



LITTLE WALDINGFIELD

Neighbourhood Plan



Village Character Assessment

October 2018

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Introduction

This Character Assessment has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee to identify and describe the distinctive features, appearance and feel of Little Waldingfield. The Steering Committee were assisted by Places4People Planning Consultancy and the Assessment is based on the guidelines published by Planning Aid England, a town planning advisory organisation that is part of the Royal Town Planning Institute. It states that *"A character assessment is a document that describes the distinct appearance and feel of a settlement or an area. It communicates the key physical features and characteristics that combine to give a particular settlement or an area its local distinctiveness and unique identity."*

In addition to the built character, a more general appraisal has been undertaken of the landscape within which the village sits. While it's not a detailed "Landscape Character Appraisal" it does identify landform and important features including views, woodland and hedgerows across the parish.

At an initial workshop facilitated by Places4People in January 2018, the Steering Committee identified six distinct character areas of the built-up areas in the parish, as identified on the maps on the following page. Over the course of the next few months members of the Steering Committee assessed these areas by walking the roads and footpaths using the Planning Aid guidelines template that covers:

- Topography;
- Land Uses;
- Layout;
- Roads, streets and routes;
- Spaces;
- Buildings;
- Landmarks;
- Green and natural features;
- Streetscape; and
- Views

This information was collected to produce the character assessment tables for each area that form the basis for the content of this document.



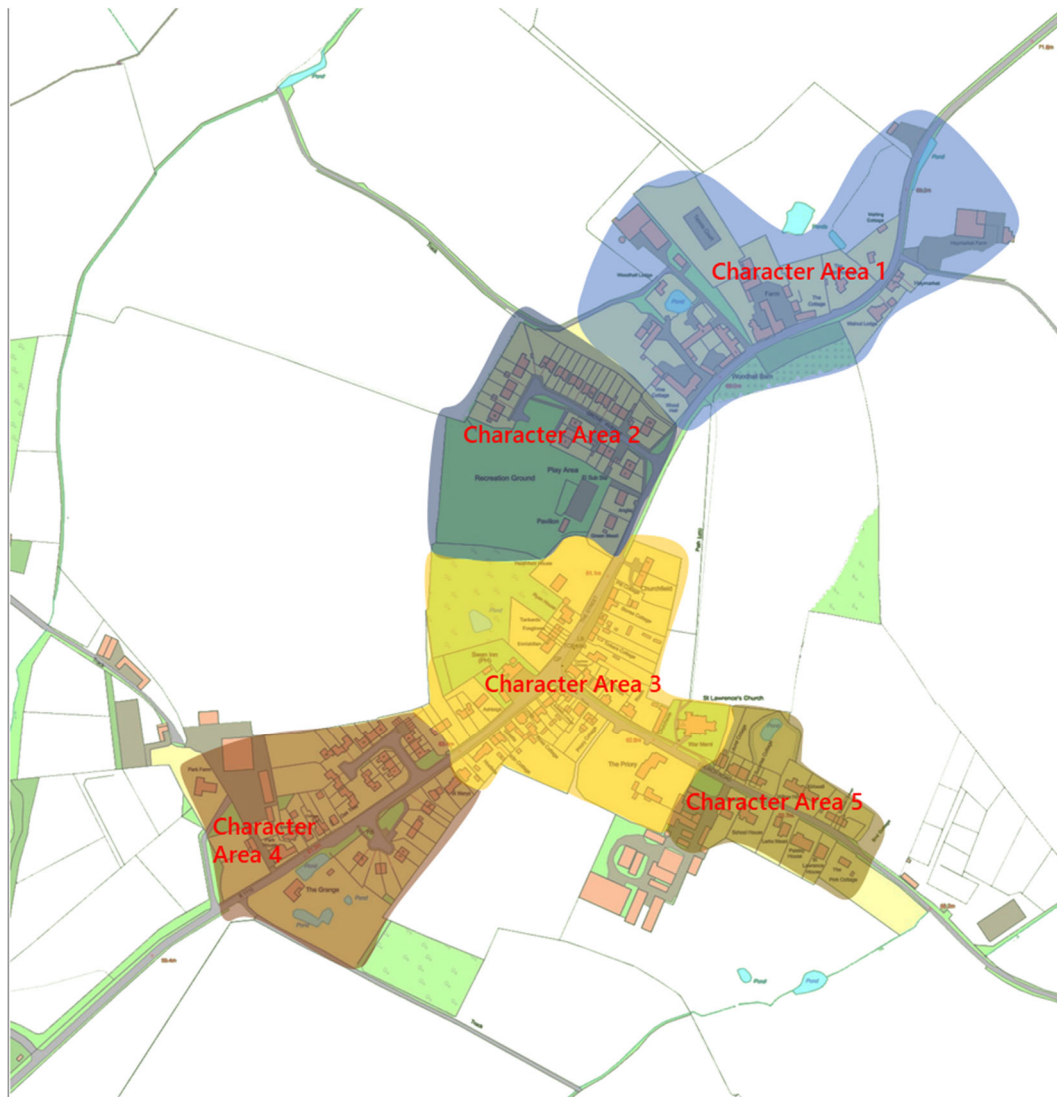


Figure 2- Village Centre Character Areas

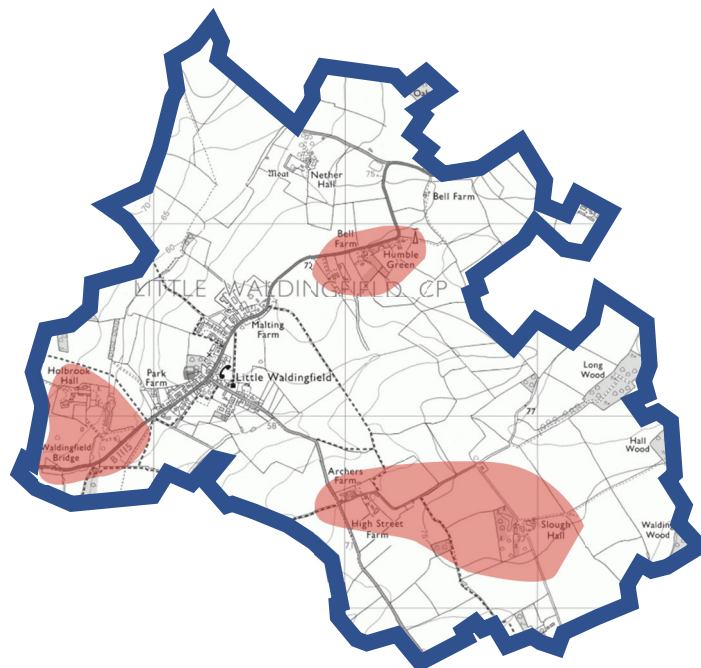


Figure 1- Rural Character Areas

Little Waldingfield

The village of Little Waldingfield lies about four miles north-east of the market town of Sudbury and is a similar distance south of the historic village of Lavenham. It is situated on a spur of higher land between 60 and 70 metres above sea level and generally sloping down from east to west to Waldingfield Bridge, as identified on the contour map below. Waldingfield Bridge crosses a tributary at the head of the River Box, itself a tributary of the River Stour. The built-up area of the village runs north-eastwards for about half a mile along the B1115 from Sudbury, extending roughly an equal distance either side of a T-junction where a minor road meets it from the south-east.

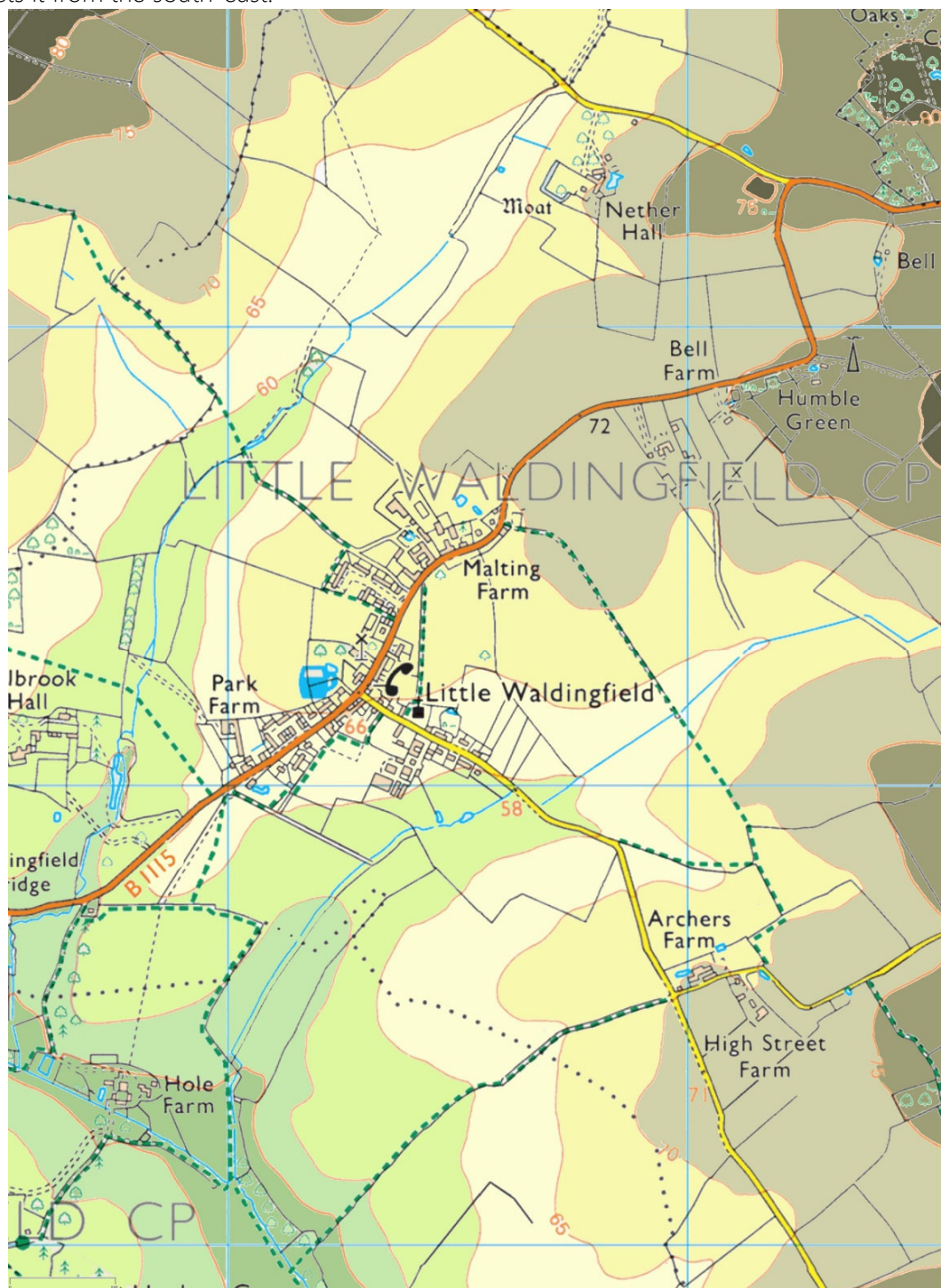


Figure 3- Contours Map

Landscape setting of the village

The village sits within an area classified as Ancient Rolling Farmlands in the Suffolk Landscape Character Appraisal. The Landscape Appraisal describes this landscape as:

- Rolling clayland landscapes dissected, sometimes deeply, by river valleys.
- The landscape retains much of the organic pattern of ancient and species-rich hedgerows and associated ditches.
- The hedges are frequently high and wide and have a strong visual impact. There are however some areas of field amalgamation and boundary loss.
- The dissected form of this landscape has reduced the scope for the really extensive field amalgamation found in some other parts of the county.
- Ancient woodland is scattered throughout in blocks that are often larger than the surrounding fields.
- The settlement pattern is one of dispersed farmsteads of mediaeval origin interspersed with some larger hamlets and occasional villages. The farms are large but are mainly owner-occupied rather than estate owned.
- The farmstead buildings are predominantly timber-framed, the houses colour-washed and the barns blackened with tar. Roofs are frequently tiled, though thatched houses can be locally significant.
- Medieval moats surrounding the farmhouses are common in the northern parts of both areas, but are much less prevalent in the south.
- This area has a network of winding lanes and paths often associated with hedges that, together with the rolling countryside, can give a feeling of intimacy.
- However, the areas of field amalgamation have also created longer views of a rolling lightly wooded countryside.

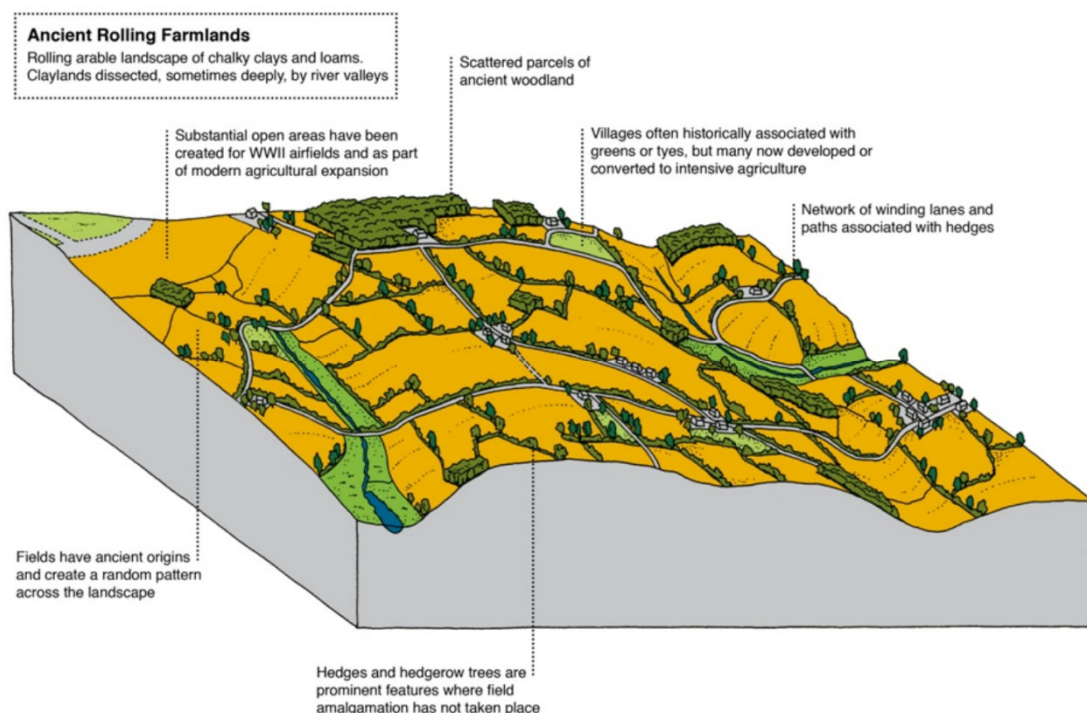


Figure 4- Typical characteristics of an Ancient Rolling Farmland Landscape

Ancient Rolling Farmlands

The enclosure over a lot of the landscape retains much of the organic pattern of ancient and species-rich hedgerows and associated ditches. The hedges are frequently high and wide and have a strong visual impact. There are however some areas of field amalgamation and boundary loss, especially on the interfluves between the numerous small valleys. The dissected form of this landscape has reduced the scope for the really extensive field amalgamation found in some other parts of the county. Ancient woodland is scattered throughout in blocks that are often larger than the surrounding fields.



Key Forces for Change

The Suffolk Character Appraisal identified distinct pressures for change that are occurring across the different landscape typologies. For the Ancient Rolling Farmlands, the pressures are:

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

Land Management Guidelines

The Guidance Note produced for Ancient Rolling Farmlands identifies a number of initiatives that are required to manage and improve this typology of landscape. These will need to be considered in the context of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. The guidelines are:

1. Reinforce the historic pattern of sinuous field boundaries
2. Recognise localised areas of late enclosure hedges when restoring and planting hedgerows
3. Maintain and restore greens commons and tyes
4. Maintain and increase the stock of hedgerow trees
5. Maintain the extent, and improve the condition, of woodland cover with effective management
6. Maintain and restore the stock of moats and ponds in this landscape

Appendix 1 reproduces the full land management guidelines for this type of landscape, albeit that some of the features are not present in Little Waldingfield.



Designations

Within the parish there are a number of statutory designations that both reflect the landscape characteristics and inform its use.

Special Landscape Area

To the northern edge of the parish is the Brett Valley Special Landscape Area. This was originally designated in the Suffolk County Structure Plan in the 1980s and have remained thereafter in local plans, albeit that structure plans has long since been abolished. The designation extends northwards into adjoining parishes and has been retained in the Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan.

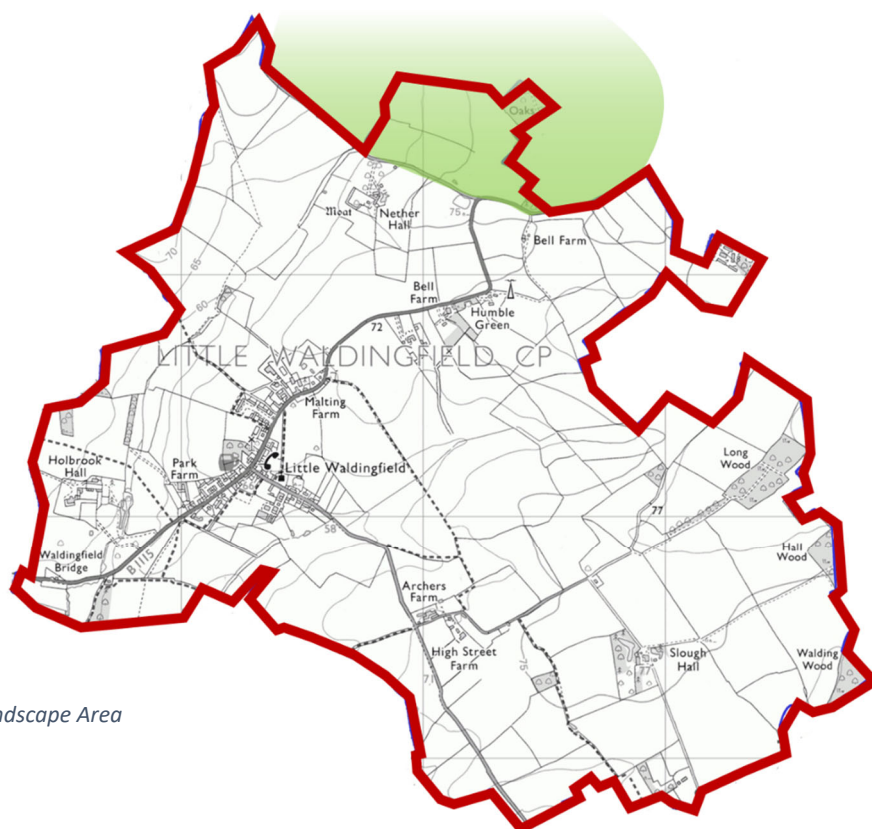


Figure 5- Special Landscape Area

Trees and Woodland

Across the parish there are areas of important trees that are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. The TPOs cover both individual trees and more extensive tracts of ancient woodland on the higher ground at the eastern edges of the parish and are illustrated in Figure 5 below.

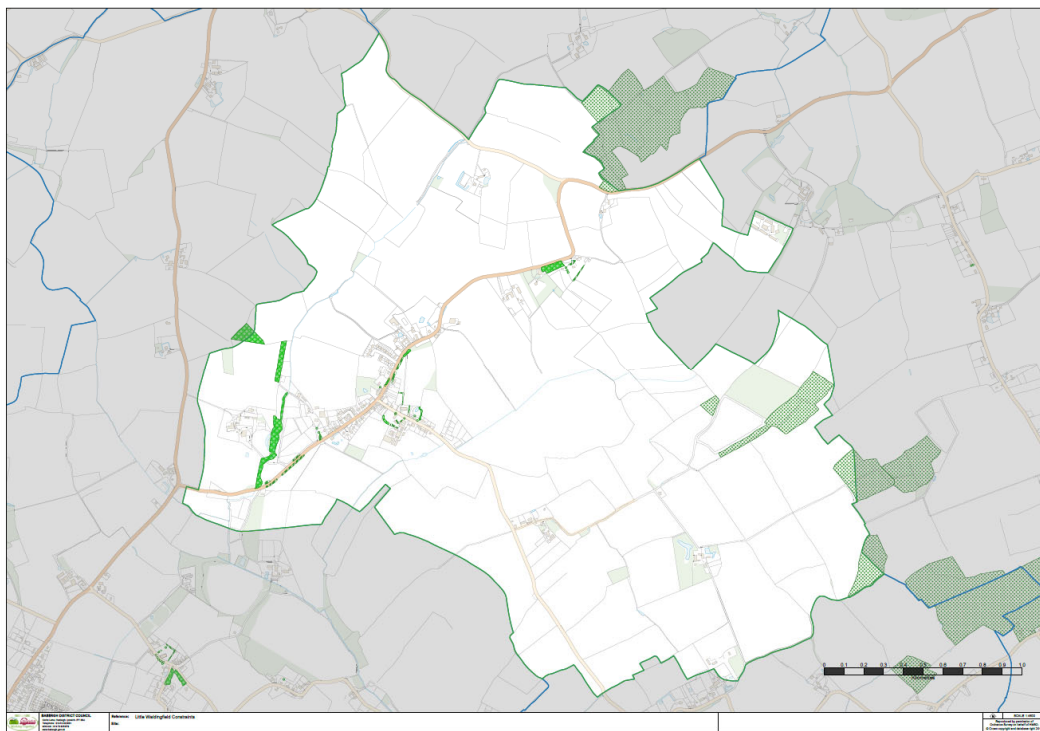


Figure 6 - Tree Preservation Orders

The ancient woodland is illustrated in Figure 6 below and, nationally, are defined as:

"ancient woodlands are areas which have had woodland cover for centuries and have been relatively undisturbed by human activity. Over hundreds of years, they have evolved into complex communities of trees, plants, fungi, micro-organisms and insects.

They are woods that are present on maps dating back to 1600 in England and Wales and 1750 in Scotland. It's presumed that if they're present on maps of this age, they're likely to be even older, perhaps even linking back to the prehistoric wildwood that once existed in the UK."

The ancient woodlands are also designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest due to their biodiversity interests.

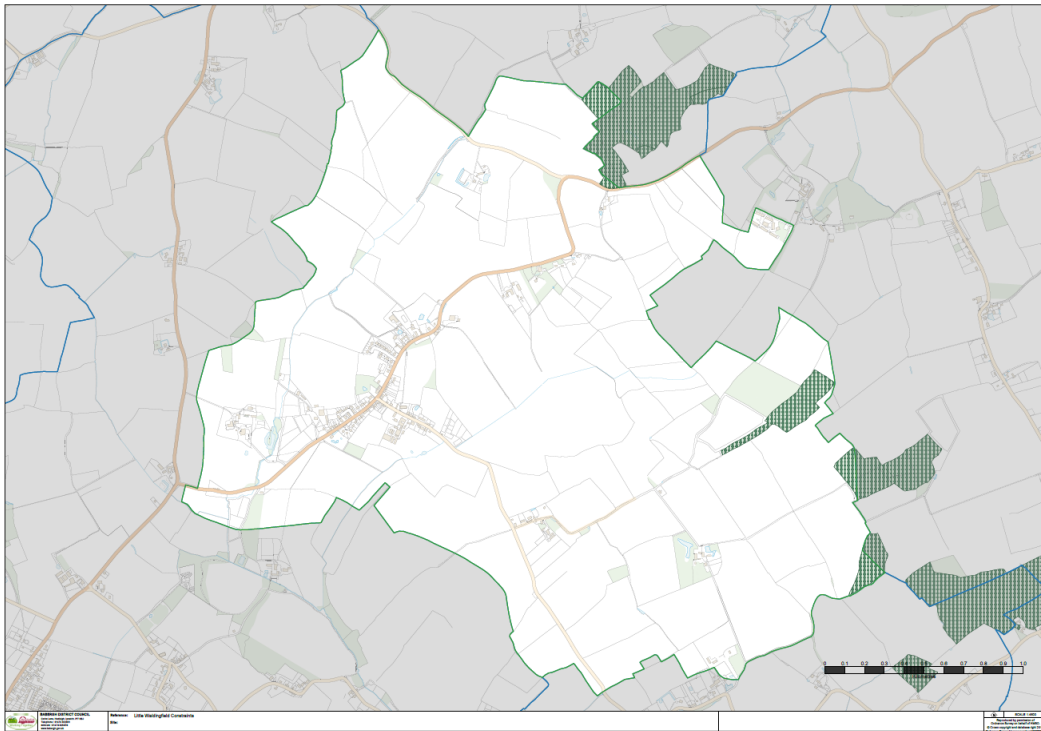


Figure 7 - Tree Preservation Orders

Agricultural Land Classification

The agricultural land across the parish is a more or less equal split of Grade 2 and Grade 3 land, with Grade 2 being the better land in terms of production.

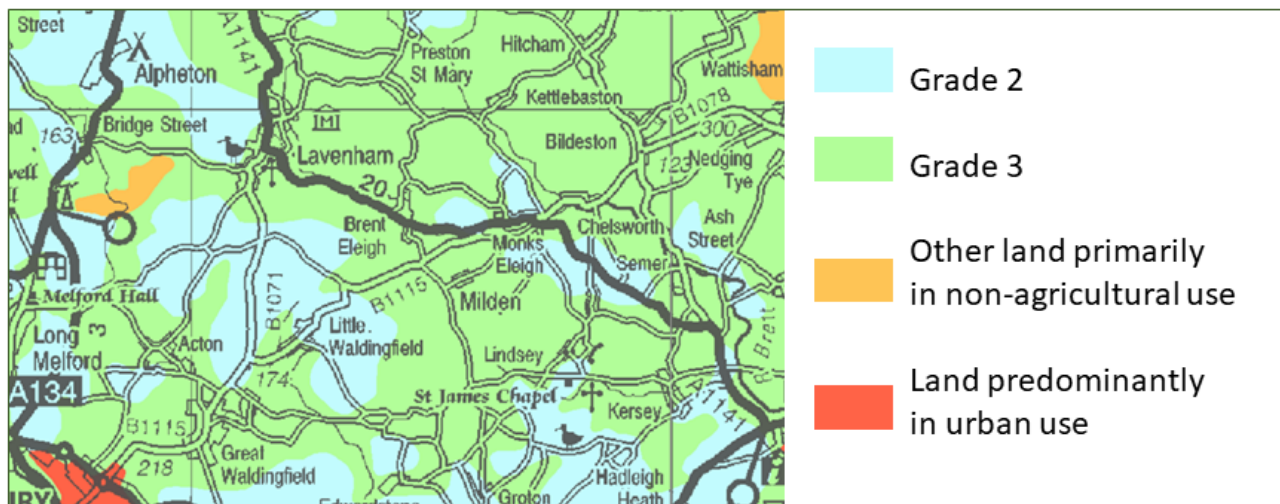


Figure 8 – Agricultural Land Classification

Conservation Area

The village centre is a designated conservation area, as illustrated below, and has its own Appraisal that was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Babergh District Council in November 2007. As a consequence of the Appraisal, the Conservation Area boundary was extended to include the public footpath running north from the Church to Wood Hall. The Conservation Area Appraisal has informed the content of this Assessment. The village centre also has a high concentration of listed buildings, the most significant of which is the Church, which is designated Grade 1. Buildings that are not on the statutory list but which are worthy of protection have also been identified, as set out in the individual Character Area Assessments below.



Figure 9 – Conservation Area



Character Area Assessments

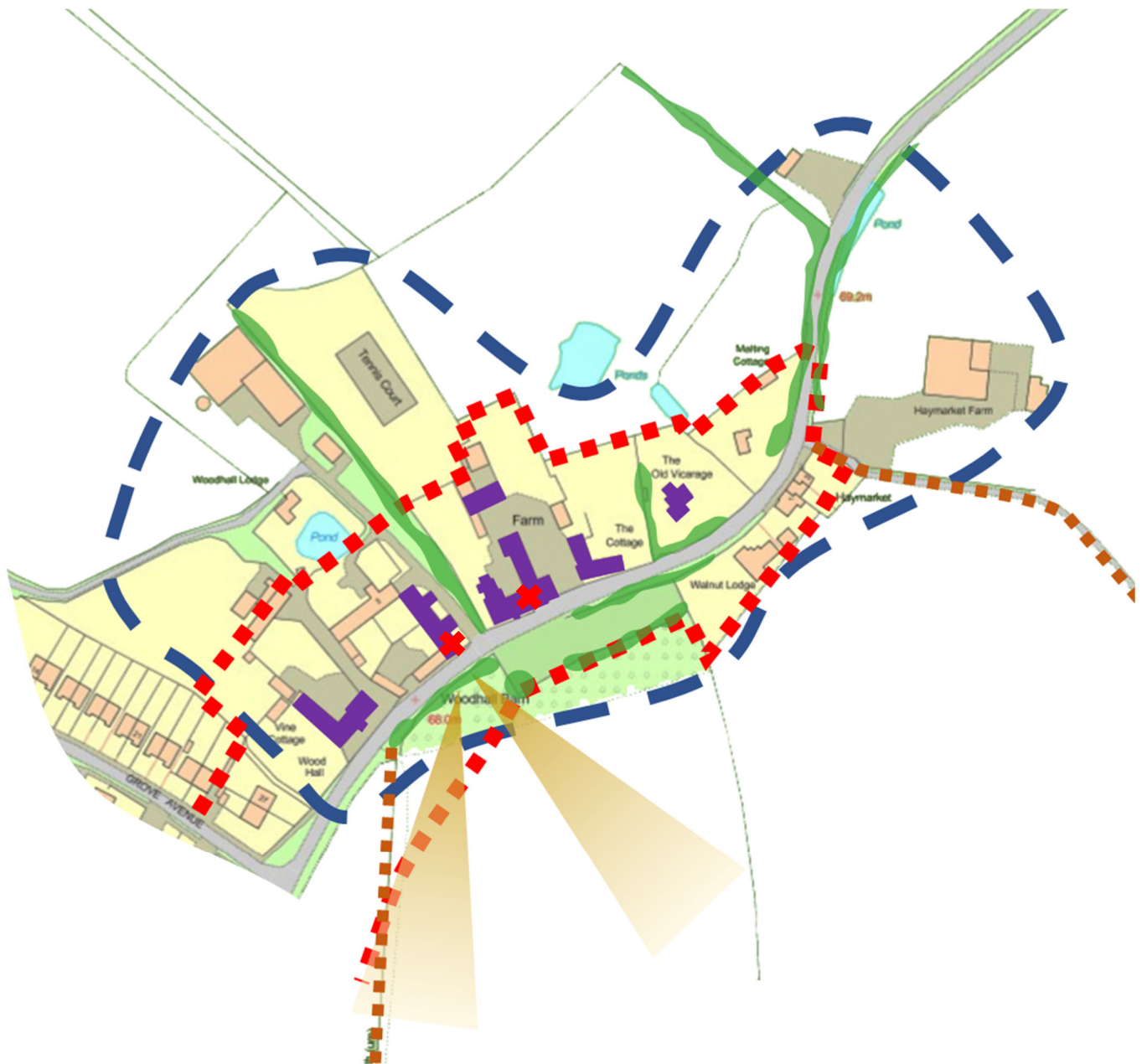
The following pages contain the detailed assessments of each character area. The assessment provides key bullet points under each of the ten categories listed in the Planning Aid template. The tables are supplemented by mapping and photographs to illustrate the key features.

The maps illustrate the following features:

Key	
	Character Area
	Conservation Area
	Listed Buildings
	Other Locally Important Buildings
	Public Rights of Way
	Important Views
	Important Public Open Space
	Playing Field
	Important Trees and Hedgerows
	Landmark feature

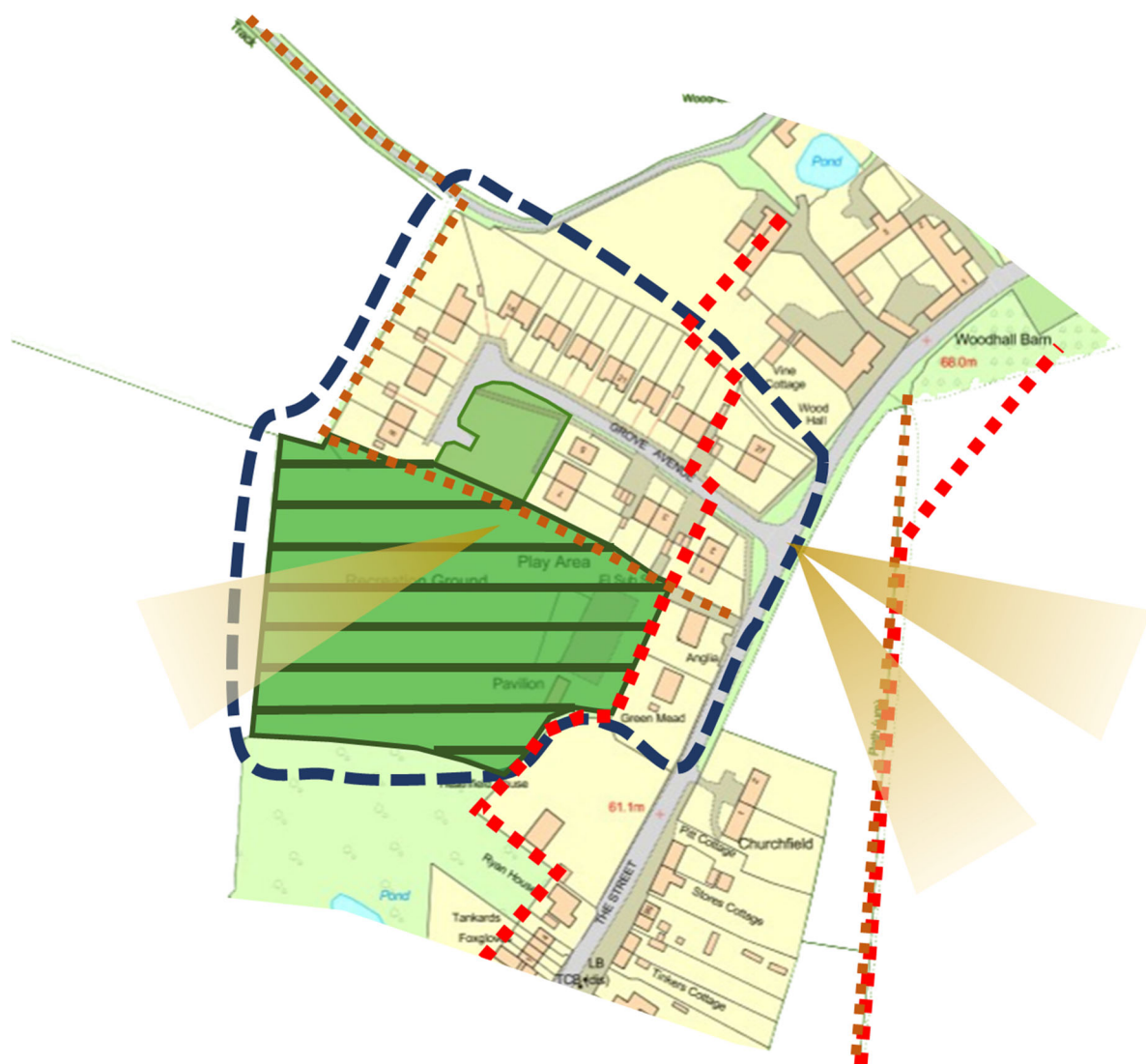
Character Area 1 – Nob End

Topography	Land Uses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flat with open views to right and left. Higher than top of Church Road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominately residential properties now but barns had a range of agricultural uses over time. Agricultural land use now.
Layout	Roads, Streets, Routes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 residential properties border road. 4 properties behind front row and 1 under construction. All detached except three terraced at Haymarket. Woodhall Barn is 3 properties - Harvest Barn on the road with Hall Barn and Long Barn behind it. All wide individual plots. All properties have wide driveway access. Some have frontage but only 2 have gardens at front. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main vehicular road in and out of village. Main through road from Monks Eleigh and Lavenham/Gt Waldingfield. No footpath on road – dangerous walking to public footpaths. Public footpath access opposite Woodhall and next to Haymarket and further footpath access from the track/access road beside Harvest Barn and behind Woodhall Lodge. Bend and road narrowing make a potential hazard for vehicles turning in or out of properties.
Spaces	Buildings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No public spaces in this area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each detached house has distinct and different features. Most are period build with 2 new builds at Walnut Lodge and Haymarket Farm. Mix of periods and finishes. Red brick and render. Woodhall – Grade II listed. One of the original manor houses in the parish. Early Victorian front white brick with heavily timbered and partly jettied elevations at rear. Slate roof. Portico entrance and Elizabethan cluster chimney stack – flint wall to roadside. Wide drive way. Harvest Barn – barn conversion. Originally called Woodhall Barn(s). Now converted to three dwellings (Harvest Barn on the road with Hall Barn and Long Barn behind it, all of same construction). Black wood boarded and red brick. Runs along roadside. Gates for vehicular access and garden. Maltings Farm – 15th Century timber framed. 19th Century Kiln turret at far end. Wide driveway to right of property. Old Vicarage – Grade II listed Hall House – probably 1600's. Walnut Lodge – new build – rendered – garage – 3 differing roof lines. Haymarket cottages (2) Painted brick and coloured render. Some evidence of 17th century interiors. Gardens at rear. Parking to each side. Malting Cottage – Thatch – white render – high hedge – evidence of 14th century timbers in kitchen driveway slight rise to ground. Haymarket Farm - New build in field – Modern traditional house design with garage. Large agricultural barn to side of property.
Landmarks	Green and Natural Features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church is very visible from some of the properties. Open views across countryside. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape views to village church and Gt Waldingfield Church.
Streetscape	Views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overhead cables. Road signs including 30 mph speed limit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stunning views to church and Church Road and beyond.



Character Area 2 – Grove Avenue and The Playing Field

Topography	Land Uses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Avenue and the Playing Field sit on level ground. Outside and away from this area, farmland slopes away downwards both to the north-west and south-east. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential & Recreational. Outside this immediate area is arable farmland (NW & SE). To north-east and south-west is residential.
Layout	Roads, Streets, Routes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Avenue is 'L' shaped starting from the village road heading NW, turning left to complete the Avenue 'L' shape which leads on to the Playing Field. Each part is of linear development with consistent building lines. Dwellings are evenly spaced though narrowly spaced to single depth, mainly set back from the road with deep front gardens/driveways. Loose enclosure of space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-way cul-de-sac with turning space at end. Standard kerbs and footpaths with some additional grass verge on one side. Access track from The Street to Playing Field. Public footpath access to north corner of Playing Field.
Spaces	Buildings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the 'L' shape of the Avenue is a grassed common area planted with mixed deciduous trees, this leads on to the Playing Field of approximately 1.25 hectares. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 27 properties of Grove Avenue are a mix of single and double storey semi-detached of 1960's and 1970s construction. They are of uniform brick and block construction with partial render of varying colours and pitched roofs with concrete tiles. No listed buildings exist in this area, and there is no recommendation to put forward properties for listing.
Landmarks	Green and Natural Features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no remarkable features. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wide front gardens with some lawns and private planting, and the grassed area at the end of the Avenue opening out on the Playing Field, give a feeling of openness and community living. The Playing Field measures approximately 1.25 hectares and is tree lined along the south and north-east boundaries. The remaining boundaries are bordered by residential properties. There are the remnants of a hard-surfaced tennis court with a children's play area alongside a wooden pavilion and storage sheds.
Streetscape	Views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A grass bell-mouth on the village road leads to a metalled road with tarmac pavements each side giving a hard aspect with limited tree planting along the Avenue (lost in 1987 storm). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When exiting the Avenue at the 'T' junction with the village road (facing east), there are exceptional views across open countryside/farmland interspersed with hedgerows out to a distance of ¾ mile when the topography rises to form a ridge. Views to the North and West from the Playing Field and back gardens of those properties at the end of the cul-de-sac, stretch to the Lavenham Road which comprise open arable land with hedgerows and small wooded areas.



Character Area 3 – Village Core

Topography	Land Uses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Along the Street (B1115): flat at Church road end and gently sloping down towards West. Top of Church Road: slopes down towards Church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential; public house (with two B and B units); ecclesiastical.
Layout	Roads, Streets, Routes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All housing borders roads on both sides. Detached, semi-detached and terraced properties; fairly closely spaced but spreads out at Church/Priory Farm. Deep pavements to east of T-junction and east of Church road, down to the front of the Church. Otherwise shallow pavements and small gardens to the front of properties. More recent builds more set back. Parking area to front of pub. Church set in grounds with open and closed cemetery. Priory Farm set back behind wall fronting Church Road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B1115 road from Lavenham Road to Monks Eleigh. Church Road towards south. Pavements to left of road to start with, moving west. Both sides from Pub area to Croft Lea and then on right side only to Park house. Most houses on north side of B1115 have driveways. Most houses on left have on road parking or off road in front of property. Church Road wide pavements on Church side. Limited on Priory Farm side.
Spaces	Buildings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To south of B1115 and east of T-junction, deep pavements; old listed phonebox and post box. Deep, grassed pavement to east of Church Road. Cemeteries around Church. Parking area to front of Pub. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly a mix of semi-detached and detached; two-storey; red-brick, Victorian and modern copy properties, with pitched roofs, to south of B1115. A number of buildings are listed, the most significant being the Parish Church. Mix of property types to north of B1115, with listed Eniskillen and Pub; two-storey with similar heights to properties to south of road. Red brick modern and Victorian towards Church in Church Road, changing to Almshouses (Elizabethan parts); The Priory (Elizabethan features) and Church itself. Casement windows. Victorian properties fronting The Street near T-junction, as well as the Parish Rooms, are of local importance and should be protected.
Landmarks	Green and Natural Features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pub. Postbox. Telephone box (now information centre) along the Street. Almshouses. The Priory house. Church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hedges and trees to north of B1115. Grassed verges to east of Church Road. Church with surrounding cemeteries and grassed areas space to south.
Streetscape	Views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overhead wires, telegraph posts. Road signage. Church notice board and village notice board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediate views as pass along B1115 and Church Road and from adjoining pavements. Longer views as approach from south along Church Road and pavement to east. Views of the Church from Wood Hall footpath and surrounding footpaths. Distant views of Church from roads parts of road network, especially from south.

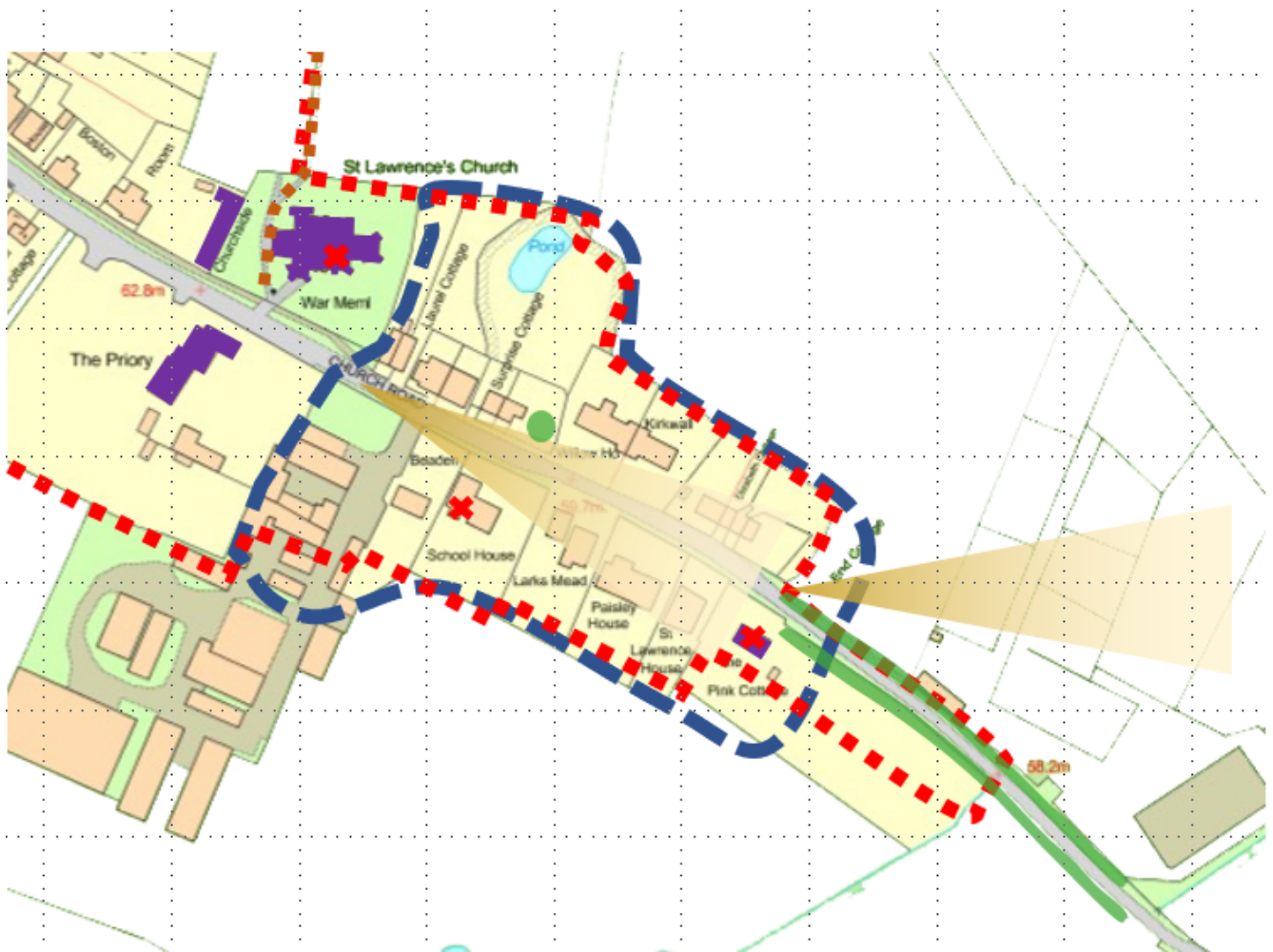
Character Area 4 – Wade Crescent and Croft Lea area

Topography	Land Uses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level ground. Beyond south-west residential area land slopes downhill to a tributary of the River Box. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential. Outside the defined residential boundary is arable and grazing land.
Layout	Roads, Streets, Routes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sporadic positioning of housing along the village road with no consistent theme. Wade Crescent and Croft Lea break linear development along the village road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B1115 is main thoroughfare through this section of the village. Croft Lea is a cul-de-sac with turning space at end. Wade Crescent provides a crescent shaped area serving eight properties. Standard kerbs and pavement only on northern side of village road until the end of Wade Crescent where kerbs and footpaths exist on both sides. Access to 2 public footpaths just beyond The Grange.
Spaces	Buildings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development tight to the village road with the exception of Wade Crescent and Croft Lea. Wade Crescent enjoys its own green space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eclectic mix of period and contemporary properties including listed thatched property, The Grange, with lathe and plaster rendering, Park House, early 19th Century farmhouse which is also listed. Towards centre of village is a mixture of post war contemporary housing. No additional properties warrant local protection.
Landmarks	Green and Natural Features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village entrance sign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixture of thinly spaced ash and lime trees adjacent to village road. Small green sward within Wade Crescent. Green swathe at entrance to Croft Lea, with bench to east.
Streetscape	Views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overhead wires, telegraph posts. Village entrance sign. Formal boundaries on roadside of full height brick walls, formal hedgerows and picket fencing. Croft Lea and Wade Crescent have paving on both sides of feeder road. Croft Lea has a green bell-mouth on which sits an electricity substation/transformer. Bench at entrance to Croft Lea (east). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited views inwards to the centre and outwards along the village road. Extensive views of open countryside at the back of all properties on both sides of the village road.



Character Area 5 – Church Road (East of the Church)

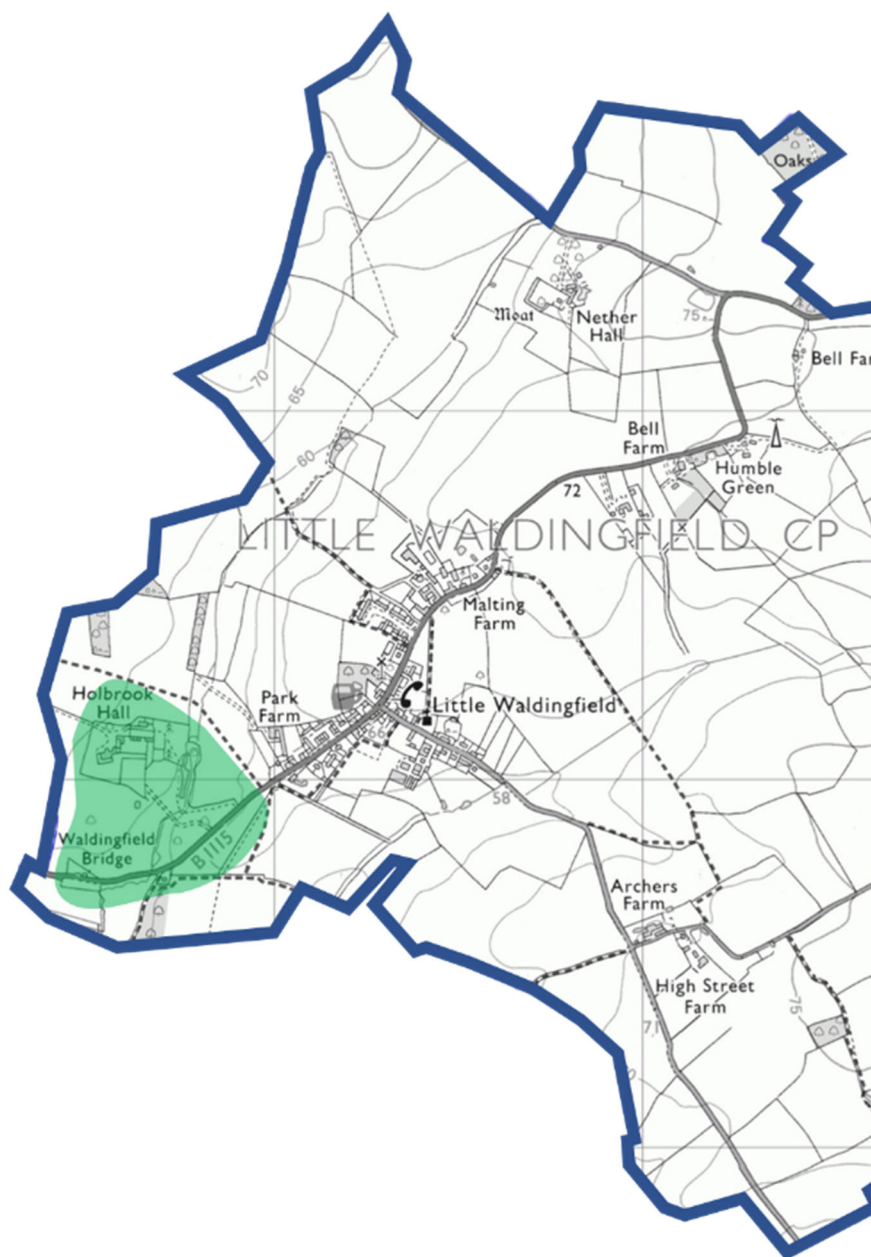
Topography	Land Uses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road slopes downhill with views towards Archer's Farm and Slough Hall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly residential plus agriculture, light industry and community uses.
Layout	Roads, Streets, Routes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix of detached and semi-detached plus a short terrace of dwellings. Detached dwellings stand in large plots with wide parking areas in front. All properties back onto open countryside. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow road with no footways and grass verges. High hedgerows as road leaves built-up area.
Spaces	Buildings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow grass verges. Significant green space at entrance to Priory Farm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix of building styles and materials that reflect the development that has taken place over many years. Predominantly red brick and cream coloured rendering. The old school building (School House) is a significant building in the street scene of local importance and should be protected. The listed Pink House creates an important entrance feature to the village. More recent dwellings are mainly single and 1½ storey.
Landmarks	Green and Natural Features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View to Church. The Pink House. School House. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Churchyard. High hedgerow at southern end. Green space at entrance to Priory Farm.
Streetscape	Views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overhead wires, telegraph posts. Road signs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distant views to Archer's Farm and Slough Hall and south through Priory Farm and west towards Great Waldingfield Church.



Character Area 5 – Outlying Areas

Holbrook Hall Park

- Small isolated group of mainly Victorian buildings dominated by a large manor house (now care home) in an ancient rural setting. Cluster of employment/commercial buildings sympathetically constructed to minimize its impact on the area. Pretty privately restored nature area.
- Local Listing: The Hall and other residential buildings in the vicinity of the same era, should all be considered for local listing(s).
- Footpath from B1115 to Lavenham Road: commences through domestic field/meadow land towards the brook; elongated views towards the NE as approaches the brook; through arable land, slopping north on far side of brook. Minimal views of Little Waldingfield.



Humble Green

- Mainly hidden collection of isolated properties along south side of a relatively busy through road.
- The lack of footpaths presents a significant hazard to pedestrians.



Archer's Farm

- A quiet hamlet in a rural setting above the main village with little traffic or noise pollution originally a farming settlement but now mainly residential.
- Archer's Farmhouse and Slough Hall are listed buildings.
- Local listing - some older buildings may have historic/architectural merit which may justify local listing.
- Public footpath links back to both ends of the village, to Great Waldingfield and Priory Green.
- Important panoramic views over the village.



Important Views outside the Character Areas

As part of the Character Appraisal, an assessment of important views was made from around the Neighbourhood Plan Area, including from public footpaths.

The location and routes of the footpaths and identified important views are illustrated below.



Photographs of the additional important views within the Neighbourhood Plan Area are illustrated on the following pages.

In addition to these views, there are a number of important views from outside of the Neighbourhood Plan Area into Little Waldingfield and the focal points within it. Although, because the viewpoints are not located in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, they cannot be protected in the Neighbourhood Plan, it will be important that the potential impact on these views is considered when assessing development proposals.



View from Point 1



View from Point 2



View from Point 3



View from Point 4



View from Point 5

Locally Important Buildings

The Character Assessment has identified buildings which, although not Listed, make a significant contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the Conservation Area. These are focused around the village centre. The buildings are:

Cyprus Cottage: A Victorian red brick two storey dwelling on the corner of Church Road and The Street. Probably originally a pair of dwellings, the Gable End facing The Street has a plaque with 1890 inscribed on it. The dwelling forms an important focal point at the centre of the village when approaching from Great Waldingfield direction and helps to define the wider space that is a distinct feature of the centre of the village. Two recently constructed dwellings adjoining the Cottage, on Church Road, have taken their design lead from Cyprus



Cottage.



Yew Tree Cottage, Bramley Cottage and Rose Cottage: A pair of cottages and individual dwelling fronting The Street both constructed of red brick and adjacent to a range Grade II Listed Buildings to the north-east. Rose Cottage is dated 1875. Combined, these properties make an important contribution to the street scene and wider conservation area.



Parish Rooms: The Parish Room was built in 1903 to commemorate the coronation of Edward VI in 1902. Originally called the Parish Reading Room it was built for that very purpose. The building was paid for by Miss Hamner of Holbrook Hall on 'waste' land belonging to the Almshouse Charity.



Old School Rooms:



Appendix 1 - Land Management Guidelines

Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment Guidance Note for Ancient Rolling Farmlands.

Source: <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk/>

Ancient Rolling Farmlands

Landscape Sensitivity & Change

This is a rolling, wooded, arable landscape of generally medium clay, or lighter soils dissected by rivers and streams.

The characteristic land cover is arable farmland divided by an irregular sinuous field pattern, and scattered with ancient woodland. There are important areas of regular fields, arising from the enclosure of commons, greens and tyes.

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

Ancient 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 including a lack of deer control.

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 Rolling Farmlands 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.

Although the majority greens commons and tyes in this landscape have been enclosed, they remain 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 finish and planting is 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
- Impact of deer on the condition of woodland cover

- Settlement expansion eroding the characteristic form and vernacular styles
- Conversion and expansion of farmsteads for residential uses
- Large-scale agricultural buildings in open countryside
- Development of former airfield sites
- Development of large-scale 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. However, in some locations the influence of a landed estate may mean there is a locally distinctive tradition of non-native tree or hedge planting.

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 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, as well as 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 commons and tyes
- Maintain and increase the stock of hedgerow trees
- Maintain the extent, and improve the condition, of woodland cover with effective management
- Maintain and restore the stock of moats and ponds in this landscape