into a more substantial village in the 20th century with the introduction of new housing estates. This coupled with the more recent growth of Stowmarket town means that on its southern fringes the village of Stowupland struggles to retain its sense of separate identity. Away from Stowmarket, the Parish relates strongly to its landscape setting of adjacent river valleys and historic field enclosures.
- 1.1.3 The landscape appraisal has sought to identify the character and qualities of Stowupland Parish including its landscape and village character, key views and valued characteristics and spaces. The local landscape and village character areas are used as a framework for assessing the sensitivity of the area to accommodate new housing growth but also to identify opportunities for environmental initiatives which seek to enhance local identity and settlement distinctiveness where it has become eroded. The result is a vision for the Parish which identifies a range of opportunities that can be used as an evidence base to inform the development of policy within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. A key element of this approach is to consider the Parish holistically ensuring that where there may be opportunities for new housing, such development supports existing communities in achieving the conservation of valued assets and enhancement of the local environment.

1.2 Objectives

- 1.2.1 The key objective of the study is to provide a robust understanding of the character and qualities of the Parish and to evaluate Stowupland as a whole and the built environment of the village in particular, to determine opportunities for housing development from a landscape perspective and environmental initiatives which help reinforce sense of place. This assessment therefore considers the historic evolution of the Parish, present day landscape and village character and sensitivity and capacity to absorb change and growth without adverse effects on what is valued.

1.3 Scope of Work

- 1.3.1 The assessment considers all the land within the Parish of Stowupland. Where relevant, reference has also been made to land beyond the Parish where there is strong intervisibility such that the wider landscape forms a setting to the Parish, bolstering its sense of place and /or is important in outward or inward views.

1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan and Policy Background

- 1.4.1 In November 2014, the Parish Council submitted a Neighbourhood Development Plan Area Designation Application to define the boundary of their Neighbourhood Plan area. The publication period began on 12th December 2014 and closed on 30th January 2015. Under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, Mid Suffolk District Council confirmed the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area on 3rd February 2015.
- 1.4.2 The Stowupland Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was set up early in 2015. One of its first tasks was to consult local residents and businesses to seek their views on how much housing, employment, shops etc. are needed in the future. A Workshop and Village Consultation event took place in July 2015 and September 2015 respectively, and a Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire was launched in December 2015.
- 1.4.3 More recently the committee, along with a number of volunteers from the community, have undertaken a landscape character assessment of the Parish and divided it into 11 discrete character areas. This work has been reviewed and used as a basis of the landscape appraisal.

1.5 Methodology and Approach

- 1.5.1 This assessment has been carried out in accordance with Guidelines on Landscape Character Assessment¹ and Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity². The approach has included a client meeting and familiarisation site visit, desk study and further detailed site assessment in December 2016.
- 1.5.2 The landscape and village areas defined as part of the baseline were used to inform an assessment of sensitivity and capacity. This is because they reflect local character variations and because the pattern of settlement in the Parish is often dispersed. Nevertheless where character areas abut existing built development i.e.

¹ Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002) The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage and An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014) Natural England.

² Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2004

around Stowupland village, attention has been focused on the landscape and built form interface when assessing sensitivity and capacity.

- 1.5.3 This study takes into account the distinctive characteristics of each landscape character area, visibility, function, value, relationship to the settlement and potential for mitigation and enhancement in order to reach a judgement on the sensitivity of the landscape and the capacity of the area to accommodate housing development. The following definitions of terms are used in this study:

Sensitivity is defined as the ability of the landscape to accommodate a particular type of change (in this case built development) without adverse effect and is determined by consideration of landscape character, visual sensitivity and value of a landscape.

Landscape Value is defined as the relative value that is attached to different landscape by society. In this study value has been assessed in the context of Stowupland Parish and with reference to factors such as designations, conservation interest, distinctive features and characteristics, role and function (i.e. setting or gap), condition and intactness, and rarity.

Capacity of an area considers the extent and nature of development which may be accommodated and is derived from an understanding of both landscape value and sensitivity of a landscape to change.

2: The Evolution of the Parish

2.1 The Parish

- 2.1.1 The Parish of Stowupland is located to the west of Stowmarket and is roughly triangular in shape. It comprises the village of Stowupland and the linear hamlet of Saxham Street as well as a dispersed pattern of farms and two halls (Columbine and Stowupland). The northern boundary of the Parish is defined by the River Gipping, the southwestern boundary by the A14 and the southeastern boundary by hedgerows.

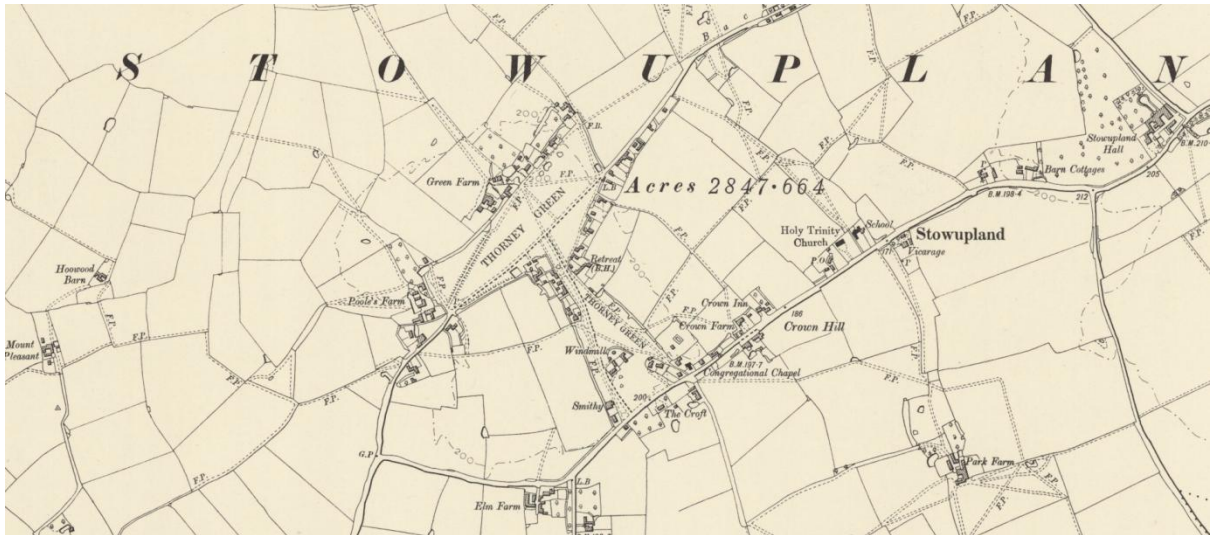
2.2 Stowupland and Saxham Street

- 2.2.1 The Parish contains two main clusters of development namely the village of Stowupland and the hamlet of Saxham Street. The name Stowupland is thought to mean 'the higher land' with 'stow' meaning place, while Saxham is thought to mean homestead or village. Hodkinson's Map of 1783 is one of the earliest showing the settlement pattern. Stowupland is depicted as a loose cluster of dwellings arranged around a T shaped green called Thorney Green, with dispersed linear development occurring intermittently along Church Road. Further north the linear dispersed dwellings comprising Saxham Street can be seen, as can the moated site of Columbine Hall which dates back to the 14th Century.
- 2.2.2 Greens are one of the characteristic features of Suffolk's clayland settlements. Emerging around the 11th century, the largest (up to about 530 acres) are on the wide plateaux of north Suffolk, but many were enclosed in the 18th and 19th centuries and now only survive as outline 'ghosts'. In south Suffolk, 'tye' is a locally distinctive term for a green. These open 'greens' were fringed with houses and farmsteads of those who had the right to graze their animals there.

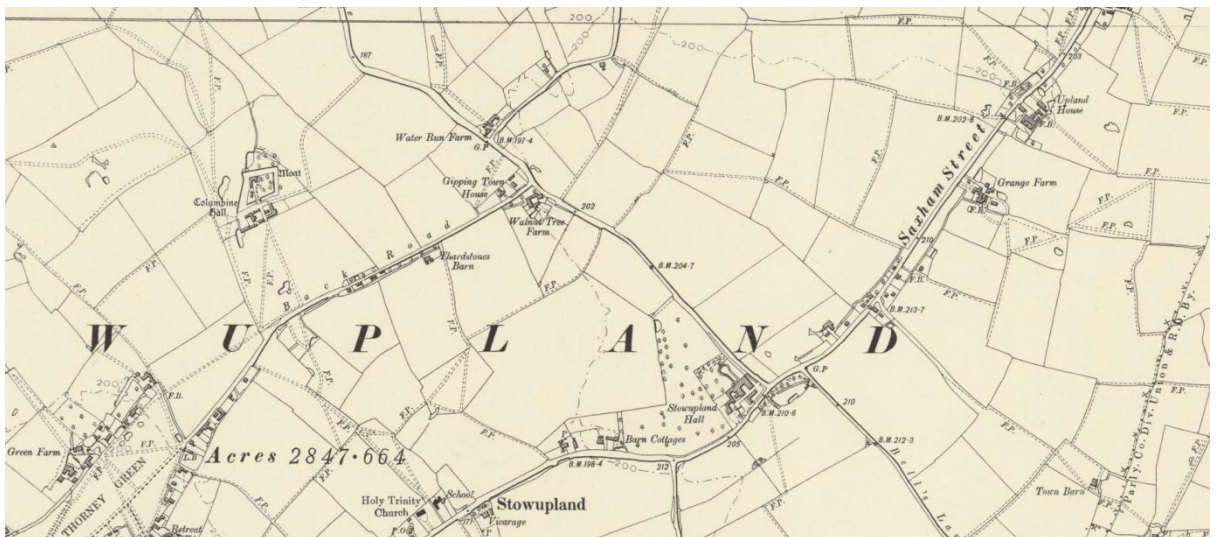


Photograph of dwellings around Thorney Green

- 2.2.3 Historic maps dating to around 1900 show the cluster of houses and farmsteads persisting around Thorney Green at Stowupland. Thorney Green has a distinctive 'T' shaped layout. Maps also show the cluster of buildings around the church (including the post office, school and vicarage) which collectively form a small service centre. To the east and beyond was Stowupland House and parkland and the moated manor house of Columbine Hall to the northeast. Along Saxham Street a linear dispersed pattern of farmsteads is evident. Various small orchards flanked the outer edges of properties around the green and in the centre of the green was a windmill.



Extract from OS mapping (1900s) showing loose cluster of dwellings around Thorney Green and small orchards



Extract from OS mapping (1900s) showing Columbine Hall and Stowupland Hall (with parkland) and dispersed farms along Saxham Street



Photograph of the former windmill which was located on Thorney Green

- 2.2.4 By the middle of the 20th century some new additional housing development had occurred in the north of the village along Columbyne Close and also in the southwest with the creation of Felix, Highfield and Broomspath Roads.
- 2.2.5 Through the 1970's and 80's, development in the southwest of Stowupland continued as far as the green and also extended southeast from Columbyne Close with the creation of Reeds Way and Trinity Walk. The result of this housing development was to create two new clusters of dense housing cul-de-sacs which significantly increased the population of the settlement. During this time, and in response to the increase in population (as well as the need to service the surrounding villages), the primary school was extended and a new secondary school built in a central location between the two new housing centres. Further north along Saxham Street there was little change other than occasional infill development comprising isolated properties.
- 2.2.6 Development in the last couple of decades has been relatively low comprising the completion of the Reeds Way area, including two care homes and supported housing and small infill groups within the village (mostly single and one-and-a-half storey). In 2016 however a significant new housing scheme was approved, on appeal, on land north of the church comprising 175 dwellings. This will once again result in a sizable extension to the village comprising an additional discrete area of higher density housing.
- 2.2.7 The result of these periods of development and the nature of the development which has occurred has resulted in a significant alteration to the character and appearance of Stowupland from its early origins. Nevertheless the historic pattern of the dispersed loose arrangement of dwellings around the green is still apparent particularly to the north and the cluster of historic buildings around the church and those associated with Stowupland Hall are all still evident. Tyes and greens form important open spaces that shape the relationship of buildings to each other and define the form of settlements within Suffolk. These remnant patterns are therefore extremely valuable in creating a strong sense of place and character within Stowupland Parish.

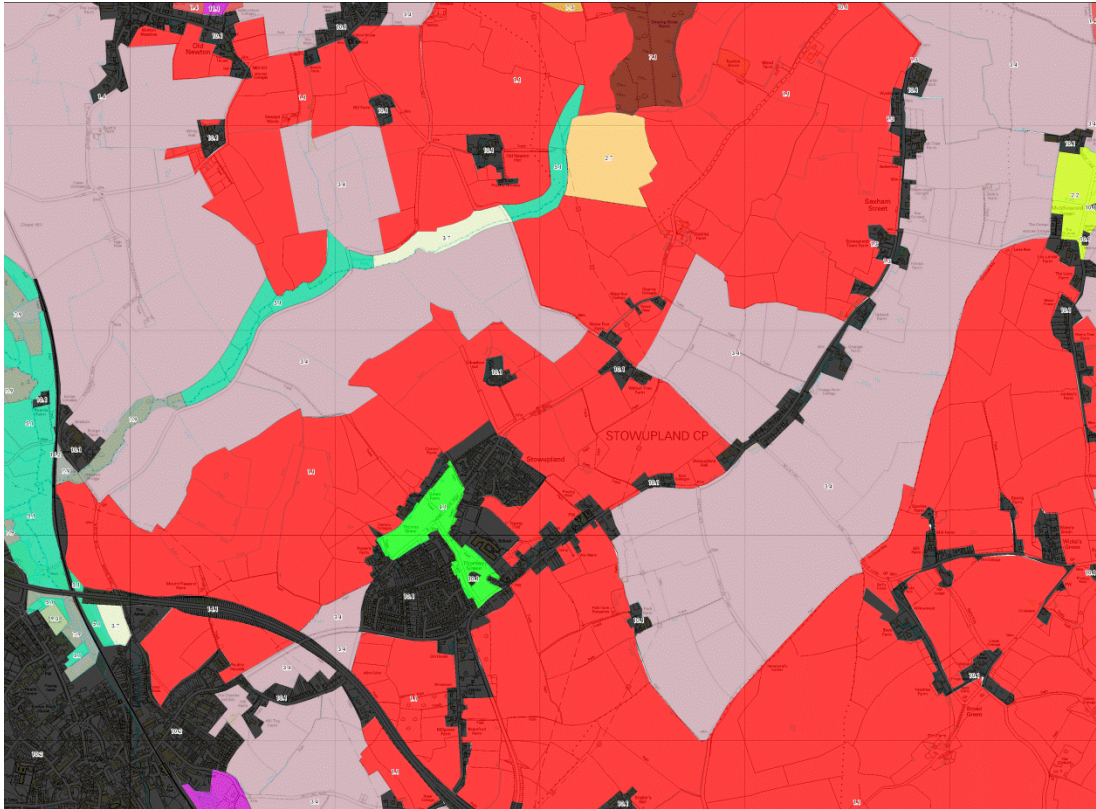
2.3 Surrounding Historic Landscape Patterns

- 2.3.1 Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is the process of characterising the historic landscape into a series of types. A HLC was undertaken for the whole of Suffolk and within the Parish of Stowupland the enclosure pattern is defined as predominately the 'random fields' type. These are described as *'landscapes made up of fields that have an irregular pattern (i.e. without any dominant axis). Many were in existence by the medieval period, but could be earlier. Boundaries usually take the form of species-rich hedges (normally coppiced not laid) with associated ditches and banks. Areas with this field pattern are probably some of our earliest farming landscapes'*.
- 2.3.2 It also contains other areas categorised as 'boundary loss from random fields' where the former pattern has been partially removed in the 20th century. These are described as *'areas that have had their character altered as a result of agricultural changes in the post-war period. Historic field patterns have disappeared or been weakened through the removal and remodelling of hedges and other field boundaries. Other important changes are in landuse, as in the conversion of meadows into arable land. Overall, these changes have produced 20th-century landscapes, but aspects of their previous character can be determined by reference to earlier mapping, such as the 1st edition Ordnance Survey or tithe maps.* Within the Parish those areas which are categorised in the HLC as experiencing these changes include a concentration on the steeper slopes towards the River Gipping and also to the west of Stowupland and south of Saxham Street.
- 2.3.3 Along the River Gipping valley floor is an area of meadow noted in the HLC as *'seasonally wet grassland that is mown for hay and/or grazed by animals. Normally found alongside rivers and streams and characteristically takes the form of long and narrow land parcels that run parallel to the watercourses. Often hedged on the dry-land side, but with ditched internal sub-divisions that often have a drainage function'*. Further downstream from these meadows the land has been planted with woodland in the 20th century while upstream the meadows have been converted to arable. This middle section is therefore the only part within the Parish which is managed as traditional meadow.

2.4 Conclusions

- 2.4.1 An analysis of the evolution of the Parish and present day landscape and settlement form enables the following conclusions to be reached:
- Much of the Parish retains a loose arrangement of dispersed farmsteads;
 - Traditionally settlement was located on the most elevated parts of the plateau associated with tyes or greens;
 - The historic origins of Stowupland village are still evident in places;
 - 20th century housing estates contrast with the traditional settlement patterns and have altered village form;

- Historic enclosure patterns form an important rural context and setting to settlement be it small pasture fields associated with farmsteads or irregular arable field defined by species rich hedgerows and ditches.



Extract from the Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation. The red areas comprise random fields, the pink -boundary loss from random fields and the aqua blue - meadows. Thorney Green is illustrated in bright green.

3: Landscape Character

3.1 Suffolk County LCA

3.1.1 The Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment includes Stowupland Parish and classifies it into Ancient Plateau Claylands, Plateau Claylands and Rolling Valley Farmlands landscape types. The key points in the County assessment relevant to this study are summarised below and extracts of the assessment are contained in appendix 1 of this report. A map showing the extent of these character types can be found at http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk/landscape_map.aspx.

Plateau Claylands

3.1.2 This character type forms the northeastern part of the Parish and forms a plateau of glacial till or bolder clay. In the Parish of Stowupland it includes the areas of Saxham Street. Key characteristics relevant to this area include:

- heavy clay soils very gently undulating
- ancient organic pattern of fields
- substantial coppiced hedges of hawthorn and oak/ash hedgerow trees
- dispersed settlement - village with multiple nuclei
- large greens - houses around their margins or small triangular greens at road junctions
- small copses in villages and around farmsteads
- timber framed buildings, plastered and colour-washed exteriors with peg-tiled or thatched roofs
- open views
- slight changes in slope can have a profound effect on what and how much of the landscape can be seen
- small clusters of trees and houses on the horizon are common

3.1.3 Past changes have included:

- loss of pasture to arable following land drainage
- amalgamation of fields and loss of field boundaries
- little suburbanisation - the perception of a working, farmed landscape is retained

Ancient Plateau Claylands

3.1.4 This character type covers the majority of the Parish including Stowupland village and surrounding valley slopes. Key characteristics relevant to this area include:

- flat or gently rolling arable landscape dissected by streams at its edges
- field pattern of ancient enclosure
- dispersed settlement pattern - loosely clustered villages and isolated farmsteads
- pairing of medieval churches and manorial halls (often moated) usually in valley side locations

- villages often associated with medieval greens or tyes - Stowupland is the only tye which exists north of the Gipping
- farmstead buildings are timber framed, houses are colour washed with peg-tiled or thatched roofs and barns blackened with tar
- scattered ancient woodland parcels
- occasional landscaped parks
- moats and ponds are commonplace
- hawthorn hedges with oak, ash and field maple as hedgerow trees
- network of winding lanes and paths creating visual intimacy
- open and occasional feelings of exposure

3.1.5 Past changes have included:

- removal of hedges to amalgamate fields
- reduction in biodiversity interest and isolation of habitats
- localised impacts of new development associated with A14 corridor - historic patterns within Parishes easily lost by infill and ribbon development
- Increased demand for large scale farm buildings particularly associated with poultry and pig production
- expansion of garden curtilage
- increase in horse paddocks
- development of wind turbines

Rolling Valley Farmlands

3.1.6 This character type forms the northern fringes of the Parish along the River Gipping - the river course forming the Parish boundary. Key characteristics relevant to this area include:

- valley landscapes comprising narrow valley floor and valley slopes
- silts, sands and gravels as a result of outwash deposits from the ice-sheets of the great Anglian glaciation
- good tree cover on the valley sides and within the valley floor
- valley floor pastures - can be fragmented habitat
- small scale villages and farm complexes on valley sides

3.1.7 Past changes have included:

- conversion of pasture to arable cultivation
- visual intrusion from expansion of settlement or large scale farm buildings
- increase in horse paddocks
- lack of hedgerow and woodland management

3.2 Community Landscape Assessment

3.2.1 In December 2015 the Stowupland Neighbourhood Plan group undertook a local landscape character assessment of their Parish with the help of the local community. The purpose of the exercise was to understand local variations in character and provide an evidence base for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

3.2.2 A total of 16 character areas were defined which covered landscape and village areas. Each area was surveyed in the field and data collected on field survey sheets. The following information was collected for each area:

- topography,
- land use,
- housing layout,
- roads, streets and routes,
- spaces,
- buildings,
- landmarks,
- green and natural features
- streetscape
- views

3.2.3 The results of the assessment were written up and have informed the preparation of local landscape character areas as part of this landscape study of the Parish (refer section 5.3)

3.3 Community Questionnaire

3.3.1 In 2015 the Neighbourhood Plan group undertook a questionnaire and sought to illicit those areas that local residents felt were unsuitable for housing development. The analysis of responses provided as part of this study did not include the reasons given. A total of 14 land parcels were assessed and are illustrated on the aerial photograph below. The analysis of the results of the questionnaire concluded:

'The four areas to which there are the fewest objections are: between the allotments and Mill Street (Land Parcel 1), the land both East and West after housing ends on Saxham Street (Land Parcels 8 and 9), the land that drew the fewest objections of all to development, the most favoured site for building, is the land behind the Garage (Land Parcel 14).....The conclusion one must make is that residents recognise the separate areas of housing in Saxham Street and the main Village, and regard them as such'.

3.3.2 The result of the questionnaire have been informative to this study, and the land parcels identified in the questionnaire have been reviewed as part of the evaluation (refer to section 5).



Extract from the Stowupland Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire showing the location of land parcels referred to in section 5 of this report.

4: Existing Design Guidance

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section briefly considers two important design guides which cover Mid Suffolk and seek to protect and enhance landscape and sense of place. Notably they both recognise the issues which can arise through the introduction of peripheral housing estates in areas of traditionally dispersed and loosely arranged settlement.

4.2 The Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Landscape Guidance

- 4.2.1 This document, which was published in 2015, highlights some of the effects of modern development. In paragraph 1.3.5 it states:

"Some modern developments have made a positive contribution to the character of the landscape and village. However, some 20th century developments, in particular, have failed to take into consideration the landscape setting, its historic form or local building character which can lead to the standardisation of areas."

- 4.2.2 It goes on to provide a key aim and objectives for the Ancient Plateau Claylands landscape type of which Stowupland village forms a part (see section 3 above). These include:

"Aims

- *To retain, enhance and restore the distinctive landscape and settlement character. In particular strengthen the woodland, parkland and prairie landscape with appropriate planting and safeguarding the dispersed settlement pattern*

Objectives

- *To maintain and enhance the landscape areas and settlement pattern, ensuring the sense of separation between settlements is maintained where appropriate*
- *To reinforce and enhance the existing field boundaries*
- *To safeguard the plantation and ancient woodland areas*
- *Safeguard the parkland areas."*

[emphasis added]

4.3 The Suffolk Design Guide

- 4.3.1 The Suffolk Design Guide, published in 1993 and revised in 2000, provides design principles on the shape of development with the aim of adding to rather than detracting from, the total character of a place. It states in para 3.11.1 that *"all too often new development does not relate well to its landscape setting. Most problems*

occur where large estates are placed on green-field sites next to existing small scale settlements. Examples maintaining good relationships can be found in urban locations and small infill sites where the scale and design of development is more readily influenced by immediate surroundings. It is the failure to respect an existing scale within new large estates which emphasises the differences between old and new."

- 4.3.2 In para 3.5.12 it states that *"high density development is rarely applicable in Suffolk"*.
- 4.3.3 In para 3.15.7 it highlights that *"good design in Suffolk will relate to local and historic character....all too often new roads are simply lined with standard detached or semi-detached units, a few trees planted and future occupants are left with the awesome, if not impossible, task of trying to transform another chunk of anywhere into somewhere"*.

4.4 Conclusions

- 4.4.1 These documents recognise the distinctive and traditional form of settlement in Suffolk and the need for new development to positively contribute to the existing valued sense of place. They therefore form useful reference documents in assessing the appropriate form and location of development as well as the development of policy in the emerging Stowupland Neighbourhood Plan.

5: Evaluation

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section establishes the current landscape baseline of the Parish and includes analysis and evaluation seeking to identify both development opportunities and environmental initiatives. Consideration is first given to key views and landmarks. Secondly village areas are described and help to create a picture of the distinctive places within the existing settlement pattern. Thirdly landscape character areas are described and an assessment of their sensitivity and capacity to accommodate housing growth is provided.

5.2 Key Views and Landmarks

- 5.2.1 The site visit undertaken in December 2016 sought to identify important views in and around the Parish. Views are critical in defining and reinforcing sense of place and local distinctiveness, connecting places where people live with the wider environment, providing opportunities to appreciate special qualities and connecting to local landmarks which can aid orientation. Due to the elevation of Stowupland Parish many of the views are outward to the wider landscape, particularly at the edges of the plateau where the land starts to slope into adjacent valleys. Views northwards from upper slopes are often far reaching across the Gipping Valley to Gipping Great Wood, the village of Old Newton, and in good visibility as far as Haughley and Onehouse. Outward views to the south and southeast are across the gentle valley landscape associated with Park Farm towards Creting St Peter and Creting St Mary as well as to the wooded slopes on the southern side of Stowmarket including Combs Wood. These views are open and expansive, despite the more varied topography of the foreground. From the southern edges of Saxham Street the southeasterly views extend across what appears to be continuous plateau with few landmark elements in the views, while to the north east the views are gentler extending into the folds of the upper reaches of the River Gipping.
- 5.2.2 There are also views towards the existing built areas on approaching the settlement which affect perceptions of local distinctiveness. From within the Parish the views to the urban edge arise in close proximity to the built edge and on arrival at the settlement. Urban edges that are most visible tend to be 20th century developments where the density and height of buildings make them more visually obvious and/or where there is little intervening vegetation. Longer distance elevated views to the urban edge are possible from the north, outside of the Parish, and from Creting Lane looking northwest.
- 5.2.3 Both outward and inward views are illustrated on drawing 2 - the mapping of views seeks to illustrate principle views but should not be taken to be exhaustive.

5.2.4 Key landmarks in views have also been identified (i.e. those buildings or landscape features which have been identified as memorable based on site assessment³). These are illustrated on drawing number 2 and include the following:

- Holy Trinity Church steeple
- Pine trees along Church Road
- Gipping Great Wood
- Columbine Hall
- Stowupland Hall
- Pill box on Gipping Road
- Two-and-a-half storey property on Thorney Green

5.2.5 The assessment has concluded the following:

- In many instances settlement in the Parish is not widely visible from the wider landscape;
- Views towards isolated properties on the skyline, associated with groups of trees and copses is characteristic;
- Development which is more visually obvious tends to include recent housing where the urban edge is abrupt and or the density/height of housing is uncharacteristic;
- Those areas of development which are most successfully integrated into the landscape tend to be single or 1.5 storey, low density and loosely arranged with good boundary vegetation.

5.3 Village Character Areas

5.3.1 A total of 8 village character areas were defined in this study. These areas are shown on drawing number 1.

VCA A - Stowupland Green

5.3.2 This area of the village focuses on the historic green and loose arrangement of dwellings of cottages, farms and some infill development around the previously called Thorney Green. This area is arguably the defining character of Stowupland village and contains a high concentration of listed buildings. Importantly the dwellings surrounding the green are often set back behind vegetation and the open expanse of grassland (which retains a strongly rural character with little urban paraphernalia) forms the foreground and dominates in views. As a result the landscape dominates with dwellings being recessive and forms a highly valued open community space within easy reach of homes.

³ As for key views the identification of landmarks should not be taken as exhaustive.

- 5.3.3 The dwellings appear randomly arranged at the edge of the green and there is little formality and structure. The types of building present range in age and style with notable historic properties comprising thatch and pan-tiled roofs and painted render and also a modern two and a half storey property in the north east corner. Variety is characteristic and whilst landmark buildings such as the latter stand out and add to the variety, they should be the exception not the rule.
- 5.3.4 The vegetation associated with the dwellings often forms a treed skyline and prevents views to the wider landscape such that this area of the village is predominately inward looking with outward views only possible from its northern and southern fringes. Water bodies are also a defining characteristic of this area forming ponds and linear waterways around the edge of the green, thought to date to medieval times and created to improve drainage and separate the dwellings from the green - many have been lost or lack management.
- 5.3.5 The open grassland of the green is crossed by numerous footpaths and is vulnerable to the introduction of urbanising infrastructure such as formal play equipment, organised sports pitches, signage and seating and also to inappropriate planting that undermines its open simple character. The roads through the green are unenclosed with soft grass verges which reinforces the 'common land' character of the green as does the current mowing regime aimed at establishing greater biodiversity interest. Many of the residents hold a right to graze animals on the green although this is not taken. Access to properties is often along tracks and adopted roads around the edge of the green.

VCA B - Columbyne and Trinity Walk and Reeds Way Estates

- 5.3.6 This area comprises the distinctive 1930's housing development of Columbyne Close and more recent later 20th century development to the south of Thorney Green Way. The Columbyne development is distinctive for its unity and linear arrangement of bungalow developments with large garden plots and reflects a period in post war housing development. The 20th century housing to the south is arranged in cul-de-sacs with standard housing types and streets which lack distinction such that the areas can often be disorientating. The exception is the southern end of Trinity Walk which has framed views to the spire of Stowupland Church.

VCA C - Church Road Future Housing

- 5.3.7 This area will form the future housing site off Church Road and will comprise a large housing area to the north with small blocks of housing in the southern area. In the central part of the site there will be public open space which connects a valued meadow site to the north with Trinity Walk. A landscape buffer will form the northeastern edge of the site and provide a soft edge and opportunities for improved footpath connections.

VCA D - Holy Trinity Church

- 5.3.8 This part of the village focuses around Holy Trinity Church which was built in 1843 and includes a collection of buildings built around the same time including the local primary school and former vicarage. The siting of the church is unusual as it is located at the head of a tributary valley in a slightly sheltered location off the main plateau. The topographic variation created by the valley is apparent when travelling along Church Road and starts to drop around the Cemetery entrance and rises again to the cottages on Church Road to the north. The steeple of Holy Trinity Church is a key landmark in this area and in adjacent landscapes. To the south of the church there is an open field providing a rare link between this historic memorable part of the village and the wider valley landscape.

VCA E - Stowupland School and Playing Fields

- 5.3.9 This area comprises the secondary school which has a distinctive architecture reflecting large scale agricultural barns and associated open playing fields. This area is relatively flat and inward looking surrounded by development and tree belts. This landscape has a simplicity and strong focus and function as part of the school. It also includes the Sports and Social Club, Bowls Club and Village Hall. A number of public rights of way pass through this area connecting the school with local housing areas and the area as whole forms a Visually Important Open Space.

VCA F - Church Road Southern Edge

- 5.3.10 This area forms the southern edge of Stowupland Village and sits at the edge of the plateau overlooking Park Farm Valley LCA. This area contains a notable number of listed buildings comprising historic cottages and farmsteads and also contains the Crown Pub and Stowupland Service Station. There are important views from this area into VCA A and also to the wider landscape to the south and LCA 6. There has been significant infill housing development along this road in the latter part of the 20th century. As such the remaining views out across the wider landscape have become all the more valuable in retaining this areas sense of place and connection to the wider rural setting.

VCA G - The Heights

- 5.3.11 This area forms a cluster of high density housing in the southwest of Stowupland which was started in the inter war era (1930's) and further intensified in the latter half of the 20th century. Comprising mainly cul-de-sac development, standard housing types, and no notable open space, the streets often lack distinction and sense of place with few street trees or landmarks. As a result the layout of the housing estate can be disorientating. The houses are predominately semi detached two storey properties or bungalows and the roads have pavements and street lights. To the south along the B1115 there is a substantial mature hedge which separates this development from land to the south. With the exception of the outer edges of this development, where there are views west into LCA 7 and east onto the green, the

area is inward looking. This area of the village is strongly urban and makes no reference to the historic rural origins of the village.

VCA H - Saxham Street 20th Century Housing

- 5.3.12 This area comprises the linear development on both sides of Saxham Street just beyond the junction of Bell's Lane and mostly dates to the latter half of the 20th century comprising bungalow development and two storey detached and semi-detached houses with occasional older Victorian cottages. This development appears divorced from any centre of population or community and the street scene lacks sense of place although there are views out to the wider landscape from the rear of properties. There is little boundary planting and the housing is highly visible from the wider landscape.

5.4 Landscape Character Areas

- 5.4.1 The landscape of Stowupland Parish is heavily influenced by topography and drainage. In simple terms it comprises two areas of upland plateau above the 60m contour - one focused on Stowupland Village and the other in the area of Saxham Street but which extends eastwards beyond the Parish (refer to drawing 1). To the northwest the land drops away to the River Gipping, to the north the plateau is incised by a shallow tributary stream and to the south there is a more marked tributary stream which extends between Stowmarket and Creeping St Peter. These topographic and drainage variations have strongly influenced the historic settlement pattern and land uses and influence aspect and views as well as local distinctiveness. A total of 7 landscape character areas were defined in this study. These areas are shown on drawing number 1. A summary description of each is provided below focusing on the special qualities, key issues and opportunities of each. A judgement as to the value and sensitivity of the landscape is given and guidance on the capacity of the landscape to accommodate housing development is provided. Cross-reference is made to the landscape parcels noted in section 3.3 above and shown on the aerial photograph.

LCA 1 - Upper Gipping Slopes (includes land parcel 3)

- 5.4.2 This landscape lies to the north of Stowupland village and forms the upper slopes of the River Gipping above the 50m contour. Gentle undulations in topography caused by tributary streams gives rise to varied character and scenic interest. Its elevation offers panoramic long distance views across the Gipping Valley to the wider landscape beyond the Parish and to Old Newton. This landscape forms an important interface between the historic loose arrangement of tie dwellings on the northern edge of Stowupland (VCA A) and the wider landscape and acts as an important setting to the village bolstering sense of place. This area also contains the historic moated manorial site of Columbine Hall which is Grade II* listed and set within an area of associated small pastures, and the isolated farmstead at Mount Pleasant Farm (farmhouse is Grade II listed). This landscape therefore forms an important

rural setting to these listed buildings. There are a number of public rights of way which connect the village of Stowupland with the Gipping Valley and are highly valued. The condition of landscape features in this landscape is mixed with the loss of field boundaries and intensive arable cultivation. The elevated open nature of the slopes means that they are sensitive to development which may be visible over a significant distance.

- 5.4.3 This landscape area has a medium value as a result of its distinctive characteristics and cultural heritage assets. Adjacent to Stowupland the sensitivity of the landscape to development is high due to few detractors, fair condition and high visibility. Importantly this landscape retains the physical and visual connection of the historic core of Stowupland with the wider landscape - here the historic relationship between the village and its wider landscape remains unaltered and is rare in the context of the Parish. This landscape has very limited capacity to accommodate housing development without adverse effect on valued features and perceptions.

LCA 2 - Gipping Valley

- 5.4.4 This landscape forms the northern fringe to the Parish and comprises the valley floor and steep lower valley slopes below the 50m contour. Within the valley floor there are areas of pasture reflecting traditional management of the valley floor and with notable biodiversity interest while further upstream the valley floor has been converted to arable and downstream poplar planting has occurred. The valley sides are often open and used for intensive arable with many of the field boundaries having been lost or removed although there remain significant blocks of interlocking woodland in the northern part of the area which combined with topography creating more scenic areas. This landscape offers a degree of intimacy and enclosure. Views are generally constrained within the valley and whilst the occasional farmstead is visible on the valley sides to the north, the village of Stowupland, sitting above the valley, is not apparent - this gives rise to a sense of being away from settlement and activity. Stonebridge Lane is a narrow winding lane along the valley which is unenclosed and crosses the River Gipping on small white railed bridges. In the lower reaches of the valley there is some noise and visual intrusion from the A14.
- 5.4.5 This landscape area has a high value as a result of its distinctive topography, woodland, rural characteristics, scenic qualities and few detractors. It is highly sensitive to change which undermines these characteristics both within the area and on the fringes of adjacent character areas i.e. LCA 1 and 3. Opportunities exist to improve habitat networks along the valley floor including reversion of arable to pasture, increased field margins and reinstatement of hedgerows and woodland copses but the area has no capacity to accommodate housing development without adverse effects on valued features and perceptions.

LCA 3 - Gipping Road Northern Tributary

- 5.4.6 This landscape lies to the north of the Parish and includes a small tributary valley to the River Gipping and affords attractive views across the River Gipping from Gipping Road towards Gipping Great Wood beyond the Parish boundary. This is a relatively

open outward looking landscape which slopes away from Saxham Street and Stowupland forming land below the 60m contour and faces northwards out of the Parish. It has a strongly rural character dominated by arable land use with occasional views of farmsteads surrounded by trees on the skyline along Saxham Street and Gipping Road. The field enclosure pattern is strongly geometric comprising well trimmed hawthorn hedges with occasional trees and although it has suffered some loss, the patterns still read strongly and give rise to visual cohesiveness and unity. The Mid Suffolk Footpath long distance route passes along Gipping Road on the edge of this landscape. Otherwise the area has limited footpaths with only one route crossing east west connecting Saxham Street to the Gipping Valley. Due to field amalgamation and hedgerow loss the route of this footpath is hard to follow in places.

- 5.4.7 This landscape area has a high value as a result of its many distinctive rural characteristics, scenic qualities and few detractors. It is highly sensitive to change which undermines these characteristics and has very limited capacity to accommodate housing development without adverse effects on valued features and perceptions. Opportunities exist to reinstate field boundaries and hedgerow trees where they have been lost and to improve footpath connections between Saxham Street and the Gipping Valley.

LCA 4 - Saxham Street Plateau (land parcels 9 and 10)

- 5.4.8 This landscape forms an area of elevated plateau above the 60m contour which stretches to the southeast beyond the Parish. It contains the road Saxham Street and the dispersed linear settlement of the same name. The settlement comprises mainly historic farmsteads which are spread out along the road over a distance of approximately 1.5km (the northern most farmsteads forming part of the LCA 3 where the land drops in elevation). The dispersed pattern of the farms means that the landscape remains dominant, flowing between the clusters of buildings. For this reason the farmsteads are included as part of the landscape and not identified separately as a village character area. Although the settlement is strictly linear it is not perceived as such. Around the farmsteads are small fields of pasture, market gardening and paddocks as well as small woodland copses and distinctive clumps of Scots pine. As a result the buildings are not visually obvious often set back from the road and screened by vegetation. Between the farmsteads there are open panoramic views to the south east across the plateau and to the north east over the tributary valley of LCA 3. This landscape has a strongly rural character despite the number of farmsteads. The enclosure of vegetation around the buildings combined with the contrasting open views across the wider landscape are a defining characteristic. This pattern has been lost to some degree where infill and linear housing has occurred in the south. Here the housing is a higher density and highly visible from the south forming a visually stark edge.
- 5.4.9 Overall this landscape area has a high value as a result of its many distinctive rural characteristics, scenic qualities and few detractors. It has a high sensitivity to change and is vulnerable to infill linear development which disrupts these qualities and characteristics. This area is considered to have a low capacity to accommodate

housing development without adverse effect on valued features and perceptions. However to the south adjacent to VCA H there is some capacity for housing development adjacent to the existing built edge, in conjunction with improved landscape structure and planting to soften existing and proposed development.

LCA 5 - Walnut Tree Farm Plateau (land parcels 5/6/7/8 and 11)

- 5.4.10 This landscape forms a central plateau area within the Parish, between the 50 and 60m contours, which is relatively flat and often inward looking except at its edges where the land begins to slope away offering long distance views. For example its southern edge along Church Road has long range views across LCA 6 and also its northern edge along Gipping Road has views across the Gipping Valley (LCA 2) to the plateau edge at Old Newton to the north.
- 5.4.11 From this landscape the edge of Stowupland appears well treed with views to the church spire. This northern edge of the village is likely to continue to be well treed following development at Church Road. This area also includes the historic hall and associated farm buildings of Stowupland Hall which is Grade II listed. To the southwest of the hall are a collection of former barns and associated farmhouse (now divided into cottages), a number of which are also listed. Between the Hall and the barns there is an area of pasture containing a number of mature trees which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order and which formed part of the former parkland to the hall and which extended further to the north. This collection of buildings is also relatively well screened by vegetation.
- 5.4.12 In contrast the large barns and farm buildings at Walnut Tree Farm and late 20th century development at the southern end of Saxham Street are not well screened and remain highly visible. Rendall Lane cuts across the centre of the area connecting Gipping Lane with Church Road and retains its rural lane character although it is suffering from heavy use and grass verge erosion. There has been some field boundary loss such that there is a simple pattern of large fields however those hedgerows which remain are often substantial and contain oak and ash trees, particularly to the north of Rendall Lane. A line of pylons pass though the southern half of this landscape and coupled with 3 small turbines at Walnut Tree Farm have a visually cluttering effect. Walnut Tree Farm forms a community hub comprising a farm shop, post office, cafe and car park - it is therefore associated with higher levels of activity.
- 5.4.13 There are a number of detractors in this landscape (large barns associated with Walnut Tree Farm, pylons and urban edge of linear development in Saxham Street) and landscape elements such as road verges, field boundaries and parkland are in places in poor condition or have been lost. This, combined with the location of this area adjacent to the edge of Stowupland village leaves it vulnerable to future housing development pressure. Nevertheless, this area contains a number of features which are of value such as the pasture field on the southwestern edge, listed buildings, and remnant parkland associated with Stowupland Hall. Its open agricultural character and public footpaths give it a valued role in providing a rural setting to Stowupland village and Saxham Street, and an important transition from village to open

countryside. From its margins there is clear inter-visibility with other character areas and thus greater visual sensitivity. Land adjacent to the settlement edge is highly vulnerable to development in future due to its location and accessibility via rural lanes. This is reflected in the number of land parcels considered in this area during the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire. Overall the sensitivity of this landscape is considered to be medium.

- 5.4.14 Opportunities exist to significantly improve landscape structure and condition and function through initiatives such as parkland restoration and improved setting to Stowupland Hall, field boundary planting and softening of existing development through carefully sited planting. The capacity of this landscape to accommodate housing development is limited due to the valued characteristics of the area which are vulnerable to change. The implementation of environmental initiatives noted above may enable the area to accommodate some housing development close to existing settlement but would require careful design to ensure the valued characteristics and perceptions of the area are not adversely affected. Further 'estate' style development in this area is unlikely to strengthen the valued historic and traditional characteristics of Stowupland village or the Parish as a whole, and is not recommended.
- 5.4.15 Further to the northwest, around the junctions between Gipping Road and Rendall Lane the landscape may have some limited capacity to accommodate small scale development (i.e. a group of 2-3 cottages similar to those along Gipping Road or a farm complex as typically found on the upper slopes) in association with enhancement/re-creation of field enclosure patterns or small orchard. However care would need to be taken to maintain the intimate and small rural character of the lanes or adjacent listed buildings and also ensure that there are no adverse visual impacts on the Gipping Valley.

LCA 6 - Park Farm Valley (land parcels 12/13 and 14)

- 5.4.16 This landscape comprises a tributary valley to the southeast of Stowupland, the upper reaches of which penetrate the village and formed the context of the early siting of the village church. The valley topography creates undulations and visual interest forming a distinctive and attractive setting to the southern part of the village. There are elevated views from the fringes of this area across the valley both from the edge of Stowupland along Church Road as well as from Creting Lane, many of these views are long distance. A line of pylons pass through the valley but is often partially screened by intervening vegetation. The field enclosure pattern is relatively intact comprising dense hedgerow and hedgerow trees and the valley sides support a mixture of pasture and arable land use. The course of the stream and buildings associated with Park Farm and a more recent house are well treed and give rise to an intimate landscape which contrasts with the surrounding uplands. A number of public rights of way cross this landscape offering a variety of circular routes which are highly valued.
- 5.4.17 This landscape area has a high value as a result of its distinctive rural characteristics, varied topography, elevated views and few detractors. As with LCA 1 this landscape

performs an important role in retaining the physical and visual connection of the historic areas of Stowupland (i.e. southern part of the green and cottages along Church Road near Stowupland Hall) with the wider landscape and is important in terms of setting of the village. The areas adjacent to the village are also highly visible from the wider landscape and have a low capacity to accommodate change. However close into the urban edge along Church Road there is some capacity for a low key, small scale development in association with environmental initiatives which seek to improve the street scene, provide a setting to the church and maintain the visual and physical links to the wider valley landscape.

LCA 7 - Mill Street and Stowmarket (land parcels 1 and 2)

- 5.4.18 This landscape forms the south western fringe of the Parish and separates Stowupland village from the A14 and Stowmarket town. It comprises the now redundant Mill Street with its associated linear collection of old farm houses and buildings and more recent infill housing, which used to connect into Stowmarket before the construction of the A14. It also comprises an area of allotments along the B1115 and a collection of arable fields from which there are elevated long distance views over the A14 as far as Onehouse. This landscape is relatively flat and elevated, sloping gently to the south. It has a remnant, divorced character which is poorly related to Stowupland village and is visually influenced by the close proximity of new housing in Stowmarket which has crept up the valley slopes on the other side of the A14. Noise intrusion from the A14 also affects the character of this landscape. To the south of the B1115 the landscape has an urban fringe character while to the north it retains a more rural character with greater visual connection to adjacent LCA 1.
- 5.4.19 The poor condition and presence of landscape detractors in this landscape reduces its landscape value. Nevertheless it performs an essential role in providing a physical and perceived separation between Stowupland village and Stowmarket. The rural character of land north of the B1115 is critical in this function and this landscape is considered to have a medium sensitivity. The development of housing onto the upper slopes adjacent to the A14 has reduced the capacity of this landscape to accommodate further development. Any development in this landscape is likely to undermine a sense of separation and any sizable estate development would be atypical of traditional settlement pattern, exacerbating the influences of existing estate development at the Heights and Stowmarket. The provision of public open space between Stowmarket and Stowupland along the B1115 should also be considered with care as this may still alter current perceptions of rural open character and is likely to have an urbanising influence.
- 5.4.20 However, this landscape has some limited capacity for small scale infill development along Mill Street which would not reduce sense of space between the two existing urban edges of Stowupland and Stowmarket if undertaken with appropriate mitigation planting. There are also opportunities to improve the character and condition of this landscape through the creation of strong woodland buffer along A14 edge to screen views to Stowmarket and filter noise intrusion from A14. South of the B1115 there are opportunities for the creation of community orchards which were commonplace in

early 20th century, while north of the B1115 it is important to retain the rural open character of area and outward views/connectivity to the wider landscape to the northwest. Here the reinforcement of field boundaries with hedgerow planting in order to strengthen landscape character, soften the current urban edge along Thorney Green Road, improve footpath network and ecological corridors is a priority. There are also opportunities to plant a distinctive avenue of trees along the B1115 to create a stronger sense of place and arrival.

5.5 Conclusions

- 5.5.1 This assessment has revealed that the capacity of the Parish as a whole to accommodate development of a high density estate type, is very limited without loss of character and significant detriment to valued qualities. Whilst future housing estates may be argued as matching the character of existing housing estates they adjoin (in terms of form, density and height), care should be taken to critically review the extent to which housing of this type can effectively support the valued character of the village and of the Parish. Currently the historic character of the village, comprising a loose low density arrangement around open space remains tangible, however continued estate development is likely to tip this balance such that higher density development becomes the more prevalent form and thus a defining character. Such a change is also likely to blur the distinction between Stowmarket and Stowupland village. If the values identified in para 6.2.1 below are important to conserve and enhance then care should be taken to avoid this outcome. This does not mean to say that the Parish cannot accommodate development but rather that alternatives to estate development need to be considered and that creatively designed, small scale proposals are likely to be more easily integrated within the rural character of the settlement and Parish.
- 5.5.2 There are two areas within the Parish, close to the existing village edges which are likely to experience the greatest pressure from development in the future. These are LCA 5 and LCA 7. It is imperative therefore that any development in these areas is carefully considered in terms of siting, form and character and that it seeks to deliver significant environmental initiatives, enhancing the special qualities of the Parish and creating an high quality environment in which to live.

Landscape Character Areas and Notable Features



View from Upper Gipping Road looking north towards Great Gipping Wood and the pill box.



View from Church Road looking northwest towards St Mary's Church a key landmark in the village of Stowupland



View looking south towards pine trees along Church Road from public right of way



View looking north across Thorney Green in Stowupland village - open space dominates and built form recedes



LCA 1: Upper Gipping Slopes



LCA 2: Gipping Valley



LCA 3: Gipping Road Northern Tributary



LCA 4: Saxham Street Plateau



LCA 5: Walnut Tree Plateau



LCA 6: Park Farm Valley - view from Church Road across valley



LCA 6: Park Farm Valley - view from public right of way within valley



LCA 7: Mill Street and Stowmarket - view from Mill Street to Stowmarket housing

Village Character Areas and Housing Types



Trinity Housing Estate (VCA B)



The Heights Housing Estate (VCA G)



Saxham Street 20th Century Ribbon Development (VCA H)



Columbine Housing (VCA B)



Traditional thatch cottage (VCA A)



Traditional farmhouse with dormer windows (VCA A)



Traditional cottage on the green (VCA A)

6: Vision for Stowupland

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This section of the report sets out a 'vision' for Stowupland Parish in terms of opportunities for growth as well as environmental initiatives which seek to conserve and enhance the special characteristics of the area. These two aspects of the vision for the Parish should not be seen as mutually exclusive but can be interrelated, one helping to achieve the other to positive effect.

6.1.2 The identification of these initiatives and potential development sites are based on landscape analysis only with no consideration given to matters such as ownership or access. Nevertheless the initiatives are borne out of a robust character assessment and analysis which considers the sensitivity of the landscape and its capacity to accommodate housing and provides a sound evidence base for discussion with the local community and use within the Neighbourhood Plan.

6.2 Special Qualities to Retain

6.2.1 The following special qualities have been noted in the Parish as a result of this landscape appraisal:

- long distance elevated views from the edge of the plateau;
- rural landscape with dispersed pattern of development often loosely arranged with rural landscape flowing between small groups of dwellings;
- rural narrow lanes with grass verges;
- interrelationship between upland plateau and areas of stream valley offering long distance scenic views;
- wedges of open space penetrating urban form such that green space dominates the built form in the historic parts of Stowupland village - perceptions of the proportion of open space to built form are significant;
- Water is a key theme occurring as ponds, ditches and streams;
- Separate identity to Stowmarket.

- 6.2.2 Although there are few designations associated with the Parish of Stowupland the historic rural settlement pattern, notable open spaces and valued views are key limiting factors to incorporating growth and change. The key characteristics and valued attributes of each of the character areas (set out in section 5 above) should be considered whenever new development is proposed.

6.3 Environmental Initiatives

- 6.3.1 The assessment of the Parish has revealed the following environmental initiatives. The letters in brackets relate to those on drawing 2 and help to locate where these initiatives could potentially take place.

- ***Landscape woodland buffer along the A14 (A).*** This woodland belt is proposed in order to reduce the visual intrusion of housing on the edge of Stowmarket and noise intrusion from the A14. It also seeks, in association with retaining adjacent land in open agriculture to improve the sense of perceived separation between these two settlements. Planting should comprise native broadleaved woodland.
- ***Retention of rural farmland setting (B).*** This is proposed in areas where the land is under pressure from development and the rural setting of settlement could potentially become squeezed. This is particularly important for LCAs 5 and 7. This requires retaining the open agricultural use of this land for arable or pasture and the reinforcement and continued management of hedgerows.
- ***Re-creation of parkland landscape (C).*** Historic maps dating to the turn of the century show the former extent of parkland associated with Stowupland Hall (see below). The creation of parkland landscape within this area would create a positive landscape asset for the Parish, enhance biodiversity and local distinctiveness, enhance the setting to Stowupland Hall and help to protect the transition between existing settlement and open countryside.
- ***Creation of new community orchards (D).*** Historic maps dating to the turn of the century indicate that there were a number of small orchards on the fringes of the villages. There are opportunities to create new community orchards in areas where they can help to filter views to housing development, contribute to biodiversity and assist in the sale of local produce through outlets such as the local farm shop at Walnut Tree Farm.
- ***Street scene improvements (E).*** This initiative applies to those areas of relatively modern housing estate where the street scene lacks distinction and a strong sense of place. Opportunities to plant new street trees should ensure that each street has its own character derived from the planting arrangement and or choice of tree species. The choice of tree could perhaps reflect some of the existing street names in The Heights development for example.

- **Field boundary reinstatement and traditional management (F).** This applies to areas of rural farmland within the Parish where it is apparent that there has been historical field boundary loss. Opportunities should be sought to reinstate field boundaries where feasible, encourage the planting of field boundary trees and enable the traditional management of hedgerows through techniques such as coppicing. This applies particularly to LCAs 1, 2, 3, and 5.

6.4 Opportunities for Growth

6.4.1 It is clear from the assessment that Stowupland Parish has limited opportunity for development which is in keeping with its traditional rural dispersed patterns. Further housing estate development is unlikely to reinforce local character and sense of place and runs the serious risk of undermining the rural character of Stowupland village that many value. Going forward future housing development and growth should therefore be:

- Small scale;
- Low density;
- Arranged in a loose fashion;
- Create new distinctive places with a strong identity;
- Avoid or carefully accommodate areas noted for key views (as identified in drawing 2);
- Respond and relate to the historic rural origins of the village;
Include significant landscape provision in order to improve the setting of existing valued features which lie adjacent, and or help ameliorate existing adverse effects of current development.

6.4.2 Within this context the following limited development opportunities have been identified. The areas identified may, with careful consideration for retention and enhancement of local features, and significant landscape creation present opportunities for small scale development which could be suitably integrated within the local landscape without resulting in significant disruption to local landscape character. None of the proposed housing sites are suitable for housing estate development. They are discussed in turn below:

- **Infill development along Mill Street.** Development in this area should be small scale comprising one or two dwellings and reflecting the traditional cottage or farm complex development found elsewhere along the lane.
- **Development south of the Service Station.** Development in this area should be small scale comprising a small cluster of dwellings (4-6 dwellings). Care would need to be taken to ensure no adverse visual impacts on the Park Farm Valley or approaches to Stowupland along the A1120.
- **Development south of Church Road opposite the church.** This land parcel is currently the subject of a planning application. Its low elevation set within the

head of the Park Farm Valley and its association with an historic cluster of dwellings and buildings make it a suitable site for some residential development. However, development on this site would need to provide an improved setting to the church and make a positive contribution to the street scene. This might be achieved through the creation of a pocket green facing onto the road opposite the church with development set back around the green for example. The development would then focus on the church bolstering sense of place and local distinctiveness. Physical and visual connections through the development to the wider landscape of the Park Farm Valley should also be retained and bolstered through careful consideration of housing layout.

- ***Development at the junctions between Gipping Road and Rendalls Lane.*** The junction of these roads and presence of existing loosely arranged rural dwellings in the vicinity make this area suitable for some small scale infill housing in the form of 2-3 cottages with direct access onto the lane or development resembling a farmstead i.e. farmhouse and barns arrangement. Development in this area could, in conjunction with existing properties, create a new rural cluster, which would be in keeping with the character of the Parish, and close to the local facilities at Walnut Tree Farm, . This area has a number of sensitivities and care should be taken to avoid adverse impacts on the character of the rural lanes and on the setting of Water Run Farm listed building as well as avoid adverse visual effects on the Gipping Valley to the north.
- ***Development southeast of Saxham Street.*** This potential site sits behind the existing dwellings along Saxham Street and could accommodate a small scale development, comprising a group of cottages and / or farm complex. Care would need to be taken to ensure a suitable landscape and vegetated edge to development to minimise effects from the wider plateau landscape. Development should not extend as far as Grange Farm thereby retaining a sense of separation from this farmstead and also views through to the south east from the road.

Appendix 1

Extract from Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment

Ancient Plateau Claylands

Landscape Sensitivity & Change

This is a series of gently rolling plateaux; each individual plateau is dissected by small streams and rivers that give important physical variation to these landscapes. Ancient Plateau Claylands the cultural boundary of the Gipping and there are local distinctions between these two areas, especially in terms of vernacular building styles and the form of settlements. Specifically, large open greens are not found in the south and are replaced by tyes which tend to be smaller, and are even more likely to be enclosed than the common grazing in the north. South of the Gipping, there is a larger stock of fine mediaeval buildings.

The characteristic land cover is arable farmland divided by an irregular sinuous field pattern, and scattered with woodland. There are important areas of regular fields, created by the enclosure of commons greens and tyes, as well as a distinctive pattern of co-axial fields in the north-western portion of this landscape type, “the Saints” area. All these historic field patterns are degraded in many places by boundary rationalisation. There are also occasional landscape parks, for example at Thornham Magna, Ringsfield and Flixton. However parklands in this landscape are not as ubiquitous and extensive as in the Ancient Estate Claylands.

Former WWII airfields are a recurring feature of this landscape. They are often the focus of industrial and transport-orientated development, as well as the construction of large-scale wind turbines, all of which can have a considerable local visual impact.

Ancient and plantation woodland is a significant feature within this landscape. The extent of tree cover is now generally stable but much of this resource is at risk from inappropriate management and neglect, especially a lack of deer control. Along with the remaining commons these are likely to be ecologically significant areas in an otherwise arable dominated landscape.

Settlement is scattered widely throughout this landscape, with parishes tending to have multiple built clusters of various sizes: large groups often elongated; outlying groups often based on green side settlement; and wayside settlements and farmsteads. These historic patterns within parishes are easily lost to infill and ribbon development.

The Ancient Plateau Claylands contain an important array of moated sites and farmsteads, both multi-period collections of buildings and some planned estate-type farmsteads. These are often the focus for redevelopment and modification. As well as the loss of characteristic features on individual buildings, the associated development of garden curtilages and paddocks has a significant impact on the wider landscape, which increases with the frequency of such conversions.

Commons, greens and tyes are found throughout this landscape, both extant and enclosed. Even where they are enclosed they can remain as important open spaces that shape the relationship of buildings to each other and define the form of settlements. Intake of such land into gardens, or a change of use, has significant impact on the wider landscape.

Developments in agriculture have increased the demand for large-scale buildings, such as those associated with poultry production. These can cause considerable intrusion if the siting, finish and planting are not appropriate to mitigate their visual impact.

Key Forces for Change

- Expansion of garden curtilage
- Change of land use to horse paddocks and other recreational uses
- Settlement expansion eroding the characteristic form and vernacular styles
- Conversion and expansion of farmsteads for residential uses
- Impact of deer on the condition of woodland cover
- Large-scale agricultural buildings in open countryside
- Redevelopment of former airfield sites to new uses
- Development of wind turbines

Development Management

Manage the expansion of garden curtilage

The expansion of a garden which is not in keeping with the existing local pattern has a significant impact on the local character and form of the built environment, as well as historic patterns of field enclosure. New or expanded curtilage should always be designed to fit into the local context and respect the established pattern. Furthermore, the visual impact of domestic clutter and garden paraphernalia on the wider countryside is often highly significant.

In many cases the extent of gardens in a village or cluster within a parish is relatively uniform, with all gardens following a defined boundary with agricultural land. If settlement expansion is required then the local pattern must be respected wherever possible. However, new garden curtilage may be required in other situations, such as in association with barn conversions, or dwellings for agricultural workers in open countryside.

If a large area of agricultural land is to be attached to a domestic dwelling the planning authority should define the extent of the garden curtilage. The objective is to create a clearly defined and agreed distinction between the wholly domestic areas and, for example, land to be used as a paddock.

Effective boundary planting is essential for reducing the visual intrusion of garden extensions into the open countryside. This should be conditioned as part of the change of land use and is especially important when a section of arable land is taken in, because in these cases there are often no existing hedgerows or other boundary features present.

The style of boundary fencing and hedging to be used can have a significant impact. The use of appropriate low impact materials, such as post and wire fencing is preferable to close boarded fencing or fence panels. If the latter are required they

should be screened by appropriate hedging. The use of locally appropriate hedging species including hawthorn, field maple, dogwood and other typical clayland species should be specified in preference to non-native plantings such as leylandii or laurel for example.

Change of land use to horse paddocks

The proliferation of post and rail fencing and subdivision of land into small paddocks using temporary tape can have a significant negative landscape impact. In ecologically sensitive areas the impact on the quality and condition of grassland can be adverse. Mitigation strategies in terms of design, layout and stocking rates should be employed where possible.

It may be possible to screen the site with an effective and appropriate planting scheme. However, it may also be necessary to specify the type and extent of fencing to be used. On a sloping site post and rail or white tape can be particularly intrusive. If necessary brown or green fencing tapes should be conditioned and planting should be required to soften the impact of the post and rail fencing. Furthermore the location of field shelters and material storage areas should be specified, to minimise the landscape impact of these activities.

Opportunities should also be taken to design a field layout that is in keeping with the local field pattern or the historic pattern of boundaries.

Impact of deer on the condition of woodland cover

Large-scale deer control should be supported and individual sites may require deer fencing. New woodland plantings and screening and mitigation schemes will require effective protection from deer to support their establishment.

Settlement expansion eroding the characteristic form and vernacular styles

Parishes in this landscape tend to consist of multiple clusters of varying sizes. The release of land for development should, if at all possible, reflect the local pattern. Ribbon development destroys this pattern and can have a considerable impact on the wider landscape. When vernacular styles and detailing are used for housing or other development the choice should echo that of the immediate locality or the specific cluster in which the development is proposed.

Conversion and expansion of farmsteads for residential and other uses

These proposals require careful consideration and considerable attention to the detail of form and styling. Redevelopment proposals should also enhance the contribution these historic sites make to the wider landscape.

Specifically, any new building should usually be close to the existing cluster of buildings and should be subordinate in size to the principal buildings. The design, including the finishes such as tiles, brickwork, mortar, or wooden cladding should be appropriate for the style of buildings present. Staining used for exterior boarding should be capable of weathering in the traditional way, as a permanent dark or black colouring is not locally appropriate. As farmsteads in this landscape have usually developed over an extended period there may be a range of styles on site.

The change of land use, especially to residential curtilage, can often be more disruptive to the wider landscape than modifications to the buildings. The changes to the surrounding land from agricultural to residential, which entails the introduction of lighting and other suburban features, can be extremely intrusive. Unless the site is well hidden, it may be necessary to impose clear conditions relating to the extent of garden curtilage and how this is screened from the wider landscape.

Large scale agricultural buildings in open countryside

The right choice of siting, form, orientation and colour of these buildings can make a considerable contribution to mitigating their impact. There are also opportunities to design locally appropriate planting schemes to reduce the visual impact further.

Specifically, the siting of buildings should relate to an existing cluster of buildings whenever possible. Usually, although not in all cases, some shade of the colour green is preferred as this will integrate well with vegetation. The correct orientation of the building can also significantly change the visual impact of the development, and this consideration should always be explored.

In addition to new planting to mitigate the impact of a development, the option to modify the management of existing hedgerows should also be explored. There are often significant opportunities to retain these boundary features at a specific height. Furthermore, the location of the development in relation to existing trees that act either as screening or as a backdrop should be carefully considered. The planning authority should ensure that these trees are retained for the lifetime of the development.

New planting should be designed to integrate the development into the character of this landscape, and may consist of both backdrop and screening planting. Although there should be a preference for native tree species other options should not be overlooked, especially if they can act as nurse trees, or are likely to prove successful in difficult conditions.

The care and maintenance of the planting should be made a condition of these developments. In many cases the landscape impact of these projects is only acceptable if it is mitigated by effective planting. The applicant should therefore provide a detailed scheme of planting and aftercare, which can form the basis of a condition. Furthermore, depending on the risks to be controlled, the planning authority may need to consider a 106 agreement to secure the landscaping and design requirements for an extended period.

Development of former airfield sites

In most cases a specific master-plan approach is the most effective way to deal with the development of these sites. It is then possible to implement strategic planting schemes to mitigate the visual impact of long-term growth on the site, rather than dealing with proposals and mitigation on a piecemeal basis.

Specific issues relating to airfield development also include the preservation of cultural and historic features, such as bunkers and control towers, and the need for a design that retains them in an appropriate setting. Also, the alignment of runways etc can be

echoed in the layout of buildings and the arrangement of planting.

Development of large-scale wind turbines

These developments have a significant local visual impact that cannot be effectively ameliorated; however, they usually take place in those areas that are the most open and lacking in tree and hedgerow cover. An opportunity therefore exists to generate long-term landscape enhancement through extensive hedge planting schemes, which will provide a positive landscape legacy beyond the lifetime of the turbines. To achieve this, applicants should explore opportunities to manage funds generated by the income from the development to improve the condition of the landscape. Such a scheme is likely to cover an area within 4-6km of the site. The principal objective is to compensate for the landscape impact of the development by providing a long-term legacy of landscape *compensation*. There is little scope for planting to act as *mitigation* except at locations more distant from the turbines, when their scale in the landscape is reduced. In these more distant locations planting can be used to remove turbines from the views of specific receptors or from the setting of listed buildings. This work can also be included in an offsite planting scheme.

Land Management Guidelines

- Reinforce the historic pattern of sinuous field boundaries
- Recognise localised areas of late enclosure hedges when restoring and planting hedgerows
- Maintain and restore greens and commons
- Maintain and increase the stock of hedgerow trees
- Maintain the extent, and improve the condition, of woodland cover with effective management, especially if this can be economically viable
- Maintain and restore the stock of moats and ponds in this landscape

Plateau Claylands

Landscape Sensitivity & Change

This landscape type is principally one large plateau of clay soil in the north of the county, with a second very small plateau to the south of Lowestoft. The main area is dissected by small streams and rivers which give important physical variation to the landscape. There is also considerable local variation in the extent and density of the network of hedges and trees; some areas being largely denuded of tree hedgerow cover while others are partially or completely intact.

The characteristic land cover is arable farmland divided by an irregular sinuous field pattern; there is very little ancient woodland, rather a scattering of small copses and occasional plantations associated with farmsteads and field ponds. The historic field pattern has in places been severely degraded by boundary rationalisation.

Former WWII airfields are recurring features of this landscape. They are often the focus of industrial and transport-orientated development that can have a considerable local visual impact.

Settlement is scattered widely throughout this landscape, with parishes tending to have multiple built clusters of various sizes: large often, elongated groups; outlying groups often based on green side settlement; and wayside settlements and farmsteads. These historic patterns within parishes are easily lost to infill and ribbon development.

The Plateau Claylands contains an important array of moated sites and farmsteads, both multi-period collections of buildings and some planned estate-type farmsteads. These are often the focus for redevelopment and modification. As well as the loss of characteristic features on individual buildings the associated development of garden curtilages and paddocks has a significant impact on the wider landscape, which increases with the frequency of such conversions.

There are several important commons and greens that are completely or partially intact. Many others have been enclosed, but remain as important open spaces that shape the relationship of buildings to each other and define the form of settlements. Intake of such land into gardens, or a change of use, has a significant impact on the character of the wider landscape.

Developments in agriculture have increased the demand for large-scale buildings, such as those associated with poultry production. These can cause considerable intrusion if the siting, colour and planting is not appropriate, or their visual impact is not adequately mitigated.

Key Forces for Change

- Expansion of garden curtilage
- Change of land use to horse paddocks and other recreational uses
- Settlement expansion eroding the characteristic form and vernacular styles
- Conversion and expansion of farmsteads for residential uses
- Large-scale agricultural buildings in open countryside
- Redevelopment of former airfield sites to new uses
- Development of wind turbines

Development Management

Manage the expansion of garden curtilage

The expansion of a garden which is not in keeping with the existing local pattern has a significant impact on the local character and form of the built environment, as well as historic patterns of field enclosure. New or expanded curtilage should always be designed to fit into the local context and respect the established pattern. Furthermore, the visual impact of domestic clutter and garden paraphernalia on the wider countryside is often highly significant.

In many cases the extent of gardens in a village or cluster within a parish is relatively uniform, with all gardens following a defined boundary with agricultural land. If settlement expansion is required then the local pattern must be respected wherever possible. However, new garden curtilage may be required in other situations, such as in association with barn conversions, or dwellings for agricultural workers in open countryside.

If a large area of agricultural land is to be attached to a domestic dwelling the planning authority should define the extent of the garden curtilage. The objective is to create a clearly defined and agreed distinction between the wholly domestic areas and, for example, land to be used as a paddock.

Effective boundary planting is essential for reducing the visual intrusion of garden extensions into the open countryside. This should be conditioned as part of the change of land use and is especially important when a section of arable land is taken in, because in these cases there are often no existing hedgerows or other boundary features present.

The style of boundary fencing and hedging to be used can have a significant impact. The use of appropriate low impact materials, such as post and wire fencing is preferable to close boarded fencing or fence panels. If the latter are required they should be screened by appropriate hedging. The use of locally appropriate hedging species including hawthorn, field maple, dogwood and other typical clayland species should be specified in preference to non-native plantings such as leylandii or laurel for example.

Change of land use to horse paddocks

The proliferation of post and rail fencing and subdivision of land into small paddocks using temporary tape can have a significant negative landscape impact. In ecologically sensitive areas the impact on the quality and condition of grassland can be adverse. Mitigation strategies in terms of design, layout and stocking rates should be employed where possible.

It may be possible to screen the site with an effective and appropriate planting scheme. However, it may also be necessary to specify the type and extent of fencing to be used. On a sloping site post and rail or white tape can be particularly intrusive. If necessary brown or green fencing tapes should be conditioned and planting should be required to soften the impact of the post and rail fencing. Furthermore the location of field shelters and material storage areas should be specified, to minimise the landscape impact of these activities.

Opportunities should also be taken to design a field layout that is in keeping with the local field pattern or the historic pattern of boundaries.

Settlement expansion eroding the characteristic form and vernacular styles

Parishes in this landscape tend to consist of multiple clusters of varying sizes. The release of land for development should, if at all possible, reflect the local pattern. Ribbon development destroys this pattern and can have a considerable impact on the wider landscape. When vernacular styles and detailing are used for housing or other development the choice should echo that of the immediate locality or the specific cluster in which the development is proposed.

Conversion and expansion of farmsteads for residential and other uses

These proposals require careful consideration and considerable attention to the detail of form and styling. Redevelopment proposals should also enhance the contribution these historic sites make to the wider landscape.

Specifically, any new building should usually be close to the existing cluster of buildings and should be subordinate in size to the principal buildings. The design, including the finishes such as tiles, brickwork, mortar, or wooden cladding should be appropriate for the style of buildings present. Staining used for exterior boarding should be capable of weathering in the traditional way, as a permanent dark or black colouring is not locally appropriate. As farmsteads in this landscape have usually developed over an extended period there may be a range of styles on site.

The change of land use, especially to residential curtilage, can often be more disruptive to the wider landscape than modifications to the buildings. The changes to the surrounding land from agricultural to residential, which entails the introduction of lighting and other suburban features, can be extremely intrusive. Unless the site is well hidden, it may be necessary to impose clear conditions relating to the extent of garden curtilage and how this is screened from the wider landscape.

Large scale agricultural buildings in open countryside

The right choice of siting, form, orientation and colour of these buildings can make a considerable contribution to mitigating their impact. There are also opportunities to

design locally appropriate planting schemes to reduce the visual impact further.

Specifically, the siting of buildings should relate to an existing cluster of buildings whenever possible. Usually, although not in all cases, some shade of the colour green is preferred as this will integrate well with vegetation. The correct orientation of the building can also significantly change the visual impact of the development, and this consideration should always be explored.

In addition to new planting to mitigate the impact of a development, the option to modify the management of existing hedgerows should also be explored. There are often significant opportunities to retain these boundary features at a specific height. Furthermore, the location of the development in relation to existing trees that act either as screening or as a backdrop should be carefully considered. The planning authority should ensure that these trees are retained for the lifetime of the development.

New planting should be designed to integrate the development into the character of this landscape, and may consist of both backdrop and screening planting. Although there should be a preference for native tree species other options should not be overlooked. There are some specific local styles in this landscape, such as the use of 'Lombardy' poplar. In addition, on difficult sites, it is important to select species that will grow successfully - this may require options such as *Pinus nigra* or *Alnus incana*.

The care and maintenance of the planting should be made a condition of these developments. In many cases the landscape impact of these projects is only acceptable if it is mitigated by effective planting. The applicant should therefore provide a detailed scheme of planting and aftercare, which can form the basis of a condition. Furthermore, depending on the risks to be controlled, the planning authority may need to consider a 106 agreement to secure the landscaping and design requirements for an extended period.

Development of former airfield sites

In most cases a specific master-plan approach is the most effective way to deal with the development of these sites. It is then possible to implement strategic planting schemes to mitigate the visual impact of long-term growth on the site, rather than dealing with proposals and mitigation on a piecemeal basis.

Specific issues relating to airfield development also include the preservation of cultural and historic features, such as bunkers and control towers, and the need for a design that retains them in an appropriate setting. Also, the alignment of runways etc can be echoed in the layout of buildings and the arrangement of planting.

Development of large-scale wind turbines

These developments have a significant local visual impact that cannot be effectively ameliorated; however, they usually take place in those areas that are the most open and lacking in tree and hedgerow cover. An opportunity therefore exists to generate long-term landscape enhancement through extensive hedge planting schemes, which will provide a positive landscape legacy beyond the lifetime of the turbines. To achieve this, applicants should explore opportunities to manage funds generated by

the income from the development to improve the condition of the landscape. Such a scheme is likely to cover an area within 4-6km of the site. The principal objective is to compensate for the landscape impact of the development by providing a long-term legacy of landscape *compensation*. There is little scope for planting to act as *mitigation* except at locations more distant from the turbines, when their scale in the landscape is reduced. In these more distant locations planting can be used to remove turbines from the views of specific receptors or from the setting of listed buildings. This work can also be included in an offsite planting scheme.

Land Management Guidelines

- Reinforce the historic pattern of sinuous field boundaries
- Recognise localised areas of late enclosure hedges when restoring and planting hedgerows
- Maintain and restore greens and commons
- Maintain and increase the stock of hedgerow trees
- Increase the area of woodland cover based on information from the Historic Landscape Characterisation and in consultation with the Archaeological Service
- Maintain and restore the stock of moats and ponds in this landscape

Rolling Valley Farmlands and Furze

Landscape Sensitivity & Change

These are valley side landscapes with river terraces or exposures of sandy or chalky (in the Gipping valley) soil that are set in a wider clayland landscape. Along the Waveney and at the head of the Gipping there are distinct areas of acid sandy soils with former or extant heaths and commons. Historically these were areas of common pasturage, subsequently followed by late enclosure or parkland creation. More recently, they have been utilised for mineral extraction or the creation of golf courses.

The Gipping valley and the Woolpit Heath area are particular areas of change and development as they are located on a principal communication corridor. The Fynn valley, although largely rural, is under considerable development pressure because of its proximity to Ipswich.

If the common grazing in these areas could not be converted to arable land, they were left as accessible green space e.g. Stuston Common golf course or Wortham Ling. Where the land has been converted to arable production the land use can be akin to that of the estate sandlands, with the production of irrigated crops and outdoor pigs found in both the Waveney and Gipping valleys.

The spatial relationship of this landscape to the adjacent valley floor means that change and development here can have a profound visual impact on the adjoining valley floor landscape type.

Key Forces for Change

- Expansion of settlements.
- Construction of large agricultural buildings.
- Expansion of garden curtilage.
- Change of land use, especially the creation of horse paddocks.
- Mineral extraction.
- The introduction of new agricultural techniques.
- Recreation pressure on the poorest land.

Development management

Exaggerated visual impact of the height of buildings and structures

In these valley side landscapes, the visual impact of new vertical elements is increased by the landform. Therefore new buildings are likely to have a significant impact on both the character and visual amenity of valley floor and valley side landscape types. The setting of specific features and elements of these landscapes, such as small-scale enclosure patterns or historic buildings and monuments, can also be significantly damaged.

The majority of development will, to some degree, be subject to this problem. Therefore, it is essential to manage this issue effectively, taking every opportunity at the earliest stages of the development of the proposal to modify and improve it or to be clear with the applicant that the impact of the proposal is unacceptable or may be at a high risk of refusal due to landscape impacts.

Settlement form and expansion

Valley side landscapes have historically been a focus for settlement. However, large-scale expansion should be confined to the adjacent plateau. In this location the landscape and visual impact can be more easily mitigated with effective planting and design.

Settlement extension in a valley side landscape is likely to have a significant visual impact and adversely affect the character of the landscape, including that of the adjoining valley floor. A comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is essential to identify the risks and the options for mitigation. These developments tend to create a highly visible new “roofscape” on the sides of valleys. The effect of this can be partially mitigated by planting within the development as well as on the perimeter and offsite. It is essential to ensure that there is sufficient space within the development for effective planting, and that any requirement for offsite planting is considered at the earliest stage. The proposals for mitigation planting must always be commensurate with the scale of the development and the capacity of the landscape to absorb the development without damage to the landscape character.

It is important to maintain the existing pattern of settlement clusters on the valley sides and minimise visual intrusion on the very sensitive landscapes on the valley floor. New building here needs to be carefully located; it must be of appropriate scale and style as well as being integrated into the existing pattern of vegetation and settlement. There may also be specific styles related to a particular landed estate, which should be considered as a design option. Avoid, wherever possible, ribbon development on valley sides and slopes when this will cause settlement clusters to merge.

Large-scale agricultural buildings on or near valley sides

The siting, form, orientation and colour of these buildings make a considerable contribution to mitigating their impact. However in a valley side situation, especially if located on the skyline, they will have a considerable visual impact. It is preferable to seek a location outside the valley where the visual impact of this type of development can be mitigated much more effectively.

Barn conversions and extensions

These proposals require careful consideration and considerable attention to the detail of form and styling. Redevelopment proposals should also enhance the contribution these historic sites make to the wider landscape.

Specifically, any new building should usually be close to the existing cluster of buildings and should be subordinate in size to the principal buildings. The design, including the finishes such as tiles, brickwork, mortar, or wooden cladding should be appropriate for the style of buildings present. Staining used for exterior boarding

should be capable of weathering in the traditional way, as a permanent dark or black colouring is not locally appropriate. As farmsteads in this landscape have usually developed over an extended period there may be a range of styles on site.

The change of land use, especially to residential curtilage, can often be more disruptive to the wider landscape than modifications to the buildings. The changes to the surrounding land from agricultural to residential use, which entails the introduction of lighting and other suburban features, can be extremely intrusive. Unless the site is well hidden, it may be necessary to impose clear conditions relating to the extent of garden curtilage and how this is screened from the wider landscape. Usually the risk of new domestic curtilage damaging the visual amenity and character of a valley side landscape is significant because of the shape of the land.

Manage the expansion of garden curtilage

The expansion of a garden which is not in keeping with the existing local pattern has a significant impact on the local character and form of the built environment, as well as on historic patterns of field enclosure. The visual impact of domestic clutter and garden paraphernalia can be particularly intrusive in these sloping landscapes. New or expanded curtilage should always be designed to fit into the local context and respect the established pattern.

In many cases the extent of gardens in a village or cluster within a parish is relatively uniform, with all gardens following a defined boundary with agricultural land. If settlement expansion is required then the local pattern must be respected wherever possible. However, new garden curtilage may be required in other situations, such as in association with barn conversions, or dwellings for agricultural workers in open countryside.

If a large area of agricultural land is to be attached to a domestic dwelling the planning authority should define the extent of the garden curtilage. The objective is to create a clearly defined and agreed distinction between the wholly domestic areas and, for example, land to be used as a paddock.

Effective boundary planting is essential for reducing the visual intrusion of garden extensions into the open countryside. This should be conditioned as part of the change of land use and is especially important when a section of arable land is taken in, because in these cases there are often no existing hedgerows or other boundary features present.

The style of boundary fencing and hedging to be used can have a significant impact. The use of appropriate low impact materials, such as post and wire fencing is preferable to close boarded fencing or fence panels. If the latter are required they should be screened by appropriate hedging. The use of locally appropriate hedging species including hawthorn, field maple, dogwood and other typical clayland species should be specified in preference to non-native plantings such as leylandii or laurel for example.

Change of land use to horse paddocks

The proliferation of post and rail fencing and subdivision of land into small paddocks using temporary tape can have a significant negative landscape impact. In ecologically sensitive areas the impact on the quality and condition of grassland can be adverse. Mitigation strategies in terms of design, layout and stocking rates should be employed where possible.

It may be possible to screen the site with an effective and appropriate planting scheme. However, it may also be necessary to specify the type and extent of fencing to be used. On a sloping site post and rail or white tape can be particularly intrusive. If necessary brown or green fencing tapes should be conditioned and planting should be required to soften the impact of the post and rail fencing. Furthermore the location of field shelters and material storage areas should be specified, to minimise the landscape impact of these activities.

Opportunities should also be taken to design a field layout that is in keeping with the local field pattern or the historic pattern of boundaries.

Visual impact of cropping and production, and land use changes

The changes in cropping practices that have taken place in some parts of this landscape type, such as the use of fleece and plastic, as well as outdoor pig production, have had a significant visual effect on the landscape. The siting and style of structures subject to planning control, such as static feed bins for pigs, poly tunnels or reservoirs should be appropriately conditioned to minimise their landscape impact.

It is important that structures are located to make best use of existing hedges and trees both to screen the development and as a backdrop. Existing hedge lines should also be reinforced to improve the mitigation they provide. Finally, the use of reflective surfaces on feed bins should be avoided.

Mineral extraction and post working uses

As the location for mineral operations is dictated by the availability of economically viable aggregates, alternative siting is not an option. However, careful design and mitigation proposals during extraction, together with effective management and oversight of the restoration of sites, can minimise the impact of mineral extractions.

The post extraction uses of minerals sites can often be problematic. They can make ideal recreation centres, often based around fishing, but these can neutralise the wildlife benefits and be a source of intrusive landscape clutter on the valley side. In some cases former mineral workings can be the focus for large-scale development because the land is perceived to be of low value. The visual impact of such developments can be very significant in a confined valley landscape.

Land Management Guidelines

- Reinforce the historic pattern which is a mix of sinuous and regular hedge boundaries.
- Carry out coppice management of elm dominated hedgerows.
- Maintain and increase the stock of hedgerow trees.
- Maintain the area of woodland cover; siting of any new woodland should be based on information from the Historic Landscape Characterisation and in consultation with the Archaeological Service.
- Maintain a mosaic of bare ground and varying sward heights and scrub on the small heathland sites.

Appendix 2

Extract from Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Landscape Guidance August 2015

Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk
District Council
Landscape Guidance

August 2015

2 GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

2.1 The guidance should be used in conjunction with the Suffolk Design Guide as it does not duplicate or supersede information contained therein.

2.1.1 In the countryside, buildings and their surroundings contribute to sense of place local and local distinctiveness in landscape, as well as local visual amenity. New buildings and other development including accesses car parking and domestic curtilage can have a significant adverse impact on the character of the countryside, unless sensitively designed and located they will erode the character of the landscape

Guidance is provided on the following;

- Sense of Place and Tranquillity
- Location/Siting of Development
- Design, Scale & Form of Development
- Materials
- Landscaping of Development

2.1.2 These generic issues apply to development proposals in the countryside such as agricultural buildings, barn conversions, buildings associated with recreational uses as well as residential developments etc.

Further specific guidance is also provided in respect of;

- Driveways & Car Parking
- Changes of Use
- Extensions to Dwellings
- Garden Extensions
- Village Edge Development
- Horse Keeping
- Development Essential for Utility Services & Energy Production
- Rural Lanes
- Signs and Advertisements

2.2 **Sense of Place and Tranquillity**

2.2.1 Some areas within Babergh appear to be remote, tranquil and removed from the noise and activity of busy roads and places. These intangible qualities contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of those areas and should be retained by:

- I. Avoiding the location of uses, which are visually intrusive
- II. Or, even if visual impacts can be minimised, that would create new activity and associated noise/disturbance that would be uncharacteristic.
- III. Avoiding development that would introduce and generate unacceptable levels of traffic on minor roads, particularly where it would lead to engineering works to improve the roads or alter their character.
- IV. Consider the impacts of development on the dark skies character of the countryside, the minimum levels of exterior lighting required should be used and full cut off lighting and to eliminate skyglow and LED directional light should be used to control light spillage.

2.3 Location/Siting of development (Visual effects)

2.3.1 Baberghs open and in some parts of Mid Suffolk the rolling farmland landscape with pockets of ancient woodlands can afford long distant views, which are a characteristic of the area. Development that may not appear to have an impact on its immediate surroundings may sometimes be conspicuous and have an impact in more distant views.

2.3.2 In considering development proposals, account should be taken of the potential impact of a new building or development in both immediate and distant views, particularly from roads, public footpaths and settlements. A landscape assessment may be required either a Landscape or Visual Appraisal or in some cases a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, (in accordance with the Guidance on landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition). These assessments should be prepared by and experienced a qualified landscape professional, (see the Council's Local Validation List)

2.3.3 New development in the countryside should be carefully sited to ensure the best fit with the landscape and to minimise its impact on the appearance of the landscape. Development should be located:

- I. Away from ridge tops, upper valley slopes or prominent locations.
- II. Where existing mature planting can screen, filter or soften/ integrate (depending on what level is necessary to mitigate development) what is proposed.
- III. Where there is a backdrop of woodlands or valley side so the development does not break the skyline.
- IV. Below the skyline using dark materials to the roof (unless using a natural clay pan or plain tile).
- V. Close to woodlands or groups of buildings which can anchor the building
- VI. Sympathetically with the natural landform – and to avoid hard engineering solutions.

2.3.4 Location/Siting of development (Landscape/ Historic Landscape Character)

The Council will require special attention to be given to the siting, scale, design, materials, landscaping and general appearance of any new building or development in the countryside or on the edge of settlements so that its impact upon the character of the landscape is minimised. The following guidance applies:

- I. Development located on the edge of a settlement should be consistent with the form or shape of the settlement.
- II. The layout of new developments should seek to retain historic landscape features such as hedges trees and respect the existing patterns of vegetation and enclosure
- III. The design of domestic or small-scale buildings should be sympathetic to and reflect the characteristics of existing traditional buildings.
- IV. Development should avoid dominating other buildings or landscape features around it or detract from views of listed buildings or heritage assets.
- V. Measures should be taken to minimise the scale and dominance of large-scale buildings. Large buildings have the potential to dominate their

surroundings and are therefore difficult to accommodate within settlements without effective screening.

2.3.5 Where development is proposed on the edge of a village the proposal should be consistent with the way other buildings are orientated within the settlement pattern.

2.3.6 Normally this will involve the front of the building facing the public realm although in some circumstances consideration can be given to whether the development should be:

- I. Inward looking to a village green or open space
- II. Outward looking to a view from a ridge
- III. Fronting or at right angles to a road or lane.

2.3.7 Both districts consist of clustered settlements with small hamlets and isolated farmsteads in the countryside. Many villages date from early settlements and land use, whilst others are the result of successful trading throughout the 16th to 19th century.

2.3.8 Although there has been change and development of traditional buildings over time there is a consistency and continuity throughout the district, of both design and materials.

For example;

- I. Timber frames with lath and plaster
- II. Thatch roofing materials, reed thatch nearer the estuaries such as along the Waveney Valley and straw thatch more inland.
- III. Suffolk red and white bricks
- IV. Natural red clay plain and pantiles
- V. Natural slate

2.4 **Materials**

2.4.1 The use of local building methods and materials in the countryside is a major factor contributing to and reinforcing local distinctiveness. The type, texture and colour of local building materials contribute to an area's local character. The use of inappropriate materials, often modern, would affect the character and cumulatively erode local distinctiveness.

2.4.2 Timber frame with lime/ clay render and or Suffolk brick are predominate building materials of the district, weatherboarding (or clay lump), which was traditionally a cheap material, are common on agricultural buildings, outbuildings and some commercial buildings.

2.4.3 The council will promote the use of traditional materials in all development where this is practical.

2.4.4 For large-scale buildings such as modern agricultural buildings where the use of traditional materials is impractical, the use of modern materials for wall and roof claddings may be necessary. To make these buildings as inconspicuous as possible:

- I. The wall materials should blend with the colours and textures of the landscape and should generally be dark green or brown, or black, grey green in colour, depending on the particular siting
- II. The materials should be of a low-reflective finish.

Appendix 3

Extract from Suffolk Design Guide



Landscape or Building dominated



INFORMAL



FORMAL



LINEAR



ENCLOSED

Fig. 3.10.2 Patterns of Settlement.

Appearance and Relationship to Surroundings

3.10.1 The importance of Development Briefs has been stressed in Chapter 1. Local Planning Authorities will normally produce site specific development briefs for major housing allocations in Local Plans which will set out a framework for the development.

Character

3.10.2 Most new development will be an extension of an existing settlement and it is the character of existing buildings, roads, open spaces and landscaping which should provide the starting point for the design of a new development. A number of questions dealing with shape need to be addressed, for example -

- Is the existing settlement landscape or building dominated?
- What is the scale of the existing settlement?
- Is the settlement pattern formal or informal, linear or enclosed?
- Is the topography of the site a significant influence?
- Are there important views or features which can benefit the new development or its surroundings?

3.10.3 Answers to such questions will often establish a set of principles from which sympathetic new design can spring. The aim is to add to, rather than detract from, the total character of a place. Whether such development is to blend with the existing or contrast with it, neither will be successful unless they are based upon an appreciation of what already exists.



3.11.1 Large scale emphasises differences between old and new



3.11.2 Low density, but over developed by large dwellings.



3.11.2 Too many small dwellings can lead to parking dominance

Scale & Density

3.11.1 All too often new development does not relate well to its landscape setting. Most problems occur where large estates are placed on green-field sites next to existing small scale settlements. Examples maintaining good relationships can be found in urban locations and small infill sites where the scale and design of development is more readily influenced by immediate surroundings. It is the failure to respect an existing scale within new large estates which emphasises the differences between old and new.

3.11.2 The size of building, the extent of car parking and highways, and the quality of space between buildings all interact to affect the appearance of development. A simple calculation of so many dwellings per hectare is inadequate to guide this design process. For example:

Low density development can become over-developed and dominated by buildings due to the excessive use of large scale dwellings.

Conversely, where higher density developments are appropriate, too many small dwellings can lead to an environment dominated by car parking.

In both cases the space about buildings is reduced in importance and unable to contribute to a distinctive and pleasing townscape or landscape character.



3.11.3 To determine the numbers of dwellings for a site the following main principles must be considered together:

ENVIRONMENT:

Dwellings should be comfortably accommodated to create good townscape and significant landscape appropriate to their scale and setting.

HIGHWAYS AND PARKING:

Car parking and highway requirements are directly governed by the extent of development being served. This must no longer be of incidental consideration as it has fundamental effects upon the quality of places.

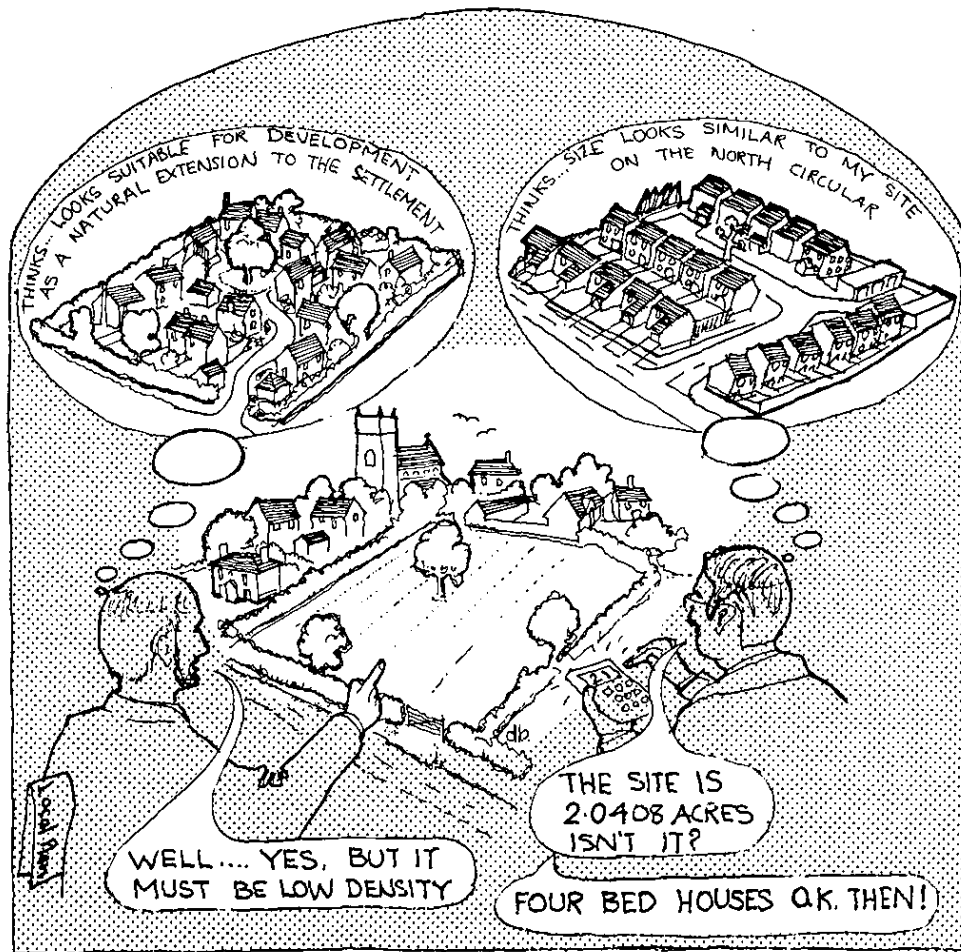
SPACE ABOUT BUILDINGS:

This must not be treated as a residual element after other requirements have been apportioned to buildings and cars. Space gives a positive and unique dimension to what may otherwise be little more than a collection of buildings and roads.

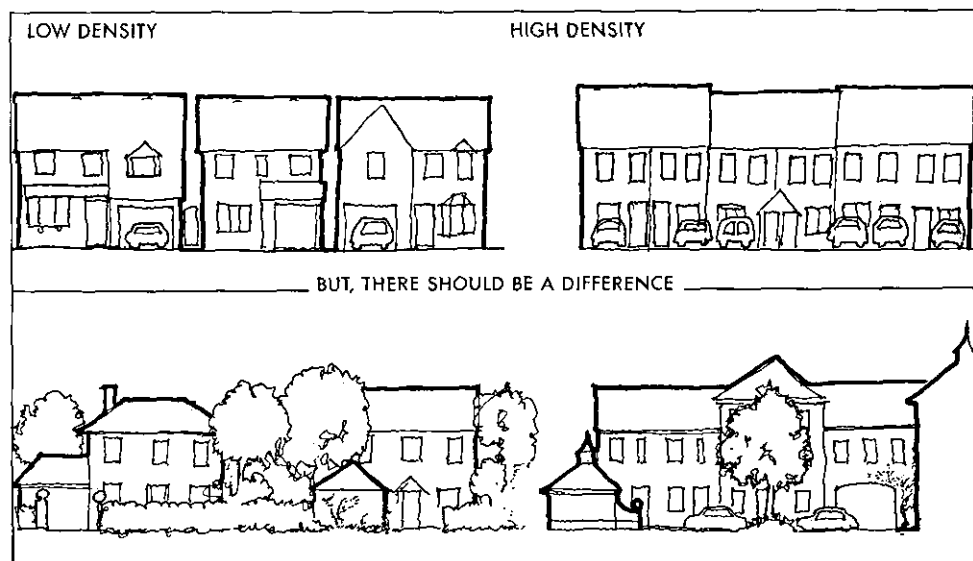
These three main principles will now be amplified.

Environment

3.12.1 Sites are often considered favourable for development because they offer a close relationship with an adjacent settlement and have been allocated on the basis of a pre-determined density. It is important therefore, that development should have regard to the setting, its relative scale and how density should be interpreted.



3.12.1 Interpretations



3.12.2 Building Volume



3.12.3 Relative Scale -impact of development of a given size



3.12.3 Large development benefiting by breaking down scale.

Building Volume

3.12.2 Density is as much to do with the scale and volume of the building as it is with the numbers of dwellings. Higher density does not mean more of the same nor does it presume an increase in the building content of a site, but possibly a diverse range of smaller accommodation which remains at the right scale for the area. Conversely, where low density is appropriate, this does not imply a dominance of large scale houses. Building volume is an important factor in determining whether a development is to become building or landscape dominated.

Relative Scale

3.12.3 It is important to consider the scale of the site relative to its surroundings. For example, a development of a given size will have a greater impact on a small village than on a large town. In a small scale development a single identity may be appropriate, whereas a large development may benefit from being broken down into smaller areas each with its own identity.

Shape

3.12.4 It is often appropriate for a development to adopt distinctive characteristics of an existing settlement pattern. This is especially true for small sites closely associated with existing town or village centres.

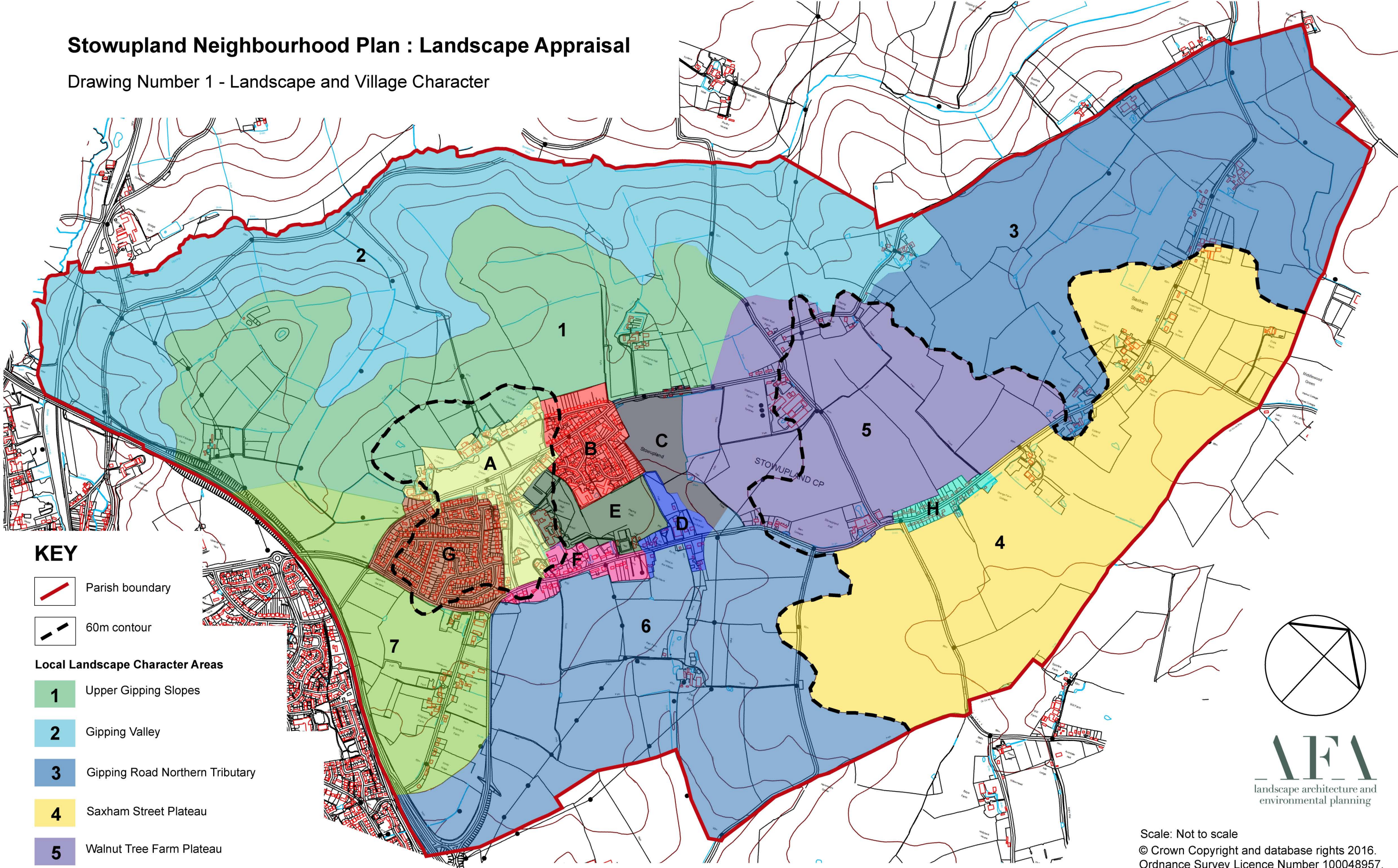


Appendix 4

Drawings 1 and 2

Stowupland Neighbourhood Plan : Landscape Appraisal

Drawing Number 1 - Landscape and Village Character



KEY

- Parish boundary
- 60m contour

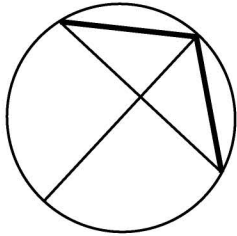
Local Landscape Character Areas

- 1 Upper Gipping Slopes
- 2 Gipping Valley
- 3 Gipping Road Northern Tributary
- 4 Saxham Street Plateau
- 5 Walnut Tree Farm Plateau
- 6 Park Farm Valley
- 7 Mill Street and Stowmarket

Local Village Character Areas

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A Stowupland Green | B Columbyne and Trinity Estates | D Holy Trinity Church | F Church Road Southern Edge | H Saxham Street 20th Century Housing |
| C Church Road Future Housing | E Stowupland School & Playing Fields | G The Heights | | |

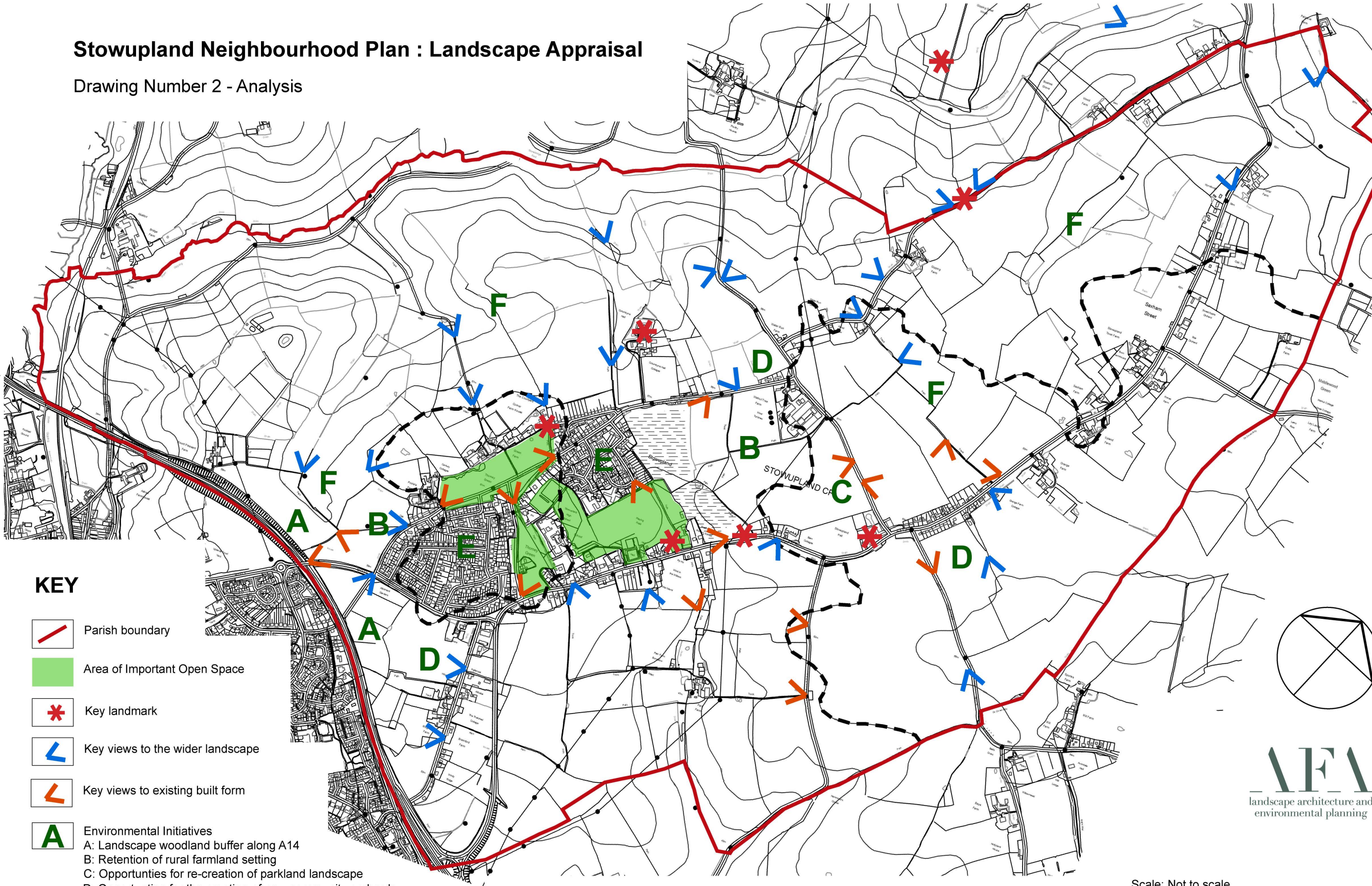
Scale: Not to scale
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Stowupland Neighbourhood Plan : Landscape Appraisal

Drawing Number 2 - Analysis



KEY

- Parish boundary
- Area of Important Open Space
- Key landmark
- Key views to the wider landscape
- Key views to existing built form
- Environmental Initiatives
 - A: Landscape woodland buffer along A14
 - B: Retention of rural farmland setting
 - C: Opportunities for re-creation of parkland landscape
 - D: Opportunities for the creation of new community orchards
 - E: Opportunities for street scene improvements
 - F: Encourage field boundary reinstatement and traditional management



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