



Worlington Landscape Character & Sensitivity Assessment November 2022

Worlington Parish
Neighbourhood Plan
Evidence document

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Refer also to the separate Appendix



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1. Introduction



Figure 1.1: Worlington's settlement boundary as per the adopted Forest Heath Local Plan 2019.

1. Worlington Parish Council appointed a Neighbourhood Plan Working Party and in July 2021 submitted an application to define its area.
2. The Working Party commissioned this landscape assessment in 2021 to assist them in the development of their Plan and with managing change in the future.
3. The aims of the assessment are:
 - To provide a parish-wide character assessment as a framework for understanding and defining the character of the landscape around the settlement edges.
 - To identify aspects of landscape and visual sensitivity in the different parts of the village fringes. The results of this will help identify the more sensitive areas, and help enable their protection. It will also support Site selection for potential site allocation on less sensitive parcels of land, if that stage is wanted in the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - To enable appraisal of important views to help form policy around protecting particularly valued views within the village.
4. This document will be useful to the parish and district councils in managing future applications for development, to landowners to understand the parameters which might limit changes in land use, and to householders or developers considering development.

2. Worlington's landscape history

Landscape context

1. Worlington is a rural parish in the district of West Suffolk (formerly Forest Heath) in northwest Suffolk, close to the border with Cambridgeshire. The village lies just to the south of the river Lark which probably gave rise to its name. Worlington is thought to mean 'The homestead of the people of Wridewella or Lark' ¹. 'Wride' appears to derive from the Olde English pre-7th Century word "wride" meaning "twist" or "turn" from "wriþan", to twist, and was used topographically to refer to a winding stream ².
2. The parish forms a roughly triangular shape, some 2.5 miles from north to south, with a meandering northern boundary defined by the course of the river. Beyond, lies the village of West Row (to the northwest), and the town of Mildenhall (to the northeast). To the east sits the large village of Barton Mills and a short straight section of the A11 which briefly forms the parish boundary, then the modern settlement of Red Lodge wraps around the southern end of the 'triangle'. To the west, there is a long boundary through farmland with Freckenham parish.
3. Worlington sits on the southwestern edge of the Brecks in a transitional landscape zone. Here, the sandy, forested Brecks to the east begin to open out and merge into the low lying Cambridgeshire Fenlands to the northwest. In addition, a finger of the rolling chalk downland, that characterises the landscape south of Cambridge, also stretches up from the southwest, just brushing the southeast of the parish.
4. In the past it was a small rural settlement, with a strong reliance on agriculture. Its historic farmhouses and halls provide heritage value and play a key role in the streetscape. Today, the farms have moved out of the village and are modern, overseeing large scale farming practises, often focused on high value crops, and exploring diversification schemes - the most significant of which is the National Infrastructure scale Sunnica solar energy project which is earmarked to affect a

significant portion of land south of the village, should it gain approval.

Topography and hydrology - refer also to map E in separate appendix document

5. The landscape feels generally fairly flat. In contrast to Suffolk's clayland river valleys, which in some places have pronounced, steep sides, the Lark does not have a pronounced valley. The wide and shallow catchment is not easily perceived - topography does not play a strong role in defining different areas of character within the parish. Also, in contrast to the rest of Suffolk, the Lark flows westwards. From its source at Bradfield Combust, south of Bury St Edmunds, the River Lark becomes a chalk river before meeting the Fenlands, west of West Row, joining the Ouse near Prickwillow, and eventually emptying into the Wash.
6. Only in the southeastern corner of the parish does topography play a stronger role in defining landscape character. Here, the edge of a gently rolling chalk escarpment is seen and is named "Chalk Hill". The rising land is partly wooded increasing perceptions of its elevation over the surrounding flat farmlands.



View of Chalk Hill from Newmarket Road

1 <https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/media/pdfs/worlington.pdf>

2 The Journal of Breckland Studies Vol 1: 2017

2. Worlington's landscape history continued:-

Soils and farming

7. A range of soil profiles are mapped across the parish. This is a result of Worlington's position on the western edge of the Brecks where they meet the Cambridgeshire chalk uplands, and its proximity to the Lark with its peaty deposits.
8. The underlying chalk geology in this area produced a low, gently undulating plateau across the Brecklands, often covered with light sandy soils of glacial origin. These can be sandy and acid or a chalky-loam and alkaline but are uniformly light and free draining and important for specialised types of farming. The light soils provide the distinctive Breckland feel, particularly where belts of pines and plantation are seen, providing shelter within the farmlands.
9. The word 'Breck' is probably of Saxon origin and was used historically in the area to denote sections of heath that were broken by the plough, cultivated for a few seasons until their already sparse nutrients were exhausted by cropping, and then allowed to revert back to heath. Extensive areas were under rabbit warrening for meat and fur. The Brecks are characterised by light soils of sand, chalk and flint, often overlain by tracts of heathland and forestry. The coherence, distinctiveness and integrity of the area are recognised in its designation by Natural England as National Character Area 85: The Brecks. The unique biodiversity of the Brecks stems from the region's free-draining, nutrient-poor sandy soils and its micro-climate, which is relatively dry with extremes of temperature.
10. Land use in the parish is dominated by large-scale farming - often high value crops such as potatoes and vegetables which make use of the free draining, easily worked soils. Outdoor pigs are also often seen, (and heard). The historic farmsteads are found along the roads in the village (Church Farm, Manor Farm) and today appear to have lost their economic connection with the land. Instead, farming take place today by a small number of modern farms, scattered in outlying positions in the parish - Rectory Farm, Bay Farm, Coldwell Farm. These lack historic farmhouses or barns and feature large-scale modern buildings, some converted to commercial use.
11. Aerial views show that the large scale arable lands rarely come right up to the village edge, instead the settlement is encircled by pasture arranged in much smaller scale patterns. To the north, meadows have endured because of the peatier, poorly draining soils, making arable farming less viable. River meadows line part of the Lark's westward journey and these are regularly divided by drainage ditches. To the south, a belt of grassland between the village edge and old railway line has endured, now divided up into equine fields. Equestrianism takes up some 28 acres here at Grove Farm and, in the wider area, the presence of studs hint at the influence of nearby Newmarket and its racing industry. Only on the west side of the village, where the Freckenham and Isleham Roads meet, do the expansive farmlands that surround the village, come right up to the village edge.
12. The Breckland area is also subject to surface peri-glacial features. There are some depressions in land to the south of the Green Lane. *'...examples of a range of periglacial features, including thermokarst hollows, hydraulic and hydrostatic pingo systems and chalk solution features such as surface solution dolines. Patterned ground, clearly visible from the air, is widespread in Breckland..'*(p13, The Norfolk 'Pingo' Mapping Project 2007 – 2008.)



photo: www.royalworlington.co.uk

2. Worlington's landscape history continued:-

13. The Brecks is distinctive for its Scots pine lines. It is likely that some were maintained as hedgerows by regular cutting, while others were planted as rows and belts of regularly spaced trees. The gnarly and contorted trees are probably those that were originally hedgerows and which have since been left to grow out. *'The Brecks' pine lines are over 200 years old and represent a concentration of veteran trees which is of exceptional historic, cultural and biodiversity interest. They are an iconic symbol for the Brecks.'*³

Golf Club

14. Approaching the village from the Southeast brings you through the 9 hole Royal Newmarket and Worlington Golf Club. Once a rabbit warren, land to the eastern side of the village first saw golf played in 1890 by landowner Mr William Gardner, who first laid out a few holes for the amusement of his friends. This led to the formal forming of a golf club in May 1893.
15. Initially a course of 18 holes was designed but only nine holes were suitable for play, those on the light and sandy soils. The other nine were located on poorly draining peatier soil and were discarded. Worlington thereafter remained a 9-hole course with only a few changes made to the course during the 1920s. It is unusual for being an inland 'Links' course - these are usually found near the coast.
16. The course has long been home to the Cambridge University Golf Club. Legend has it that in the early days the students would drop their clubs out of the carriage windows as the train passed the course and then they would walk back down the line from the station at Mildenhall to collect them before climbing over the fence to the course near the fifth hole. This practice continued until 1922 when Worlington got its own halt.

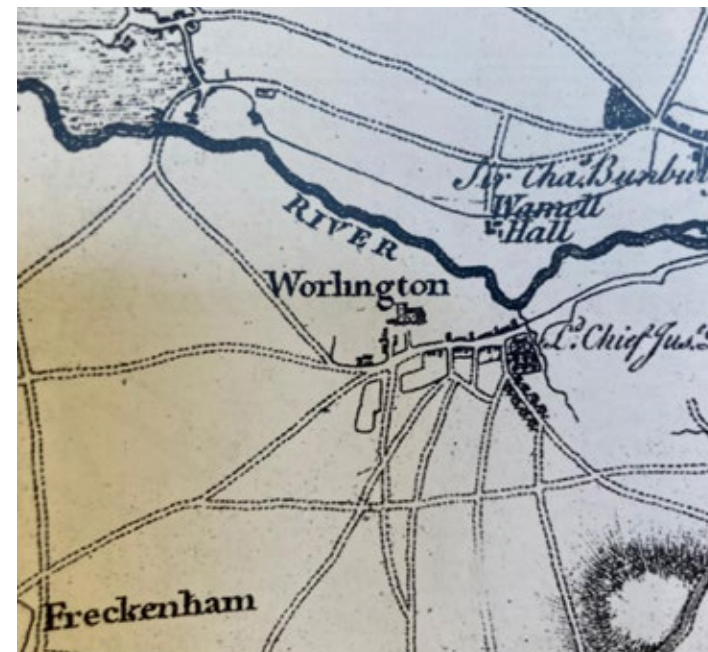
Settlement history

17. This area has yielded lots of evidence of a long settled landscape. These soils were historically dry and poor in terms of fertility and did not fall permanently under the plough for cereals in the way that much of the north Suffolk claylands

did. The lack of disturbance is perhaps why the remains of human activity have endured so well in Suffolk's sandland areas. In contrast, objects also endure well in the wet peat soils which underlie the fens in the landscape to the west.

18. The region is rich in archaeological finds. Neolithic remains such as shaped flints bear evidence to early man's activities in the area; a flint axe was found at Surprise Hill in Freckenham parish⁴. A group of sites have been found at nearby West Row Fen dating to the early Bronze Age which indicate farming communities were living in the area at this time. There have also been Anglo Saxon finds in the area - an iron sword was dredged from the River Lark in 1932 in Freckenham. Archeological works in Worlington Quarry identified a small Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flint-working hollow. Sherds of three separate

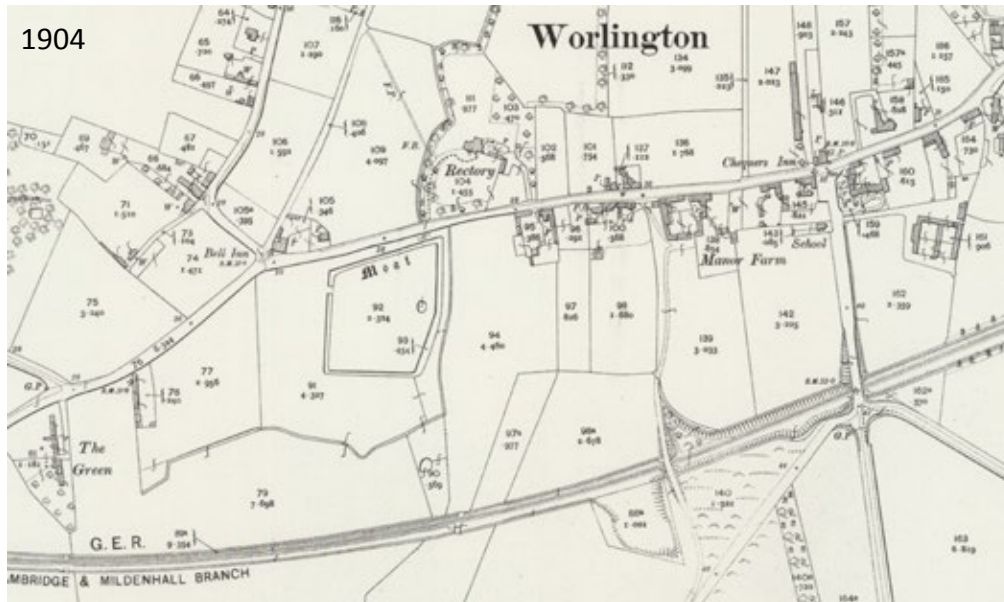
⁴ Freckenham parish council history page



Hodskinson's
Suffolk map of
1783

³ Brecks Special Qualities Report. Sheils Flynn 2016.

2. Worlington's landscape history continued:-



Beaker vessels and a large quantity of worked and burnt flints were recovered

⁵. The Roman era yielded, most famously, the Mildenhall treasure a hoard of late Roman silver discovered at nearby Thistley Green in 1942, now in the British Museum.

19. Despite being long settled, settlement is relatively scarce across the Brecks. Villages are concentrated on the sides of the shallow valleys that run through the Brecks, with only scattered small hamlets and farmsteads on the drier central plateaux.
20. Worlington has such a valley side location, close to the river Lark where the constant water supply would have made settlement possible. The village today is formed of a single 'cluster' with an overall broadly linear form, arranged along the B1102 and in short spurs along the connecting lanes and roads. Modern

development has formed a 'bow-tie' shape with expansion on the east and west sides, but not in the 'centre' of the village where the historic one-plot deep pattern remains. Here, green space penetrates into the heart of the village.

21. Domesday indicates the settlement of medieval Worlington was based around two manors. One probably in the vicinity of Manor farm, given its name, the other perhaps with Old Hall at the east end of the village. Old maps show the historic village as a scattering of houses and farmsteads and their cottages. Hodskinsons 1783 map shows a small village served by a dense network of tracks to the south. Some of these were surfaced and endure as roads today, others have been lost, or remain farm tracks only.
22. The oldest building in the village is All Saints Church. Parts of the current building dates from the C13th. Today it lies in the north-west corner of the village, along Church Lane and feels somewhat 'out of the way'. It is unfortunate that views to the church are not possible from the main road and it fails to play a role in people's experience of passing through Worlington. However, its isolated spot and close relationship with Church Farm to the north provides a historic feel along the lane, little touched by the 20th century.
23. The oldest house in the village is Worlington Old Hall (early 16th century). It is shown on the 1783 map as in the seat of the Lord Chief Justice. It appears to relate to a grand avenue of trees just to the south in the area of Newmarket Road/Golf Links Road. It is possible that some of these trees still survive today, as there are still many mature trees here.
24. Later, other imposing country houses were later added to the streetscene - Worlington Hall (C16th) and Worlington House (C17th or C18th) for example. There were two pubs by the end of the C19th, one at each end of the village, the Bell Inn (now Bell House) and The Chequers (now renamed the Walnut Tree). All the 11 listed buildings are mapped on figure 2.2.
25. The remains of a medieval trapezoidal-shaped moat and/or fishpond also endure (Suffolk HER: Monument record WGN 002) west of Grove Farm (undesigned).

5 <https://suffolkarchaeology.co.uk/reports/grey-literature/worlington-quarry-2>

2. Worlington's landscape history continued:-

Figure 2.1 Listed Buildings



- Ⓐ Church Farmhouse, Grade II
- Ⓑ All Saints church Grade I
- Ⓒ Cross base in churchyard, Grade II
- Ⓓ War memorial, Grade II
- Ⓔ Manor Farm house, Grade II
- Ⓕ 59, The Street, Grade II (Coopers Cottage)
- Ⓖ Worlington House, Grade II
- Ⓗ Cranford, Grade II
- Ⓘ Worlington Old Hall, and Coachman's Cottage, Grade II
- Ⓚ Worlington Hall, Grade II
- Ⓛ Worlington's settlement boundary as per the adopted Forest Heath Local Plan 2019.

2. Worlington's landscape history continued:-

This possibly indicates the location of one of the medieval manors, although Grove Farm is modern and is not mapped on early OS maps. It is possible it was associated with Manor Farm (Grade II listed), some 220m east of the moat, although that does represent a considerable distance. Possibly an early manor house was located further west. Manor Farm House dates mainly from the early 19th century but its rear wing is older - of mid C17. The site of the moat cannot be seen from the road as is screened behind vegetation.

26. Historic Worlington would have been a very rural settlement focused on agriculture. The type of agriculture in the Brecks (as in the Sandlings along the coast) differed to the rest of Suffolk to take account of the poor, light soils. In the medieval era the main crops would have been barley, rye and oats, and sheep were the predominant livestock. Cropping sequences would have been intermittent, perhaps lasting for two years and before being followed by a recuperative ley of two or three years before the land was cropped again. Sheep manure was very important for making the light and infertile soils farmable, and sheep were penned in folds overnight to focus their manure in the places it was needed - the 'foldcourse' system. During the day, they would be released to roam on the commons - the water meadows and the heathlands.⁶ Rabbit warrening was also important on the heathlands and provided food and fur. Warreners were still recorded as working in the village into the 1900s. Today a small remnant piece of heathland remains - 'Worlington Heath' is listed as a County Wildlife Site. It has no public access.
27. Enclosure, the process by which open, commonly farmed land was hedged or walled into individual fields was 'late' in this part of Suffolk. Most of Suffolk is 'ancient' and was enclosed gradually over time resulting in its small-scale, organic field patterns. In contrast, in northwest Suffolk, enclosure of the heaths were the result of Parliamentary Acts between 1790 to 1840. For example, records for Worlington show 1,807 acres were enclosed under Private Acts in 1799. The



A horse drawn barge is depicted on the village sign

resultant landscape is of large scale, regularly arranged rectilinear fields and straight roads, organised and designed by surveyors and often now divided by straight hedges or pine tree belts.

Transport

28. The low lying fens to the west and the Lark's passage towards them would have had a strong influence on Worlington. The Fens were created as water levels rose and fell over the millennia and periods of inundation by the sea were followed by progressive sediment deposition by rivers onto the flat plain, forming extensive marshlands. Along the south east edges of the Fen, it is likely that the landscape would have had marsh, bog, mud and meres with open water only at times of flooding. Water would have played a much more central role in the lives of early people in Worlington providing transport, food sources (fish and eels) and offering trading opportunities.

⁶ The form, function and evolution of irregular field systems in Suffolk, c.1300 to c.1550*
Mark Bailey

2. Worlington's landscape history continued:-



The Worlington Halt in the early 1960s

Heavy traffic is an issue in the village



29. From Roman times the Lark was a key transportation route linking the village and towns as far east as Bury St. Edmunds to ports to the west. In medieval times, for example, it was known nearby Isleham had three quays and navigation was kept open up until the late 19th century. The Lark was a key transportation route. Horse-pulled barges would have been regularly seen drawing agricultural products to the ports downstream. The tow path was on the opposite side of the river - now a footpath. The village sign for Worlington depicts a horse towing a barge containing malted barley to the brewery at Ely along the River.
30. By the end of the 19th century, the railway had arrived and had overtaken rivers as the most important method of transport. The railways arrived to the area relatively late, the line to Mildenhall opening in 1885. The line was constructed south of Worlington, mostly in cutting, and it was not until 40 years later that the village got its own halt, a result of the GER trying to benefit from passengers wishing to visit Worlington's golf club. It has been described a rather rudimentary installation with a unsurfaced footpath down the bank to the halt, probably just

surfaced with cinders faced with old sleepers⁷. It remained open for another 40 years, closing in 1962 when the line closed to passengers in 1961/62. The remnants of the railway line are not really sensed on the ground today but can just be made out on aerial photos.

31. South of the railway line another linear feature retains more impact. The Green Lane is a relatively historic route and offers a traffic free walking route, away from the often busy roads and is much valued by the community. It is tree lined, but glimpses out into the surrounding fields are possible at intervals (and more so during winter after leaf fall). Some of these views are set to change should the large solar farm application gain permission. This is a key concern of villagers in relation to the application.
32. Today, transport focuses on road traffic, which can feel heavy at certain times of the day. The main B1102 road, which connects Mildenhall to the northeast with Fordham and other villages to the SW, is busy. Like the other wide, modern roads, which often approach the village on long straight sections, carry traffic at

⁷ http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/w/worlington_golf_links/

2. Worlington's landscape history continued:-

some speed into Worlington. From the main artery of the B1102, several roads lead off, notably the Newmarket Road and Golf Links Road which links to the A11 beyond Barton Mills. Large freight and agricultural vehicles pass through the village frequently.

33. In contrast to the traffic carried on the main roads, only Church Lane, which connects into the heart of the village at the war memorial, is narrow and quiet. It leads north to All Saints church and Church Farm (uninhabited and in disrepair) before terminating. The early OS maps show this lane once connected west towards Jude's Ferry but the route now is just a footpath and the lane is now a no through road with some modern development at its far end.

Cultural associations and leisure

34. Worlington's status as Breckland village means its culture was historically linked to the history of the Brecks. These days the village has a busy pub, The Walnut Tree, which also now has some overnight accommodation. As well as support from the community, the pub is no doubt helped by the Golf Club, the close proximity of Mildenhall, and the population of military personnel living in the vicinity. There is no shop at present but there is a village hall, cricket club and children's play area on the north side of the village centre.
35. Accommodation is also available at Worlington Hall, a prestigious-looking red brick house on the west gateway to the village. It started life as a C16th manor hall and the original building was altered in the late C18th and extended in the C20th, during which period it was converted into a hotel.
36. The area has strong links with the two military bases to the north. The base at RAF Mildenhall lies just to the northwest of Worlington, mostly within the parish of West Row. RAF Lakenheath is also close by, just north of Mildenhall, and together host a large population of American personnel. Mildenhall is used by the United States Air Force, as the headquarters of its 100th Air Refuelling Wing and 352nd Special Operations Group and has about 2,500 military and civilian personnel in total. This means the sound of aircraft is a very familiar sound to

residents of Worlington. The two bases are economically locally important, estimated to bring £700 million a year to the area ⁸.

Ecology

37. The Breckland area supports a rich and distinctive flora and fauna that includes species found nowhere else in Britain. Local biodiversity is further enhanced by the presence of other habitats, including ribbons of wetland along the various rivers that flow through the region. Breckland is said to represent one of the few places in southern Britain where there is still ample space for wildlife.
38. There are no statutory designated wildlife sites in the parish. The nearest is Red Lodge Heath SSSI which is located about 3km southeast of the village - a fragment of heathland now surrounded by urban land uses. Along with 3 other smaller sites, the Golf Course is a designated County Wildlife Site.

Visual experience

39. The visual experience within Worlington is varied. On the western edge of the village, where it meets open farmland long expansive views are possible. Views from the river towards the north can also be expansive. However, in much of the settlement the flatness of the topography coupled with development the tree cover within the village means long views out are not part of the visual experience. The rural landscape rarely forms a backdrop to views from within the village. This makes the fingers of greenspace that come into the centre of the village, all the more valued - they offer a composition where historic buildings are seen with their historic landscape context.

Forces for change

40. Worlington remained a small village up until the mid 20th century. Post war, like all villages, local authority housing began to appear, supplemented through the 60s, 70s and 80s by the appearance of speculatively developed small estates. This took the form of infill between the historic farms and large houses. By the

1955 the two local authority built semi's had appeared on Church Lane and over time small estates, often bungalows, at All Saints Walk and later Walnut Grove and Lark Close, and The paddocks. Large single houses also began to appear along Newmarket Road in spacious plots.

41. Yet the village has seen limited growth when compared to Barton Mills, Red Lodge and Mildenhall and remains a relatively small village of less than 400 people.
42. So, whilst the village is not designated a key service centre in local planning terms, and is unlikely to be a sustainable location for significant growth, further small developments and infill is likely. Three sites are put forward in the recent West Suffolk Council SHELAA call for sites. The suitability of these in landscape terms will be dealt with later in the report.
43. However, the area is facing a sizeable development proposal. The application for a 2,500 acre solar farm by Sunnica lies just to the south of the village, at close range compared to the other villages affected by the scheme. 16 parishes are affected in total. Due to the scheme's size it is considered to be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). This means the district councils are not the determining authority and the National Infrastructure Planning process applies which means it will be decided by the Secretary of State. The part of the scheme called 'Sunnica East Site B' lies to the south of the village. At the time of writing the Planning Inspectorate has decided to accept the Sunnica Energy Farm Development Consent Order (DCO) application for Examination.
44. There is also planned development, outside the parish, on the Worlington side of Mildenhall following completion of the Mildenhall Hub. The Hub comprises Mildenhall College Academy, a pre-school, health centre, library, children's centre, Citizens Advice and Job Centre, as well as offices for Suffolk Constabulary, West Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council, and other public sector organisations. The land to the west and northwest of the Hub, is proposed for approx. 1300 houses - a development known as Mildenhall West.
45. This is at public consultation stage at the time of writing and an outline masterplan has been presented. The edge of the development is close to the village, just 800m to the north behind Wamil Hall. Large areas of development could have a substantial effect on the surrounding landscape setting of Worlington.
46. A study by The Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape Partnership identified the landscape's heritage and water resources in this area as being 'under significant threat from a variety of issues: increasing informal recreation, large scale domestic and industrial development, climate change, modern farming practices

Figure 2.2 Sunnica proposals

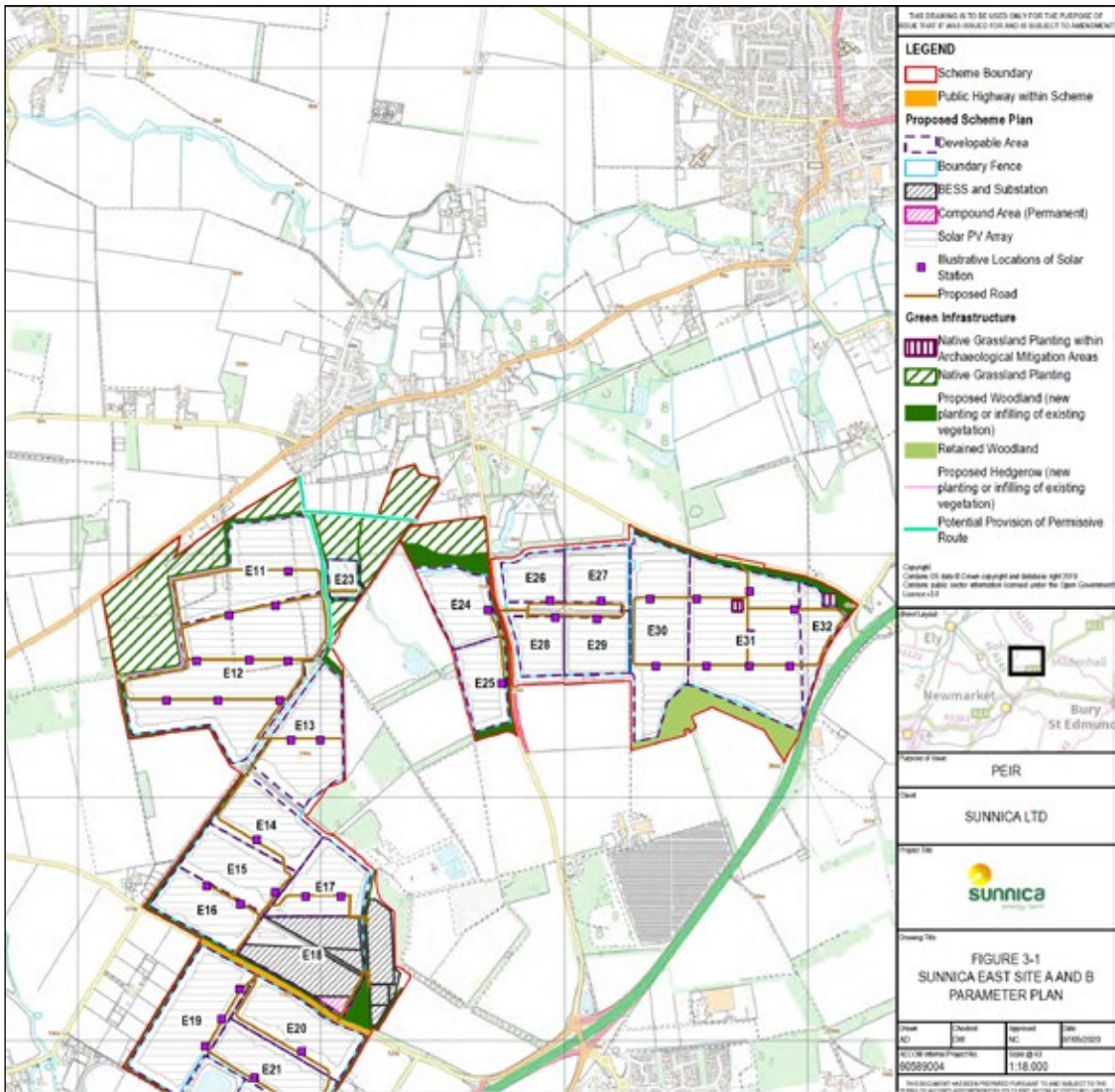
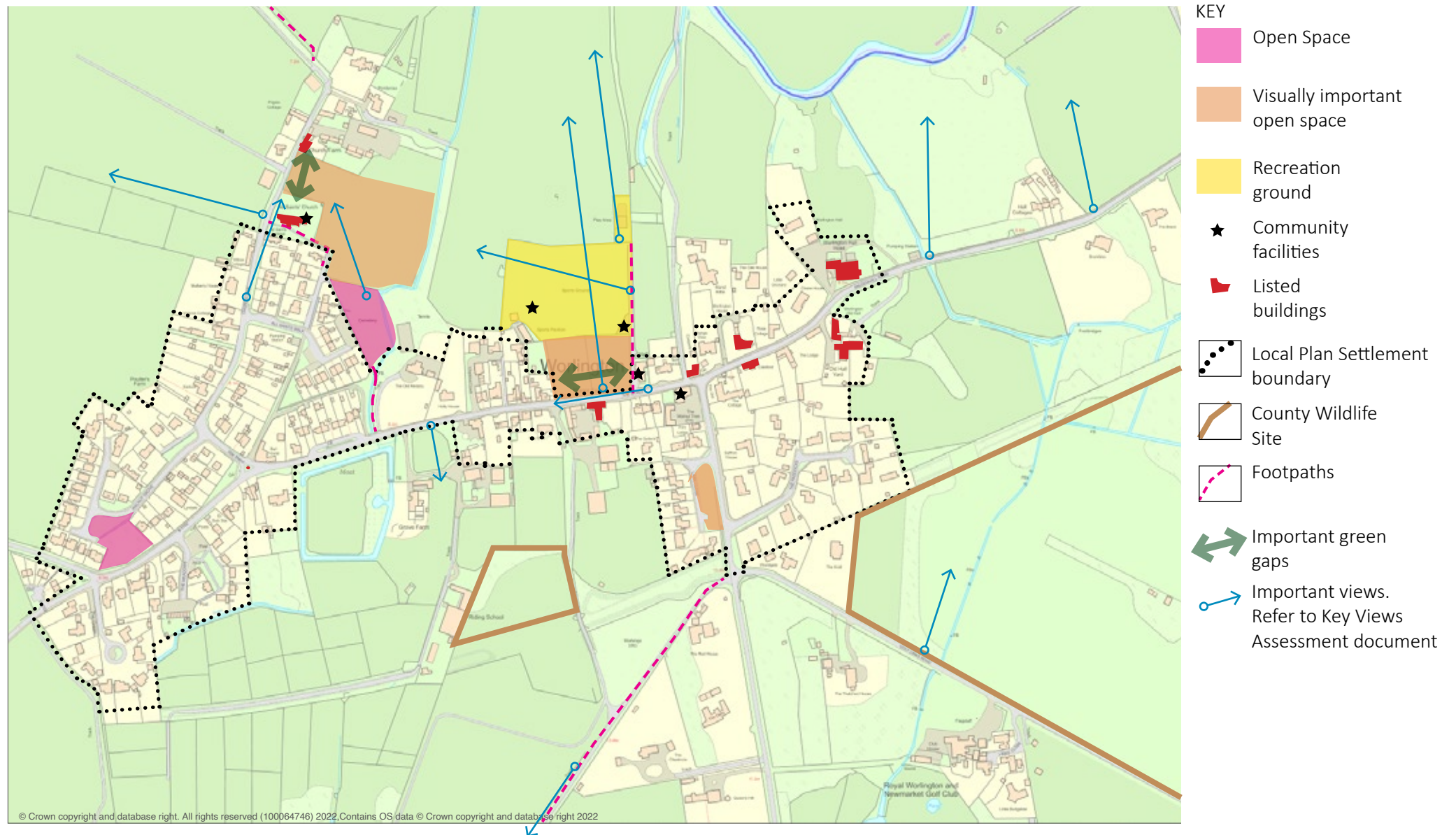


Figure 2.3 Site of Mildenhall West outlined in red



Figure 2.4 Analysis and Constraints map



3. Distinctive elements

3.1 Key streetscape buildings

The following pages show some of the key buildings in Worlington which help provide distinctiveness, sense of place and orientation. They are usually sited close to the roadside, with little plot frontage. They show the vernacular materials that are characteristic, shown in more detail in section 3.4.

Refer also to the location map for listed buildings in figure 2.4

1.



2.



3.



1. Church Farm (currently in disrepair) (Listed building location A)
2. All Saints Church, grade I listed (Listed building location B)
3. Willow Cottage, Church Lane

3.1 Key streetscape buildings continued:-

1.



2.



3.



1. Baxters Cottage, Church Lane

2. Poulters Farm, Church Lane

3. Bell House, the old Bell Inn

3.1 Key streetscape buildings continued:-

1.



2.



3.



1. Manor Farm (Listed building location F)

2. Coopers Cottage (Listed building location G)

3. Cranford (Listed building location H)

The older houses tend to be built right to the back of the narrow footways with no front gardens. Gables are oriented parallel with the street with dormer windows and large chimneys being common features. Brick walls are frequently part of the historic streetscape.

View of Cooper's
Cottage and Cranford
backed by mature trees



3.1 Key streetscape buildings continued:-



Worlington House, grade II listed



The Walnut Tree, previously The Chequers (unlisted)



Worlington Hall (Hotel) (Listed building location K)



Worlington Old Hall, grade II listed (Listed building location J)

3.3 Analysis of modern elements:

1. The more modern edges of the village are found on the west side of Worlington. These photos highlight some issues where divergence from the traditional settlement character has taken place. A circular effect is set up whereby the frequent and/or speeding traffic encourages a defensiveness strategy by householders, which, by removing the overlooking and presence of human activity from house frontages, further exacerbates traffic speeds and warrants solid boundaries.



Old Bridge Close. The effect of this new development turning its back on the village means the houses play little role in the streetscape and feel poorly integrated. This pattern of settlement is uncharacteristic - much of the traditional housing fronts right on to the road.



Poorly integrated drain cover on Iseham Road



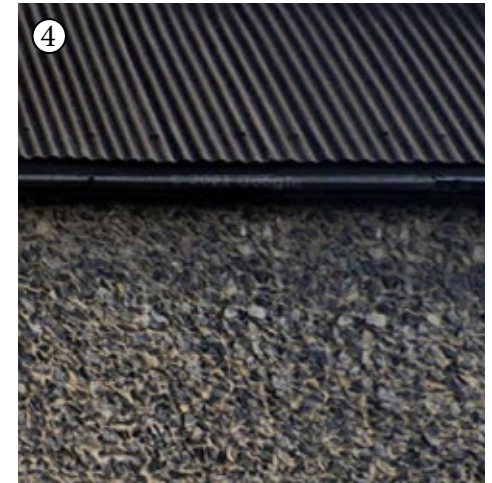
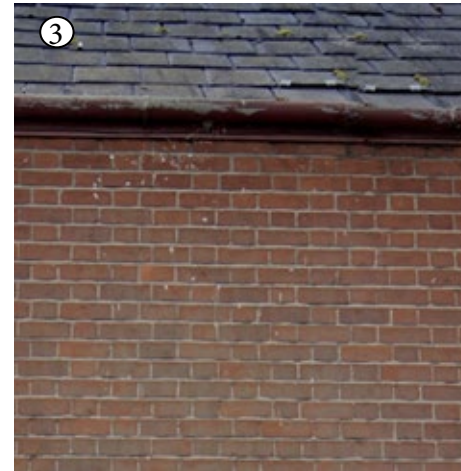
Heavy traffic along the main road is an issue.



↑ Houses on the south side of Walnut Grove seem to have two 'backs' with high close board fencing on both sides. This creates a defensive feel, reduces perceptions of safety due to the lack of over looking, and leaves pedestrians feeling vulnerable.

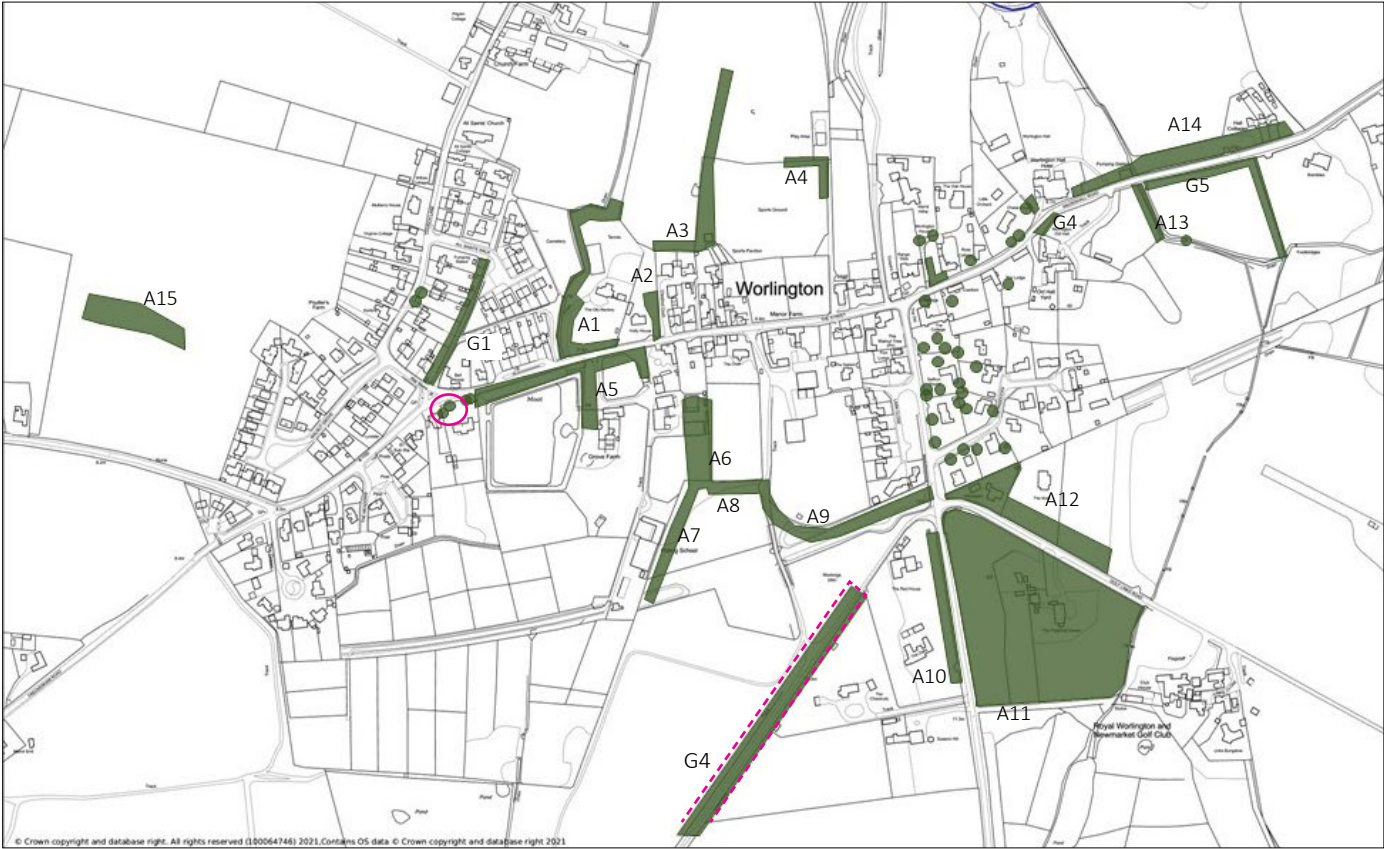


3.4 Vernacular materials:



1. Flint wall, 1 Freckenham Road
2. Buff bricks on the old Post Office
3. Red brick at 10, The Street
4. Tin roof and flint wall at 37, High Street
5. Garden wall at Mulberry House, Church Lane
6. Render and plain tiles on Bakers Cottage
7. Decorative woodwork on the village hall
8. Knapped flint on the rear extension of Bell House

3. 5 Distinctive elements - trees



Mature trees are a distinctive feature of the eastern side of the village and key to the experience of approaching Worlington from the south and east. Figure 3.5 highlights the significant number of trees protected with a Tree Protection Order (TPO).

Figure 3.5: Tree Protection Orders

- Tree Protection Order Numbers:
- TPO/1970/104
 - TPO/1985/06
 - TPO/002(2022)

4. Policies for growth

1. One of the reasons this assessment was commissioned was to help the parish understand opportunities and constraints in relation to potential residential allocations through the emerging Local Plan. The situation relating to allocations changed during the course of the commission.
2. West Suffolk Council recently completed their review of the Local Plan and have published their preferred options. The Preferred Options West Suffolk Local Plan (May 2022) identifies Worlington as a 'Type B' village. Type B villages are not considered sustainable locations for allocating growth because they;
"have a very limited range of, or no, services and poor accessibility to public transport. It is likely that residents will rely on the private car to travel to meet their day-to-day needs."
"In these villages no sites would be allocated through the local plan and only limited infill development or affordable housing exception sites would be permitted, dependent on other environmental and infrastructure constraints, to meet local needs within the village."
3. West Suffolk also notes the following constraints in relation to growth in Worlington¹.
 - An area of Flood Zone 2 and 3 runs west/east to the north of the settlement along the River Lark.
 - Worlington does not have a conservation area but has seven listed buildings within the settlement boundary.
 - The Royal Worlington and Newmarket Golf Course to the south-east of the settlement is a designated county wildlife site.
 - A cricket pitch/sports ground and pavilion are located to the north of The Street.
 - The settlement and its environs contain several known archaeological sites, tree preservation orders and records of protected species.
4. During the assessment and write-up phase of this commission, three sites had been put forward for consideration in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) - two small ones in the centre of the village and a large site on the west side of the village. These are referred to in the report as:
 - WS 198 - Meadow north of The Street
 - WS197 - Land south of The Street
 - WS 196 - Land west of Old Bridge Close
5. At that time, West Suffolk considered these sites, all within or adjacent to the settlement boundary, to have passed the initial tests of being suitable, available and achievable. Impacts to visual amenity or landscape character had not been a consideration at that stage.
6. However, by the time the final edit of this report was completed, the proposed designation of Worlington as a Type B village in the emerging Local Plan means that these sites were no longer a consideration for allocation. They are still referred to in the text, however. The suitability of the village fringes for development is addressed in general terms in the sensitivity assessment that follows, but detailed site assessment would also be beneficial, should speculative proposals still come forward for these, (or indeed other sites), in future.

¹ West Suffolk Local Plan (Regulation 18) Issues and Options October 2020: Part 3 - settlements
Section 5.19. Worlington

5. Landscape Character Context

Policy

1. The need for Local Authorities and applicants to understanding and respond to local character is now emphasised at all levels of the planning system. Following the lead of the District Council, Neighbourhood Plan Groups must also integrate a requirement for the protection of landscape character and settlement identity into their plan making process. This makes for better design outcomes and ensures compliance with the planning framework that they sits within.
2. At the National Level the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out principles for how landscape character must be considered.

NPPF Paragraph 130:

“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- (a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- (c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- (d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;...”

3. Gaining an understanding of what makes up landscape character and sense of place is therefore crucial to all planning and design proposals and decisions.

Landscape Character Assessments

4. Parish level character assessments fit into a wider structure of landscape characterisation that has been developing over the last 25 years in the UK. The English landscape is assessed and mapped at larger spatial scales - there is a National Character assessment and also a County level assessment available in Suffolk. Both these are relevant and provide the context into which this parish level study fits.

5. ‘Landscape’ is understood as a result of the interaction of the natural, physical components of the environment with the human elements - historical and cultural, land use and human interventions over time. Assessment of character maps and describes the variations in physical, natural and cultural attributes that relate to the landscape, as well as its experiential characteristics, such as tranquillity. Landscapes are not just experienced visually, but through sounds, smells, memories and cultural associations. Landscape Character Assessment presents descriptions of these attributes in a consistent, robust and structured way so the characteristics of different areas can be understood and compared. The process analyses the differences which combine to create unique and distinctive sets of characteristics.
6. Character Assessment helps provide an understanding of Worlington’s ‘sense of place’ by looking at;
 - how the village developed historically
 - its position in the landscape, and how this should influence any future growth;
 - the aspects of value that make it distinctive, including heritage assets
 - how character varies across the parish
 - how its heritage, open spaces and vegetative features contribute to character and how these, and other aspects of value, should be subject to protection;
 - where and how any important views within the village contribute to its identity
7. Taking a landscape character-led approach to the Neighbourhood Plan update will ensure that local distinctiveness is maintained and enhanced, highly valued places and views are identified and development is directed to the ‘right’ places. The assessment will also seek to identify opportunities for landscape enhancement that could be the subject of future projects.
8. This parish study identifies rural landscape character *areas* but references the relevant *types* identified in Suffolk County Council’s Landscape Character Assessment.

Landscape typologies explained:

Landscape character types are landscapes with broadly similar combinations

of geology, landform, vegetation, land use, field and settlement patterns. They might repeat across Suffolk so that landscapes of a particular type, such as 'Valley meadowlands' or 'Plateau estate farmlands', can be found in several different places across the county. They are labelled according to the position in the landscape along with a label relating to soil profile and/or farm type.

Landscape character areas are unique units that occur in only one place and are therefore geographically specific. They have their own individual character and identity and are labelled according to some local place or feature.

National level Assessment

9. At the largest scale of character assessment in the UK there are 159 National Character Areas (NCAs). The descriptions for these are available on the Natural England website.
10. Worlington is on the very western edge of NCA 85 'The Brecks'. This comprises a large area of south-western Norfolk and north-western Suffolk, together with a small part of north-eastern Cambridgeshire. The area has an ages-old identity, a very particular land use history and a richly distinctive wildlife, which sets it apart from all surrounding landscapes. It is warmest and driest parts of the UK and has sandy free-draining soils, feature which together have greatly influenced the landscape character and led to the development of dry heath and grassland communities which, together with the conifer plantations they contribute strongly to the sense of place. 20th-century agricultural advances have enabled the dry, low-fertility soils to be farmed and the area is now a major producer of vegetables and cereals, with over two-thirds of the land under cultivation, often under estate-scale farms. Where views are bounded by woodland blocks and shelterbelts, it creates a sense of uniformity, enclosure and tranquillity. There are few settlements.

County Level Assessment

11. Offering a finer grain of detail is the Suffolk County Council Landscape Character Assessment¹ which was first published in 2008 (updated 2011). It is a good and comprehensive assessment and describes 31 character types within Suffolk as a whole. The assessment describes three Landscape Character Types in the parish of Worlington, as shown in figure 4.1.
12. The council's website also states that a district wide Landscape Character Assessment is in preparation at the time of writing (October 2021).

Figure 4.1: Suffolk Landscape Character map



 13. Rolling estate chalklands	 27. Valley meadow and fens
 7. Estate Sandlands	

Source: www.suffolklandscape.org.uk

¹ <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk/>

Suffolk LCA Type 27. Valley meadowlands and fen - SUMMARY

Key Characteristics

- Flat, narrow, river valley bottoms
- Deep peat or mixtures of peat and sandy deposits
- Ancient meres within the valley bottoms & important fen sites
- Small grassland fields, bounded by dykes running at right angles to the main river
- Sparse scattering of small alder carr & plantation woodlands
- Part of a wider estate type landscape
- Largely unsettled, except for the occasional farmstead
- Drier fields turned over to the production of arable crops
- Cattle grazing now often peripheral to commercial agriculture
- Loss to scrub encroachment, tree planting and horse paddocks

Source: www.suffolklandscape.org.uk

Key Forces for Change Relevant to Worlington

Conserve the setting of this landscape

The construction of new buildings on the valley sides, or changes of land use, can easily have an adverse affect on the setting of this landscape. If these changes are to be permitted the highest standards of design and effective mitigation strategies should be applied to minimise the detrimental impact

Mitigate the impact of horse grazing where possible

The proliferation of post and rail fencing and subdivision of land into small paddocks using temporary tape can have a significant negative landscape impact.

Maintenance of valley fens for wildlife conservation

There is continued scope for habitat management and enhancement of these fen sites for wildlife benefit. However these changes need to be managed sensitively, giving careful consideration to the historic landscape and wider visual landscape impacts.

Land Management Guidelines

- Support the continuation of traditional economic activities

Restore and maintain the grazing with cattle and sheep. The continuation of traditional agricultural practices is integral to the character and condition of these landscapes and grazing is often critical to the successful management of important wildlife sites.

- Restore and retain the pattern of drainage

The pattern of meadows divided by ditches and dykes are a characteristic feature of this landscape and should be maintained with sympathetic management. This will also deliver ecological benefits.

- Maintain levels of grassland

Arable reversion through agri-environment schemes, or with the expansion of livestock enterprises, can help maintain the character of this landscape and also deliver ecological benefit.

- Encourage and support appropriate planting and management of woodlands

These landscapes contain a proportion of wet and plantation woodland, and it is important to maintain the appropriate balance of grassland and woodland. While wet woodland is an important part of the habitat mix in this landscape excessive creation of plantation woodland should be avoided.

Suffolk LCA Type 13. Rolling Estate Chalklands - SUMMARY

Key Characteristics

- A landscape of chalky soils, large regular fields, with paddocks and shelterbelts
- Very gently rolling or flat landscape of chalky free draining loam
- Dominated by large scale arable production
- “Studscape” of small paddocks and shelterbelts
- Large uniform fields enclosed by low hawthorn hedges
- Shelter belt planting, often ornamental species
- A “well kept” and tidy landscape
- Open views
- Clustered villages with flint and thatch vernacular houses
- Many new large “prestige” homes in villages

Key Forces for Change Relevant to Worlington

Refer to the guidance for the Estate Sandlands - the forces for change and development management responses are the same for both character types given their similar visual conditions.

There is a difference noted in relation to Settlement expansion:

Unlike the Estate Sandlands this landscape does have a history of settlement. Therefore there is some capacity, in terms of landscape character, for the tightly clustered settlements to expand. However, it is important to integrate the settlement edge into the surrounding rural and sparsely settled countryside to minimise the impact on the character of the wider countryside.

Land Management Guidelines

- Reinforce the historic pattern of regular boundaries.
- Restore, maintain and enhance the network of tree belts and pattern of small plantations found across much of this landscape type.
- Restore, maintain and enhance the historic parklands and the elements within them.
- Maintain and expand the area of chalk grasslands in this landscape.

Note: the LCA provides a short guidance document for each of its landscape types and this should be referred to for understanding local pressures and managing future change:
www.suffolklandscape.org.uk

Suffolk LCA Type 7. Estate Sandlands - SUMMARY

This is a flat or very gently rolling landscape of sandy soils covering the Brecks (and parts of the Suffolk coast).

It has traditionally been sparsely settled with farmsteads because in most places it was not suitable for the establishment of more concentrated settlement. The character of the landscape is largely made up of C18th and C19th estate farms, irrigated arable crops, new woodlands and tracts of heathland.

Key characteristics

- A landscape of large geometric fields, plantation woodlands and remnant heathland
- Flat or very gently rolling plateaux of free-draining sandy soils, overlying drift deposits of either glacial or fluvial origin
- Chalky in parts of the Brecks, but uniformly acid and sandy in the south-east
- Absence of watercourses
- Extensive areas of heathland or acid grassland
- Strongly geometric structure of fields enclosed in the 18th & 19th century.
- Predominantly arable land, often with very visible artificial irrigation and substantial areas of commercial forestry.
- Generally a landscape without ancient woodland, but there are some isolated and very significant exceptions
- Instead, there is a comprehensive pattern of shelterbelts and small rectilinear plantations. Large areas of state-owned forestry plantations (mainly Forestry Commission plantings of Scots and Corsican pines) created after WWI (Thetford Forest). Characteristic 'pine lines' especially in the Brecks.
- High incidence of relatively late, estate type, brick buildings
- North-west slate roofs with white or yellow bricks. Flint is also widely used as a walling material

Source: www.suffolklandscape.org.uk

Key Forces for Change Relevant to Worlington

- Expansion of settlements. Visually, the regular nature of this landscape means that it has more capacity than the ancient the claylands countryside. The simple, modern land cover pattern, and regular tree cover, means it is adaptable. However, the area does not have a history of substantial settlements. Therefore, the impact on the character of the landscape both directly and indirectly can be highly significant and damaging.
- Conversion of farmsteads. Given the range of substantial and "late" historic farm buildings within this landscape type there is considerable demand for these to be converted. C19th (and later) farm buildings are capable of accommodating new uses while conserving the character of the landscape. 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 finishes such as tiles, brickwork, mortar, or wooden cladding should be appropriate. Permanent dark or black colouring is not locally appropriate.
- Manage the expansion of garden curtilages. The change of land use, especially to residential curtilage, can often be more disruptive to the wider landscape than modifications to the buildings. Impose clear conditions relating to the extent of garden curtilage and how this is screened from the wider landscape.
- The introduction of new agricultural techniques such as turf or outdoor pig production and changes in the production of high value irrigated crops such as the use of plastic and fleece on a large scale. 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.
- Large-scale agricultural buildings - the siting, form, orientation and colour of these buildings make a considerable contribution to mitigating their impact. Ensure that the proposal is fully part of an existing building cluster and backed by trees. The plantations, shelterbelts, and tree lines found here provide opportunities to design locally appropriate planting schemes.

Land Management Guidelines

- Reinforce the historic pattern of regular boundaries.
- Restore, maintain and enhance the pattern of locally distinctive "pine lines".
- Restore, maintain and enhance the network of tree belts and pattern of small plantations found across much of this landscape type.
- Extend the cover of heathland paying particular attention to areas of commercial forestry as these have lower nutrients and a residual seed bank.
- Develop opportunities for locally distinctive species such as the rare Brecks plants.
- Protect distinctive geomorphology such as patterned ground.

Brecks Assessment

13. Further information relating to landscape character and sensitivity in the Brecks was available in work undertaken by Sheils Flynn Landscape architects for the Brecks Partnership as part of the suite of documents required for a Heritage Lottery Fund bid entitled 'Breaking New Ground. It describes the distinctive character of the Brecks and supports the positive management of the area. As well as the 'Norfolk & Suffolk Brecks Landscape Character Assessment' (2014) Sheils Flynn went on to produce the 'Brecks' Special Qualities' report (2016).
14. Aside from the Lark corridor, most of Worlington fall into a character type called 'Brecks Arable Heathland Mosaic'. Its distinctive characteristics as listed as:
 - Flat or gently sloping plateaux underlain by chalk, but with free-draining sandy soils
 - Large scale mosaic of lowland heath, mixed farmland, conifer plantations, broadleaf woodland and tree belts
 - Juxtaposition of acid and calcareous soils contributes to distinctive and exceptionally rich biodiversity
 - Belts of contorted Scots pine form a striking silhouette against the fields, defining the Brecks
 - Strongly geometric structure of fields, tree belts, roads and tracks
 - Virtually no villages, but a dispersed pattern of farmsteads, hamlets and estates
 - Wealth of archaeological heritage charting continuity of settlement from Mesolithic times and including Neolithic flint mines, medieval priories and rabbit warrens, 18th century designed parklands and 20th century military defences and training grounds
15. The most sensitive features of the landscapes are picked out:
 - ..the rural lanes and green lanes, and also areas on the fringes of settlements, which may have a smaller scale pattern of fields and woodlands and which are particularly accessible and important in local views and settlement gateways.
 - ...the most valuable elements and features are the remnant historic landscape and settlement features such as green lanes, species-rich boundary hedgerows and historic village centre greens, which may in part be enclosed by traditional buildings. Valuable ecological networks include inter-connected woodlands, tree belts and hedgerows, together with adjacent arable field margins.
16. For further detail refer to these documents at: www.brecks.org/bfer/key-documents/.



Useful sources of character and sensitivity assessment that relates to Worlington.

6. Methods of Assessment

1. This study focuses on the character and sensitivity of the rural fringes of Worlington. It does not consider the different character areas within the settlement itself. (Detailed settlement character could be the subject of further work especially if a village design guide is considered at a later stage.) The first stage is the parish-scale character assessment, and this is followed by an analysis of landscape and visual sensitivity in each character area.
2. The draft boundaries and a short description were submitted to the Neighbourhood Working Party for comment before the final descriptions for each area were written up in full.
3. The descriptions are supported by a set of representative illustrative photographs. The topics are considered under set headings, as set out in table 6.1:

Parish Landscape Character Assessment

1. Methods follow nationally accepted best practice and available guidance on undertaking Landscape Character Assessment ¹.
2. The character areas were initially drafted through desktop study. The starting point was the Suffolk Character Assessment - the boundaries drawn for this assessment formed the basis of the parish characterisation process. As identified, the village fringes fall into two character types - Type 7 'Estate Sandlands' and Type 13 'Rolling Estate Chalklands'. However, the county study is mapped at the scale of 1:10,000. This is too broad and a finer grain of detail is necessary for Neighbourhood Plan assessment.
3. Further maps were overlaid on the county character type boundaries. The following sources of mapped information were used to help develop parish character area boundaries:
 - Topography data from OS maps
 - Soils and geology data from Landis
 - Designations for heritage and ecology information from government GIS website Magic Map ²
 - Historic mapping from National Library of Scotland website
 - Google's aerial photography
 - Historic England designation maps
 - Suffolk Historic Landscape character assessment map

These maps are each provided in the separate Appendix document.

4. The initial desktop stage resulted in a set of five draft character areas, which were then tested and adjusted following visual survey in the field. Existing mapped lines and 'on the

¹ 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', Natural England, 2014

² magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap

TABLE 6.1 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT: HEADINGS AND EXPLANATION:

Physical landscape	Location and underlying character type	Reference to the relevant underlying landscape type in the Suffolk Character Assessment. The location of the area within the village.
	Topography / hydrology / position in the landscape	Describes where the area sits within the landscape. Describes the landform, its elevation in metres above ordnance datum (AOD); whether there are water courses or ponds in the area; the direction that drainage basins fall toward.
	Landcover/Landuse	Describes how the land is being used, the types of farming or cropping, and whether it is being managed for other activities, such as shooting. It describes the pattern of enclosures. What patterns the landscape demonstrates in terms of the size and form of its fields, e.g. whether organic or geometric in shape, and the presence or absence of boundary hedges.
	Trees and woodland Cover cover	The amount and type of woodland present. Whether it's ancient or of more recent origin.
Cultural perceptual, and aesthetic:	Scale and enclosure	Whether a feeling of openness or containment prevails, given the arrangement of vegetation and topography. The degree to which an area's pattern of subdivisions is small and frequent (fine grain), or large and infrequent (coarse grain).
	Historic landscape/time depth	Lists historic aspects of value such as Listed buildings/structures and their settings. How today's patterns relate to the historic pattern.
	Settlement interfaces and road network	Describes the pattern of settlement found, the shape or form and 'grain' of the settlement. Describes the transition between settlement and the countryside. Includes the forms of roads.
	Perceptual experience/ tranquillity	Whether the area feels noisy or tranquil, busy or remote and isolated. Whether the landscape feels well cared for and in good condition, or where there are aspects that are degraded or cause visual intrusion. Judgement about the level of tranquillity. Identify any sources of noise, movement and disruption.
	Visual experience and views	Description of the visual experience - whether views are generally open or intimate, whether long or short; how scenic they are. Whether the area feels noisy or tranquil, busy or remote and isolated. Whether the landscape feels well cared for and in good condition, or where there are aspects that are degraded or cause visual intrusion. Are there any Key views in the area?
	Indicators of value and Rights of Way	Areas designated and protected for geological or biological conservation, such as SSSI's and County Wildlife Sites; ancient woodland and veteran trees. Designated greenspace or public open space, or other features which contribute positively to the character of an area. The presence of any footpaths or rights of way or recreation sites.
Management issues	Issues / Change pressures	Is any aspect under threat? What should be the objectives for conservation or enhancement? Are there possibilities for future creation of ecological habitat, or expanded recreation, etc?

6. Method of Assessment continued:-

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

8. Once complete, each of the 5 character areas were then subject to assessment of their landscape value and sensitivity. This is presented as the final part of each character area description. It provides detail on the specific landscape and visual issues in each part of the village fringe and sets out future management objectives.
9. Worlington has a single defined settlement cluster. It excludes a number of properties outside the boundary, including the church and the group to the north, and properties to the southeast, along Newmarket Road. These are in 'countryside' in planning terms. Green space reaches right into the centre of the village and pressure for new residential development is being felt here, and on the rural fringes, through infilling or small developments. Development in countryside has less support in the NPPF and district planning policy and must meet strict tests to be acceptable. But where it abuts the existing built-up area there is usually more scope than on land separated from the village edge. Development must be particularly sensitive where it forms a new edge or gateway/arrival point to a settlement.
10. This study will assist by providing an understanding of the sensitivity of different parts of the village fringe and whether there is any potential capacity (in landscape terms) for allocating or consenting sites for development. New housing should only be consented or planned in appropriate locations that do not harm the special character of the village, or its valued views or features, (and where all other policy tests are met).
11. This study will assist with the following task and decisions:
 - a) provide the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party an aid for making sound decisions in relation to spatial planning and policy formation, in relation to landscape (including the proposed SHELAA sites)
 - b) provide evidence to help the parish respond to future planning applications;
 - c) help identify and justify land for allocation, (or not) and aid site planning on any such land;
 - d) aid transparency; it is important that residents and land owners understand why

decisions have been made, particularly in relation to allocation, and understand where development might be supported and where it might be discouraged;

e) identify opportunities for the enhancement, management and conservation of the landscape and views.

12. It is important to note that the results of the study are not intended to suggest specific development site areas or define future settlement boundaries. The study also takes no account of other factors that would influence development, for example such as availability of land, flood risk, sustainability issues or whether highways access is possible.

Method

13. Methods for assessing landscape sensitivity have only fairly recently been published. *"An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management"* was published in June 2019 (Christine Tudor, Natural England). The guidance urges studies to be simple, transparent, robust and defensible. An idealised process schematic is shown at the end of this document.
14. The guidance provides the following definition of sensitivity (p5):

‘..Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value... a process that assesses the resilience / robustness of landscape character and the visual resource – and what we value - to a defined change, or changes..’
15. The assessment relies on the premise that development or change should be more readily acceptable in the least sensitive areas, and where appropriate forms of mitigation would be possible. Development would be least acceptable in areas of higher landscape value and where visual sensitivity is high, and/or where conditions are such that the landscape would be sensitive to available mitigation measures.
16. Conditions indicating HIGH sensitivity are where **landscape value** is high and where **visual sensitivity** is high, for example in the following scenarios:
 - Where impacts might result to recognised indicators of value - the setting of

heritage features (such as listed buildings) or key landmark buildings

- Where impacts might result to natural or topographic features that contribute notably to local character and sense of place
- Where impacts might result because land is very visually prominent, and openness is an essential contributor to character
- Where settlement has stark edges and assimilation of new development would be hard
- Where commonly valued 'Key' scenic views, that are important to the experience of a settlement, are vulnerable
- Where a large number of people might be affected, and/or viewers would be considered sensitive (i.e. views experience directly from homes or busy recreational areas)
- Where a sense of tranquillity is strong

17. Conditions indicating LOW sensitivity are where **landscape value** is low and where **visual sensitivity** is low, for example in the following scenarios:

- Where there is a lack of any designations for landscape, ecology or heritage,
- Where there is little visual amenity or aesthetical value in the views affected
- Where the landscape does not fall into any key views of the village and/or has little scenic value
- Where land is contained or well vegetated and where development could be assimilated without wider impact
- Where development would fit well with the historic pattern of settlement development
- Where development might offer the opportunity for the enhancement or reinforcement of character.
- Where there are few receptors - few opportunities for people to view change
- Where a sense of tranquillity is absent

18. In most cases, the conditions aren't so clear cut and professional judgement has to be

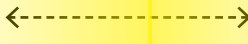
applied to determine values.

19. Landscape value and Visual Sensitivity were attributed along the following scale: LOW / MODEST / MODERATE / HIGH / VERY HIGH. The scales are useful for comparative purposes, but more useful is the detail in the supporting text that pick out the sensitivities for each area.
20. Further example circumstances indicating higher and lesser value are given in the tables in 6.2 (landscape related factors) and 6.3 (visual and perceptual related factors) that follow.

Table 6.2 INDICATORS OF VALUE & SENSITIVITY: Landscape

PHYSICAL / LANDSCAPE FACTORS		Lower value and/or sensitivity ←-----→ Higher value and/or sensitivity		
Designations	Whether the land parcel, or any of its features, are covered or adjoins any designations or protective policies. Includes value associated with the historic landscape and heritage assets within it. Where the landscape forms the setting for heritage features such as Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, or ancient woodland	No landscape, heritage or habitat designations.	One, or more, features or areas with non-statutory designations e.g. 'Special Landscape Area' or 'Non-designated heritage asset' Some cultural value.	One, or more, features or areas with statutory landscape, heritage or habitat designations present.
Other aspects of landscape value	The presence of non-designated aspects of value. Can include vegetative features with wildlife value, evidence of historic landscape continuity, or cultural aspects of value - recreational or community related.	No features of value. No particular cultural value or associations.	Some limited value in non-designated aspect of the landscape, some local limited cultural or recreational value.	High value in non-designated feature, high value for cultural or recreational reasons.
Landform	The extent to which landform plays a role in defining character and sense of place, and how vulnerable the character is to the loss of visible landform.	Topography and landform play little role in defining character	Topography and landform play some role in defining character	Appreciation of topography and landform playing key role in defining character and sense of place
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	This refers to vegetative and field patterns and intactness of habitats. For example, a landscape comprising a complex array of different habitats and/or land cover features such as long established intact hedgerows or ancient woodland will have a higher value than a simple open landscape where structural elements have been lost. Components with a semi-natural character would be highly valued. Condition relates to state of repair of the characteristic features and their resultant role in representation of character.	Simple, large-scale, open; little evidence of historic field patterns; Straightened boundaries and field amalgamation; hedges often absent - remnant boundary vegetation only. Landscape in poor condition. Little indication of time-depth / historic continuity	Medium scale field sizes, evidence of partial boundary loss. Condition of hedges sometimes poor. Some hedgerow trees endure. Some indication of time-depth/ historic continuity	Small scale, fine grain; historic field patterns strongly in evidence; limited amalgamation, intact network of hedges; regular hedgerow trees. Landscape in good condition. Strong indication of time-depth / historic continuity
Settlement edges, and gateways	Consideration of the nature and form of the adjacent settlement edges and gateways. Long established, settlement edges where low density, historic settlement prevails, untouched by modern influences, are more valued than those where the historic settlement edge is no longer evident, owing to modern development and where 20th century development has resulted in a stark interface.	Abrupt interface between edge of settlement and countryside; boundary vegetation absent or sparse, aspects of modern development present	Settlement edge varied and indistinct, some modern elements present.	Porous edge to settlement, breaks allow interface between settlement and countryside; buffered by historic landscape pattern; native vegetation softens edges.

Table 6.3 INDICATORS OF VALUE & SENSITIVITY: Visual and Perceptual

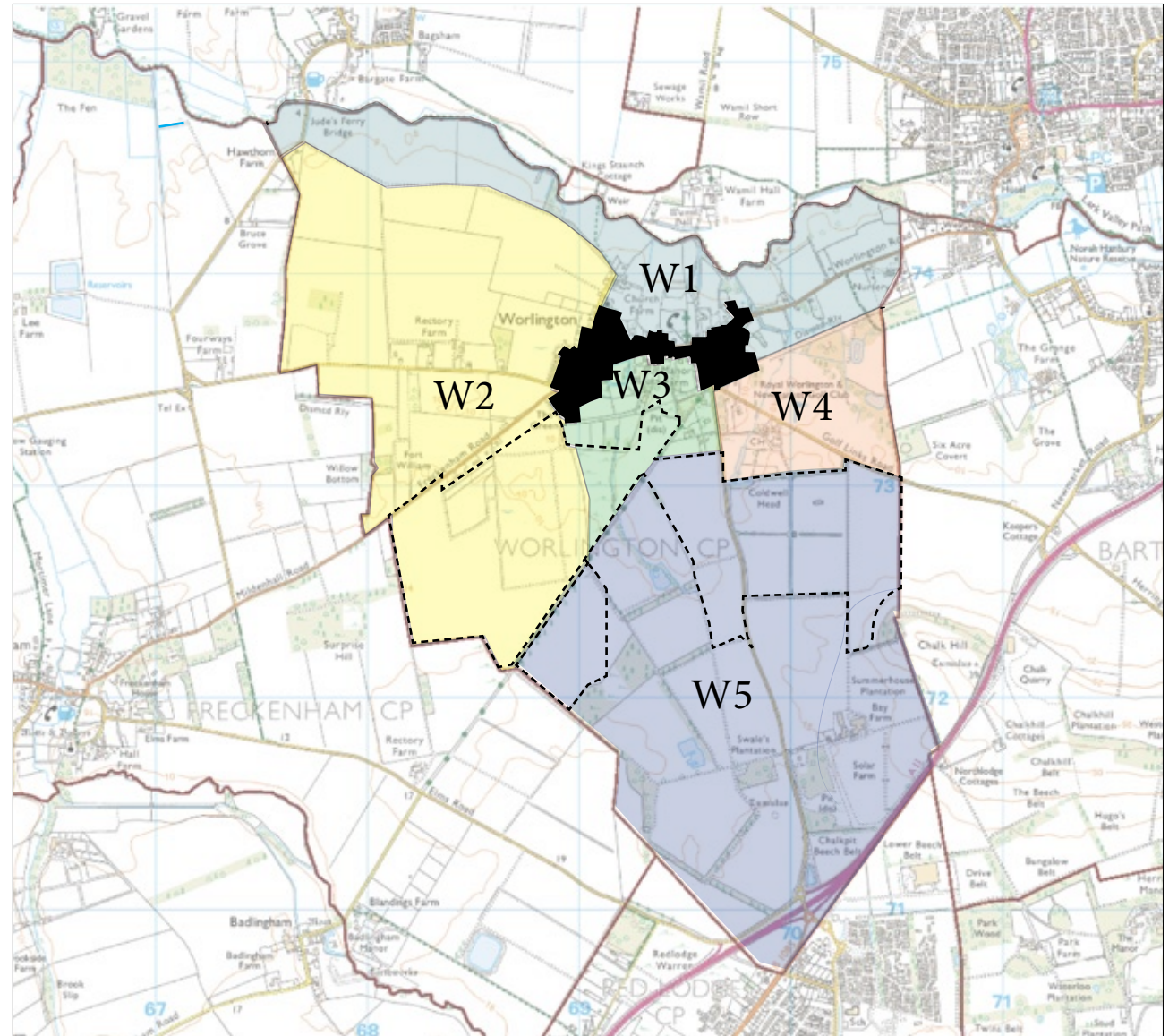
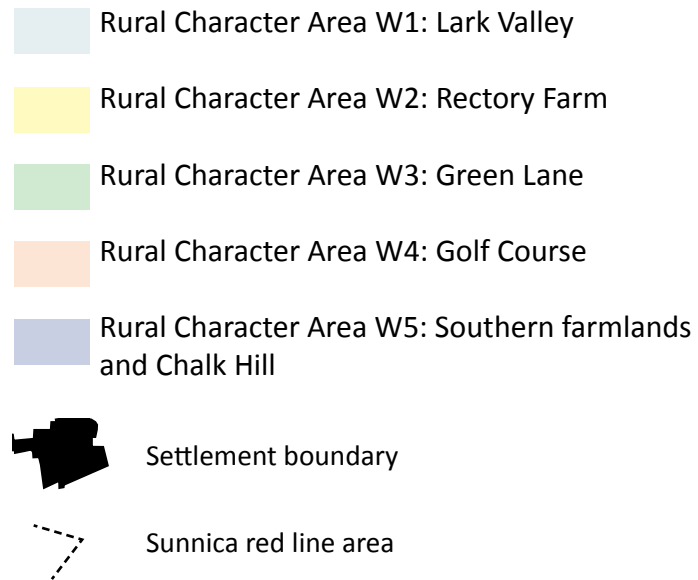
VISUAL AND PERCEPTUAL FACTORS		LOWER value and/or sensitivity  HIGHER value and/or sensitivity		
Visual prominence	<p>How generally visible the land is from the surrounding landscape, settlement edges, highways or rights of way. Land that is visually prominent, owing to the combined effects of landform, tree cover or settlement is more visually sensitive than land which is enclosed and hard to see into.</p> <p>Views from major routes are deemed more sensitive than land that is only visible from the minor lanes.</p> <p>Includes consideration of the extent to which footpaths users are likely to be affected by views of residential development.</p>	<p>Conditions combine to make views of land generally difficult to experience.</p> <p>Limited visibility from principal routes.</p> <p>No views from footpaths.</p> <p>Land parcel not easily seen within key views</p>	<p>Some views available where conditions allow.</p> <p>Moderately visible in views from principal routes.</p> <p>Views from a few points on footpaths and/or at longer range</p> <p>Part of land parcel seen in some key views</p>	<p>Visually prominent, forming part of view from many points.</p> <p>Integral part of view from one or more principal routes.</p> <p>Direct views from multiple footpaths, or at close range.</p> <p>Land parcel is prominent in one or more key views</p>
Types of receptors experiencing visual change	Sensitive viewers would be residents, tourists and those experiencing views from Listed Buildings or from within a Conservation Area. Less sensitive are viewers engaged in travel or at their place of work, for example.	Users of low sensitivity; e.g. road users, people at work	Moderately sensitive; e.g. some views from dwellings or small number of Listed Buildings	Highly sensitive; visitors, direct views from Listed Building and/or Conservation Area
Tranquillity / activity	Aspects including traffic noise, movement from people or vehicles, sense of remoteness and tranquillity. Landscapes with a higher degree of remoteness and tranquillity will have a higher sensitivity to residential development.	Rarely tranquil, regular human activity seen and/or heard	Moderate tranquillity; some human activity seen and/or heard	Relatively remote and tranquil, little human activity seen or heard
Aesthetic perception	This is the more subjective of the judgments. It covers sensitivity in terms of aesthetic attributes such as interplay of landform and landscape structure, texture, naturalness, the presence or absence of detracting features or human activity. More sensitive landscapes have a more aesthetically pleasing combination of features, likely indicated by complexity, variety, and naturalness, and absence of human scale features.	Simple and uniform in texture; sense of naturalness eroded; human scale features apparent. Unlikely to be considered scenic.	Moderately varied texture, reasonably good degree of naturalness; some features of human scale. Moderately scenic.	Complex and varied texture, high degree of naturalness with few features of human scale. Scenic.
Vulnerability of key views	Higher sensitivity is attributed to land easily seen as part of one or more of the key views, lower sensitivity is attributed where land is not seen within any of the key views.	Land parcel not seen within any key views	Part of land parcel seen in some key views or single view affected	Land parcel is seen in more than one key views



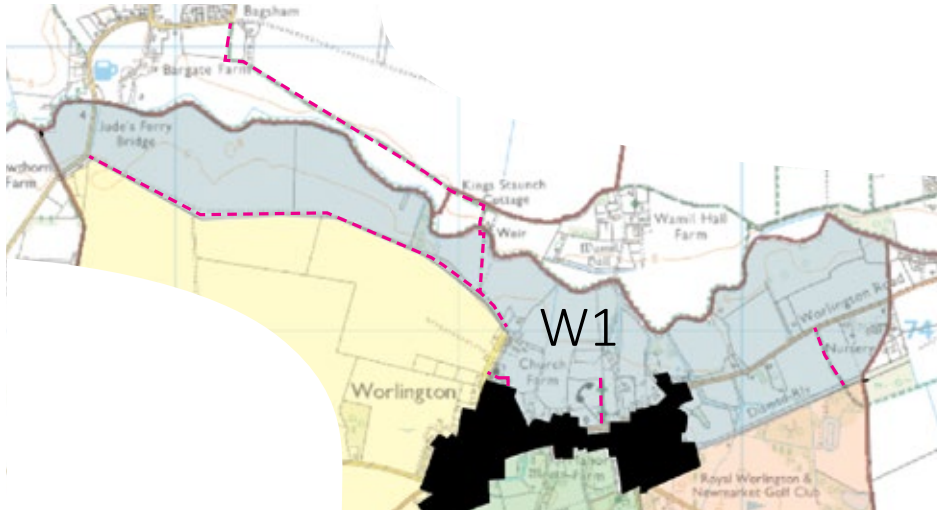
Character and Sensitivity Assessment

7. Parish Assessment

Figure 7.1. Parish Character Area Map



Rural Character Area W1: Lark Valley



Location and underlying landscape type

This longitudinal shaped character area comprises the south side of the Lark river. It forms a belt along the northern parish boundary (which is defined by the river channel) and bounds the settlement along its north and northwestern edges. It includes land on the fringes of Mildenhall in the east, to Jude's Ferry bridge in the west.

It comprises the 'Valley meadow and fens' Landscape Character Type (of the Suffolk County Council Assessment) where it meets the edge of the 'Rolling Estate Chalklands' LCT.

Topography / hydrology / position in the landscape / soils

It is formed of the very gently sloping lower valley sides and valley bottom which fringe the meandering river. The land lies between the 4 and 7m contours and much of it lies within the flood zone. Straight-cut drains and streams dissect the small fields and meadows beside the river at intervals.

Soils are seasonally wet and peaty along the river, but become freer draining and slightly acid along the southern edges.

Landcover/land use

Where they interface with the village edges the low lying seasonally wet pastures are small in size. Field size increases with distance from the village where drainage has made the land

farmable and fields have been merged into large units in the west. The small fields north of the village tend to be seasonally wet grasslands, traditionally grazed by animals, but there are also a mix of village-edge land uses including horse grazing, deep private curtilages, the graveyard, the cricket ground and a children's play area - key local resources. Stands of poplar plantations are also found next to the river.

The better drained, larger agricultural fields to the west are suitable for growing crops.

Trees and woodland Cover

The river corridor has a lightly wooded feel, often with riparian species such as willow and alder, however, most of the trees are found on the northern backs with only a few small pockets on the south side. There is a plantation of cricket bat willows to the NW of the village with strong vertical impact.

Scale and enclosure

This landscape can feel relatively small scale and intimate, especially where there is enclosure provided by tree cover and hedges. Where vegetation is absent it can, conversely, also feel expansive where the openness of the landscape offers long views over large fields, towards the west.

Historic landscape/Time depth

There is a good sense of time depth owing to the presence of the long established system of pastures - small fields along the northern edge of the village, some with intact hedged boundaries. They have endured because they were not suitable for agricultural production because they are seasonally wet.

This landscape forms setting to the ancient church and Church Farm, providing important separation between them. It contributes to their significance as historic buildings as well as helping to define the historic settlement pattern along Church Road.

It also contributes to the setting of Wamil Hall to the north, (in Mildenhall parish) an Elizabethan Manor House, substantially altered in the mid C20th after fire damage. The house is set within small, organic-shaped pastures which contrast strongly with the modern arable landscape that surrounds it.

Settlement interfaces and road network

There is little settlement in this area as a great deal of W1 lies within the flood plain. Historically, the farms and their cottages sat just beyond the edge of the floodplain on slightly elevated land.

The settlement interfaces here are usually not straight and modern but often stepped or 'porous' and reflect historic curtilages. Fingers of green space penetrate between built form and contribute strongly to character, such as to the north of Manor Farm where the countryside almost runs right through the centre of the village. It provides a sense of the low lying position of the village and its rural setting and offers the only opportunities for views towards the river.

The eastern approach to the village from Mildenhall is within this character area. It has a more distinctive and historic feel than some of the other more modern edges of the village - mature hedges contain views from approaching traffic, which open round a bend revealing large historic properties and their curtilages - there is a cluster of listed buildings in this end of the village providing a strong sense of place.

Perceptual experience/Tranquillity

Perceptions are of a relatively tranquil part of the parish. Walking beside the river offers

peaceful recreation with sounds of moving water, reeds whispering and bird life on the river to watch. However, as in all parts of the parish, aircraft noise can interfere with perceptions of tranquillity on a regular basis. Planes passing overhead are a frequent sight, often at low altitude as they circle after takeoff and before landing. The main road also carries heavy traffic at times, limiting tranquillity and bringing movement.

Long views to the often featureless horizons of the plateau to the north are also part of the visual experience.

Visual experience and views

The little valley system provides distinctive and welcome change in character from the uniformity and expansiveness of the large scale Breckland landscape that surrounds it. There are attractive views along the river, the water, woodlands, bird life, and variety of vegetation provide a richer experience than the simple planes of field and sky that form views in much of the parish. Much of the area is hard to see into from the settlement or from roads owing to intervening enclosure by trees but access on foot along the north side of the bank is possible (in Mildenhall and West Row parishes). Therefore the river does not really play a role in the perceptions of Worlington by passing traffic, for example. It is discoverable only on foot which helps its feel remote.

Indicators of value and rights of way

This character area provides setting to the majority of the Listed Buildings in the parish.

Small-scale, diverse landscape mosaic can easily be overwhelmed by development or changes in land use or water quality/flow. Their shallow form and intimate landscape character can be disrupted by changes in adjacent landscape types.

The meadows north of Manor Farm provide important setting to listed buildings and contribute positively to the historic character of the settlement. This undeveloped gap in the built form is distinctive and allows glimpses towards the river corridor.

This area has the highest number of rights of way in a parish in which footpaths are generally scarce. It also features the cricket club, play area. It has high amenity value.

The Lark represents high value for biodiversity. The river provides excellent habitat for otter

W1: Lark Valley - Illustrative photographs

Gateway to the village at Worlington Hall



Poplar plantation beside the river



Small field between the church and Church Farm



Fields in the centre of the village contribute strongly to historic character



Low-lying meadows north of the village centre



W1: Lark Valley - Sensitivity and value

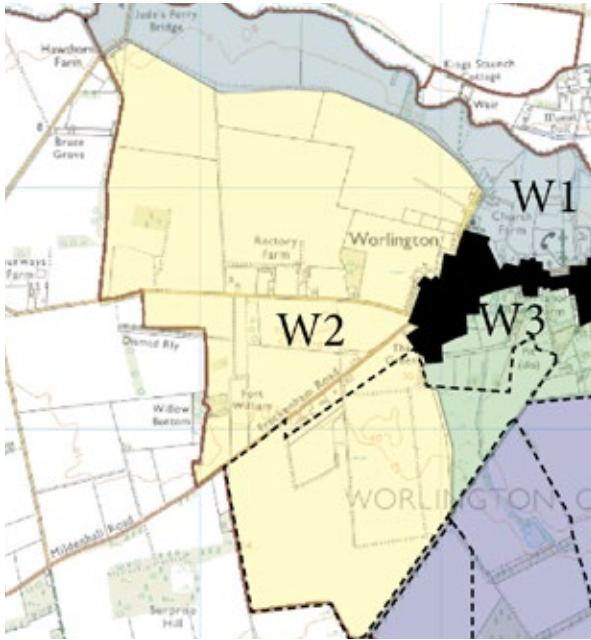
LANDSCAPE VALUE FACTORS:		VISUAL SENSITIVITY FACTORS:	
Designations	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: No landscape designations but provides setting to church and a number of other listed buildings.	Visual prominence	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Conditions mean land often hard to see into owing to fringing vegetation and inaccessibility. Very limited visibility from principal roads. However very visible from rights of way.
Other aspects of landscape value	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: River offers biodiversity and amenity value. Important area for recreation, valued highly by residents. Multiple group and individual TPOs along village edge.	Types of receptors experiencing visual change	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Those experiencing views are principally walkers and residents along the northern village edge - they are sensitive receptors. Relatively few people experience these views.
Landform	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: No distinctive topographical features and valley topography is very subtle. Nevertheless, river valley cutting through the Brecks make it a distinctive and valued landscape area.	Tranquillity / activity	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Compared to the rest of the parish this is a quiet area owing to lack of traffic noise and vehicle movements. However, its closest to the air-base and regular aircraft noise is experienced.
Pattern/ enclosure & condition	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: High value where enclosure patterns remains historic, organic and small scale and boundary hedges endure along village edge. Lesser value in open, arable landscapes.	Aesthetic perception	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Experientially and visually rich along the river corridor. Sense of natural environment strongest in this character area, although lower value in the amalgamated arable landscape upslope.
Settlement edges, & gateways	HIGH / MOD / LOW value This landscape provides separation between Worlington and Mildenhall to the east; it's under pressure as large-scale, westward expansion of Mildenhall is planned. Important gateway on Mildenhall Road - historic and distinctive with listed buildings heralding arrival point.	Vulnerability of key views	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity

Overall sensitivity indicator:

Landscape Value	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low
Visual Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low

Issues for change management in W1:

- Proposed residential allocation WS198 is located in W1. In landscape terms this land contributes very positively to the historic character of the village centre and enables views and appreciation of the valley bottom to the north. Development here could have profound adverse effect on village character and should be resisted. Instead, the historic open gap should be protected with a local designation.
- Protect pockets of land from infilling where they form open gaps between scattered historic dwellings to prevent their historic relationship being obscured, for example, land between the Church and Church Farm.
- Views from and along the valley floor are vulnerable to other infill development. Ensure the infrequent views north to the valley floor are protected and avoid overscaled buildings which project above the skyline.
- Conserve the character of the historic and leafy gateway/approach from Mildenhall. Listed buildings and curtilage walls provide a distinctive feel. Management/ support may be needed to ensure features do not fall into disrepair.
- Protect the public facilities and recreational greenspaces in this area and their relationship with adjoining open countryside.
- Maintain and the important network of rights of way to and beside the river. Providing access to the river for those with impaired movement, with pushchairs or reliant on a wheelchair could be given consideration.
- Protect the traditional grazed floodplain pastures. Limit the expansion of equestrian land use into land traditionally grazed by sheep or cattle. It can have adverse visual impacts where visually intrusive tape fencing, jumps, shelters etc., are allowed to proliferate.
- More ideas??



Location and underlying
landscape type

This character area comprises a large part of the west side of the parish from south of Jude's Ferry Bridge, as far south as Green Lane, straddling both the Iseham Road and the Freckeham Roads. It abuts the western edges of the village. It comprises 2 Suffolk Landscape Character Types - 7. Estate Sandlands and 13. Rolling Estate Chalklands.

Topography / hydrology / position in the landscape / soils

The topography feels very flat, through land slopes very gently northwards from about 15m AOD in the south to about 5m AOD along the northern boundary with W1; the gradual slope is barely perceptible. This area is part of the landscape transition between the Brecks to the east and the flat peatlands of the fen basin to the west.

There are no natural water courses or ponds in the area.

Soils are light and freely draining acidic types.

Landcover/landuse

The area has a very rural and distinctively 'Breckland' feel. It is predominantly farmland, interspersed with small belts of woodland. Where irrigation is available these freely draining soils are valuable for farming with high value crops like potatoes, vegetables, and sugar beet grown. Outdoor pigs are also part of the rotation, moving on every couple of years.

There is also equine land use here south of Freckenham Road.

Trees and woodland Cover

Plantations are seen at intervals, in the form of strips, shelter belts and pine lines which have strong vertical impact. There are no large woodlands but horizons nevertheless appear

wooded as the strips and belts link up along the skyline. Pines originating within sheltering hedges have since grown out and now form key Breckland characteristics.

Field and roadside hedges are also common. Hedges are a mix of hawthorn and elder, elm and field maple. Trees are commonly oak and scots pine.

The hedges, tree lines and verges form ecological networks across the intensively farmed landscape.

Scale and enclosure

This is a large-scale, simple, regular landscape. Enclosure is experienced from the hedges and trees that shelter and fringe the farmland, particularly along the roads and tracks. However, the underlying scale of the field system means the overall feel is expansive and open and can feel empty.

Historic landscape/Time depth

Its historic value is limited in terms of built heritage or natural features, but the surveyor-planned landscape appearance of the Brecklands follows centuries-old land management and late enclosure and is historically important in its own right. Pine lines are important historic features.

Settlement interfaces and road network

Settlement is scarce outside the villages in this area. An occasional modern farmstead is found and some scattered C20th houses along the straight roads. These tend to be absorbed within well vegetated curtilages. This area is criss-crossed by long linear roads and private farm tracks that cut straight lines across the landscape, linking the villages and farms. Pine lines emphasise the geometry.

The village gateways into the village from the west (Freckenham and Isleham Rds) contrast with the approaches from the east and south - there are far fewer trees here and the feel is much more open and stark. Houses at Old Bridge Close look directly outward into the landscape - this is generally uncharacteristic in Worlington.

Perceptual experience /tranquillity

This is often an empty feeling, rural landscape but tranquillity varies - passing traffic, often passing through at speed, can limit perceptions of ruralness. The sound of jet noise is also a regular experience.

Visual experience and views

Enclosure is varied. Along the road network high hedges contain views out, but the visual experience is generally open and expansive in the large scale farmland with typical Long view set against a backdrop of woodland

Indicators of value and rights of way

Whilst the character area has no designations or ecologically important areas, it's representative of the Breckland landscape and has strong sense of place reflected by the linear geometry, and the distinctive vegetation communities that indicate the light, acid, sandy soils underfoot.

There are no rights of way in this character area but it borders the Green Lane to the south.

W2: Western Farmlands - Illustrative photographs

View to the village gateway on Freckenham Road. New houses face out into the countryside



Expansive fields to the west of Church Rd



Straight course of Isleham Road enclosed by hedges



Streetview photo of outdoor pigs



W2: Lark Valley - Sensitivity and value

LANDSCAPE VALUE FACTORS:		VISUAL SENSITIVITY FACTORS:	
Designations	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: No landscape, heritage or habitat designations.	Visual prominence	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Views from principal roads are experienced but regular hedges and plantation strips frequently contain long views. Generally, it's a large scale open landscape where visual impacts of vertical elements can carry across wide areas.
Other aspects of landscape value	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: These are late-enclosure, relatively modern landscapes, but with some cultural landscape value for their distinctive Breckland character and distinct vegetative communities. Group TPO covers trees along Green Lane.	Types of receptors experiencing visual change	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Little settlement and no PROWS in this area - views are experienced by traffic. Only new houses at Old Bridge Close have direct views into the countryside.
Landform	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: Flat featureless landform.	Tranquillity / activity	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Traffic is across two routes - regular car movements and noise limits perceptions of ruralness. Traffic speeds are relatively high on these long straight roads.
Pattern/enclosure & condition	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: Late enclosure landscape with little evidence of ancient patterns remaining. Yet distinctive, regular and geometric arrangements with 'Breckland' character.	Aesthetic perception	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Simple, repeating uniform landscape where 'natural' features of woodland strips and pine lines bring visual texture and add interest linking up along skyline. String rural feel.
Settlement edges, & gateways	HIGH / MOD / LOW value Interface with village is abrupt and modern. New houses have poor relationship with village. Aspects of modern development rather dominant.	Vulnerability of key views	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity

Overall sensitivity indicator:

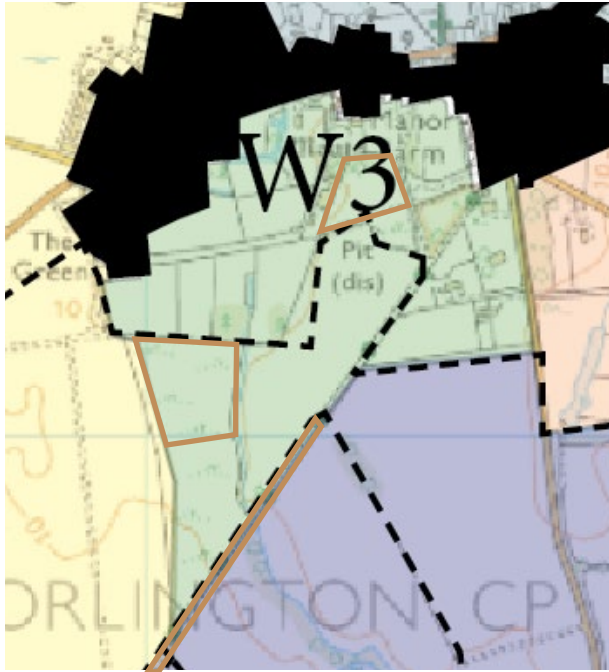
Landscape Value	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low
Visual Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low

Issues for change management in W2:

- Proposed allocation WS196 is in this character area with an indicative capacity for 78 houses. Although the openness of the landscape can mean visual impacts of development or land use change can be far reaching, development here could be assimilated with sufficient boundary planting. Breckland-style tree lines, hedges and plantation strips can be very effective in screening and integrating new development.
- However, visual integration with the main village will be difficult given the orientation of Old Bridge Close which connects the land parcel to the village. The village is characteristically inward looking and rarely overlooks, or is seen from, open countryside. Development here will cause divergence from this pattern. Careful landscape-led design would be recommended to find a solution which reflects the character of Worlington and its traditionally well vegetated edges.
- Avoid ribbon development. Ensure any new development is designed to enhance the character of the village gateways.
- Look for opportunities to create new rights of way - there are none in this area.
- Pressure from solar farming may continue to be felt in this area.

Rural Character Area W3: Green Lane

Key characteristics



Location and underlying
landscape type

This is a small character area on the south side of the settlement between the Bury Road in the east and the village edge to the west. It covers land southward as far as Green Lane along its southern boundary.

It is in Suffolk Landscape Type 13. 'Rolling estate chalklands'.

Topography / hydrology / position in the landscape

The land lies on and either side of the 10m contour and feels flat. Its northern parts sit just beyond edge of the flood plain, and there are drainage ditches and a stream which flows towards the Lark.

There is a cluster of small ponds or depressions seen on maps and aerial views, on grazed land in the far south - Worlington Heath CWS. These could be peri-glacial features - 'pingos' are known to be found in the Brecks. They now do not regularly hold water.

Landcover/landuse

Land use is domestic and equine (Grove Farm) and there is also some farmland north of the Green Lane. In the east the area includes a number of large properties that sit outside the settlement boundary, set within spacious curtilages with large trees overhead. There is a block of remnant heathland noted as 'Worlington Heath County Wildlife Site' on the west boundary.

Trees and woodland Cover

There is a good deal of tree cover - there are no woodlands but trees fringe the village edge, the old railway line, and a disused gravel pit. There is a belt of trees with a group TPO to the south

of Manor Farm - mainly Elm and Pine.

Scale and enclosure

Along the village edge the landscape is a small-scale system of domestic curtilages and fields that buffer the large scale farmland beyond. There is a feeling of enclosure from the frequent tree cover. Whilst land is still generally organised by straight lines, unlike much of the surrounding landscape, organic shapes can also be seen here.

Historic landscape/time depth

An historic moat is noted on OS maps in the north of the area although not seen by the public. The old railway line built in the late 1870s passes through the centre of the area and remnants can be seen in the landscape.

Settlement interfaces and road network

The boundaries of this character area are not easily defined because the settlement boundary, which forms its edge, crosses through garden curtilages. A gap in the built form means the landscape extends right up to the High Street, adjacent to Manor Farm.

The settlement interfaces here are usually not straight and modern but often stepped or 'porous' and reflect historic curtilages. Fingers of green space penetrate between built form

Perceptual experience /tranquillity

The area has a feeling of ruralness and remoteness. The Green Lane offers a quiet, leafy walk under mature tree canopies, although noise from the outdoor pigs to the west filters through at intervals.

Visual experience and views

This character area cannot be seen easily from public points to the north. Intermittent views are experienced from the green lane. The trees that fringe the area assimilate the built form, give an impression of a wooded landscape and frame attractive 'Breckland' views.

Indicators of value and rights of way

The historic moat and the curtilage of grade II Manor Farm adjoin the area. Otherwise there are no designated features.

The green lane is an important right of way /recreation resource.

There are two CWS - Worlington Heath and Joan's Meadow. Little is known about their condition.

The high value farmland is intensively managed for production and its structural vegetation - hedges and trees appear to be well managed. It has strong Breckland character.

W3: Green Lane - Illustrative photographs

Views towards village, 'treed' edge conceals built form



View along the Green Lane



Intermittent views to the south across W5



View westwards towards W2

W3: Green Lane - Sensitivity and value

LANDSCAPE VALUE FACTORS:		VISUAL SENSITIVITY FACTORS:	
Designations	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: The curtilage of grade II Manor Farm adjoins the area. There are 3 County wildlife sites here including Worlington Heath.	Visual prominence	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity This parcel is not visually prominent and often concealed behind built form and bands of trees. Views possible from Green Lane footpath - only at intervals. Not generally visible from principal routes.
Other aspects of landscape value	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: An undesignated historic moat is mapped west of Grove Farm. Some cultural heritage associated with the old railway line. Green Lane is an important walking route. Many mature trees and a number of group TPOs along the village edge.	Types of receptors experiencing visual change	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Green Lane users are sensitive - they value the route for its visual amenity and rural character.
Landform	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: Variations or features in landform do not play a strong role in character. Possible peri-glacial pond features present?	Tranquillity / activity	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity This area is generally fairly quiet as buffered from roads by built form and f=green lane feels remote. Outdoor pigs are noisy at times.
Pattern/ enclosure & condition	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: Smaller scale landscape than much of the surrounding farmland, with more organic shaped enclosures providing sense of time depth. Settlement edge porous in places. Condition mixed.	Aesthetic perception	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Positive perceptions of a well vegetated village edge landscape, generally in good condition.
Settlement edges, & gateways	HIGH / MOD / LOW value Strongly vegetated character of Newmarket Road and village fringe assimilates what is actually a fairly modern edge to the settlement, giving it a more established, leafy feel.	Vulnerability of key views	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity

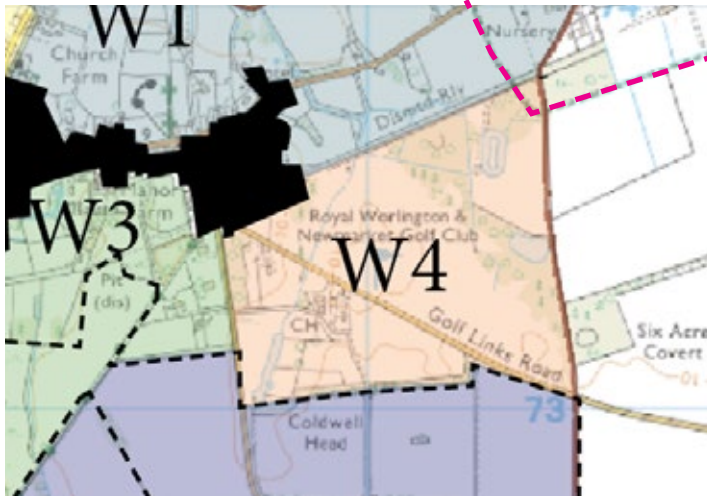
Overall sensitivity indicator:

Landscape Value	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low
Visual Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low

Issues for change management in W3:

- WS197 proposed allocation site is in this character area. It proposes conversion of the farmyard at Maror Farm for residential conversion. This is likely to be acceptable in landscape terms if the conversion maintains the feel of the farmyard, retains key streetscape elements, uses appropriate materials and forms and takes a sensitive approach with regard to the setting of the adjacent heritage asset.
- Conserve and restore ecological value in the County Wildlife Sites. Manage the heathland with traditional methods.
- This land parcel borders the Sunnica solar farm proposal area. The area of the project named 'East B' lies to the south of the green lane. All efforts to sensitively site and screen any panels from the village and rights of way should be pursued.
- Improve legibility of the Green Lane - route is known to locals but not signed for visitors.
- Any development such as infill must retain the pattern of small scale enclosures and maintain the stock of hedgerows and trees.

Rural Character Area W4: Golf Course



Location and underlying landscape type

This is a small character area, roughly rectangular shape, on the east side of the parish. It covers the extents of the Worlington Golf Course on the north side of the Golf Links Road, as well as the zone including the club house on the south side. It also includes a small number of properties in spacious grounds on the village edge lying to the east of Bury Road.

It is in the Suffolk LCA Type 13. Rolling Estate Chalklands

Topography / hydrology / position in the landscape / soils

The underlying landscape is very gently rolling and slopes from the 10m contour in the south to the 5m contour in the north. It features a very shallow stream valley. Landform on the golf course has been modified in places to create undulations and bunkers.

Soils are light and freely draining acidic types.

Two waterbodies are mapped on the east side of the area. The smaller appears to be a reservoir and the larger possibly a fishing lake (??)

Landcover/landuse

The golf course and its margins are mixes of amenity and acid grasslands with scattered trees.

Trees and woodland Cover

This is a well wooded character area with one of the largest single area of mixed woodland in the parish. The edges of the course are defined with mixed native and ornamental tree belts and a spine of pine woodland helps define the fairways. Characteristic pines form the skyline

and oaks are dotted along the Golf Links Road.

There is a large Group TPO covering the curtilage of The Thatched House, NW of the Clubhouse, which includes Corsican Pine, Silver Birch, Willow, Beech, Oak, Poplar and Walnut.

Scale and enclosure

This landscape is of medium-scale, it has an enclosed feel along its wooded edges.

Historic landscape/Time depth

This landscape has been laid out as a golf course since the 1890s. In centuries past, this would have been a mosaic of heathland, in common with much of the landscape of this area.

Settlement interfaces and road network

Golf Links Road provides an attractive approach to the village, offering views across the course. The village ahead cannot be seen, it is assimilated within tree cover. There are many mature trees on both Golf Links and Newmarket Road which help create a distinctive leafy feel with mature tree canopies overhead. There are some large C20th dwellings with big gardens along the village edge which also contribute to the leafy character.

Perceptual experience /tranquillity

A tranquil feel prevails across the golf course area but passing traffic along Golf Links Road clearly adds regular movement and vehicular noise.

Visual experience and views

This character area cannot be seen from within the main village or the wider landscape owing to the tree fringed edges. It has a contained feel offering typical golf course views to passing cars. The pattern of grassland, sandy bunkers and typical Breckland tree species echoes and contributes to the Breckland feel.

Indicators of value and rights of way

East of Golf Links Road, the course is a County Wildlife Site. Many different habitat types can be found on the course, including patches of heathland, acid grassland, improved grassland, ponds and woodland.

There are generally no rights of way across W4, just a short section of footpath No.7 clips the very northeast corner of the area.

W4: Golf Course - Illustrative photo-



Views across
the golf course



View south from the
village edge



W4: Golf Course - Sensitivity and value

LANDSCAPE VALUE FACTORS:		VISUAL SENSITIVITY FACTORS:	
Designations	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: East of Golf Links Road, the course is a County Wildlife Site.	Visual prominence	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Area cannot be seen from within the main village or wider landscape owing to well vegetated boundaries.
Other aspects of landscape value	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: There are a range of habitats and large number of mature trees across the course. Golf course is long established, although modern in landscape terms. A number of individual and group TPOs in the north of the area.	Types of receptors experiencing visual change	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Area visible only from Golf Links Road. With a couple of exceptions - adjoining dwellings, - there are no views in from the village.
Landform	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: Gently sloping, flat feeling landscape, with a little fold towards the north where the stream valley passes through. Golf course levels also artificially manipulated in places.	Tranquillity / activity	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Activity from cars passing at regular intervals along Golf Links Road and movement from golfers on the course but prevailing sense of order and tranquillity.
Pattern/ enclosure & condition	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: Designed landscape. Little evidence of the historic landscape. Intensively managed so landscape in good condition although management for sport rather than, for example, biodiversity.	Aesthetic perception	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Although golf courses do not represent a traditional landscape, this course is attractive and contributes to the Breckland feel.
Settlement edges, & gateways	HIGH / MOD / LOW value Interface with settlement is well vegetated and mature. Distinctive experience of driving right through the golf course followed by sudden arrival into leafy Bury Road.	Vulnerability of key views	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity To be completed

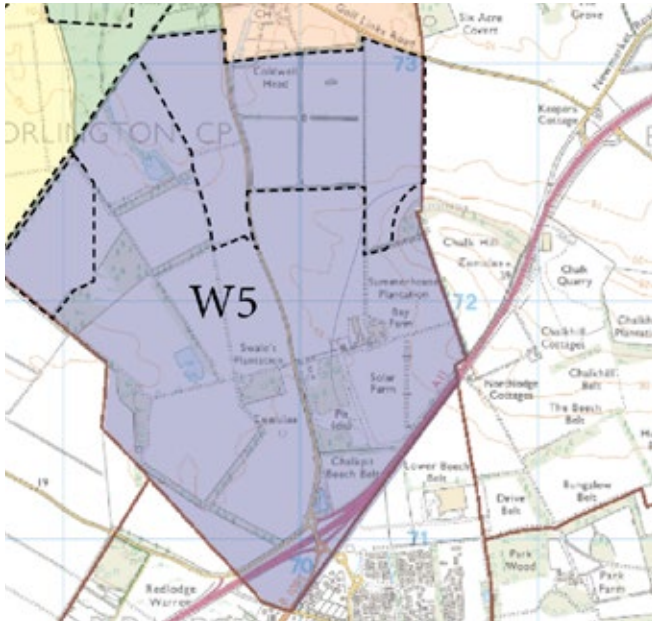
Issues for change management in W4:

- Protect its Breckland character and the visual amenity offered along the approach to the village edge.
- Golf courses today are often under pressure for revenue which could mean looking for release of land for housing in the future. The landscape likely has some capacity for small scale development adjacent to the settlement provided new edges were enclosed with tree belts, in common with the prevailing character.
- Look for opportunities for pedestrian routes and linkages which are lacking in this area.
- Protect the range of habitats - east of Golf Links Road, the course is a County Wildlife Site including heathland, acid grassland, improved grassland, ponds and woodland.
- There maybe opportunities to further enhance the biodiversity value for example through areas of further heathland restoration on the road verges, the course margins. Support any movement to make the management operations more biodiverse and/or sustainable.

Overall sensitivity indicator:

Landscape Value	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low
Visual Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low

Rural Character Area W5: Southern Farmlands & Chalk Hill



Location and underlying landscape type

This is the largest character area in the parish and comprises a block of farmland south of the Green Lane to the parish boundaries and the A11 corridor.

It includes two Suffolk LCAs: 7. Estate Sandlands and 13. Rolling estate chalklands.

Topography / hydrology / position in the landscape / soils

The majority of the area generally feels fairly flat and lies between the 10m and 20m contour, falling gently towards the northwest. An island or finger of chalk escarpment - Chalk Hill - projects into the parish on the east boundary, resulting in a sudden change of slope, the hill tops out at a height of about 39m (just east of the parish boundary). A conifer plantation on its northern flank emphasises its height.

Maps show a number of ponds, Coldwell Head is perhaps spring fed and appears to feed a stream that flows northwest towards the Lark.

Soils are light and freely draining acidic types with more lime-rich loamy soils on Chalk Hill.

Landcover/landuse

Land use is mixed although dominated by arable farming - high value crops and pigs in rotation. There is a solar farm south of Bay Farm, adjacent to the A11, and some commercial land use at Bay Farm. Large sheds here are plainly seen in views in the centre of the character area. There is also a quarry in the west of the area. Structures relating to outdoor pigs are also present - it is an arable landscape interspersed with other uses and activities.

The Sunnica solar farm proposals will affect this character area in the north of the area as

shown by the dashed line above, although much of the land west of Newmarket Road is habitat provision.

Trees and woodland Cover

There are regular blocks and strips of trees providing shelter between the large fields. The character of these is mixed, there are both coniferous plantations and mixed woodland and broadleaf shelter belts. Oaks are a regular roadside tree.

Scale and enclosure

Enclosure is experienced from the hedges and trees that shelter and fringe the farmland, particularly along the roads and tracks. However, the underlying scale of the field system means the overall feel is open with wide open skies above over the large fields. Skylines are always wooded. Some organic shapes underlie the geometry.

Historic landscape/Time depth

Its historic value is limited in terms of built heritage but the surveyor-planned landscape appearance of the Brecklands is a result of centuries-old land management and late enclosure and historically important in its own right.

Settlement interfaces and road network

The Bury Road, hedged or fringed with trees, winds very gently through this character area from the village to the junction with the A11 at Red Lodge. The rest of the tracks and boundaries tend to be very straight and angled, emphasised by rectilinear tree belts.

The interface with the edge of Worlington is very vegetated enclosed by mature trees (the Bury Road entrance is flanked by trees protected by a group TPO on both sides of the road).

Perceptual experience /tranquillity

Tranquillity is limited in this area owing to sights and sounds of Bury Road through the centre, and the A11 on the east side. Commercial scale buildings also reduce the feeling of ruralness experienced in other parts of the parish.

Visual experience and views

The visual experience is of large scale agriculture supplemented with commercial activities. The existing solar farm cannot be seen from the west side - only a glimpse from the A11 is possible.

Indicators of value and rights of way

No heritage features or rights of way within this area but the green lane that defines the northern boundary is an important recreational route and County Wildlife Site.

W5: Southern Farmlands & Chalk Hill - Illustrative photographs

Approach to the
village along
Newmarket Road



Well vegetated
village edge



Chalk Hill seen on the
eastern edge of the parish



W5: Southern Farmlands & Chalk Hill- Sensitivity and value

LANDSCAPE VALUE FACTORS:		VISUAL SENSITIVITY FACTORS:	
Designations	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: No Landscape or heritage designations.	Visual prominence	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Area reasonably visually prominent, and is easily seen to either side of Newmarket Road.
Other aspects of landscape value	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: Area borders a County Wildlife Site which is also a right of way (Green Lane).	Types of receptors experiencing visual change	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Limited to road users and users of the green line who experience intermittent glimpses south into the area.
Landform	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: The distinctive land form of Chalk Hill is a feature of interest.	Tranquillity / activity	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity Whilst Breckland landscapes can feel empty, tranquillity is limited owing to traffic on Newmarket Road and A11.
Pattern/enclosure & condition	HIGH / MOD / LOW value: Late enclosure landscape with little evidence of ancient patterns remaining. Yet distinctive, regular and geometric arrangements with 'Breckland' character.	Aesthetic perception	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity The well wooded fringes of the arable landscape and road network assimilate the infrastructure/quarry/commercial land use reasonably well. Reasonably scenic views.
Settlement edges, & gateways	HIGH / MOD / LOW value Interface with settlement along Newmarket Road is well vegetated and mature. Village is concealed within tree cover and not visible on the approach. Attractive gateway.	Vulnerability of key views	HIGH / MOD / LOW sensitivity

Issues for change management in W5:

- Maximise opportunities to integrate major infrastructure into the landscape. This character area will be subject to change if the Sunnica proposal gets the go ahead, although the parcel proposed to take panels appears to be very well enclosed (the grid of four fields south of the golf club).
- Other solar farm applications could also come forward, given the existing and proposed infrastructure.
- The edges of existing commercial land use would benefit from better integration through planting.
- Manage the impacts of further expansion of commercial land use. Its location alongside the A11 and existing commercial land use at Bay Farm means the adjoining landscape could be subject to further pressure.
- Ensure that the design of any new structural vegetation, associated with screening land use changes, is locally appropriate to the Brecklands character.
- Look to create and link new rights of way because there are none crossing this area. Links into the Green Lane that bounds the area along the north would offer a way to expand recreational opportunities.
- New farm buildings should not be located close to roads - they are characteristically placed back from roads and seen in the middle distance, backed by trees.

Overall sensitivity indicator:

Landscape Value	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low
Visual Sensitivity	Very high	High	Moderate	Modest	Low

8.2 Landscape Guidance

The following points should be considered general design guidance for Worlington, and are in part brought through from work by Sheils Flynn landscape architects in the 'Brecks Landscape Character Assessment' and the 'Brecks Special Qualities' documents undertaken for the Breaking New Ground project.

Relating to settlements....

- Conserve the existing landscape setting of Worlington and avoid coalescence with adjacent villages or with Mildenhall.
- New built development should be well related to existing settlement. Avoid development which would disrupt the characteristic gateway approaches on the east side of the village.
- Conserve wooded skylines and ensure that all views to new development are seen against a backdrop of woodland.
- New development should be designed to the highest standards, using local materials that fit sympathetically with the local vernacular - bricks, with flint and render and clunch.
- Detailed analysis of the potential landscape and impacts of any proposed growth should be subject to site specific assessment.
- Avoid traffic calming measures and signage in rural locations that could have an urbanising effect.

In the rural area....

- Conserve all remaining historic Brecks pine lines and plan replacement strategy
- Integrate new development (together with associated infrastructure in the form of lighting, signage and fencing) with large scale tree planting which relates to and is integrated with existing pattern of tree belts and plantations.
- Farm buildings are typically seen in the middle distance across open fields, backed and framed by woodland. Expansion of farmsteads alongside roads is not characteristic and would be hard to accommodate.
- Integrate new large-scale agricultural or commercial buildings in open countryside

by careful choice of form, orientation and colour. Whenever possible, new buildings should relate to an existing cluster and to existing mature trees and woodlands which can provide a backdrop, along with carefully designed new tree planting to integrate and screen.

- Building materials should be appropriate for the style of existing buildings present. Brick is often used. 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.
- Areas of remnant heathland should be managed in accordance with the detailed prescriptions contained within ecological guidance such as the Breckland Biodiversity Audit.
- Conserve and create new heathland habitats in prominent roadside locations
- Identify sites of high biodiversity value and plan for links to create larger, contiguous networks.
- Design small scale infrastructure such as signage, lighting and interpretation boards with simple forms and appropriate local materials so that it is well integrated within the surrounding landscape. Control the use of visually intrusive and unnecessary lighting or signage.