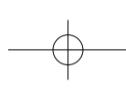
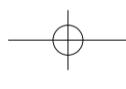




April 2003

# CAMBRIDGE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT







## STATUS OF DOCUMENT

The Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment was presented to Environment Scrutiny Committee in November 2002.

Committee requested further consultation on the Assessment. Following further consultation it was taken to Committee again in January 2003 when the Executive Councillor decided to adopt the Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment as a material planning consideration.



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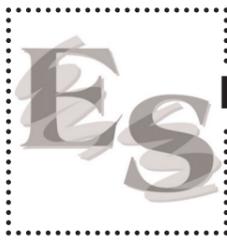
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### A INTRODUCTION

Cambridge has a distinct and remarkable local character but this is under threat from pressures of development. Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia (RPG6) was published in November 2000 and this identified a need for 12,500 new homes to be built in Cambridge by 2016.

To ensure the vital character of the city is maintained, or enhanced, it is essential that a 'baseline' statement of qualities and character is set out and agreed. For this reason a Landscape Assessment of the City has been undertaken.

### B PURPOSE OF THE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

This Cambridge Landscape Assessment has been produced for two main purposes:

- to understand and identify the key resources - the 'Defining Character' - which make up and are essential to the spirit of Cambridge. This indicates areas or features which are so important to the Cambridge environment and setting they should remain undeveloped; and
- to identify and describe the essential character of the townscape and its rural hinterland into Character Types and Character Areas. This will enable judgements to be made to ensure that new development will take account of existing character and where possible achieve environmental or visual improvement.

From this analysis it will be possible to consider more objectively where and how the required development will take place. It has already been used to underpin the evidence given at the Regional Planning Inquiry and in the recently produced Eastern Expansion Study.

### C METHODOLOGY

The Landscape Assessment was carried out by undertaking an extensive literature and information review for the area around Cambridge and a field survey of the area bounded by



the A14 on the north, the M11 to the west and in a line from the Hauxton Road junction, to Addenbrooke's and then in an arc encompassing Cherry Hinton and the airport to the north. The findings were collated and analysed according to established landscape assessment techniques.

## **D SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

Areas of Defining Character are identified in Section 2 of the Assessment. Character Types, Cambridge Character Types and Character Areas are identified and described in detail in Section 3. The main Character Types are as follows:

- **River Corridor;**
- **Green Corridor;**
- **Rural Lowland Mosaic;**
- **City Centre;**
- **Residential areas;**
- **Industrial and Commercial areas; and**
- **Borrowed landscapes.**

The relationship between Defining Character and Character Areas and Character Types is given in Table 1.

## **E FUTURE USE OF THE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT**

The Landscape Assessment study will help us to deliver better quality development and amenity improvements across the city. In particular it will inform:

- **the review of the Green Belt boundary;**
- **the review of the Local Plan; and**
- **the preparation of planning briefs and masterplans.**

It will also inform the preparation of:

- **Character Area Appraisals;**
- **Open space strategy;**
- **Wildlife and Biodiversity Strategy; and**
- **Landscape Framework strategies.**



**F QUALIFICATION FOR USE OF THE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT**

The study area for the Assessment uses, where possible, major physical boundaries, which bear no relationship to political boundaries. Landscape areas are, however, contiguous. Therefore, although the scope of this study encompasses other local authority areas because they are part and parcel of the immediate setting of Cambridge, the findings of this assessment are only intended to inform work carried out for Cambridge City Council.







## INTRODUCTION - CHAPTER 1

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This document brings together the findings of a detailed study into the environment of Cambridge. The Landscape Assessment identifies areas or features in the Cambridge area which should be conserved. It also identifies and describes the character of different landscape types and areas. In this way it will inform the process of choice of location for new development and ensure that new development takes existing character into account in the design and execution of proposals.

#### 1.1 THE CAMBRIDGE ENVIRONMENT

Cambridge is renowned for its history, its association with the University and Colleges and its architecture. However, it is more than this. It is the interlaced mosaic of built area including listed buildings and conservation areas, the colleges and the commons, residential areas, open spaces and gardens, archaeological and historic sites, the infrastructure and urban edge, natural features and habitat which all contribute to the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the City landscape. It sits in largely unexceptional arable lowland, but there are attractive aspects to its setting, and the countryside is never far away. The landscape of Cambridge and its surrounding area is an important but fragile resource.

Cambridge as a whole enjoys a high quality environment. Approximately 4.1million visitors spend some time in Cambridge each year<sup>1</sup>. There are nine Conservation Areas covering approximately one seventh of the City area. Much of the historic core is protected by being within a Conservation Area and many of the buildings are listed for their architectural and historical importance.

The City has a network of open spaces, which take corridors of green semi-natural habitat into the heart of the built-up area. It is a compact City with a strong sense of identity. The City centre is easily walked. There are strong links between the historic core and the suburbs with a ring of neighbourhoods encircling the centre within walking or cycling distance, and beyond to the agricultural hinterland and surrounding villages.

<sup>1</sup> 1999 Data from Tourist Office





Green space, whether it is of value for amenity, wildlife or for agriculture, is often under threat from development. Contact with, or close proximity to, semi-natural habitat and associated wildlife is important for the well being of residents<sup>2</sup> but these spaces are often fragmented and difficult to get to. The agricultural hinterland is generally of good quality soils used for arable monoculture, but which is for the most part low in biodiversity and provides only limited access to the open countryside for recreation. Open views over agricultural land are often significant to the setting of Cambridge and its relationship to the surrounding countryside.

<sup>2</sup> English Nature 1995 Accessible natural greenspace in towns and cities. English Nature Research Report No 153

## 1.2 LANDSCAPE EVOLUTION

Change in the Cambridge landscape has gone hand in hand with the growth of the City<sup>3</sup>. Measured historically the pace and speed of change in the modern day has increased many fold helped by changes in personal mobility. Landscapes which have evolved slowly in relation to land use are now under pressure for change from development which could alter the landscape irreparably in a short number of years.

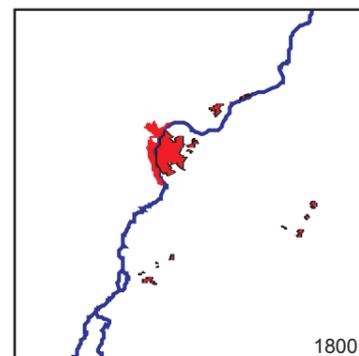
<sup>3</sup> Cambridge City Council 2002 Supporting Technical Appendix to the Landscape Assessment

Early maps and aerial photographs show how the City has grown and in particular how rapid has been the change since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

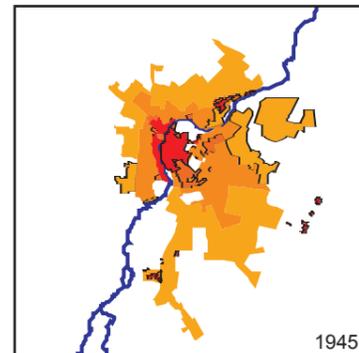
Major increases in the size of Cambridge occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the development of land released in the Enclosure Acts, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the major residential expansions in north and south-east Cambridge. Rapid urban expansion is not a new phenomenon for Cambridge, nor has it necessarily been damaging to the setting of the City. Some of the areas associated with these previous expansions such as the high-density terrace streets of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are now designated as Conservation Areas.

Cambridge is encircled with a Green Belt within which little land is available for new development, forcing it out into the necklace villages and market towns and consequently increasing both peripheral and edge to centre traffic movements. Traffic congestion is a source of atmospheric pollution. The University is expanding its facilities to the west of the City, and there is pressure for more research and development buildings associated with the University and Addenbrooke's.

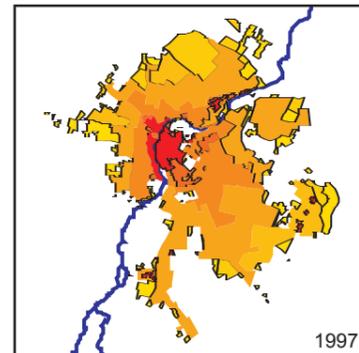
The Green Belt has been successful in its original purpose of protecting the City from additional peripheral development but at the cost of greenfield development elsewhere in villages poorly served by public transport. This is now thought to be unsustainable. Accommodating growth in a sustainable way that protects the existing character and setting of Cambridge will require some difficult choices to be



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made about the future of the City and its Green Belt. These choices are being made as part of the review of the Structure Plan and Local Plans over the period to 2005. The Landscape Assessment is informing this process and will help ensure that Cambridge is allowed to grow in a way that reflects and enhances the character of the City.

### 1.3 SCOPE OF DOCUMENT

Pressures for development and redevelopment could conflict with the conservation and enhancement of the City's heritage and setting. It is important that new development should be located, and be of a standard, that helps to conserve and/or enhance the existing environment or to create an attractive new environment. Otherwise the long-term effect will be to degrade the character of the City.

National policy set out in Planning Policy Guidance 7 (PPG 7)<sup>4</sup> promotes the reinforcement of local distinctiveness to 'assist in accommodating necessary change without sacrificing local character'. Commitment to environmental quality is made in the Cambridge Local Plan (1996). Actions to conserve, enhance and improve the qualities and character of Cambridge's environment depend on an appreciation of the distinctive features that make up the environment and give character to an area. The Council for the Protection of Rural England<sup>5</sup> pointed out that the Local Plan had no policies for safeguarding the countryside for its own sake or its landscape character. The Cambridge Local Plan 1996 went some way to redress this by designating and thus safeguarding areas of Best Landscape and tracts of land with significant environmental value including setting and views.

The Countryside Commission<sup>6</sup> argues that the principle of quality at national, county and regional levels is still strongly supported by government policy. This study considers the merits of all landscapes and re-evaluates areas which are already designated, for instance as Areas of Best Landscape, within the Local Plan. The analysis on which these previous designations were based utilised quantitative techniques. This assessment is based on a descriptive approach based on such factors as geology, topography, social and cultural influences and visual elements.

Landscapes and features that are of special importance to the character of Cambridge and the quality of its contextual setting are referred to as 'Defining Character'. Thus the 'Defining Character' means areas or features that are inextricably associated with what Cambridge is. If the Defining Character was altered or removed, a very vital element of what Cambridge is would be lost. Areas of 'Defining Character' are especially vulnerable to change.

<sup>4</sup> The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic Social Development PPG7 DTLR

<sup>5</sup> Council for the Protection of the Countryside 1992 The Lost Land

<sup>6</sup> Countryside Commission 1993 Landscape Assessment Guidance CCP 423





Chapter 2 identifies 'Defining Character'. It is based on survey data<sup>7</sup>, with a supporting audit of physical and environmental factors which have influenced the region's character and which is given in a Supporting Technical Appendix. 'Defining Character' does not mean that no change or development will be allowed but it does imply that the character of the areas should be sacrosanct.

Chapter 3 defines generic Character Types and Character Areas to accepted national guidelines as outlined by the Countryside Commission<sup>8</sup>. Each Character Type or Area is described, with important features, pressures and opportunities outlined. This indicates ways in which necessary development and the resulting infrastructure requirements can proceed without detracting from the intrinsic qualities of the Character Type, and gives the framework within which there are opportunities to enhance the environment. The relationship between the Defining Character and the Character Types and Areas is given in Table 1.

#### 1.4 STATUS OF DOCUMENT

The Landscape Assessment has a policy framework that is set out in the Supporting Technical Appendix<sup>9</sup>. Much of the work for this Assessment was carried out in the late 1990s, and has informed several policies and proposals of the Environment and Planning Department since then, including the early stages of the decision making about the future growth of the City. It is important that this work is available in the public domain, and given a formal status. It is to be subject to consultation with interested parties, and adopted as a material planning consideration.

The study has also created as an end product a base line audit of the City's landscape which takes the form of photographic, descriptive and mapped information.

#### 1.5 PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

The increasing demand for new development in and around the City will put greater pressure upon its special character. Policy P9/3a<sup>10</sup> of the Structure Plan states that a '*Green Belt will be maintained around Cambridge for the purpose of defining the extent of its urban growth, preserving its unique character, maintaining the quality of its setting and preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with Cambridge*'.

The Landscape Assessment, by considering the merits of all landscapes, provides a description and evaluation of the unique character of Cambridge through the identification of Character Types and Areas. Defining Character identifies the special quality of the setting of Cambridge which should be preserved.

<sup>7</sup> Primarily undertaken in 1996 and updated for subsequent changes

<sup>8</sup> Countryside Commission 1993 Landscape Assessment Guidance CCP 423  
The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002. Landscape Character Assessment. Guidance for England and Scotland.

<sup>9</sup> Cambridge City Council 2002 Supporting Technical Appendix to the Landscape Character Assessment

<sup>10</sup> Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council 2002 Joint Structure Plan Deposit Draft





Its purpose includes:

- Identifying the capacity of landscapes to accommodate new development;
- Identifying landscapes which should be safeguarded;
- Identifying how and where development can take place without a detrimental impact on the character of the City; and
- Identifying areas where opportunities should be sought for environmental enhancement.

The Landscape Assessment study will inform future strategic planning policy and development control decisions that will, taken together, influence the future of Cambridge over the next 20 years.

### **1.5.1 Strategic Planning**

The assessment has already informed the early stages in the consideration of where development can be accommodated on the edge of the city. It has informed the Conservation Area Appraisal and other strategies. It will play a key role in informing:

- The Local Plan Review, the review of the Green Belt and site selection for accommodating the planned expansion of the City;
- The review of policies for conserving and enhancing the quality of the City and to guide the character of new development;
- The preparation of an Open Space Strategy and Wildlife Strategy for the City that takes a holistic perspective on the beneficial qualities afforded by green spaces, integrated use of open spaces to provide recreational opportunities, transport opportunities, and access to semi natural space within a landscape framework;
- Area Appraisals, covering areas of Cambridge that are not Conservation Areas. Similar to the Conservation Area Appraisals these would identify existing character including building ratios, density and street patterns, and a description of features and palettes of materials characteristic of the area to reinforce local distinctiveness and give guidelines for new development;
- Guidelines for the development of key sites, proposals for street enhancement, and topic based studies such as the 'Street Design Guide'. In this way a logical framework from the broad brush of the Landscape Assessment to the site specific is envisaged to guide the future of the City;



- **Help in the identification of areas where Supplementary Planning Guidance may be appropriate to safeguard and or enhance character;**
- **The preparation of Development Briefs. Reference to the Character Types and Areas can be used to ensure that development proposals harmonise with and respect the intrinsic qualities of the locality;**
- **Guide the consideration of planning applications. Future development should both respect local character, and be seen as an opportunity to enhance the visual quality and where appropriate, ecological interest of the area as well as improve accessibility, both City wide and locally; and**
- **Identify opportunities for planning benefits. It is in the north and the east of Cambridge where the majority of the areas of poor environmental quality are found. Due to this, particular attention should be paid to take opportunities to enhance the public realm, make use of open areas to increase recreational opportunities, community facilities, biodiversity and create interesting and safe spaces for people.**
- **Help identify and establish recreational opportunities and improve access to the countryside.**

### **1.5.2 Sustainable City/Local Agenda 21**

A baseline audit of landscape and environmental features can be used to help measure change and monitor LA21 objectives of making our environment and way of living more sustainable. The Landscape Assessment can therefore be used for the following:

- **Identify and measure indicators for Local Agenda 21, Sustainable City and Biodiversity strategies;**
- **As part of an urban Biodiversity Action Plan and as such will be an important contribution to Local Agenda 21 and Sustainable City initiatives;**
- **Enhance community involvement in Local Agenda 21 by developing practical and locally based policies and projects for environmental enhancement. In the spirit of LA21 local people could be involved in, for instance, the creation and long term management of woodland areas, pocket parks and linked pathways and water features;**
- **Contribute toward a biological record centre for Cambridge, encouraging local people to identify plants or animals sighted in their area, or to provide information on, for instance, migrating birds; and finally**
- **Support community initiatives such as the recent proposals to create new 'parkland' to the west of Cambridge or make open space more accessible.**



## DEFINING & SUPPORTING CHARACTER

### 2.1 DEFINING CHARACTER

This following section describes the Defining Character of Cambridge. This is similar to the approach used for the Winchester study<sup>11</sup> and the Chester study<sup>12</sup>, and which has been further developed into 'Quality of Life Capital'<sup>13</sup> approach.

All areas have a historic perspective of development with contributes to a distinctive character of place. In this study the term 'Defining Character' represents key resources that are essential to the special qualities of Cambridge and its setting. If these resources were jeopardised or removed Cambridge and its setting would be compromised. Defining Character identifies the areas in setting and character terms that are consistent with one of the defined purposes of Green Belts<sup>14</sup> - *'to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns'*. RPG6 requests *'a review of the Cambridge Green Belt should be carried out.... the review should start from the vision of the City and of the qualities to be safeguarded'*. The Defining Character approach is consistent with this planning guidance.

The built heritage and associated spaces, planned landscape, open spaces, woodland, trees and wildlife habitats, agricultural hinterland, the river and the recreational use and amenity value of the area in and around Cambridge are highly valued. Where identified as Defining Character they are regarded as so closely associated with Cambridge and what makes it distinctive, they are irreplaceable and should be regarded as 'sacrosanct'. In this context it means important elements and features which make up the singular character of the City and its setting should be conserved. There should generally be a presumption against development which does not respect existing character. Any small-scale new development should take account of, and preserve, the essence of the character and qualities of the area, or improve upon them.

The elements which make up the Defining Character are outlined below. In Chapter 3 each Character Type and or Area is described, and the main issues affecting it are considered, including whether part or the whole can be considered as a Defining Character of Cambridge and thus whether the quality and essential character should be conserved and not jeopardised by inappropriate development. This relationship between Character Types, Areas and 'Defining Character' is given in Table 1.

<sup>11</sup> Winchester City and its setting. 1998. Winchester City Council

<sup>12</sup> Chester. The Future of an Historic City. 1994. Chester City Council

<sup>13</sup> Quality of Life Capital. Managing environmental, social and economic benefits. 2001. English Heritage, Environment Agency, The Countryside Agency and English Nature

<sup>14</sup> Green Belts (PPG 2) DTLR

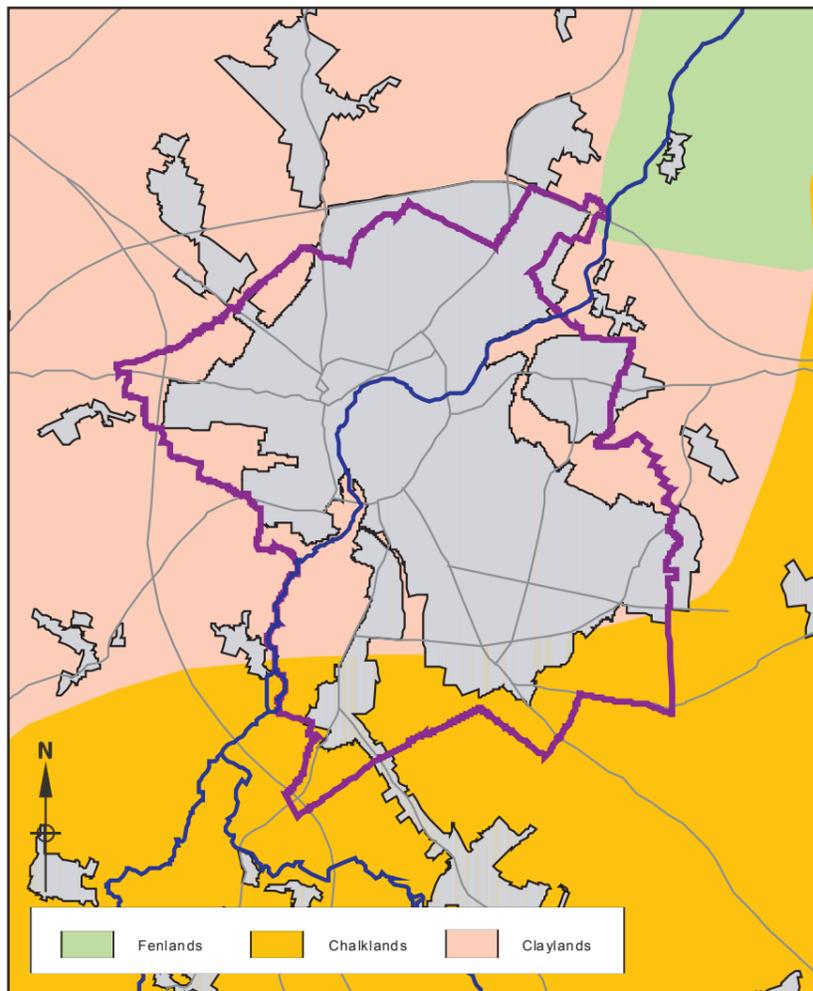




## 2.2 NATIONAL CHARACTER AREAS

Cambridge strides the boundaries of three Character Areas as defined by the Countryside Agency and English Nature - the East Anglian Chalk, the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands and the Fenlands. The interface between Cambridge and the surrounding countryside is described more fully in a Supporting Technical Appendix.

- The Chalklands to the south east rise to 74m at Wandlebury and from which there are extensive views of the City and surrounding countryside. The high ground and open countryside close to the City centre is a highly valued resource;
- The Claylands to the west are typically open, rolling countryside rising to a height of about 60m close to Madingley. There are good views across to the City from the west and south west of Cambridge;
- The Fenlands to the north east where the most obvious character is the low-lying terrain - mostly below the 10m contour.



From the Countryside Agency 1999. Countryside Character. East of England

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Although in themselves these Areas are not Defining Character for Cambridge they are an important influence upon the setting, topography, views, and land uses of the City area. The very fact that Cambridge sits across the boundaries of three National Character Areas adds to the diversity and richness of landscape, ecology, development patterns and associations, and this diversity is an intrinsic part of the Cambridge character.

### **2.3 DEFINING CHARACTER OF THE CITY AND ITS SURROUNDINGS**

Cambridge is a contained collegiate city in a rural setting. The notion of the countryside being close by and accessible to people is an important one. The rural hinterland is especially close to the west of the City centre but nowhere in Cambridge is very far from the countryside or the green corridors which link it to the City centre. Combined these give the perception of compactness and accessibility to rural space.

Arriving in Cambridge provides a strong sense of anticipation and association with the City for the visitor and can result in evocative memories. Sense of arrival is not a physical entity, but is intrinsically bound up with other characteristics. It is closely connected with the idea of compactness, and with views and edges.

Compactness and sense of arrival should therefore be considered in conjunction with other characteristics to make an assessment as to whether the sum total is regarded as Defining Character. For instance the arrival from the chalk hills to the south-east dropping down from the higher land and where there are expansive views to the City are part of the Defining Character of the setting and views. Similarly the views across from the Grantchester area are so special and evocative of Cambridge they are part of the Defining Character of the setting and views.

Where the edges are positive, and the City is anticipated by glimpsed and distinctive views to the skyline or landmarks, this is a Defining Character of views and setting. Conversely, edges that are adjacent to major distributor roads, or adjacent to degraded landscapes or detracting views are negative.

The notion of compactness is common to many towns and cities and sense of arrival is common to all urban areas. Although intrinsic to the quality of Cambridge it is not possible to delineate. The 'Defining Character' of Cambridge is therefore restricted to physical features as follows:



- **Buildings and Historic Core;**
- **Green Fingers and Corridors;**
- **Water courses and bodies;**
- **Open Green Spaces within the City;**
- **Setting and Views of the City Skyline; and**
- **Separation.**

### 2.3.1 Buildings and The Historic Core

Cambridge historic core has developed around the river Cam. The character of the City is essentially a market town with grand, historic, mostly collegiate buildings, set side by side vernacular buildings of much lesser scale within a tight pattern of narrow streets. The historic core is Defining Character.

There are approximately 1600 listed buildings in Cambridge. Those most closely and intrinsically associated with Cambridge are Defining Character.

There are nine Conservation Areas within the City. Some areas within these - those most closely associated with Cambridge, the College Backs and King's Parade for instance, are Defining Character.

The Historic Core and Conservation Areas are dealt with in much more detail in other studies<sup>15</sup>.

### 2.3.2 Green Fingers and Corridors

Amongst the most important features of Cambridge are the green fingers and corridors that sweep in from the rural hinterland to the heart of the City. The Backs is one of the archetype landscapes here. The corridors provide a landscape framework for the whole City and Cambridge owes much of its very special character to the way these spaces penetrate the urban fabric and the unique association between the built spaces and green space. Many of the adjacent urban areas owe much of their character to green corridors. Policy P9/3b of the Deposit Draft Structure Plan<sup>16</sup> emphasises the importance to ensuring *'the protection of the green corridors running from open countryside into the urban area'*.

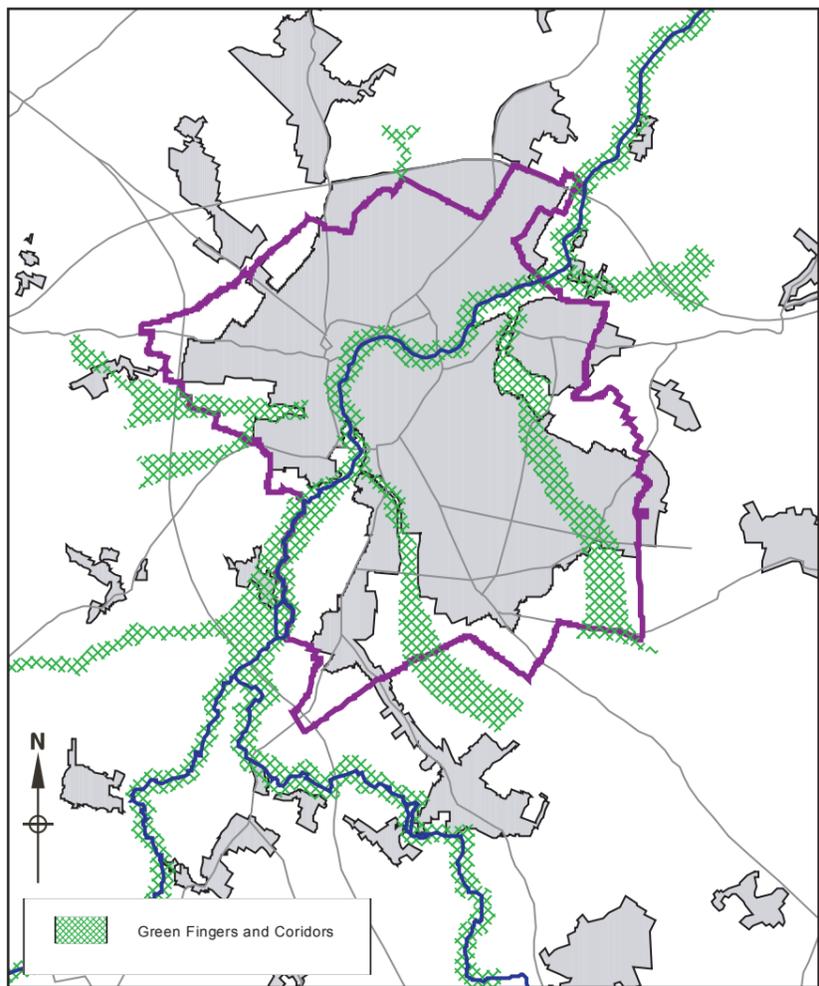
The distinction between the urban and rural edge is blurred as the green landscape penetrates through the City. The two are considered together - City and setting - as contributing to the elements that make up the Defining Character. The green corridors are:

<sup>15</sup> Cambridge City Council Conservation Area Appraisals. Trumpington, Mill Road and St Matthew's Area, Newnham Croft, The Kite and Southacre. Conservation Area Appraisal for the Historic Core in progress

<sup>16</sup> Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council 2002 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Structure Plan Review. Deposit Draft Plan 2002



- The green space that sweeps in along the corridor of the Cam from the south-west linking the claylands with the fenlands to the north-east. It consists of a string of major open spaces, mostly Commons, encircling the City centre which relate and give a setting to the historic City core;
- The Vicar's Brook and Hobson's Brook corridor extending from the Nine Wells area to the south of the City, north through Empty Common to the River Cam;
- East Cambridge Corridor which links the complex of chalkland sites important for nature conservation around Lime Kiln with Cherry Hinton Hall, Blue Circle, Coldham's Common and eventually the Fenlands to the north-east;
- The western corridor which is bifurcated and runs in towards the historic core following linear features such as the Bin Brook, the Coton footpath hedge and other hedges and ditches; and
- The Mere Way in north Cambridge which is a linear wooded area following the Roman Road.



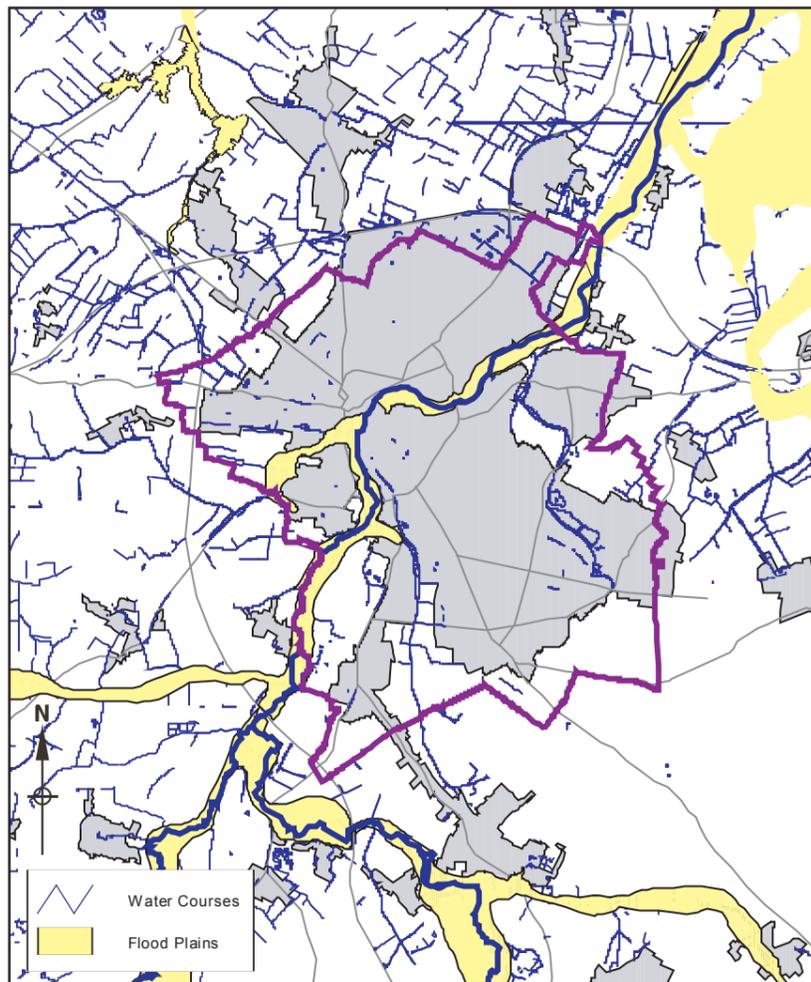
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### 2.3.3 Water Courses and Bodies

With the proximity of the Fenlands and the heavy slow draining claylands, water is a major element associated with the Cambridgeshire countryside. The river courses and associated flood plains are important environmental features. In addition to the Cam, Granta and Rhee there are many ditches and streams, especially in the fenlands and claylands. Ponds are also characteristic of west Cambridge. Spring fed streams, are an important feature of the chalklands. Water bodies and their associated riverside trees, wetland habitat and floodplain are regarded as Defining Character.



### 2.3.4 Open Green Spaces within the City

The open spaces that follow the major green corridors are already identified as Defining Character as Green Fingers and Corridors.

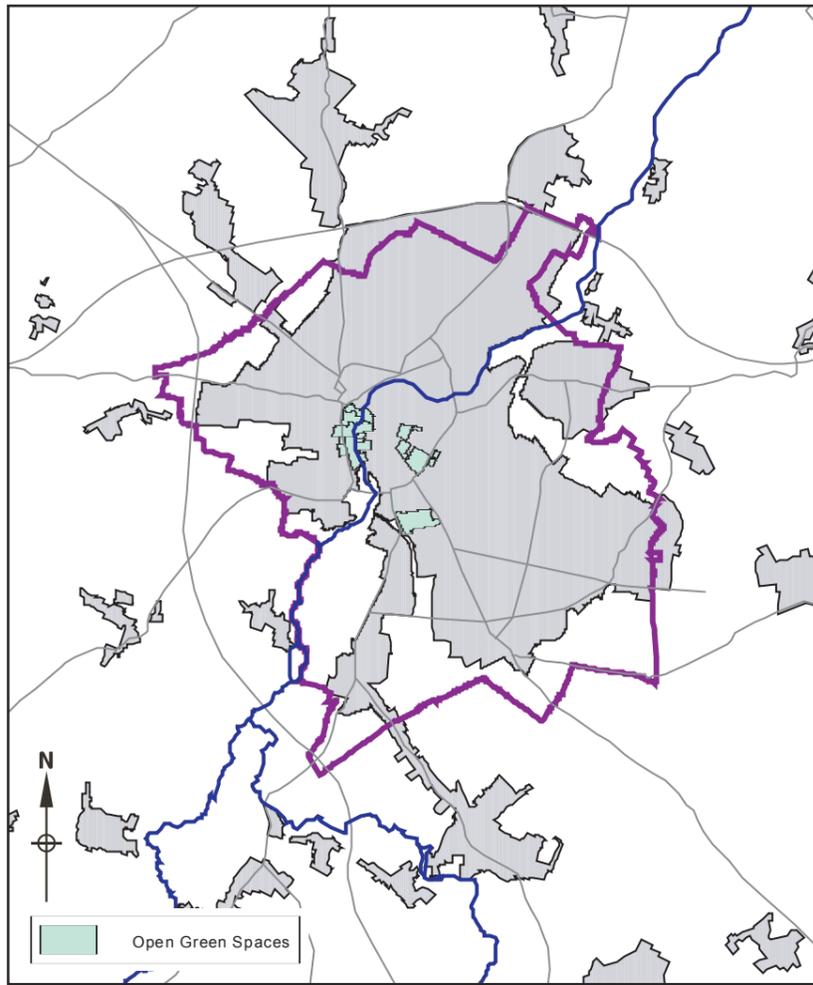
Other spaces that are an intrinsic part of the built historic core or that have cultural or significant historical connections such as:





- Parker's Piece;
- Christ's Pieces and New Square;
- Botanic Garden;
- The ribbon of green land along Hobson's Conduit in front of Brookside; and
- Historic Parks and Gardens.

are all Defining Character.



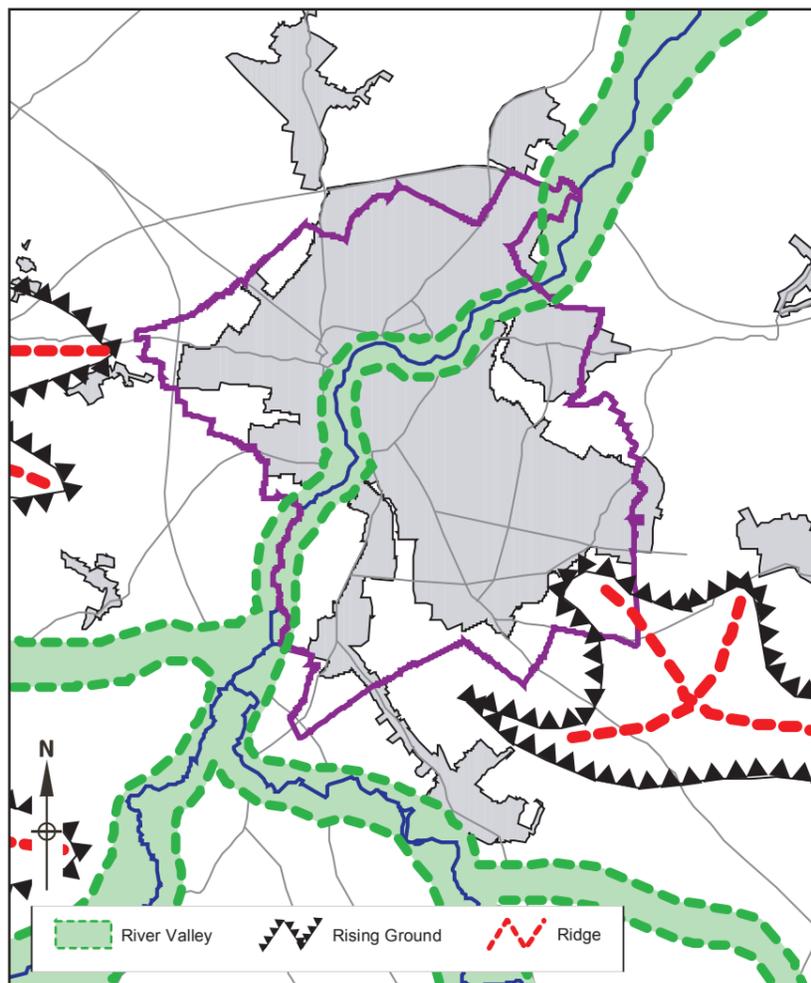
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### 2.3.5 Setting

The topography of the area is a direct consequence of the geology and one of the important characteristics of Cambridge is the relationship between the City and its rural setting and the notion of a contained town sitting in a bowl of generally low lying landscape with higher ground to the south east, south and west and low lying fen and clay lands to the north and east. High ground overlooking the Cambridge bowl has a very limited capacity to accept



development without a major negative impact to the City setting. High ground is therefore regarded as Defining Character.



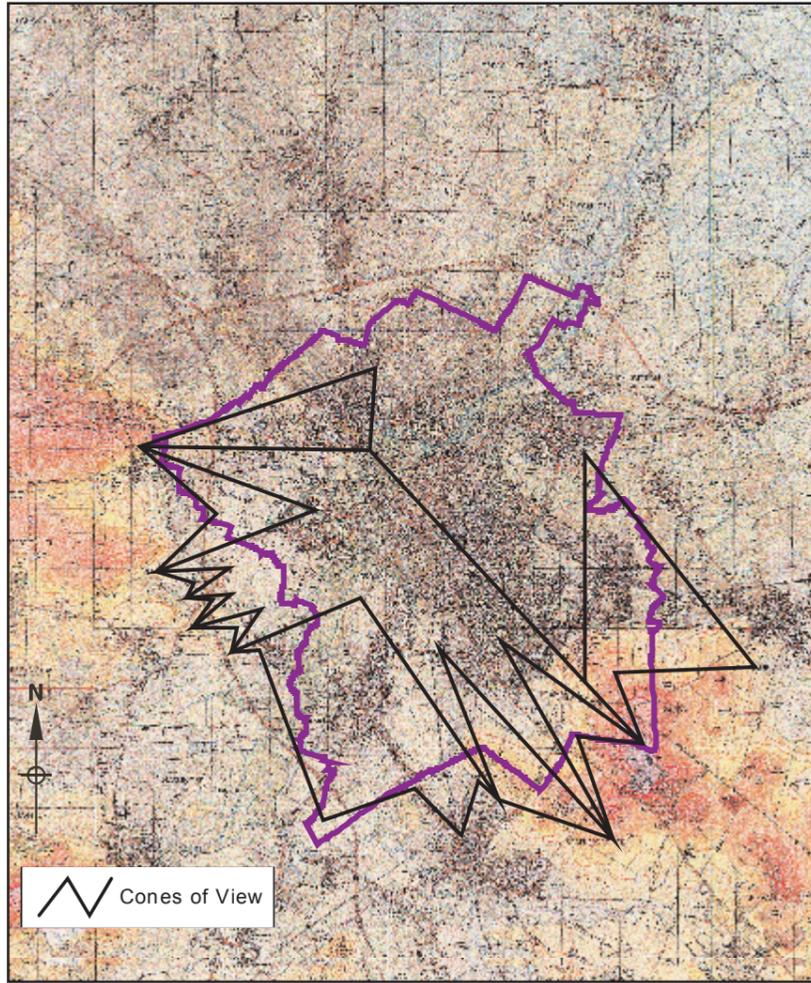
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### 2.3.6 Views of the City Skyline

Views from the south and west towards the City skyline are particularly evocative, and in a relatively flat landscape, unusual. The main landmark buildings on the City skyline are Schlumberger, the University Library, Kings's College Chapel, St John's Chapel, the Catholic Church, All Saints on Jesus Lane, St Luke's, the Museum of Technology, the mill buildings at the station and Addenbrooke's Hospital and are visible from a variety of locations. Cones of view considered important are given in the Local Plan and are regarded so important to the character of Cambridge to be regarded as Defining Character.

There are important views into Cambridge from some major transport routes nearby such as the M11 and A14. Certain parts of this countryside, such as the high ground of the chalk hills to the south-east and views from the south west, or areas where there are exceptional views especially

important to and characteristic of Cambridge, both into and out from the City, are regarded as Defining Character of Cambridge.



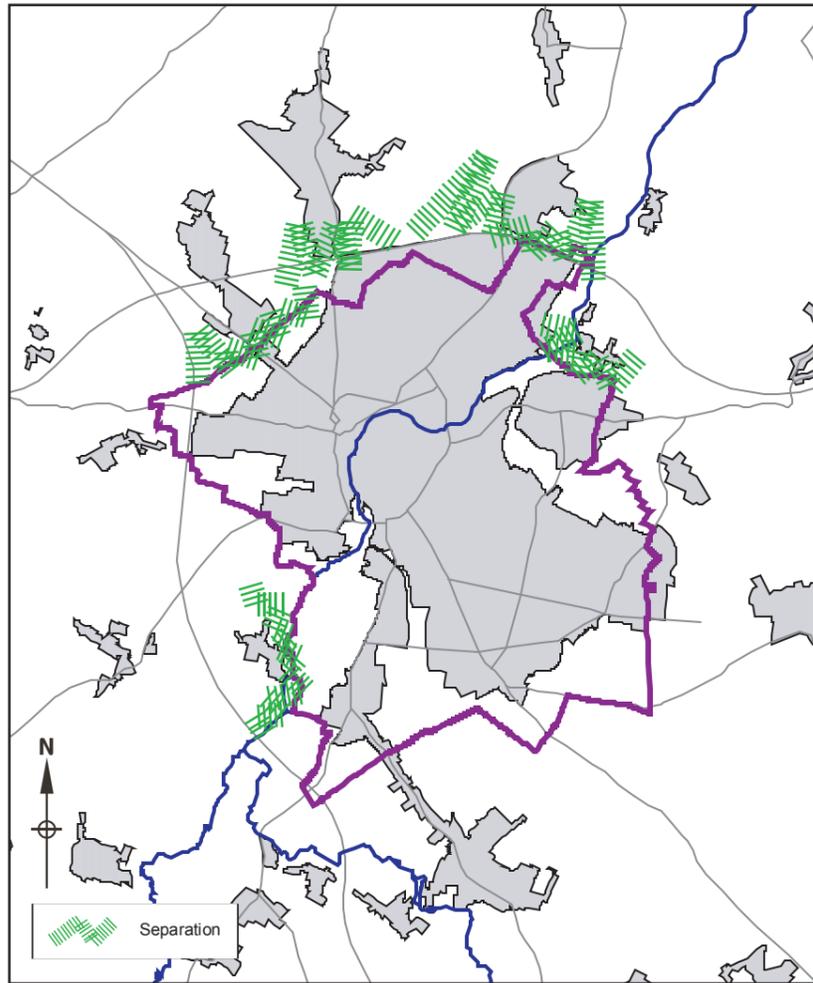
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### 2.3.7 Separation

Policy 9/3b in the Draft Deposit Structure Plan<sup>17</sup> states that one of the main purposes in maintaining the Green Belt is '*preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with Cambridge*'. Where the separation between the City and the necklace villages is much reduced, the remaining areas represent Defining Character.

Areas between communities should be assessed and the minimum amount of actual separation required to ensure there is no perception of one community merging with another should be evaluated. The analysis will be based on a number of factors such as topography and vegetation cover. The minimum distance to ensure the perception of separation should remain sacrosanct.

<sup>17</sup> Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough District Council 2002 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Structure Plan Review Deposit Draft 2002



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## 2.4 SUPPORTING CHARACTER OF THE CITY AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The adopted meaning of 'Defining Character' precludes features and areas which are also very important to Cambridge and its character, but not so important that their removal or development would completely change the distinctive character of Cambridge. The importance of these areas are defined as 'Supporting Character'. Where features are identified as Supporting Character they are regarded as very important to the character of Cambridge. This importance should be a material consideration and new development should take account of these characters, and where possible conserve or improve upon existing character.



The supporting areas include:

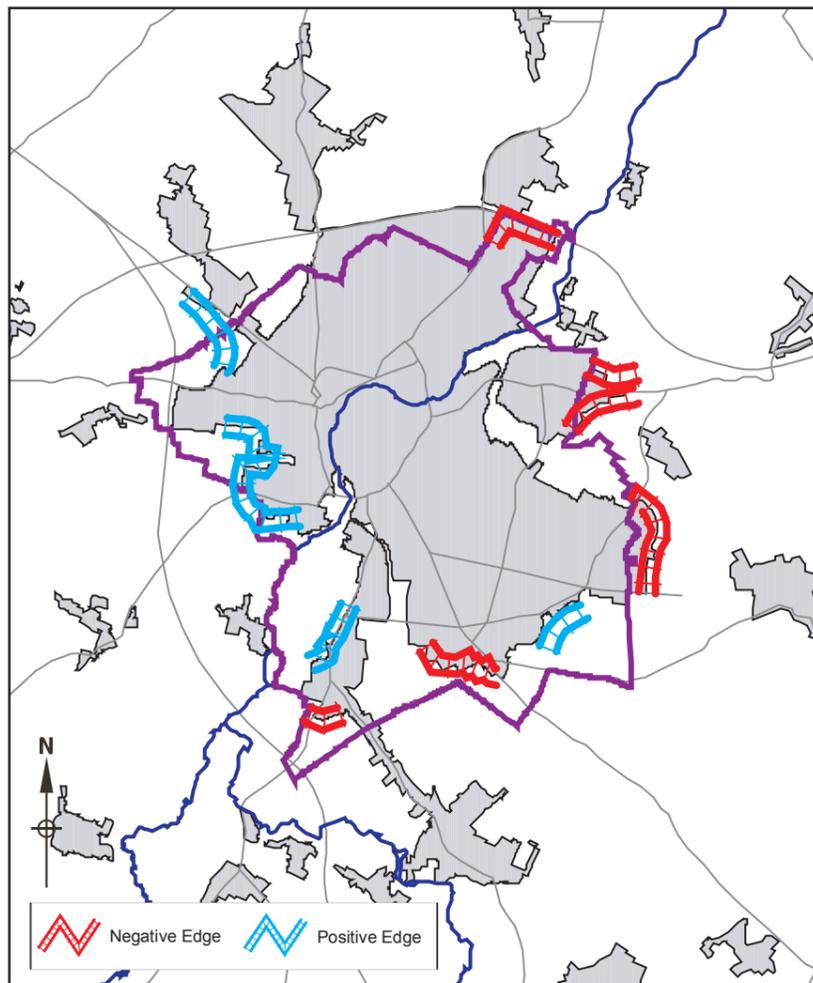
- Edges;
- Local Open Spaces;
- Local Views;
- Archaeology;
- Ecology, Natural History; and
- Ancient Woodland, Tree Cover, Hedgerows and Veteran Trees.

### 2.4.1 Edges

In most areas there is a distinct separation between the City and its rural setting. The character and quality of the rural landscape and the urban interface is variable. Areas where the built edge is framed within a treed or hedged landscape or which afford views of the City skyline or to landmark buildings are regarded as making a high quality, positive, contribution to Cambridge and its setting. Examples of such edges are found in west Cambridge, parts of south-west Cambridge and south-east Cambridge. Edges that are abrupt and lack tree cover or hedgerows or which are adjacent to degraded landscapes, major arterial roads or detracting views are regarded as negative assets.

Edges on their own are not considered as Defining Character as they are, by and large, recreatable. Edges should be considered in conjunction with other characteristics to make an assessment as to whether they are Defining Character. If positive edges are not regarded as Defining Character, at the very least, they should be recreated in any future development.





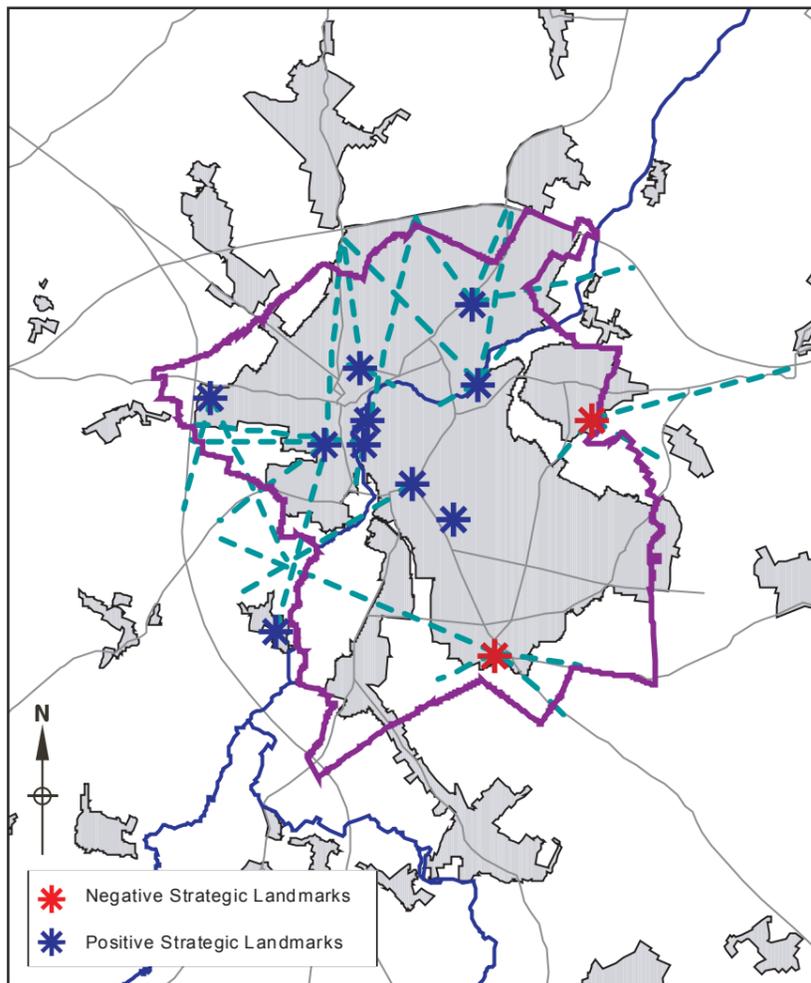
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### 2.4.2 Local Open Spaces

Other spaces in Cambridge have considerable merit and make substantial contribution to the character of the locality and/or the setting of Cambridge. For instance the Mill Road Cemetery and other cemeteries, allotments and the college playing fields to the west of Cambridge are not in themselves Defining Character, but their importance to the general setting and character and to the notion of the compact City should not be underestimated.

### 2.4.3 Local Views

As already detailed, important views from the rural hinterland to the City are Defining Character. There are also important views that are significant to the character of Cambridge into and within the urban fabric and out to the rural hinterland. Important landmarks may be visible at a local scale such as fine panoramic views to church spires and towers, college and other buildings. Distinction should be made between positive and negative or detracting landmarks. Although not important enough to be regarded as Defining Character, they are certainly important to the fabric of the City and are Supporting Character.



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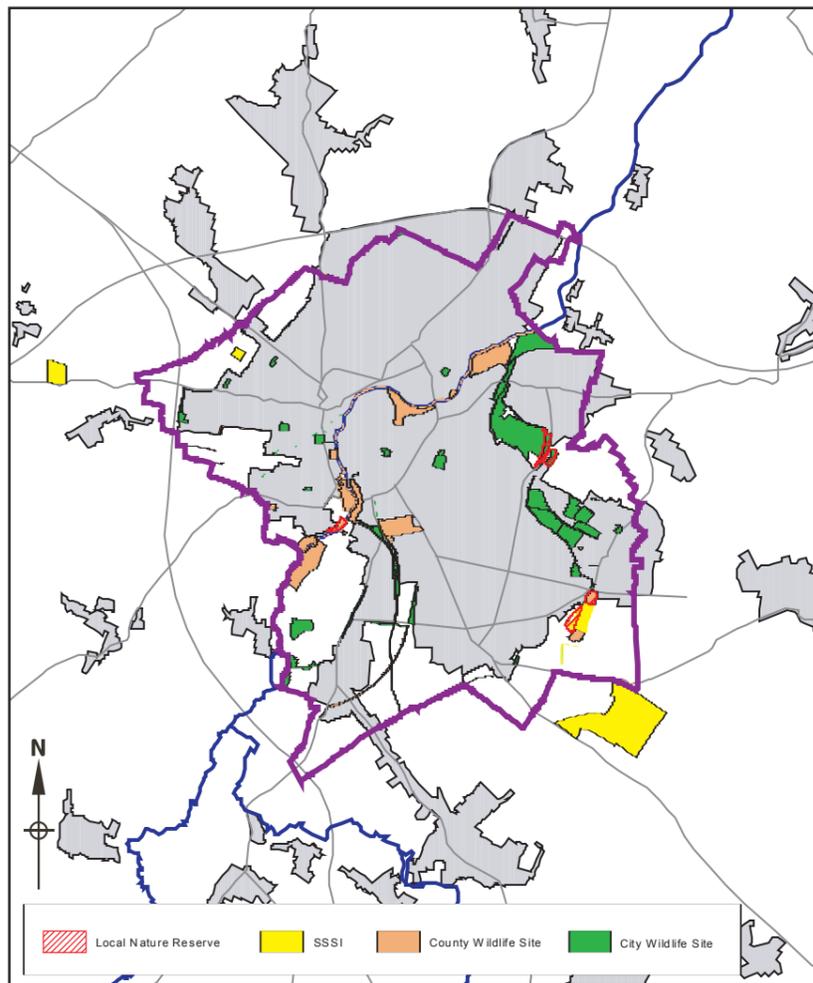
#### **2.4.4 Archaeology**

The City has a considerable history and therefore a wealth of historic artifacts and archaeology. These are of considerable value to the historic perspective and character of the City and their worth to the City should not be underestimated. However they are not in themselves within the strict definition of Defining Character and are regarded as Supporting Character.

#### **2.4.5 Ecology, Natural History and Landscape Structure**

There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest in Cambridge, and several close to its boundary. Within the City there are four Local Nature Reserves. There are 15 County Wildlife Sites, and 49 City Wildlife Sites.

These features do not necessarily accord with the strict definition of Defining Character. Where there are special cultural or social links such as at Lime Kiln Close, or when located within Defining Character areas, they become Defining Character by association. Otherwise these are Supporting Character.



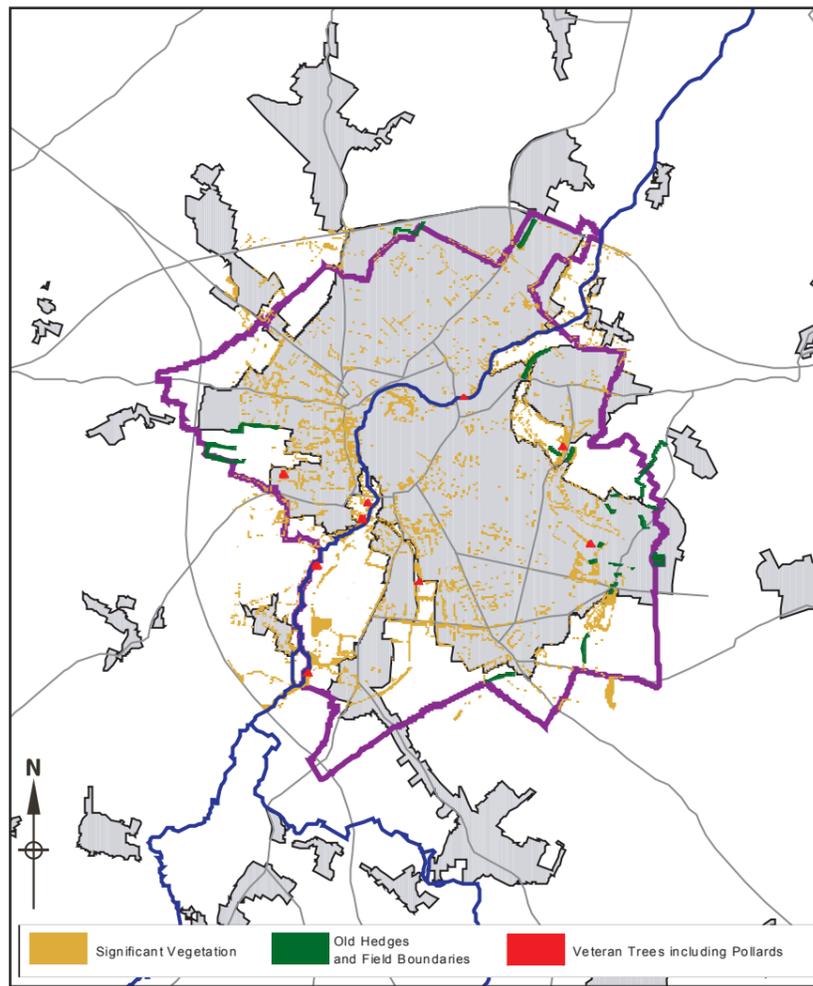
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#### **2.4.6 Ancient Woodland, Tree Cover, Hedgerows and Veteran Trees**

There are no ancient woodlands within the City, but there are some in close proximity to the City limits. These are a scarce resource and contribute to the landscape and amenity of the City. Although these cannot be regarded under the strict definition of Defining Character they are of considerable worth to Cambridge. It would not be possible to recreate this resource.

Cambridge is essentially a well-treed City and the tree belts and avenues that are characteristic of many streets are an important part of the City's character. They are not in themselves Defining Character, but their summed contribution to the City's environment is immeasurable. They are Supporting Character. Where they coincide with major green spaces, setting or views for instance they become by association Defining Character.

Veteran trees and ancient hedgerows associated with early field pattern or where these are of significance in the landscape, they are Supporting Character. It would not be possible to recreate this resource.



## 2.5 CAMBRIDGE CHARACTER TYPES AND CHARACTER AREAS

This following sections on Character Types and Areas follows the principles of the process of Landscape Character Assessment<sup>18</sup> developed over the last 20 years and most recently described by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage. This document defines terms. A Character Type is a generic term for areas that have '*a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.*' They are generic because they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country. They possess a sense of place characterised by elements of landscape, architecture or layout held in common. For example River Corridor - Open Rural is a Character Type. The Types purposely do not represent a continuous entire unique geographical area such as 'the Kite' or 'Cherry Hinton'.

A Character Area is a discrete geographical area that is unique. So for example the area to the south-west of Cambridge in the River Corridor - Open Rural Character

<sup>18</sup> The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002 Landscape Character Assessment. Guidance for England and Scotland



Type is a unique landscape to Cambridge, and is therefore a Character Area. Where an area is unique it is described as a Character Area. It is recognised<sup>19</sup> that the end product of characterisation will usually be a map of character types and/or areas and the two can co-exist.

Some or all of the following criteria have been considered when describing and defining the Character Type and Area - location, historic development and form, context and influences, views, landscape types, habitats, vitality, landmarks, memorable places and building groups, local building materials and colour palette.

Cambridge has been divided into Landscape Character Types and Areas. This local level designation was based on the map of the Character of England<sup>20</sup> and the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines<sup>21</sup> in conjunction with the desktop and field survey. Local Landscape Character Areas identified by South Cambridgeshire District Council<sup>22</sup> were also considered. The relationship with other over arching frameworks will be helpful in establishing and justifying sound strategies for future land use change.

The boundaries between the Character Types are not always distinct or abrupt, often overlap and can share some common characteristics. Although it is necessary to show divisions to illustrate the areas in map form, no attempt has been or should be made to precisely define boundaries.

The relationship between 'Defining Character', Character Types, and Areas is given in the following Table. The opportunity to amalgamate Cambridge Character Areas into a more generic description of Character Types has been taken where possible to simplify the presentation of characteristics, pressures and opportunities common to the areas. In Chapter 3 each Character Type and or Area is described, and the main issues affecting it are considered, including whether part or the whole can be considered as a Defining Character of Cambridge and thus whether the quality and essential character should be conserved and not jeopardised by inappropriate development.

<sup>19</sup> The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002 Landscape Character Assessment. Guidance for England and Scotland

<sup>20</sup> Countryside Commission and English Nature Countryside 1996 The Character of England Map. Landscape, wildlife and natural features

<sup>21</sup> Cambridgeshire County Council 1991 Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines

<sup>22</sup> South Cambridgeshire District Council 1998 Cambridge Green Belt Landscape Study by David Brown Landscape Design



CHARACTER TYPE	CAMBRIDGE CHARACTER TYPE	CAMBRIDGE CHARACTER AREA	'DEFINING / SUPPORTING CHARACTER'	POSITIVE CHARACTER FEATURES	NEGATIVE CHARACTER FEATURES AND OPPORTUNITIES	
<b>3.1 RIVER CORRIDOR</b>	Open rural	South West	DEFINING CHARACTER	Setting, Separation, Views, Green Corridor, Environmental Features		
		North East	DEFINING CHARACTER	Setting, Separation, Views, Green Corridor, Environmental Features		
	Commons	Ditton Meadows	DEFINING CHARACTER	Setting, Separation, Views, Green Corridor, Environmental Features		
		Stourbridge	DEFINING CHARACTER	Setting, Views, Green Corridor, Environmental Features		
		Midsummer	DEFINING CHARACTER	Views, Green Corridor, Environmental Features		
		Jesus Green	DEFINING CHARACTER	Views, Green Corridor, Environmental Features		
		LLamas Land, Sheep's Green	DEFINING CHARACTER	Views, Green Corridor, Environmental Features		
		Paradise	DEFINING CHARACTER	Views, Green Corridor, Environmental Features		
	Urban Edge	College boatyards	DEFINING CHARACTER	Views, Green Corridor, Environmental Features, Unique		
		Riverside	SUPPORTING CHARACTER	Conservation Area. Relationship between river and built form. Industrial history		
			Water Street	NO		May be opportunities for environmental enhancement and increased opportunities for riverside access
			Quayside	SUPPORTING CHARACTER	Well used riverside space - only public hard space beside river	
			College Backs	DEFINING CHARACTER	Views, Green Corridor, Environmental Features, Unique	
			Hobson's Brook / Vicar's Brook	DEFINING CHARACTER	Setting, Green corridor, Environmental Features, wildlife	

CHARACTER TYPE	CAMBRIDGE CHARACTER TYPE	CAMBRIDGE CHARACTER AREA	'DEFINING / SUPPORTING CHARACTER'	POSITIVE CHARACTER FEATURES	NEGATIVE CHARACTER FEATURES AND OPPORTUNITIES
<b>3.2 GREEN CORRIDOR</b>	East Corridor	Limekiln Hill	DEFINING CHARACTER	Setting, Green Corridor, Environmental Features, Wildlife	
		Cherry Hinton Hall	DEFINING CHARACTER	Green Corridor, Environmental Features, Wildlife	
		Blue Circle	SUPPORTING CHARACTER	Green Corridor, Environmental Features, Wildlife	Brown Field Site. Partly degraded landscape with great potential
		Coldham's Common	DEFINING CHARACTER	Green Corridor, Environmental Features	
		Barnwell Junction	DEFINING CHARACTER	Green Corridor, Environmental Features	

<b>3.3 RURAL LOWLAND MOSAIC</b>		Northern Fringe	NO	Historic routeway with associated ancient hedgerows, wildlife	Degraded landscape. Environmental enhancement. Potential association with green river corridor
		West Claylands	Parts are 'DEFINING CHARACTER'	Setting, Views, Green corridor, Environmental Features	
		Chalklands	Parts are 'DEFINING CHARACTER'	Setting, Views, Environmental features. High Ground, important views	
		Eastern Transition	NO	Some features such as ancient hedgerows and veteran trees	Monotonous landscape. Possibility of Environmental enhancement and association with green corridor
		Southern Fringe	Parts are 'DEFINING CHARACTER'	Setting, Views	

CHARACTER TYPE	CAMBRIDGE CHARACTER TYPE	CAMBRIDGE CHARACTER AREA	'DEFINING / SUPPORTING CHARACTER'	POSITIVE CHARACTER FEATURES	NEGATIVE CHARACTER FEATURES AND OPPORTUNITIES
<b>3.4 CITY CENTRE</b>		Historic Core	DEFINING CHARACTER	Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Unique	

<b>3.5 RESIDENTIAL</b>	Ancient Village Core	Trumpington, Chesterton, Cherry Hinton	Parts are 'DEFINING CHARACTER' otherwise 'SUPPORTING CHARACTER'	Substantial contribution to the character of Cambridge	
	Pre 1900 Terraces		SUPPORTING CHARACTER parts such as important open spaces or exceptional buildings may be DEFINING CHARACTER	Substantial contribution to the character of Cambridge	
	Pre 1900 large Terraces		SUPPORTING CHARACTER parts such as important open spaces or exceptional buildings may be DEFINING CHARACTER	Substantial contribution to the character of Cambridge	
	Villas and Modern Movement		SUPPORTING CHARACTER parts such as exceptional individual buildings may be DEFINING CHARACTER	Substantial contribution to the character of Cambridge	

CHARACTER TYPE	CAMBRIDGE CHARACTER TYPE	CAMBRIDGE CHARACTER AREA	'DEFINING / SUPPORTING CHARACTER'	POSITIVE CHARACTER FEATURES	NEGATIVE CHARACTER FEATURES AND OPPORTUNITIES
<b>3.5 RESIDENTIAL contd</b>	Post 1900 suburb		No		Possible environment enhancement opportunities to enrich amenity and character
	Post War		NO		Possible environment enhancement opportunities to enrich amenity and character
<b>3.6 INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL</b>	Railway Corridor		NO where disused railway lines have significant wildlife interest may be SUPPORTING CHARACTER		Possible environment enhancement opportunities to enrich amenity and character
	Road Corridor		Where road verges have significant wildlife interest may be SUPPORTING CHARACTER		Possible environment enhancement opportunities to enrich amenity and character
	Quarries and Brick Pits		No where there is significant wildlife interest - may be SUPPORTING CHARACTER		Possible environment enhancement opportunities to enrich amenity and character
<b>3.7 BORROWED LANDSCAPES</b>	Colleges		DEFINING CHARACTER	Some Listed buildings, Conservation Areas, Unique Substantial contribution to the character of Cambridge	
	Parklands and Gardens		DEFINING CHARACTER listed 2.3.4	Substantial contribution to the character of Cambridge	
	Playing Fields		No but some may be SUPPORTING CHARACTER	Substantial contribution to the character of Cambridge	
	Church yards and cemeteries		SUPPORTING CHARACTER	Substantial contribution to the character of Cambridge	



## CHARACTER TYPES & AREAS

This chapter deals with the Character Types and Areas that have been identified in Cambridge.

- River Corridor
  - Open Rural
  - Commons
  - Urban Edge
  - College Backs
  - Hobson's Brook, Vicar's Brook
  
- Green Corridor
  - Coldham's Brook, Cherry Hinton Brook
  
- Rural Lowland Mosaic
  - Northern Fringe
  - West Cambridge Claylands
  - Chalklands
  - Eastern Transition
  - Southern Fringe
  
- The City Centre
  
- Residential
  - Ancient Village Cores
  - Pre 1900 Residential - Terraces
  - Pre 1900 Residential - Large Terrace Houses
  - Villas and Modern Movement
  - Post 1900 Suburb
  - Post War
  
- Industrial and Commercial
  - Railway Corridor
  - Road Corridor
  - Quarries and Brick Pits
  
- Borrowed Landscapes
  - Colleges,
  - Gardens,
  - Playing fields
  - Church Yards and Cemeteries

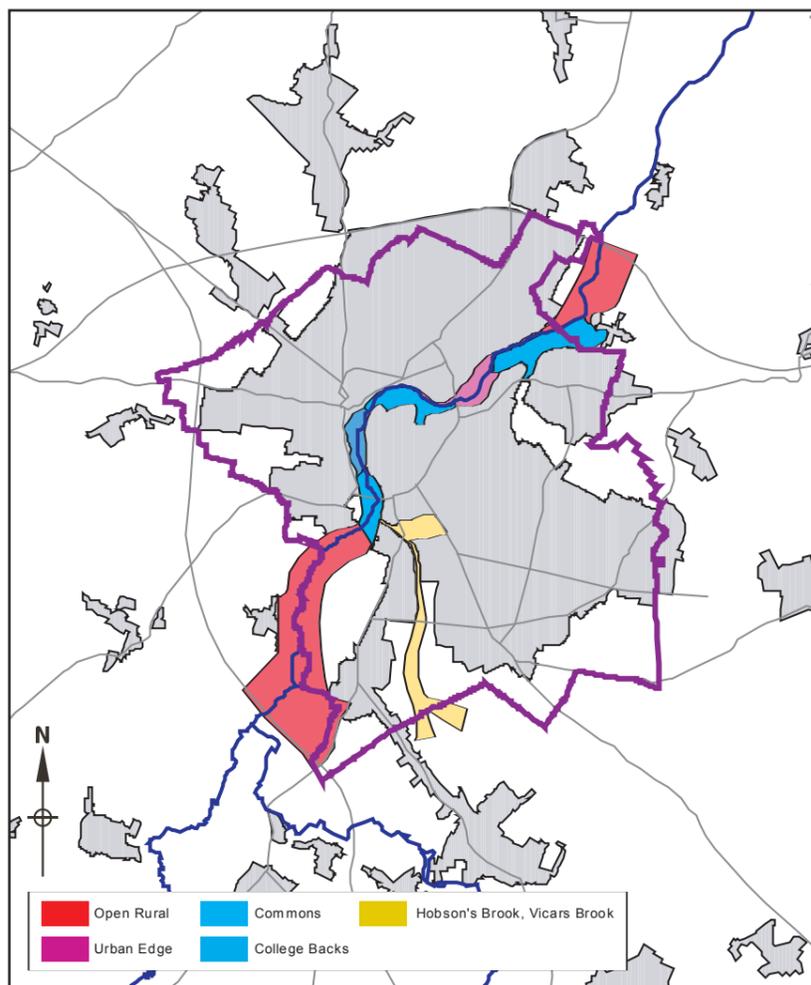




### 3.1 THE RIVER CORRIDOR

The River Cam and its tributaries represent one of the most important natural features in Cambridge. The Granta and the Rhee converge to the south of Cambridge and are joined by the Bourne Brook at Byron's Pool. The Cam flows through Cambridge from south-west to the north-east in a loop which encloses the City centre. Hobson's Brook and Vicar's Brook join the Cam to the south of Fen Causeway. Coldham's Brook and Cherry Hinton Brook flow into the Cam further east.

The unifying element is the watercourse and the associated water meadows and flood plain which are, by and large, relatively undeveloped because they are damp and low-lying. The flood plain is now also protected through Local Plan and Environment Agency policies. As the river flows through the City it passes through different landscapes, Commons and open spaces, the 'Backs', and residential development on Riverside as well as development such as the College Boat Houses. The following Character Types and Areas associated with the rivers and streams are identified.



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### 3.1.1 The River Corridor - Open Rural

This is a varied landscape that is unified by the dominant feature of the river Cam. The river lies in a broad flat valley. It is typically lined with willows, many of them ancient pollards. In the Fen Ditton area there are two notable black poplars that form a very characteristic silhouette on the skyline.

The valley of the Cam has a distinct landscape with a small-scale intimacy that contrasts with the nearby chalklands and claylands. Small woods and semi-wet meadows occur along its length.

There are two main areas, the farmed land to the south-west and the farmed land in the north-east corner of Cambridge in the area of Fen Road.

The south-west area is contained by a discernable valley within gently rolling land providing subtle variety of levels and excellent panoramic views towards the City from vantage points. The views of the river from the east are contained by the ridgeline between the river and Trumpington Road.

There is a relatively large tree population including a plantation, small wooded areas and recent tree planting along the river and along field margins. The former not only benefits the landscape in visual terms but is an important resource, providing game cover and as an additional bonus a variety of habitat which encourages species diversity. The riverside planting carries on the tradition of bank side pollard willows. Some of the best panoramic views within Cambridge are to be had from this area. There are excellent views into the City from the road running between Grantchester and Newnham.

The river corridor has cultural and historical association and recreational opportunities. The Cam (or Granta) upstream between the mill pool and Grantchester, together with Grantchester meadows, has long featured in university life as the setting for punting and walking, and is equally significant for locals and visitors alike. The area has cultural associations with Byron, Rupert Brooke and much more recently in the popular instrumental 'Grantchester Meadows' by Pink Floyd.

There is a Definitive Footpath to the west of the river between Grantchester and Newnham. It is an extremely well used path, especially at the weekend and offers fine views across the tranquil riverine landscape to the meadows and fields to the east of the Cam and north to the City and King's College. It also allows public access to the river. The river and water meadows are well used for picnicking, informal punting and bathing.



*Views to river from Grantchester*



*Picnicking near the Cam at Trumpington*





The Fen Road area to the north-east has some of the characteristics of Fenland, with the proximity of the willow lined river, and the adjacent flat pastoral landscape contained within the very shallow river valley. The meadows are semi wet and are important for over wintering birds associated with the water filled former gravel pits of Milton Country Park to the north of the A14. This part of the river corridor is isolated, with no through road, and is evocative of a previously widespread form of land husbandry.

There is a Definitive Footpath leading from Cambridge to the north-east to Bait's Bite Lock and beyond to Ely. The footpath leads through a beautiful river landscape and is well used by people especially during weekends. To the north of Cambridge the cultivated arable farmland sits hard against a footpath lined with willow pollards, with settlements on the higher ground.

The river between the Pike and Eel and Bait's Bite lock forms the course of the lent and May bumps, and the river, banks and the towpath have strong historical and cultural associations with university life.



Views to river from Fen Road



River Corridor north-east of Cambridge

## ISSUES

### Defining Character

- **The River Corridor Open Rural is a key resource and essential to the special qualities of Cambridge. It is a Defining Character of Cambridge.**

### Characteristic Features

- **shallow valley landscape;**
- **ancient hedgerows, veteran trees including pollard willow and important habitat including river bank and associated flood meadows; and**
- **views over the water meadows, across the floodplain and to the river, especially where it is lined with willows.**

### Pressures

- **pressures from development on adjacent and overlooking land. Generally development close to these areas should ensure that the essential character remains, protecting views, habitat and setting.**





- recreation pressures; and
- pressure from dredging activities to clear the river channel.

## **VISION**

To safeguard the character of the river and immediate floodplain and to maximise opportunities for informal recreation including a riverside path through the City while retaining historic and cultural associations, landscape features and maximising the benefits to wildlife.

## **Opportunities**

- identify important features and produce management plans to accommodate land-use pressures and improve biodiversity;
- care of the long term landscape with strategies implemented for pollarding cycles, opportunities taken to plant willows along the river bank to continue the tradition of river bank willows, opportunities taken to plant black poplars in selected locations to provide local features;
- encourage the allocation of riverside zones to create new habitat such as wet grazing meadows, marshlands and open areas of water and encourage the use of headlands by the river edge in arable fields;
- continuation of grazing as a management regime where appropriate;
- allow meadows to flood in winter months;
- maximise the resource for the future enjoyment of Cambridge people;
- form partnerships with adjacent authorities, landowners and organisations to encourage and capitalise on the links between town and countryside and through the city with riverside walks and increased biodiversity along the river corridor; and
- in association with adjacent and overlooking development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type in visual and cultural terms and which benefit wildlife. Encourage the use of trees and shrubs of native or local provenance where appropriate.





### 3.1.2 The River Corridor - Commons

A number of commons and open areas touch the river, including Stourbridge Common, Midsummer Common and Jesus Green, Lammas Land and Sheep's Green as well as the wooded area around Paradise Local Nature Reserve. Ditton Meadows is also included within this category for although it is not a common it has a similar character to the nearby Stourbridge Common.

Conservation Plans have been produced for, amongst others, Coe Fen and Sheep's Green<sup>23</sup>, Jesus Green<sup>24</sup> and Midsummer Common<sup>25</sup>. Paradise has a Summary Management Plan<sup>26</sup>.

These tracts of land are one of Cambridge's most important resources as they provide a green bridge right across and through the heart of the city. The juxtaposition of the built areas with green open space helps make this city unique. Each space has a subtle variation in character - from the more manicured commons in the central locations like Jesus Green, to the 'rougher' less managed commons on the periphery of Cambridge, Stourbridge, Coe Fen and Sheep's Green for example. In recent years Jesus Green has been managed to promote meadow grasses and herbs, but even though management regimes have been relaxed, the urban edge is still omnipresent, partly enclosing the Common and imbuing a more urban character.

One of the essential characteristics of the commons found in the central locations is the long views across open grassland and under long avenues of trees. For example, this is typical of Jesus Green and Midsummer Common. The long views across from one side of the common to the other are a characteristic of Cambridge, and are important in the often confined spaces found within the City. There are fine views over both commons from Victoria Avenue, and especially Victoria Road Bridge and long views to King's College Chapel and the University Library to the south-west and Museum of Technology chimney to the east. Jesus Green and Midsummer Commons together with the views across the grounds of Jesus College connect with the open space of Christ Piece and New Square to the south, creating an almost continuous green link from the very heart of the City, north to the river.

Since medieval times and until 1934 a Fair was held on Stourbridge Common. It was famous throughout the land. In 1589 it was called 'by far the greatest and most famous fair in all England'. The fair was first mentioned in about 1211 in a charter by King John to the Leper Hospital of St Mary Magdalene. The Leper Chapel still stands just over the Barnwell Railway Bridge. Stourbridge Common has a horizon of mostly randomly planted trees and the open space is contiguous with Ditton Meadows providing an open

<sup>23</sup> Cambridge City Council 2001 Conservation Plan for Coe Fen and Sheep's Green

<sup>24</sup> Cambridge City Council 1998 Conservation Plan for Jesus Green

<sup>25</sup> Cambridge City Council 2001 Conservation Plan for Midsummer Common

<sup>26</sup> Cambridge City Council 2001 Summary Management Plan for Paradise



Views across Jesus Green





tract of land between the river and Fen Ditton. Well-used footways and cycleways cross the Common. There are good views across the Common from the river and to people boating on the river. The Common appears to be mostly used by people passing through or walking their dogs. It is bisected by the Cambridge to Peterborough railway line. The housing and industrial development to the south turns its back to Stourbridge Common.

Until quite recent times Coe Fen was very marshy. During the enquiry made by the Municipal Corporations Commission in 1833 it was stated that 'mire came up to the horses knees, and medical men thought that unless it were drained it would be fatal to the health of the town'. A public subscription was raised to drain the land and then early in the 20th century the dumping of road sweepings and rubbish, raised levels, so further drying it out. A Cambridge Chronicle report during 1915 stated 'Coe Fen originally had a charm of its own, and many old inhabitants deplore it being made a deposit heap'. Even so, it retains, along with Sheep's Green, the essential character of wetland, with willow and some poplar, dissected by various depressions and ditches some water filled in winter. Coe Fen and Sheep's Green are especially atmospheric on cold winter days when mist lingers low over the meadows.

The area was used for a ladies' bathing place. In July 1894 the Cambridge Chronicle recorded that 'The ladies of Cambridge have been provided with a bathing place - if such it may be called in its present condition. A ladder has been erected at that point of the river just above the iron bridge'. The 'Iron Bridge' was the Robinson Crusoe Bridge built in 1898-9. It is still a local landmark. The area is well used by local people for picnicking and bathing.

The visual and physical coherence of Coe Fen and Sheep's Green was cut in the 1926 when Fen Road was constructed to link Newnham with Lensfield Road. Now the elevated Fen Causeway separates the two areas. Until recently the underpass between the two only allowed livestock to cross, but now provision has been made for pedestrians and cyclists to pass underneath Fen Causeway. The two areas retain a similar character today.

Lammas Land lies just to the west of Sheep's Green and has a very different character. It is a well-used recreational area with closely mown grasslands. The Rights of Common were extinguished in 1923 to make way for the recreation ground. The recreation ground was laid out in 1927 followed by the paddling pool in 1931.

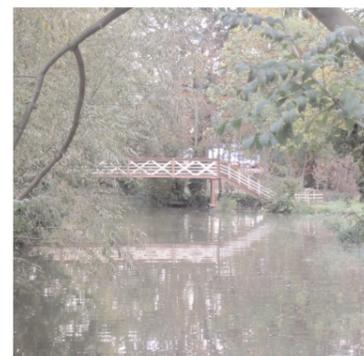
Paradise Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies on the north-west bank of the Cam as it enters the City. A marsh is surrounded by carr vegetation reminiscent of habitat associations found in the fens. There are willows on the riverbank and



Coe Fen



Sheep's Green



Robinson Crusoe Bridge





associated secondary woodlands. The river often bursts its banks during the winter months keeping this area wet and muddy. However, in recent years gradual silting has raised levels and the habitat is changing from wet to dry with consequent changes in vegetation.

## **ISSUES**

### Defining Character

- **The River Corridors - Commons are a Defining Character and essential to the special qualities of Cambridge.**

### Characteristic Features

- **commons tradition;**
- **character of individual commons;**
- **open areas linking green space right through the City; and**
- **views across the meadows to the river and beyond to other Commons.**

### Pressures

- **disposal of river dredgings. These should not be applied where they can alter flooding patterns or harm habitat or views;**
- **development pressure on adjacent land;**
- **recreational activity; and**
- **difficulty in sustaining traditional grazing.**

## **VISION**

To safeguard the character of the commons and to maximise opportunities for informal recreation while retaining historic and cultural associations, landscape features and maximising the benefits to wildlife.



## Opportunities

- **Commons are important landscape, recreational, cultural and biodiversity resource. Increase accessibility and linkages between the commons, and biodiversity where appropriate;**
- **link Stourbridge Common and Coldham's Common by way of Barnwell junction;**
- **liaise with Cam Conservators to make sure ditch maintenance uses best practice to ensure conservation of uncommon species and enhancement of habitat;**
- **plan and manage tree stock for future generations;**
- **flooding of meadows and other habitat increases plant and animal diversity;**
- **provision for recreational use could be very visually intrusive but may outweigh the detrimental affect on the environment - mitigation should be sought;**
- **ensure that future development and or redevelopment on the edge of the commons addresses and makes better use of the Common;**
- **form partnerships with adjacent authorities and organisations to encourage and capitalise on the links between countryside and City and increase biodiversity along the river corridor;**
- **take Biodiversity Action Plans into account in future development or management plans; and**
- **encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type in visual and cultural terms and which benefit wildlife. Encourage the use of trees and shrubs of native or local provenance where possible.**

### 3.1.3 The River Corridor - Urban Edge

This Character Type is found mostly along the section of the river that flows roughly east, between Midsummer Common and Stourbridge Common, but also includes the Quayside area. It is varied, and includes the distinctive area of the College boatyards, Jubilee Gardens, the Quayside Area, the residential areas such as Riverside and Water Street, the industrial/commercial areas near the former Gas Works, and the former Philips site.

Downstream from Magdalene Bridge the character of the river is strongly focussed on the university, college and town bathhouses, and the rowing activities based in them.

Various commercial activities have become associated with watercourses, either because water was required in the



*People congregate in the Quayside Area close to the river*



process, or for ease of transport at a time when roads were relatively difficult to negotiate, or even non-existent.

Among others, water was required for the paper making industry, the chamois leather industry and the parchment industry. Local lime was used in preparation of the skins. Sawston became a centre for the parchment and paper industry and no doubt contributed towards the printing and book binding industry of Cambridge.

Water was used for harnessing power from very early times and the creation of the millrace at Trumpington and the Mill House on Grantchester road are examples of how the power was utilised for local industry. Interspersed between the urban areas are small pocket landscapes that possibly indicate how the riverside landscape might once have appeared before land was cleared. One such area, Logan's Meadow, is accessible by the public. Other areas are privately owned but are visually important as borrowed landscape. Examples occur by Pretoria Road footbridge, the island at the back of Capstan Close behind Camside and the large gardens to the back of Grayling's Close and Thrift's Walk. Not only are these areas visually important, they are important as habitat, further increasing the network of green spaces, and they provide us with visual associations to previous landscape.

The Cam was a major barrier for movement. The first major traffic bearing bridges at Bridge Street, Silver Street and Victoria Road facilitated easier movement between the central area and north and west Cambridge. Fen Causeway, built in 1926, joined Newnham to the central area. The Fort St George and Pye footbridges were built in 1927 to replace ferries. The massive expansion to the north necessitated the construction of Elizabeth Way Bridge in 1971.

In 1832 Jesus Green Lock and Baits Bite Lock was completed after it was decided that the river should be deepened between Cambridge and Clayhithe and the four existing locks reduced to two. The locks at Clayhithe and at the Pike and Eel, Chesterton, were to go.

In more recent times the sewerage works were located in the north east of Cambridge taking advantage of the riverside location and proximity to major transport routes.

Some developers have recently taken advantage of riverside locations to build prestigious new homes such as at Quayside, and Capstan Close. These developments, often raised on a plinth to avoid flooding, can dominate the riverside scene. Planting associated with these developments is not always sympathetic to the riverside location and character.



*College boatyard*



*Jesus Green Lock*





## **ISSUES**

### Defining Character

- **The River Corridor - Urban Edge are in part Defining Character. This includes the College Boatyards, the Museum of Technology (scheduled ancient monument), and some of the most evocative bridges.**

### Characteristic Features

- **Boat yards and associations with the 'bumps' and other river based activities;**
- **Urban edge for instance Riverside which closely associates with the river and from which there are fine views of the river;**
- **industrial process associated with the river including the industrial buildings and warehouses, locks and bridges; and**
- **Pocket landscapes.**

### Pressures

- **disposal of river dredgings. These should not be applied where they can alter flooding patterns and harm habitat;**
- **pressure of new development in flood plain of Cam; and**
- **pressure to provide more boat mooring places and facilities.**

## **VISION**

To safeguard the character of the area and maximising opportunities for informal recreation while retaining and developing historic and cultural associations.



## Opportunities

- management of wetland habitat to ensure that vestigial habitat is, where possible, retained and enhanced;
- existing willows should be pollarded on a regular maintenance cycle. Where appropriate, opportunities for planting new willows should be sought;
- new infill development or redevelopment should respect the character of the riverside setting taking its cue from surrounding buildings and open spaces with appropriate design and use of appropriate street furniture, trees and shrubs;
- develop alternative forms of transport;
- develop associations with local history; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type in visual and cultural terms and which, where appropriate, benefit wildlife.

### 3.1.4 The River Corridor - College Backs

The College 'Backs' form a distinct Character Type. They stretch from Queens Green to Magdalene Bridge and although separated by the bridge, includes Magdalene College to the north-west of the river.

The major reference is the green open spaces of the 'Backs' linked to elegant college buildings set on the east side of the Cam by way of varied and well known bridges and footbridges from the stone Bridge of Sighs to the wooden Mathematical Bridge at Queen's. Although separated by Magdalene Street, it also includes Magdalene College to the north-west of the river.

There are wonderful views of the 'Backs' from the bridges, and punters enjoy the changing vistas of the riverside setting as they pass under the bridges. There are views from the Quayside area and from the board walk along the river to Magdalene College grounds.

Although this land is privately owned, it has a semi-public feel. The public have free access along Queen's Road and along the river, and limited access into the Colleges.

The landscape is varied, from rough grazing to neatly laid out and maintained Master's Gardens. There is, however, a feeling of unity, provided by the backdrop of the College



*View to the west of the river with University Library in background*



buildings behind the green spaces, the dominant physical feature of the river, and the relatively recent tree planting along Queen's Road.

Along with the Commons the 'Backs' should be regarded as one of Cambridge's best assets where the magnificent college buildings take centre stage over the remnants of the river flood plain. Watercourses and ditches cross the area and are a dominant natural feature. The bridges crossing the River Cam all add to the distinctive character of this area.

The landscape of the 'Backs' evolved, almost by default, over a long period of time. However, the landscape of the 'Backs' could have been very different to the one we know today. Many changes have taken place due to changes in taste and fashion with, over the centuries, architects and landscape planners recommending major 'improvements' to the landscape.

In the 17th century the relationship of the colleges to the river was functional and not scenic although by then most of the riverside wharves had gone leaving stairs on the bank for disembarkation.

The ground between Trinity Library and the river was turved in 1760 and in 1771 King's upgraded their riverside area. The ground between the Gibbs building and the Cam was freed of bowling green, walls and other enclosures, and levelled. The horses were removed to the other side of the river, which was still rough unimproved meadow with ditches and canals. The area was then sown with seed to get it into good and ornamental condition.

The 'Backs' as we know them today were made possible when William Wilkins drew up plans for King's College in 1818. The centrally placed old bridge was rebuilt in its present position in a line with the avenue planted some sixty years previously on the south side of the lawn and now continued on the west bank. The lawn was sloped down to the river, taking away the reinforced earth embankment, giving the area very much its present appearance.

The 'picturesque gothic' landscape of the early 19th century was achieved in 1825 at St John's with a new court across the Cam and joined to the old buildings by the picturesque Bridge of Sighs. It gave a new orientation to the landscape of the Cam colleges as, instead of facing the river, it fronted the bend and looked down the river.

It was the riverside walks, beloved for centuries that help give Cambridge its special character. Dyer<sup>27</sup> wrote of Queens' 'Let no one leave these grounds without going to the end of that world by the side of the river, and let him thence look to the view on the opposite side, nor let him say, it is the best in Cambridge, or is well enough for Cambridge:



*King's College*

<sup>27</sup> **Batley, M (1989) The Historic Gardens of Oxford and Cambridge. Macmillan**





though it has not hill or dale, perhaps, of the kind it is the best anywhere for it has grand objects, which amply compensate for the want of other beauties'.

The walks are still there to this day with public access controlled through payment, although residents of Cambridge are entitled to a free pass. The walks are a splendid sight, especially in the spring months when spring bulbs line the route and the leaves of the avenue trees begin to unfurl.

There is no continuous north - south path along the backs. Also the cross routes for the public are limited to Silver Street, Garrett Hostel bridge and Magdalene Bridge.

English Heritage designates much of the area of the Backs in their Register of Parks and Gardens. The gardens include St John's College, Trinity College, Trinity Hall, Clare College, Kings College, and Queens College.

## ISSUES

### Defining Character

- **The River Corridor - College Backs are Defining Character and arguably one of the best known Cambridge landscapes.**

### Characteristic Features

- **Riverside location and associated meadows and gardens;**
- **Tree avenues;**
- **views across meadows to colleges;**
- **walks; and**
- **semi-public space, a space which is not owned by the community but brings significant public realm benefits through landscape enhancement, views and or access.**

### Pressures

- **pressure and pollution from increase in traffic; and**
- **pressure from tourists.**



*Spring bulbs along the backs*



*View across the backs to Clare College*





## VISION

To work in partnership to safeguard the character of the Backs and ensure it continues to provide a significant semi-public amenity. To work towards increasing public access.

### Opportunities

- work in partnership with college to promote long term landscape and wildlife strategy for the area;
- maintenance of ditches to increase biodiversity; and
- enhanced public access, especially a north - south route and additional public access between Queens Road and the City centre.

### 3.1.5 The River Corridor - Hobson's Brook, Vicars Brook

The Hobson Brook/Vicar's Brook corridor runs approximately north-south for three kilometres and includes Empty Common and the Botanic Garden. The first stream to flow into the River Cam above Cambridge is Vicar's Brook. The main road from Cambridge to Trumpington crosses the brook by a brick culvert just south of the modern Brooklands Avenue. The brick culvert is known as Stone Bridge, and close by stands the first of sixteen milestones which were set up between Cambridge and Barkway after 1724 when the road was constituted a turnpike road. This crossing of the Vicar's Brook by the London Road was known for many generations as Trumpington Ford although as far back as 1552 there was some sort of a bridge there.

From here Vicar's Brook flows down the boundary of New Bit south of Coe Fen and on into the Cam by way of the mill stream of the ancient King's Mill. There is much less water passing under the Stonebridge because much of it has been abstracted to the Hobson's Conduit.

The Hobson's Brook/ Vicar's Brook Character Area contains several City Wildlife Sites. There is a Definitive Footpath running along the Brook through the Common from Long Road and linking up with roads and footways to the north and west. The corridor offers a quiet retreat to its users.

From the Nine Wells west of White Hill Farm spring water emerges and feeds into the Hobson's Brook. North it is diverted into the Hobson's Conduit that feeds into above and below ground culverts to supply fresh water to the old town. This channel is artificial and was created c1610. It strikes off from Hobson's Brook about 0.5 km north of Long Road across Empty Common, under Brooklands Avenue and alongside Trumpington Road to the Hobson's Conduit Head at Lensfield Road corner.



Empty Common





From Nine Wells to Long Road the brook runs through open countryside dominated by Addenbrooke's Hospital complex and the railway line although there are some shelter belts. North of Long Road the stream goes into a typically treed area with some willow and poplar and then diverges: the Vicar's Brook to the west of the allotments and Hobson's Conduit to the east of the allotments.

A Definitive Footpath runs north from Long Road following Hobson's Conduit and then crosses west, south of the allotments, to follow Vicar's Brook to the west of the allotments up to Brooklands Avenue. Another path, known locally as Finches Walk continues along the Hobson's Conduit. Both these paths offer very pleasant walks well away from the urban bustle.

This area forms a significant wildlife corridor that includes the Botanic Garden. These corridors could be merged into other Character Types, but the Eastern Wildlife Corridor and Hobson's Brook and Vicar's Brook deserves special mention as separate Character Types.

The brooks are the focus of this Character Area, because of the unifying element of water and the potential for access and quiet recreational pursuits.

## **ISSUES**

### Defining Character

- **The River Corridor - Hobson's Brook and Vicar's Brook corridor are a Defining Character of Cambridge.**

### Important Features

- **historic association of Hobson's Conduit for the supply of water to Cambridge as early as 1610;**
- **walks;**
- **trees and wildlife corridor;**
- **City Wildlife Sites; and**
- **green spaces.**





## Pressures

- Pressures from nearby or adjoining development;
- inappropriate management of ditches and streams; and
- pressures for use as 'rapid-transit' transport corridors and cycling corridors.

## VISION

To ensure that the character of the area and its watercourses is safeguarded and that appropriate environmental improvements are carried out to maximise amenity, access and informal recreation opportunities and increase biodiversity.

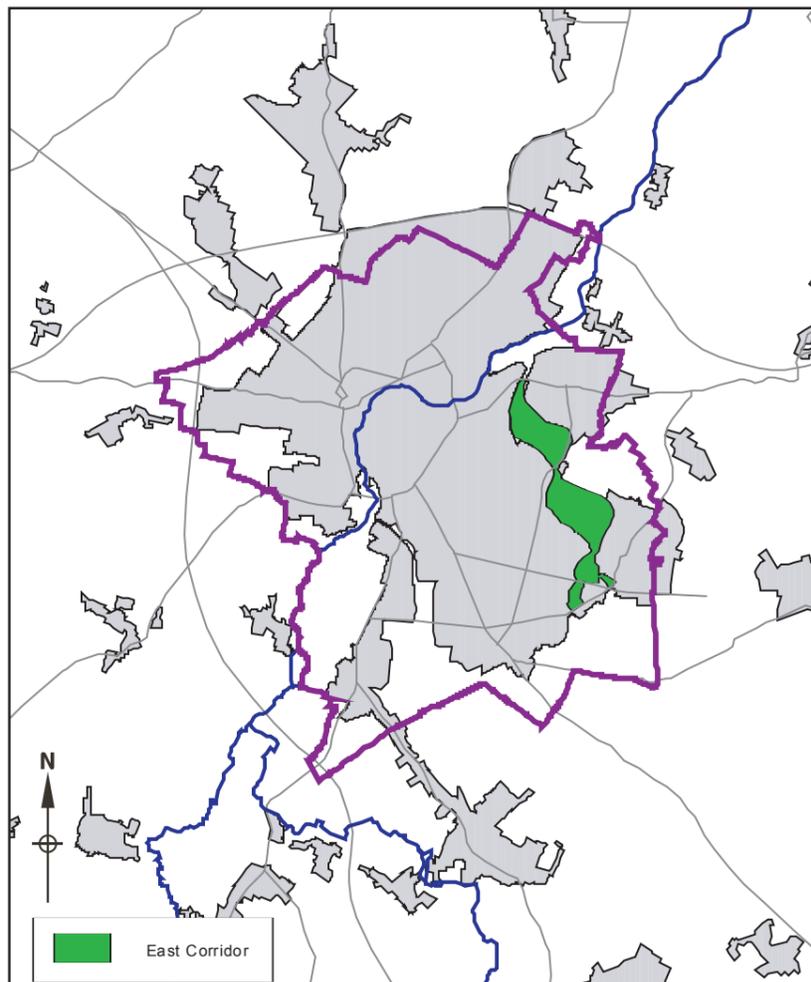
- maximise this resource for the future benefit of Cambridge people;
- long term management plans for tree stock;
- tree planting and extension of habitat into adjoining land. Encourage the use of trees and shrubs of native or local provenance where possible.
- take Biodiversity Action Plans into account in future development or management plans; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type in visual and cultural terms and which benefit wildlife. Encourage the use of trees and shrubs of native or local provenance where possible.

## Opportunities





### 3.2 GREEN CORRIDOR - EAST CORRIDOR COLDHAM'S BROOK, CHERRY HINTON BROOK



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This Character Area is loosely associated with Cherry Hinton Brook and runs from Limekiln Close and West Pit, through Cherry Hinton Hall, part of the former Blue Circle Site, Coldham's Common through Barnwell Junction to Stourbridge Common and Ditton Meadows. The Blue Circle site includes the water filled pits and the landfill sites as well as land set aside for wildlife conservation purposes during recent development. Parts of the Blue Circle Site are currently being developed.

The whole corridor is approximately 4 km long and apart from the potential for habitat conservation and creation offers unique opportunities in Cambridge for public recreation, access to semi-natural open spaces including water bodies, car free transport opportunities and access into the countryside beyond Cambridge. It has a variety of habitats including the stream courses with associated commons, meadows, parklands, allotments, open space, water filled quarries and rubbish tips. The water filled quarries and rubbish filled quarries are a unique resource in the City.





Cherry Hinton Brook and Coldham's Brook run through the East Corridor in a northerly direction eventually discharging into the Cam. These together with the extensive gravel workings on the Blue Circle Site offer opportunities for recreation and footway and cycleway corridors.

There are two Definitive Footpaths which link Cherry Hinton to the City centre - The Tins and Snakey Path.

The Blue Circle Site, which is not easily accessible for the public, provides a diversity of habitat that is unusual in Cambridge. It is well used by local naturalists who report an interesting and diverse list of plants and animals that occur there. The landfill sites have also developed interesting flora and fauna and are, potentially, a recreation resource and perhaps in the long term as development land. The water bodies and landfill sites would have to be carefully reviewed with public safety in mind.

The area was the subject of a survey and subsequent Nature Conservation Strategy published in May 1993<sup>28</sup>. The area was found to contain a wide range of habitats, from broad leaved woodland, ancient trees, scrub and hedges, semi natural calcareous and neutral grasslands, ruderal herb communities, marsh, seasonal and permanent pools, marl lakes and watercourses.

This character area is unified by the streams and has great potential for nature conservation, access and passive recreation.



Water filled pits

<sup>28</sup> Cambridge City Council 1993  
Nature Conservation Strategy

## ISSUES

### Defining Character

- the Green Corridor - East Corridor, Coldham's Brook and Cherry Hinton Brook is generally an area of Defining Character.

### Important Features

- large tracts of undeveloped areas close to dense development;
- City Wildlife Sites; and
- Walks.





### Pressures

- development pressure on filled tips; and
- privately owned semi derelict open space and therefore pressures from trespass.

### **VISION**

To work towards safeguarding this unique resource for public amenity and enjoyment.

### Opportunities

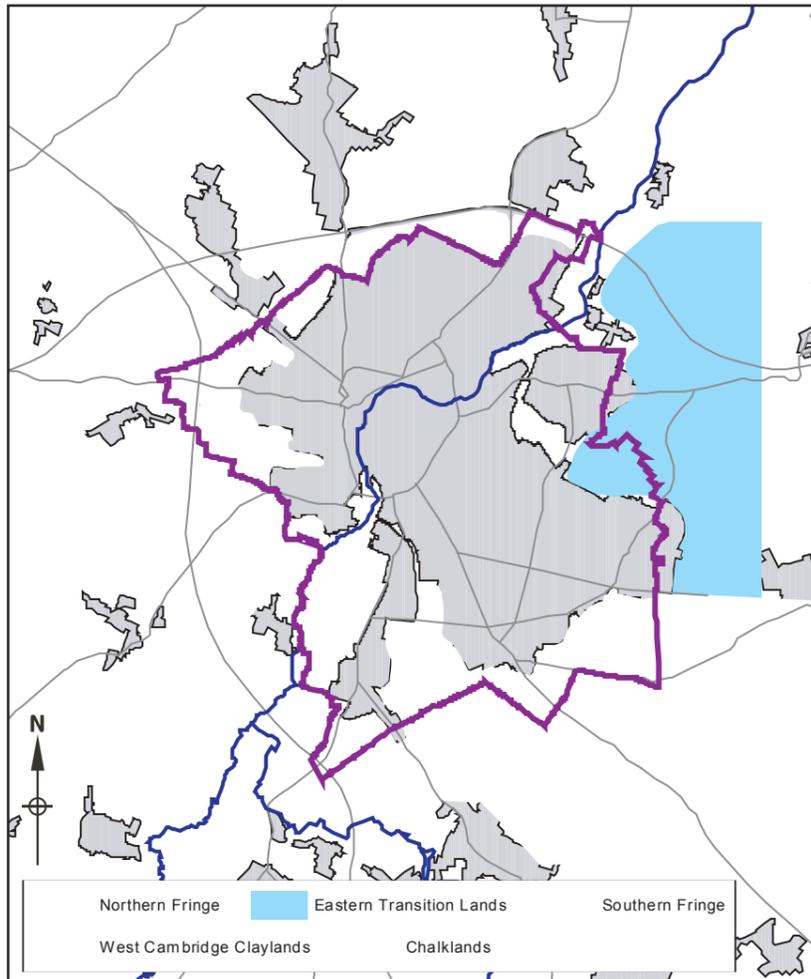
- to work together in partnership with landowners to produce management plans which ensure implementation of appropriate management regimes which maximise wildlife interest;
- improve access while ensuring safety for the public;
- take Biodiversity Action Plans into account in future development or management plans; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type in visual and cultural terms and which benefit wildlife. Encourage the use of trees and shrubs of native or local provenance where possible.





### 3.3 RURAL LOWLAND MOSAIC

Cambridge sits in arable lowland that can be further divided into the following Character Areas.



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#### 3.3.1 RURAL LOWLAND MOSAIC - NORTHERN FRINGE

This area sits between the hard urban edge of King's Hedges Road and the A14. It stretches from Fen Road in the east to the Histon Road in the west. The land is generally between 10 and 15 m above sea level and gradually falls away to the east and north towards the River Cam and the fens.

The area has a mixed land use with disused railway sidings, sewage works, Business Park and Science Park, Cowley Road industrial units, a Park and Ride Site, Cambridge Regional College, and open fields with some ancient hedgerows, all dominated by the noise, proximity, pollution and visual intrusion of the A14 which is elevated along a major part of its length along this stretch. However, the slight elevation has advantages for the road user, as there are wide panoramic views across Cambridge. Church spires, notably the Catholic Church and St Luke's, King's College





Chapel, the University Library, Addenbrooke's chimney, and Museum of Technology chimney can all be seen from certain locations, as can Missleton Hill and the Gogs to the south.

The Northern Fringe has very much the appearance of a degraded landscape, only partly offset by the farmed arable land, the Science and Business Parks. There are few features which benefit the landscape and biodiversity, or which have cultural associations. However, one feature that does contribute to the amenity, the Mere Way, is the site of a Roman road. Before the Enclosures it was the main road between Landbeach and Cambridge. However, after the Enclosure it became a Public Bridleway along most of its length. The existing track has the remnants of a double hedge. Some of the coppiced hazel within the hedge are very ancient. There are other ancient hedgerows nearby.

The sewage works attract birds. Previously this area had extensive areas designated as City Wildlife Sites however on resurvey in 1998 they did not meet the Criteria for Designation<sup>29</sup>. Winter flocks of birds congregate on the nearby Chesterton Fen.

Twenty two species of butterflies are found in the sidings area which indicates an area rich in nectar plants and is usually a good indicator for a diverse and rich flora and fauna. This is the highest number of species found in one location near Cambridge<sup>30</sup>. It greatly exceeds what would commonly be found for a Cambridge site.

Much of the Northern Fringe between Histon Road and the eastern boundary of the Chesterton Sidings has been earmarked for development over the coming years. Recently extensive tree planting has been carried out running parallel to the A14 at Chesterton Sidings and on a high bund at Cambridge Regional College. The sense of the City contained within its rural environment has been lost along most of this length.

There is currently a major development proposal submitted for the Arbury Camp area, on the western end of the Northern Fringe.

A new cycle/footbridge is proposed across the A14, launching from the Cambridge side on the old route of the A10 close to the Business Park, to the Milton side.

## ISSUES

### Defining Character

- **The Rural Lowland Mosaic - Northern Fringe is generally not a Defining Character Area of Cambridge.**



Science Park

<sup>29</sup> Cambridge Local Plan 1996 Appendix 4

<sup>30</sup> Julia Napier 2002 Personal communication





### Important Features

- urban rural interface which 'contains' the City;
- in parts, degraded urban edge;
- noise and visual intrusion of traffic using the A14; and
- ancient trackways and hedgerows.

### Pressures

- development;
- pressure of pollution and noise from increasing traffic; and
- possible widening of the A14.

### VISION

It is likely that most of this area will be developed. The vision is to ensure that new development creates character and sense of place, safeguards and enhances areas rich in flora or fauna within a developed space increases opportunities for informal access to the river, and to the villages and countryside beyond the A14.

### Opportunities

- produce urban edge land use capability study, landscape framework and management plan;
- integrate the northern edge of Cambridge into the greater landscape as befits this major interface between the town and its setting;
- balance the need for screening the A14 corridor with the need for retaining important views to the landmarks which indicate the presence of the City to the south;
- ensure development respects existing features and maximises opportunities to extend and improve ecological diversity;
- ensure high quality of future development to reflect the quality of the City beyond and redress some of the environmental disbenefits of the A14;
- encourage enhancement of existing features, such as the reinstatement of "Arbury Camp" earth banks and ditch system
- pedestrian and cycle links across the A14 to gain access to countryside beyond;
- environmental improvements;
- take Biodiversity Action Plans into account in future development or management plans; and





- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type in visual and cultural terms and which, where appropriate, benefit wildlife.

### 3.3.2 Rural Lowland Mosaic - West Cambridge Claylands

This area encompasses a large arc of land from the north west of Cambridge from NIAB land through to Grantchester and towards the River Cam. The M11 corridor dominates the western edge.

The area is underlain by chalk and limestone till which gives rise to cold, calcareous clay soils. The land rises to the north towards Madingley Rise, but is generally between 10 and 15m above sea level and is gently undulating. Fields tend to be of medium size, sometimes bounded by ditches and often thorn hedges.

The area is bisected by small brooks flowing east - Bin Brook, Bourne Brook and Washpit Brook. Most of these brooks take the form of steeply cut man-made channels. They often form field boundaries. Water features including storm water retention ponds have been created along an east-west corridor following the line of the Coton footpath.

The field pattern is post Enclosure, when the Coton footpath was realigned along with the field boundaries.

There are a number of hedgerows in the area. Many of these form substantial linear landscape features that are an important resource in the landscape. Substantial lengths of hedge suffer from Dutch Elm disease.

There is mixed use in the area, with College playing fields, farmed land and research buildings. The soft, well treed urban edge of the generally large, individual residences within large mature well treed gardens is very evident and works to separate the city from its rural hinterland.

The Schlumberger building is very prominent on the western side of Cambridge, partly due to its bulk and distinctive skyline, but also because of its elevated position.

From several locations there are panoramic views east, towards the historic city skyline, especially from the motorway. The University Library and Addenbrooke's chimney and various church spires are important landmarks of Cambridge. The views across to the City from the area between Grantchester and the motorway and from Grantchester Road are exceptional. Extensive roadside tree planting along Barton Road will in the long term obliterate the fine views from Barton Road towards Cambridge over the open countryside.



Views showing hedgerows



Schlumberger





The elevated land to the west around Madingley Wood and Barton is also a prominent feature of the landscape here. There are some exceptional views from this area back towards the City Centre.

The University is planning an extensive development on their West Cambridge site, east of High Cross and north of the Coton Footpath to facilitate expansion of university facilities. The scheme is being developed in accordance with a carefully considered Masterplan document which should direct design issues, and will bring major gains in the biodiversity of the area.

There are a number of Definitive Footpaths in this area, including the Harcamlow/Wimpole Way/Coton footpath and the footpath from the A603 past Laundry Farm. There are also a number of Permissive Footpaths. There are a number of City Wildlife Sites which lie beside the footways or which follow ditches and hedges forming wildlife corridors to the west of the City, with the Coton Footpath and Bin Brook important extensions, and which run towards the City core.

A Wildlife and Farm Reserve centered around Coton to the west of the M11 is currently being proposed. There is a possibility that the area will extend east of the M11, but certainly access improvements between the City and this area are being considered<sup>31</sup>.

Part of this area has been designated in the past as an Area of Best Landscape<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Proposed at public meeting called by Cambridge Preservation Society in January 2002

<sup>32</sup> Cambridge Local Plan 1996

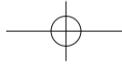
## ISSUES

- parts of Rural Lowland Mosaic - West Cambridge Claylands area, where they fit the criteria for Defining Character in terms of green fingers, water courses, setting, views to the City skyline and separation, are Defining Character.

## Defining Character

- urban edge characteristics;
- brooks ditches and wetlands;
- views; and
- hedgerows and field pattern.





## Pressures

- pressures from development;
- noise, visual intrusion and pollution from nearby motorway traffic; and
- agricultural utilisation of land for maximum commercial output.

## VISION

The vision is to ensure that landscape features of importance and biodiversity is conserved or enhanced. Access opportunities, along with opportunities for informal recreation should be promoted.

## Opportunities

- Any extended edge to Cambridge should seek to replicate the current edge of City landscape;
- create further wetland habitats such as ponds ditches and field drains to augment existing water systems;
- create recreation opportunities using brooks and ditches as a green network of paths, increasing the existing network of paths;
- take opportunities to reduce noise and visual intrusion of motorway where appropriate;
- increase biodiversity through appropriate management regimes such as having headlands on arable crops, wildlife sensitive management of ditches and where appropriate replacing dead elm;
- work in partnership with Cambridge Preservation Society with regard to the proposed Coton Countryside Park; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type in visual and cultural terms and which, where appropriate, benefit wildlife.





### 3.3.3 Rural Lowland Mosaic : Chalklands

This area occurs to the south and south east of Cambridge extending from south of Addenbrooke's eastwards towards Newmarket. The hills form part of the East Anglian Heights and are an extension of the chalklands running north from the Chiltern Hills.

The hills are gently rounded and rolling, reaching 74m above sea level at Wandlebury. The springs that occur at the junction of the chalk and clay, such as at Nine Wells are an important habitat, and the dry valleys of the chalk are important landscape features.

The soil is light in texture and colour and thin. Cereal farming predominates. The fields are large, enclosed by generally very closely maintained low thorn hedges with few hedgerow trees. Shelter belts, often of beech, and hill top copses are an important feature of this landscape, the latter often acting as reference points. The roads tend to be straight and towards Cambridge run across the contours, thus commanding some excellent panoramic views of the City and its environs. Addenbrooke's Hospital, on the edge of Cambridge, tends to dominate views to the City.

Parts of this area have been designated in the past as Area of Best Landscape<sup>32</sup>. The area is rich in archaeological interest. Beyond Cambridge the Roman Road forms an important linear landscape feature. Wandlebury Ring is also of considerable archaeological interest. Wandlebury Country Park, the Roman Road and the Beech Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR) are important recreational and ecological sites close to Cambridge.

Cherry Hinton Chalk Pits Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Limekiln Hill LNR are located in this area. The pits and surrounding grassland provide habitat for several rare plants and over the years many species of birds have been recorded there, including the nightingale.

There are a few remaining areas of chalk grassland left in this area - some still occur on Protected Roadside Verges and on Coldham's Common.

#### ISSUES

##### Defining Character

- Rural Lowland Mosaic - Chalklands are Defining Character.



*Rising ground of Chalk Hills*



*Limekiln Hill and West Pit LNR*





### Characteristic Features

- views;
- area of open higher rolling landscape near Cambridge; and
- chalk grassland habitat including Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserve.

### Pressures

- pressures from nearby development;
- inappropriate use of nature reserves causing management problems and endangering habitats;
- recreation pressures; and
- utilisation of agricultural land for maximum commercial output.

### **VISION**

To secure the area from inappropriate development, and at the same time conserve and where possible enhance landscape features and biodiversity to improve amenity while seeking opportunities for access and informal recreation opportunities.

### Opportunities

- chalk grassland remnant habitat should be retained and managed appropriately;
- improve biodiversity on farmed land such as headlands and where appropriate hedgerow management for wildlife;
- opportunities to work in partnership to protect existing wildlife and where appropriate increase biodiversity;
- improve access opportunities;
- enhance access and perception of personal safety in nature reserves;
- promote nature reserves, walks etc;
- take Biodiversity Action Plans into account in future development or management plans; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type in visual and cultural terms and which benefit wildlife.





### 3.3.4 Rural Lowland Mosaic - Eastern Transition Lands

This area lies to the east of Cambridge and is generally low lying between 10 and 15m above sea level. The underlying chalk to the south gradually slopes down to the fens area to the north. It is a transition zone where the characteristic chalkland vegetation of the south is essentially retained until it reaches the Fen area to the north.

The airport is a flat area, bounded by major roads. The Cambridge Airport runway, the large aircraft hangers and Marshall's work dominate the area. These hangers have a negative impact on the landscape. They block potential views of the City skyline. They are very visible from the east. Travelling in a westward direction along the A14, their appearance is one of the first indicators that Cambridge is close by. The runway and Airport are very visible from Coldham's Lane and Airport Way.

The open areas of closely cut grassland of Marshall's airport links the notional countryside with Coldham's Common and then by way of the gravel workings and Cherry Hinton Hall through to the chalklands to the south. The airport is devoid of trees, and the management regime of the grassland so severe that diversity of habitat and wildlife is actively discouraged.

There is a Definitive Footpath along a partly hedged field boundary adjacent to the airport. Ancient hedgerows are recorded in this area.

This area is proposed for major urban expansion<sup>34</sup>.



Cambridge Airport

#### ISSUES

##### Defining Character

- Rural Lowland Mosaic - Eastern Transition is not a Defining Character of Cambridge.

##### Characteristic Features

- Flat, open monotonous space;
- close cut grassland with few trees; and
- long views.

<sup>34</sup> DEGW 2001 Cambridge Urban Expansion Final Report for Cambridge City Council





## Pressures

- **pressures from development - this area has been identified as a possible location for major new urban extension within a substantial green framework and incorporating high quality public transport and non-vehicular transport infrastructure.**

## VISION

Use development to facilitate and enable the creation of character and to improve the setting of the City, enhance landscape features and biodiversity to improve amenity while seeking opportunities for access and informal recreation opportunities.

## Opportunities

- **use development opportunities to open up views of the City skyline;**
- **use development opportunities to create visual character and cohesion of area, to improve and or create important new green corridors which enhance the setting, character and biodiversity of the City and which link in to existing open space framework;**
- **use development opportunities to link Hobson's Conduit through Nine Wells to the Gog MaGog Hills.**
- **increase habitat diversity and wildlife interest;**
- **create new commons and open spaces with links to adjacent common and open space areas;**
- **take Biodiversity Action Plans into account in future development or management plans; and**

### 3.3.5 Rural Lowland Mosaic - Southern Fringe

This area lies to the south and west of Addenbrooke's Hospital and is generally dominated by the hospital buildings. It is an unexceptional landscape lying between the chalk and the built edge of the City. The fields are large, generally used for cereals, and there are few hedges or hedgerow trees, with the notable exception of the boundary hedge of the field just south of Addenbrooke's Hospital.





It is a transitional landscape between the chalk and claylands and is dominated by flat expanses of arable field and crossed by Definitive and Permissive Rights of Way, upon which cyclists appear to cycle across the horizon. The chalklands begin to rise to the south east.

The main London to King's Lynn railway cuts across this area. The views to Addenbrooke's are the first indication of the approach to Cambridge for train passengers.

The Hobson's Brook wildlife corridor and Character Area runs through the centre of this Character Type and the disused railway line also cuts through from Trumpington in a north easterly direction. Nine Wells, the spring source of the Hobson's Conduit lies to the south, just beyond the City boundary.

Parts of this area has been designated in the past as Area of Best Landscape<sup>34</sup>.



*Addenbrookes dominates Southern Fringe*

<sup>34</sup> Cambridge Local Plan 1996

## ISSUES

### Defining Character

- **part of Rural Lowland Mosaic - Southern Fringe is Defining Character of Cambridge, setting the urban edge within context of a framework of an increasingly elevated hinterland.**

### Characteristic Features

- **generally flat land bisected with footways and cycleways; and**
- **dominance of Addenbrooke's Hospital buildings.**

### Pressures

- **pressure for housing development;**
- **pressure for hospital and associated 'R&D' development;**
- **pressure for new road from Hauxton Road to Addenbrooke's;**
- **recreational and commuting pressures with the footways and cycle ways well used; and**
- **agricultural utilisation of land for maximum commercial output.**





## **VISION**

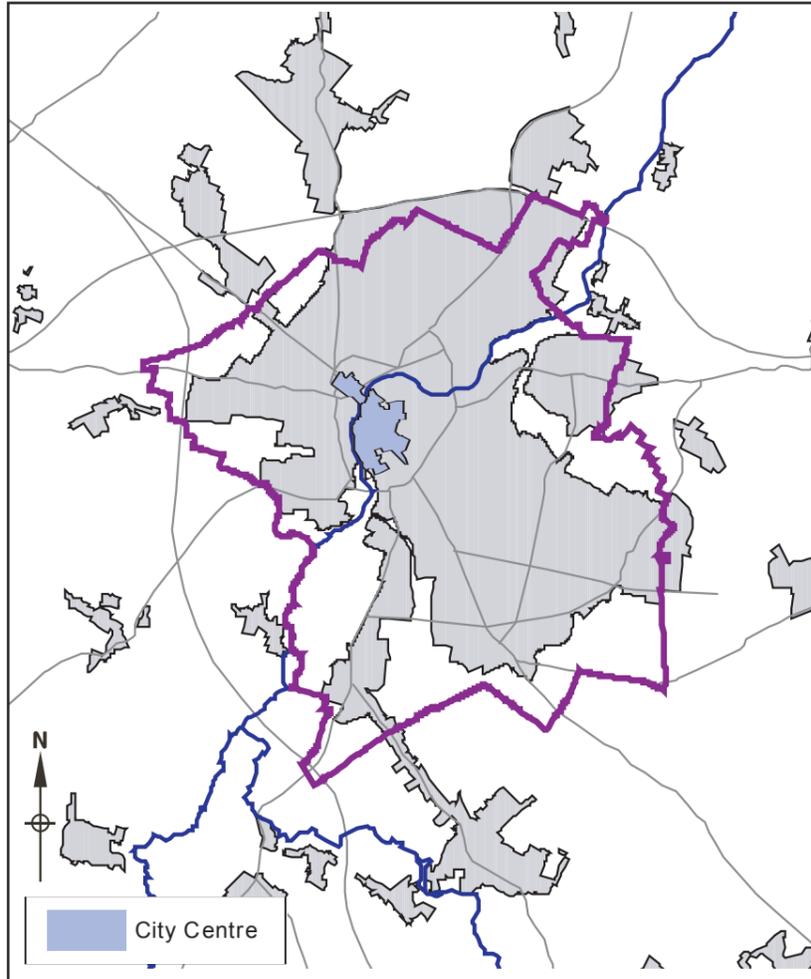
To secure the green finger network and where possible enhance landscape features and biodiversity to improve amenity while seeking opportunities for access and informal recreation opportunities within the context of new development.

### Opportunities

- **create a better edge to the City;**
- **ensure that as part of any development proposals the green finger network is safeguarded;**
- **conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the wildlife corridor and the area in general;**
- **maximising the resource of Nine Wells for the future enjoyment of Cambridge people;**
- **take Biodiversity Action Plans into account in future development or management plans; and**
- **in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type in visual and cultural terms and which, where appropriate, benefit wildlife.**



### 3.4 THE CITY CENTRE



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Trade, commerce and the university dominate this area, lying between King's Parade and Trinity Street to Sidney Street and including Bridge Street and Jesus Lane. One of the chief assets of Cambridge is its built form, and more particularly the college buildings and courts and their setting within the City.

The essential character of Cambridge is that of a busy sub regional service centre cheek by jowl with prestigious and grand college buildings. The market square lies at the very heart of Cambridge. It is a colourful mix of stalls selling a variety of goods.

The University generally has a long history of fiercely safeguarding the setting of its buildings and forums and commissioning fine new buildings of high architectural and technical merit. These landscapes are less likely to be threatened or downgraded by change than elsewhere within the City.

The use of domestic buildings for university office and administration functions is a characteristic of the City Centre's peripheral area.



The town buildings show a variety of styles - and are a reflection of an original market town economy. The earliest examples of 'vernacular' styles are usually of timber frame construction with clay tile roof. Later terraces are often of brick (earliest examples are red brick) with slate roofs. Some larger commercial buildings have stone facades. In contrast the college and church buildings are mostly stone. With few exceptions town dwellings are more recent than the college buildings.

On Trinity Street, Bridge Street and St Andrew's Street the Colleges sit side by side with the town buildings. On King's Parade King's College faces the row of shops along its length. The materials used to build the Colleges reflect the limited availability of stone during different periods. Bricks were uncommon until the 16th century. The only readily available building stone within a short distance of Cambridge, known locally as clunch, was a hard chalk. There is much evidence to suggest that it was almost universally used for the earliest buildings.

However, chalk does not weather well out of doors and Cambridge builders had to look further afield. A belt of Jurassic limestone passes within 40 miles of Cambridge, and transport by boat over the rivers, meres and dykes of the Fenlands was achievable. The Lincolnshire limestone group furnished most of the stone of surviving University and College buildings.

In the 15th century expansion of the University, Weldon, Kingscliffe and Clipsham stone was used, the Weldon predominating. The 17th century saw the introduction of Ketton and Edithweston and towards the 17th century Ancaster stone was used.

As methods of transport changed, from bigger boats using the Fen route, to improved highways and then with the railway, architects looked further afield for their building material. Bathstone had no ready outlet to sea and did not reach Cambridge until the 19th century. As Portland and Purbeck were well placed for sea transport, Portland stone was first used in Cambridge in the 18th century.

The limestone groups generally yield a range of colour from pale to dark cream, often with shelly texture, sometimes pinkish with blueish hues. The colour of the Portland was much whiter. The colour palette of the buildings is further enriched by the use of Collyweston slate for roof material that weathers into ochre and pink tones.

The dense urban core of the City has the advantage of the river and associated wet meadows cutting right through towards its very heart. This is a very major benefit providing opportunities for recreation, has an aesthetic appeal and brings a diversity of habitat and wildlife right into the city. The City centre also has the advantage of urban spaces



*King's Parade. The important green space in front of King's College*





such as Market Square and Senate House Hill and the green spaces of Parker's Piece, Christ's Pieces and New Square. Christ's Pieces through New Square is the main pedestrian link between the historic City core and the Grafton Centre, and many people moving between the pleasant tree lined route which link the two therefore see and appreciate them.

Parker's Piece is a large green space to the south east of the historic City core. It is well used as a recreation area. It has tree planting to its boundary, but none with the internal space, making it a unique space in Cambridge. There are two major paths bisecting it, with a Grade II Listed lamp column near the centre. Like New Square and Christ's Pieces it is closely mown. New Square and Christ's Pieces have avenues of trees. New Square, with one diagonal tree lined path is surrounded by set piece architecture. The space is enclosed on three sides and was until 20 years or so ago used as a car park.

Christ's Pieces has a number of pathways traversing it - many are lined with fine avenues of trees. It has had relatively recent additions of shrub planting. The eastern section of the Piece has a bowling green and space devoted to municipal herbaceous flowerbeds much loved by the residents of Cambridge. A very recent addition is the Princess Diana Memorial Garden with raised planting bed, iron arches and seats. There are tennis courts and a small play area in the north-west corner - mostly obscured by shrub planting.

The student population and tourists should not be forgotten as they introduce a cosmopolitan, busy, colourful and sometimes noisy atmosphere to the streets.

The City centre is to be more comprehensively reviewed in the on-going Historic Core Appraisal. Christ's Piece and New Square<sup>36</sup> and the other open spaces of the City centre are the subject of a comprehensive survey as part of the Conservation Plans for Open Space or Conservation Area Appraisals.

<sup>36</sup> Cambridge City Council 2001  
Christ's Piece and New Square  
Conservation Plan

## **ISSUES**

### Defining Character

- the listed buildings, the conservation area and the open spaces of the City centre are Defining Characteristics of Cambridge.





### Characteristic Features

- many buildings of historic and architectural merit with listings;
- urban spaces such as Market Square and Seante House Hill.
- dimensions of streets in relation to building heights;
- interplay of different scales and materials of buildings;
- colleges and college gardens;
- historic core with college buildings side by side with town buildings;
- open and closed spaces; and
- views.

### Pressures

- traffic. The City centre was obviously not designed to accommodate modern vehicles. Through traffic, servicing, shops and parking must all be considered;
- pollution;
- trade and commercial requirements;
- pressure from tourism;
- pressure from development; and
- lack of finances to upgrade central spaces such as the Market Square.

### **VISION**

Retain essential character of the historic core while improving the spaces and public realm.

### Opportunities

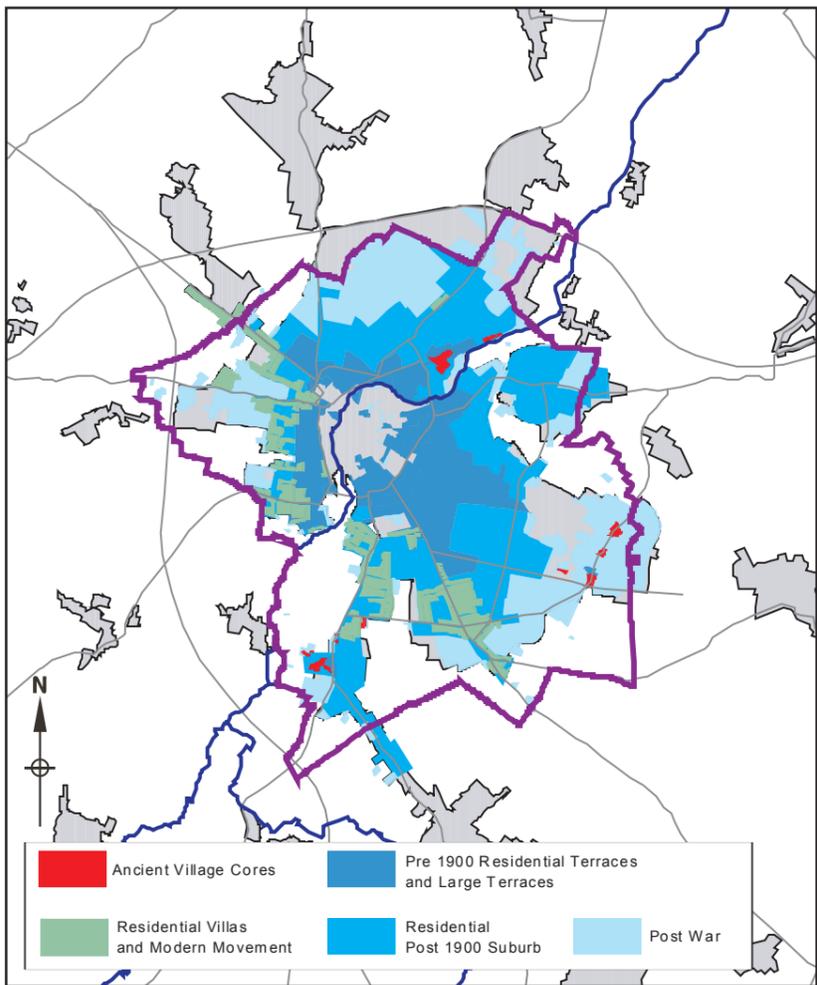
- comprehensive guidelines - currently being undertaken within the Historic Core Appraisal;
- street design strategy to give cohesive guidance for materials, street furniture, highway signage etc;
- redevelopment of important public spaces around the Market Square area and main shopping areas;
- new development should respect the character of the area and the constraints and opportunities provided by the site.





- appropriate use and design of street furniture;
- reduction of highway signs and obtrusive road markings;
- create links to adjacent common and open space areas; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type.

### 3.5 RESIDENTIAL



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### **3.5.1 Residential - Ancient Village Cores**

The core of the old villages of Chesterton and Trumpington are protected by Conservation Area status, numbers three, four, and five respectively. A Conservation Area Appraisal covers Trumpington. Cherry Hinton, although not protected by Conservation Area status, still has very much the feel of a separate village within Cambridge.

There is usually a variety of dwelling style and street proportion. The village is often grouped around an important building such as a church or significant dwelling house. The older buildings are often timber frame with thatch or clay tile roofs - commonly found in Trumpington. Dwellings are sometimes hard up against the back of the footpath. From the 16th century onwards red brick was introduced - often topped with clay tiles. Later in the 19th century the terrace became the predominant style, usually with gault clay brick and with slate roof.

Traditional features are often associated with the villages - for instance Trumpington has many dwellings with white painted walls, and the boundary walls are characteristically of flint.

Some of the major landmark buildings which occur within these areas are Chesterton Tower, Chesterton Hall; Trumpington Hall, Trumpington Church; Anstey Hall farm, and Cherry Hinton Hall.

The street pattern of the village cores is often more compact towards the centre. The ancient village cores acted as seeds to continued development from the centre out, until meeting other development from the town. The building style is varied and from different periods. Parking is often on street.

Historic natural features, such as ancient hedges or trees are often overlooked in these areas, but should be identified within the Conservation Area Appraisals.





## **ISSUES**

### Defining Characteristics

- **Residential - Ancient Village Cores - are not Defining Character. They are however important to the character of Cambridge and some are protected by Conservation Area status, and Listed Building status etc.**

### Characteristic Features

- **compact core of early dwellings, no particular building style predominates;**
- **street pattern and layout not consciously planned;**
- **built around nucleus of church or hall;**
- **may have important characteristic features such as the flint walls found in Trumpington; and**
- **open space.**

### Pressures

- **traffic movement in spaces not suited to the modern vehicle;**
- **parking on street (but this can be an advantage as informal 'traffic calming');**
- **quality/character of vernacular architecture and artefacts; and**
- **from development, minor redevelopment and infill.**

## **VISION**

Retain essential character of the ancient village cores while improving the spaces and public realm.

### Opportunities

- **encourage the retention of the character of the village cores with their small irregular street blocks, usually tight urban grain and traditional boundary treatments;**
- **new development should respect the character of the area and the constraints and opportunities provided by the site, preserve character and protect open space;**



- **emphasis on people not vehicles;**
- **appropriate use and design of street furniture;**
- **reduction of highway signs and obtrusive road markings; and**
- **in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type.**

### 3.5.2 Pre 1900 Residential - Terraces

The Enclosure Acts of 1802 (Western Fields) and 1807 (Eastern Fields) provided the necessary legislation for the rapid expansion of Cambridge, particularly to the south and east. The rapid expansion generally lasted between 1814 until 1850. The overall development followed the pattern of enclosed fields and parcels of land under different ownership so that the terraced houses form discrete blocks. Generally the smaller houses preceded the grander homes, but between Hills Road and Trumpington Road this trend was reversed.

The character of these areas very much depends upon the similarities of the street pattern, the tight grain with small street frontages, prominent chimneys that develop a strong rhythm, and the building materials. The presence or absence of front garden, boundary and path details, the width of road and the presence or absence of street trees provides local distinctiveness.

From 1815 the Kite Area, New Square and north of Maid's Causeway were laid out. In the mid nineteenth the Mill Road area was started, followed by further rapid expansion to the east and south and in the Castle Hill area and around Huntingdon Road and Chesterton Road.

Across the City, and within different areas, there are subtle varieties of style - single bay windows, double bay windows, chimneys and roof forms. The house widths tend to be between twelve and fifteen feet, giving a tight grain to the streets. Where the terraces have been built in a piecemeal fashion there is a diversity of house heights, window and door styles, typically changing between every two to eight houses along the street, as different developers have taken control of the building works.

The railway station was built in 1845 in what had formerly been the Middle Field of the Eastern System. So this, together with early industry, its associated housing and the college servants' quarters, were all pushed to the east of the City.



*Typical small terrace*



Car parking tends to be on street, or in rear gardens. The former makes some of the streets very congested and dominated by the car. Bin storage can also be a problem on streets where there is no direct access between the street and back garden.

The smaller terraces of this time were generally set in a rectilinear pattern in a generally back-to-back formation. The streets tend to be narrow, two way with on street parking and typically no trees in the highway. The front gardens are either small such as in Riverside or non existent as in some areas of Mill Road and the Kite. Where there are small front gardens these were traditionally bounded by low walls and railings. The back gardens tend to be of small to medium size and long and narrow. The roofs are mostly of slate with Cambridge stock bricks being the predominant building material. The doors tend to be panelled and the windows wooden sashes.

Set pieces, such as New Square, Orchard Terrace and Radegund Terrace on Jesus Lane, where the row of houses has been designed as a single entity, give a strong coherence to the street and represent some of the best examples of the small terrace in Cambridge.

Some areas are almost entirely residential, as for instance Newtown. Often houses, for example those in the Kite area, have workshops in back gardens, whereas in the station and railway area, where college servants tended to live, there was no need for workshops. Pubs are often significant buildings in the streets, or on street corners. Other areas, especially towards the east have a mixture of residential and minor industry, all adding to the diversity of the street scene.

Vistas along the street either tend to be long, out to areas of open space, including the Commons, and often to significant trees, or stopped by other terraces or feature buildings at right angles to that street.

## ISSUES

### Defining Character

- **Pre 1900 Residential - Terraces are not Defining Character. They are however important to the character of Cambridge and are protected by Conservation Area status, and Listed Building status etc. The open spaces integral to these areas are also important to the local character.**



*Cars dominate the street scene*



*Views to open spaces such as 'Alexander Gardens' are a common feature*





### Characteristic Features

- **tight grain to narrow, treeless streets;**
- **superficial uniformity of style with Cambridge stock bricks and slate roof predominating;**
- **rectilinear building pattern; and**
- **long views out to open space or to significant trees.**

### Pressures

- **diminution of detail reduces architectural character;**
- **conversions and extensions;**
- **traffic movement in narrow streets; and**
- **on street parking.**

### **VISION**

Retain essential character and vitality of the pre 1900 terraces while improving the spaces and public realm.

### Opportunities

- **encourage innovative design solutions to meet the changing needs of families and society to retain the vitality of these areas;**
- **encourage the retention of essential character and architectural elements common to terraces - for instance walls, railing details;**
- **encourage the retention of the original materials and quality of workmanship in repair and restoration works - especially roof, chimney, door and window replacements;**
- **identify and restore street furniture contemporary with or shortly after the development;**
- **reduce the amount of street furniture and road traffic markings;**
- **improve quality of street furniture either contemporary with development, or well designed modern equivalents;**
- **identify opportunities for environmental improvements;**



- review conservation area status and setting to protect integrity of the best examples of these areas;
- new development should respect the character of the area and the constraints and opportunities provided by the site;
- review the layout characteristics of the successful areas as good example of layout for urban extensions; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type.

### 3.5.3 Pre 1900 Residential - Large Terraces

Along with the major residential expansion of buildings of relatively low quality during the nineteenth century, larger, higher quality terraces and individual houses were being built for the middle classes. The large terraces were often built in groups - several streets at a time. Examples include the terrace streets to the north of Mill Road and Hills Road, the De Freville area, Parkside, Park Terrace, Hartington Grove, Blinco Terrace and parts of Huntingdon Road with their ample proportions. They are often three storied, have small front gardens and medium to large back gardens. The architectural detail is generally of a much better quality than found in the smaller terraced houses. Larger individual or semi-detached houses sprang up around the edges of the built up area. Examples of these include the substantial houses at the Huntingdon Road end of Richmond Road and Halifax Road.

Set piece architecture includes Scroope Terrace on Brookside behind Hobson's Conduit and Doll's Close on Maid's Causeway. The Causeway Houses were built 37ft. wide on plots of 46ft. wide. This compares with the Willow Walk houses immediately to the south, intended for the staff of the Doll's Close Houses, at 22ft. wide.

The streets are generally wider than the previous example, sometimes with large highway trees. Individual garden trees can be an important feature within this landscape. Coach houses were not uncommon to the rear of the larger terraces - for instance in the Parkside area.

Generally the issues affecting this Character Type are the same as those for the last Character Type for small terraces. Also, many of these areas will be, or have been, the subject of Conservation Area Appraisals.



*Large terraces on Brookside*



## **ISSUES**

### Defining Character

- **Pre 1900 Residential - Large Terraces are not Defining Character. They are however important to the character of Cambridge and are protected by Conservation Area status, and Listed Building status etc. Important open space integral to the layout, and important 'public' trees also contribute substantially to the local character.**

### Characteristic Features

- **often 3 storeys, predominantly gault brick with slate roof;**
- **tend to be set on rectilinear pattern and on the 'public edge' of terraced areas; and**
- **often have distinctive features, such as iron work balconies on terrace overlooking Parker's Piece, decorative barge boards, stonework or joinery.**

### Pressures

- **loss of distinctive detail;**
- **unsympathetic alterations (such as creation of car parking space);**
- **traffic movement; and**
- **location of street trees and inappropriate choice of species.**

## **VISION**

Retain essential character of the pre 1900 large terraces while improving the spaces and public realm.

### Opportunities

- **encourage innovative design solutions to meet the changing needs of families and society to retain the vitality of these areas;**
- **review conservation area status and setting to protect integrity of the best examples of these areas;**





- encourage the retention of essential character and architectural elements common to terraces - for instance walls, railing details;
- encourage the retention of the original materials and quality of workmanship in repair and restoration works - especially roof, door and window replacements;
- new development should respect the character of the area and the constraints and opportunities provided by the site;
- review the layout characteristics of the successful areas as good example of layout for urban extensions; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type.

#### **3.5.4 Residential - Villas and Modern Movement**

The early 1880's brought new housing to the west of Cambridge - notably Cranmer Road, Chaucer Road and Storey's Way. This was partly brought about after Cambridge Dons were allowed to marry and they therefore needed family homes. Much of the land was owned by St. John's College and Storey's Charity. They specified large plots and individual architect designed houses. Our inheritance today is areas of large individual houses set well back from the road - some of great architectural merit, for example, 48 Storeys Way designed by Baillie Scott - in large gardens with typically mature trees and shrubs.

Similar development occurred in the 1930's along Conduit Head Road. Again this land was released by a College, Trinity, which exacted very specific landlord requirements for the new buildings including large plot size and architect designed houses. This area is very secluded - mostly because it is a cul-de-sac and is very lavishly endowed with trees. It has a very affluent rural feel, quite different than some of the other examples, and fine buildings of high architectural merit. Some of the residences are in the style of the 'Modern Movement' typically flat roofed, rendered and painted white with horizontal emphasis to fenestration.

There are many examples of this style - large detached individual villas set in large gardens with mature trees and shrubs, Millington Road, Chaucer Road, Latham Road, Luard Road, Sedley Taylor Road, Long Road and parts of Hills Road, Huntingdon Road and areas off Trumpington Road also fit this Character Type. A proportion of the buildings are in Conservation Areas or are Listed.





## **ISSUES**

### Defining Character

- Residential - Villas and Modern Movement are not usually Defining Character. However, parts of Storey's Way and Conduit Head Road are so unique and special to Cambridge that they are Defining Character. Otherwise these areas are important to the character of Cambridge and are protected by Conservation Area status, and Listed Building status.

### Important Features

- large plots, with typically mature trees and shrubs; and
- individually designed houses.

### Pressures

- pressure of development, with pressure to subdivide large plots and houses.

## **VISION**

Retain essential character of the Villas and Modern Movement Character Type, while improving the public realm.

### Opportunities

- review conservation area status and setting to protect integrity of the best examples of these areas;
- encourage the retention of the essential character of these areas;
- encourage the retention of the original materials and quality of workmanship in repair and restoration works - especially roof, door and window replacements;
- new development should respect the character of the area and the constraints and opportunities provided by the site;
- review the layout characteristics of the successful areas as good example of layout for large homes - though note this could conflict with PPG3 with regard to density; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type.





### 3.5.5 Residential - Post 1900 Suburb

Last century, residential development has been concentrated to areas in the north, east and south-east.

In the first quarter of this century, development has mostly concentrated in the south-east around Glebe Road, Hills Road and Radegund Road, Coleridge Road, with some further development in Chesterton around the Milton Road, Arbury Road, and Union Lane area.

The Post 1900 suburbs are characterised by their traditional mostly rectilinear layout, and include areas built later last century, for example the Windsor Road, Gilbert Road area and a large area to the east of Hills Road. Also Queen Edith's Way, Brampton Road, Trumpington Road area, Cromwell Road and Coldham's Lane fall within this character type. The plots are of medium size with medium size front gardens. The house types tend to be semi-detached or detached. The gardens tend to have mature, well-established trees and shrubs, giving an air of permanence. Various house styles and building materials are evident, but each area has a typical palette of material and style giving a uniform and orderly look.

The character elements are therefore of medium size houses on medium size plots, with a mostly rectilinear street pattern and little or no open space provision within the main area. The roads tend to be of medium size with enough room for parking within the dwelling curtilage. There are often grass roadside verges sometimes with highway trees planted along the roads that effectively widens the visual effect of the road and increases the feeling of spaciousness and affluence. Individual garden trees can contribute significantly to the scene.

Provision of allotments is often common within these areas.

#### ISSUES

##### Defining Character

- Residential - Post 1900 Suburb are not Defining Character.

##### Characteristic Features

- rectilinear layout;
- detached, semi detached with some short terrace runs; and
- tend to have medium gardens.





## Pressures

- extensions to existing property;
- redevelopment and amalgamation of plots; and
- parking.

## VISION

Retain best examples of post 1900 suburbs, while reviewing more efficient use of land through possible intensification or redevelopment while improving the spaces and the public realm.

## Opportunities

- encourage innovative design solutions to meet the changing needs of society to maximise land use;
- environmental improvements;
- ensure that development proposals are in keeping and respect the character of the area; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type.

### 3.5.6 Residential - Post War

This Character Type is relatively modern and there are many examples of residential development in this type - from low-rise flats, maisonettes, bungalows, detached, semi-detached and terraces. The built forms are too varied to examine in detail in a Citywide appraisal, and would be better dealt with in area based appraisals.

The Type is exemplified by a road pattern of crescents and culs-de-sac and a relatively high proportion of public open space associated with the 'public' realm. However, more recently the rectilinear street pattern has tended to be adopted.

In Council-built housing areas in particular, these are often large open, sometimes featureless prairie like grass spaces. In private development there can often be 'left over space' between private garden and highway - too small to be of recreational use and often too small to make any meaningful amenity impact - therefore only providing very limited visual benefit. Often the planting associated with these areas is 'aggressive', with robust form that withstands vandalism, and



*Large open spaces in post-war development*





generally in large swathes of few species. These left over spaces can often be a disservice, especially in more recent developments, where the roadside planting is not maintained and the areas are allowed to collect litter.

Church End Cherry Hinton, parts of Trumpington, King's Hedges and Queen Edith's all fall within this group, as do the more recent private developments of Mill End Road, Cherry Hinton.

## **ISSUES**

### Defining Character

- **Residential - Post War areas are not Defining Character of Cambridge.**

### Characteristic Features

- **variety of styles of dwelling with often very limited provision of shops and other facilities;**
- **road pattern of crescents and cul-de-sacs;**
- **often large areas of open space - prairie landscape; and**
- **often has substantial publicly maintained tree stock.**

### Pressures

- **Parking.**

## **VISION**

Retain best examples of post-war suburbs, while reviewing more efficient use of land through possible intensification or redevelopment and improving open spaces and the public realm. Seek to improve access to open space and natural green space.

### Opportunities

- **encourage innovative design solutions to meet the changing needs of society to maximise land use;**
- **environmental improvements to enhance local amenity and character;**



- encourage pedestrian links between town and quiet green spaces;
- review the layout characteristics of the successful areas as good example of layout for urban extensions; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate and which can add character and distinctiveness to these areas.

### 3.6 INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND TRANSPORTATION INFLUENCES

Industry and commerce have influenced the way the City has developed, and feature in Character Types of today. These Character Types can stand alone, but often have elements or area shared with other Character Types.

#### 3.6.1 Industrial - Railway Corridor

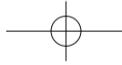
The arrival of the railway in the nineteenth century coincided with a time when Cambridge was expanding rapidly.

The railway station is only directly accessible from the south and west via Hills and Station Roads.

The position of the railway line within the City's structure brought not only industry directly associated with rail, but also created a hinterland - mostly unsuited to housing - where industrial buildings and sheds, storage warehouses and large retail concerns have taken advantage of this land. The Town Map of 1964 shows warehouses and other industrial units along the railway. These are gradually being replaced by new, usually smaller scale development. There is a miscellany of buildings and wasteland following the railway track that makes up this character type.

To the north-east and associated with the sewerage works is a large area of sidings - now mostly unused and derelict. This area may now be developed. Also the former St Ives link and Bedford link have been dismantled but are earmarked for a rapid transport system.

The railway corridors have become colonised by plant species such as Rosebay Willow Herb and Buddleia. The disused railway tracks have often become neglected but have developed into worthwhile habitat for plants and animals. The disused spurs that run through Trumpington, the former Bedford track, and pass close to Fen Ditton, the former Fordham track, are City Wildlife Sites and well used local walks. The disused line to the north-west, the former St Ives track is gradually being colonised by plants, and is a well used walk linking Kings Hedges with Impington.



## **ISSUES**

### Defining Character

- **Industrial - Railway Corridor area is not Defining Character.**

### Characteristic Features

- **large warehouses and derelict sites;**
- **derelict and underused large urban spaces - gradually passing out of this phase;**
- **rail corridor gives poor impression to those entering City; and**
- **disused track beds are often important for wildlife.**

### Pressures

- **development pressures from industrial to residential; and**
- **development pressures on disused track bed for transport corridors.**

## **VISION**

Through appropriate development bring about significant environmental improvement while ensuring that landscape features and wildlife interests are safeguarded.

### Opportunities

- **through development opportunities in the station area especially to improve and create a new district with its own character;**
- **make further provisions for access to railway station;**
- **alternative rapid transit transport opportunities;**
- **development to put derelict areas to good use;**
- **seek mitigation where sites important for wildlife are developed;**
- **take Biodiversity Action Plans into account in future development or management plans; and**
- **in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type.**





### 3.6.2 Industrial - Road Corridors

The major road corridors of Cambridge are the A14, and the M11 motorway.

The A14, originally built as a northern bypass of Cambridge, has tended to encourage development northwards from the city edge and has resulted in some degraded areas. The industries that are located near this fast transport link tend to be those related with the leading edge of scientific technology.

Cambridge Science Park was developed in a very prescriptive way that has resulted in a spacious internal landscape with open space, trees and ponds. Some of the car parking areas have been relegated to the periphery adjacent to Milton Road. More recently the Business Park has been developed with tree avenues setting off a formal layout of large buildings with adjacent landscaped car parking areas. Cycle ways have been provided.

Other industrial parks occur in a piecemeal fashion throughout the city, but most notable in the north east and east. Most are a product of post war industrial expansion and generally are examples of poorly controlled, opportunity led development. They are therefore commonly of poor visual, environmental and landscape quality.

Business has followed Newmarket Road and Histon Road. At the City end large sales warehouses dominate Newmarket Road. Further out of the City it is dominated by the airport and the Marshall's garages complex. Histon Road similarly has a number of garages and repair shops along its length.

More recently a number of 'Park and Ride' sites have been built on main distributor roads into the City at Newmarket Road, Cowley Road, Madingley Road, Babraham Road and Huxton Road, Trumpington. Generally the buildings, design and landscape treatment of the Park and Ride facilities are of high quality.

#### ISSUES

##### Defining Character

- **Industrial - Road Corridor areas are not Defining Character.**



A14





### Characteristic Features

- **planned landscape of Science Park and Business Park; and**
- **elsewhere poor areas in terms of visual and environmental quality.**

### Pressures

- **piecemeal development;**
- **lack of maintenance;**
- **transport and dominance of car related travel; and**
- **pollution from traffic.**

### **VISION**

To ensure that these road corridors do not degrade the landscape and to ensure that Cambridge retains its essential character of a small City surrounded by an agricultural hinterland.

### Opportunities

- **environmental improvements;**
- **take Biodiversity Action Plans into account in future development or management plans; and**
- **in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type and which, on the boundaries, benefit wildlife.**

### **3.6.4 Industrial - Quarries and Brick Pits**

The chalk area in particular has a long history of quarrying activity.

The most easily obtained building stone in the locality is chalk clunch, and there is evidence of a small number of quarries worked in the Roman period. Examples of clunch can still be seen in the churches, college buildings and college walls.

The chalk can be used outside if protected by limewash. When chalk is burnt to form lime it can be used for mortar,





render or on the land as a fertiliser. The chalk quarry at Cherry Hinton has a long history. The characteristic chalk flora and fauna which has developed there is exceptional and the site has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Flints, found in the upper part of the chalk deposits, were highly valued and also used for building. Examples of this occur in houses and wall details, and the fine flint walls of Trumpington are an especially good example, and are very important in contributing to the local character of the village.

Fossils are very characteristic of chalk and particular fossil occurrences have given rise to a local industry - coprolite mining. The word 'coprolite' means petrified dung, but its meaning also now includes phosphatised casts of vertebrate remains. The 'coprolite' was used as a fertiliser and old workings can be seen in various Cambridge localities including Coldham's Common, and the coprolite ponds near Hauxton off the Cambridge Road. Often these old workings have developed into locally important habitats.

In the 1820s John Grafton, of Grafton House, Maid's Causeway, started making coal gas in retorts at Gas Lane near St Matthew's Street. He obtained a contract to light the streets with 'inflammable gas made from coal'. On 13 January 1870 a large gasholder was erected on Newmarket Road. In 1876 the people of the area complained to the Council about 'noxious vapours from the gas works'. In 1867 the gasholder was blown over in a gale. 300,000 cubic feet of gas escaped and became ignited. Apart from the gas industry, the other main industry in this area was brick making. Some 4 brickyards flourished between 1880 and 1930 using a thick seam of Gault clay as their raw material. Alexandra Gardens is the site of a previous clay pit.

The largest quarries in Cambridge are in the Blue Circle site. Three of these quarries are water filled, the one remaining quarry is currently being developed and the others are landfill sites. These areas are also part of the Eastern Corridor.

## **ISSUES**

### Defining Character

- **Industrial - Quarries and Brick Pits are not on their own Defining Character. These should be considered along with other attributes.**





### Characteristic Features

- as historic reference showing earlier land use and invasion and succession by plant and animal communities; and
- the areas still extant are often on Common land or are nature reserves.

### Pressures

- from development; and
- lack of appropriate maintenance.

### **VISION**

Where significant nature conservation interest has developed in these pits this should be conserved. Otherwise, through appropriate development significant environmental improvement could be achieved with appropriate development while ensuring that landscape features and wildlife interests are safeguarded.

### Opportunities

- conservation and creation of habitat;
- exploit historical interest;
- lakes are a valuable asset which could be developed; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type and which, where fitting, benefit wildlife.



### 3.7 'BORROWED' LANDSCAPES

'Borrowed' landscapes in this context mean landscape types which can be viewed from public places and which add to the singular quality of localities. Many could be considered as 'Defining Character' in their own right. 'Borrowed' landscapes are very typical of Cambridge - the glimpse of college gardens or a church cemetery through railings - and are common throughout many of the 'Character Types'.

#### 3.7.1 Colleges

The College Buildings and their setting contribute greatly to the landscape of Cambridge. Courts open to the street scene, such as Trinity Court with its impressive gateway, and King's with the screen and green contributing to the amenity of King's Parade. Other Colleges allow glimpses through railings and gateways to the college ground beyond - Senate House with its substantial cast railings of the 18th century<sup>37</sup>, Jesus College, and Christ's College, and more recently New Hall, Fitzwilliam and Wolfson -giving a borrowed element of landscape to the public realm and increasing the amenity of the area. Other Colleges have wrapped themselves with high walls or facades, such as Magdalene and Emmanuel and more recently Robinson College but even so the massive gatehouses, repeated throughout the centuries, are an important element in the Cambridge street scene, as are the mature trees within the gardens and courts which can be seen from the public realm.

There are 24 Undergraduate Colleges as well as a number of Postgraduate, teacher training and theological colleges. Peterhouse was the founded in 1280, and the most recent is Robinson, founded in 1974.

Apart from halls, libraries, teaching spaces and chapels the Colleges are predominantly residential, chiefly in rooms grouped around staircases in a courtyard setting. In 1565 Dr John Caius designed a court with one side open. This can still be seen today in Gonville and Caius. The idea was supposed to offer improved ventilation, and a view to the world outside. The basic ingredient of this open courtyard with staircase planning became very popular being used repeatedly in the Cambridge Colleges over the centuries with some notable exceptions within the last one hundred years or so.

In the late 19th century the first women's colleges were set up looking more like country manor houses than scholarly institutions. Newnham employed the Queen Anne Revival architect Basil Champneys. Neither Newnham nor Girton (1873) used the courtyard and the traditional staircase system. The new Selwyn College 1884 was based on the staircase and courtyard system. At about the same time celibacy was no longer required for a college fellowship and

<sup>37</sup> The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments England 1959  
An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of Cambridge  
Part 1 and Part 2



*Glimpsed views into college*



*Views through to Pembroke College  
Courts from the street*



the university lost many of its residential fellows when they married and moved to the new suburbs such as Storey's Way.

In the early 19th century Downing College was built along neo-classical lines - arguably the world's first campus. The spacious lawns and porticoes give it a grandness of place.

More recently the university has looked beyond the City centre to expand their facilities and to foster close relationships with high-tech industry. West Cambridge is currently being developed. There are proposals to develop north west Cambridge.

### **3.7.2 Botanic Gardens**

The Botanic Gardens are an important part of the landscape to the south of Cambridge. They affords fine views from the Trumpington Road and gives a feeling of spaciousness to the road where it sits opposite the New Bit part of Coe Fen.

The first Cambridge Botanic Garden of 5 acres was given to the University in 1761. It was situated off Free School Lane and was laid out with the help of the Curator of Chelsea Physic Garden. The garden was intended for scientific studies, but the buildings around it made it unsuitable for a botanic garden and by the beginning of the c19 the five-acre site was much too small. The new Cambridge Botanic Garden was moved from its town site and set out in the 1840s to display the gardenesque principle of the individual beauty of the trees and plants set in a natural setting. It was very different from the layout of the original Botanical Garden. The Trumpington Road site lies along side Hobson's Conduit, a stream dug in 1610 to bring water to Cambridge. The Conduit now feeds the lake in the Gardens.

The new 40-acre Botanic garden was officially opened in 1846, and later the wrought iron gates from the earlier garden were set up on Trumpington Road above the water garden. In 1951 the botanic garden was able to extend its acreage.

### **3.7.3 Playing Fields**

The College and school playing fields are a valuable landscape and environmental resource, often providing views over large tracts of land. Hedges and hedgerow trees, providing landscape features and habitat, bound many of the playing fields. The College playing fields are mostly found off Queen's Road, Barton Road, Grantchester Road and Huntingdon Road. Many are located on the edge of the town and provide a good transition between the built area and the rural hinterland.





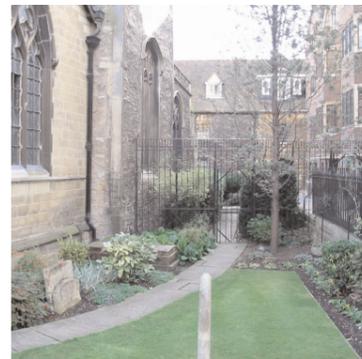
### 3.7.4 Church Yards and Cemeteries

Church yards and cemeteries are often important in cities because they alleviate hard urban areas - they are often surrounded by railings, allowing views into and across the green space - and help define the distinctiveness of different localities.

Within the City centre, St Andrew's, Round Church, Holy Trinity and St Mary the Great all have churchyards which contribute to the street scene and are seen and appreciated by many people.

Some churchyards are especially well tended and some afford retreat and sanctuary from the bustle that surrounds them. St Bene't and Little St Mary's are prime examples.

Other churchyards and cemeteries are City Wildlife Sites. These include the Mill Road Cemetery, Cherry Hinton Churchyard, Histon Road Cemetery, Trumpington Churchyard, Little St Mary's Churchyard, St Clements, St Giles and St Peter's both off Castle Hill. Histon Road Cemetery, and Mill Road Cemetery especially provide green oases in densely built up areas. They both have many fine memorials. Loudon designed the cemetery grounds in Histon Road in 1842 generally to the 'horticultural tradition' advocated by him in the mid c19. It is possible that he also advised on the gardenesque layout of Christ's College.



*Glimpsed views into well tended church yards*

## ISSUES

### Defining Character

- some of the Borrowed Landscapes are Defining Character because they are unique to Cambridge Colleges, or associated with other characteristics - for instance Botanic Garden. Otherwise they are not Defining Character.

### Characteristic Features

- variety of character;
- contribute to the distinctiveness of localities; and
- provide a break in the built form which is - one way or another - important to the environment and setting of Cambridge.





## Pressures

- development; and
- condition due to high cost of maintenance etc.

## **VISION**

Ensure that new development maintains or enhances character while ensuring that landscape features and wildlife interests are safeguarded.

## Opportunities

- enhance biodiversity and create new habitat by appropriate management;
- take Biodiversity Action Plans into account in future development or management plans; and
- in association with new development, encourage the use of trees and shrubs which are appropriate to the Character Type.







# 4

## CONCLUSIONS - CHAPTER 4

The Landscape Assessment places Cambridge into the broader picture guided by the National Character Areas identified by the Countryside Commission and English Nature, and the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines. This relationship within other frameworks will be helpful in establishing and justifying sound strategies for future land use.

Over the years a significant amount of information about the landscape character of the City has been collected, but this has been disparate and uncoordinated. The lack of a centralised retrieval system hinders easy access to existing information. This study has created as an end product a base line audit of the City's landscape which takes the form of photographic, descriptive and mapped information.

The information gathered has been analysed and evaluated. The elements identified as being of utmost importance to the City and the setting of the City - the things that make Cambridge a special, distinctive, unique place - are identified as Defining Character.

Character Types and Character Areas are identified and described in an attempt to promote a better understanding of the richness and diversity of different areas within the City. The pressures and opportunities that affect each Character Type and Character Area are identified.

The Landscape Assessment will be a useful tool in establishing policies for conserving and enhancing the quality of the City. The Defining Character will inform the choice of areas reviewed and identified for a relaxation of the Green Belt and which will therefore be the potential location of new development.

The previous rapid expansions of Cambridge can be used to inform development planning, at both the large-scale and detail level. Positive examples of local land use, building style and layout, described in the Character Types and Areas can be emulated, whilst examples that are considered poor, or not effective, can be avoided.

The characteristic features for Character Types and Areas will guide development proposals.

The Landscape Assessment will be an umbrella document for various other initiatives - strategic and area based masterplans, frameworks and strategies.



The actions required to manage and control pressures and promote opportunities identified within each Character Type and Character Area can largely be initiated through existing processes within the Planning Department. The actions fall into relatively discrete categories

- **The development pressures identified can largely be controlled or managed through existing development control procedures. Opportunities identified for protection or enhancement will be material consideration for development applications. The information contained within this document will highlight issues;**
- **Pressures for increased access both within the City and out to the countryside beyond, multi modal transport corridors are largely being addressed by current City Council Initiatives such as Local Plan Review and Southern Corridor Study. The information contained within this document can feed into these reviews;**
- **Opportunities for environmental enhancement will continue to be identified through area based assessments and topic based strategies. The Landscape Character Assessment will act as a framework for initiatives such as the Historic Core Appraisal, Planning Briefs, Arboriculture Strategy, Conservation Plans for the Commons; and**
- **The Landscape Character Assessment also indicates that certain work needs to be undertaken to feed into the Local Plan process, including for instance, a holistic overview of open space, and a Citywide wildlife strategy.**

The information gathered for this study is by no means definitive, it will change over time, and change should be planned in to ensure new information gathered can be used to review the Defining Character, and the Character Types and assess the impact of future landscape change.