

SAHAM TONEY VILLAGE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



Part Two: Fringe Sensitivity Assessment

January 2019



SAHAM TONEY
NEIGHBOURHOOD
DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Saham Toney

Fringe Sensitivity Assessment

for Saham Toney Parish Council

January 2019



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Lucy Batchelor-Wylam
Landscape architecture LucyBW@outlook.com

Report written by chartered Landscape Architect Lucy Batchelor-Wylam CMLI

Landscape planning and landscape architecture services.

Tel: 07905 791207

email: LucyBW@outlook.com



**SAHAM TONEY
NEIGHBOURHOOD
DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

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Introduction

1. Chartered Landscape Architect Lucy Batchelor-Wylam was initially appointed in July 2018 to undertake a parish scale landscape assessment. The assessment falls into two main parts. Part one is a parish character assessment, and it functions as part of the baseline understanding on which subsequent studies were based. This fringe sensitivity assessment forms Part two of the assessment. Both studies were commissioned to help inform emerging Neighbourhood Plan policies and the process of site allocation. The assessment results also assisted in finalisation of the Key Views report and a village Design Guide, in collaboration with the parish group.
2. This report aims to assess the sensitivity of different peripheral areas of land on the village settlement edges, and the ability of the land parcels to accommodate residential development. The findings provide a framework within which to understand the potential landscape/visual impacts of development on different parts of the settlement fringe.
3. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that sufficient housing delivery is enabled, but in appropriate locations that do not harm the special character of the village, its valued views or special landscapes. The Strung out nature of the village and the key role that some of its open spaces play in the way it is experienced, means it is important that development is directed to areas with less sensitivity, and highly sensitive areas are protected.
4. The assessment has the following objectives:
 - a) develop the level of detail provided for Saham Toney by the 2007 Breckland Fringe Sensitivity Study by LUC;
 - b) provide the district planning teams and the Neighbourhood Plan group the means of making sound decisions in relation to spatial planning and policy formation;
 - c) help explain to residents and land owners why such decisions were taken;
 - d) inform developers/applicants of the expectation in relation to sense of place, landscape protection and enhancement opportunities;
 - e) provide assistance to those determining planning applications or appeals and

ensure due weight is placed on landscape issues;

f) identify priorities for the enhancement, management and conservation of the landscape and views.

What is landscape sensitivity?

5. The sensitivity of a landscape is ‘the extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character’ . Landscape sensitivity is understood through the evaluation of landscape character and value, and selected sensitivity criteria. This definition is based on best practice and is compliant with the definitions given in the published guidance ‘Landscape Character Assessment: Topic Paper 6’ (see section on methods).
6. The assessment aims to communicate the ability of the landscape, given its particular character or visual qualities, to accommodate ‘change’ without undue detrimental effect. Change usually refers to new development, in this case it focuses on the residential development that is likely to come forward on the village edges in the future, however, its principles are likely to be applicable to other types of development.
7. The assessment, assisted by information set out in the Landscape Character Assessment, identifies how valuable and sensitive to change the landscape and its component features are. It analyses the features and attributes that give a landscape its character and unique sense of place. As well as the sensitivity of its physical aspects, the process also considers visual sensitivity of viewers of the landscape; who would experience the changes, where they would be experienced from, and whether valued or ‘key’ views are at risk. It also looks to a historic understanding of how settlements grew up, and their position in the landscape, as important factors. The evolution of settlements provides an important starting point for making judgements on future change or growth.

Development pressures

8. Within Breckland's settlement hierarchy, set out in policy GEN3 of the Local Plan, Saham Toney is defined as one of the 'Villages with Boundaries'. It is therefore unlikely going to be a key area for growth but is likely to face pressure to provide some new housing on its peripheries. Local Plan Policy 'GEN 05 Settlement Boundaries' supports development within the defined settlement boundaries but restricts it outside them, to preserve the countryside. Policy HOU 04 does allow housing development "immediately adjacent" to the settlement boundary provided certain criteria are met, which include size limits, prevention of coalescence, and a requirement for community benefit.
9. The Neighbourhood Plan team wish to take a more positive role in directing future growth and intend to allocate sites going forward. This study will form a key piece of evidence in that process but many other factors will influence decision making, including highways access issues, flood risk, infrastructure capacity, ecological impact etc. More detailed work on all types of impact needs to be carried out to determine the acceptability of individual development sites. Areas identified by this study as having some potential to accommodate development (in landscape terms), may not in fact be suitable for allocation. On their own the conclusion of this assessment cannot, therefore, be taken as a justification for supporting or resisting any future development proposal, but should be given appropriate weight.
10. Although the primary focus of this study is towards residential development, the findings can equally inform decisions about other types of development. The results will be available to landowners/developers to identify the particular issues likely to arise within each land parcel and promote sympathetic site design.
11. In 2007 Land Use Consultants carried out a settlement fringe landscape assessment of 5 towns and 12 villages in the district for Breckland Council. It formed part two of a Landscape Character Assessment. Saham Toney was one of the 12 villages assessed.
12. It considered sensitivity - to settlement expansion, - of the landscape character areas falling within 1.5km of the central, historic village cluster of Saham Toney. The study determined that the study area should be assessed in two parts, each half broadly focusing on a different character area.
13. The 'ST1 - Saham Toney south, west' area focused on the area within the District character area D2. The 'ST2 - Saham Toney north, west, east' area focused on land within District character area B5. Assessment of areas within district character area E5 was not included. Some overlap in the area of the church means this central settlement cluster appears to be mentioned in both assessments.
14. Overall, the study found that both areas of study merited a judgement of HIGH sensitivity. A summary of the assessment findings, taken from the 2007 study, is provided in Appendix A.
15. This study was commissioned to bring a finer grain of investigation to the individual village edges and identify any variation within the blanket 'HIGH' sensitivity. The purpose of this was to help with identifying suitable area where development might be accommodated, to provide information to help with site selection for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan and ensure that protection for areas of particularly high sensitivity could be identified.

Existing studies

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Method

Available methodologies

1. There is no specific standard guideline for assessing landscape sensitivity. In studies carried out to date, methods used vary in their emphasis, and are dependent on the geographical scope of a project and nature of the changes proposed.
2. This study follows the approach undertaken on previous studies by this author, and particularly on a 2018 study for Suffolk Coastal District Council in assessing the sensitivity of the Ipswich fringe and numerous smaller satellite settlements undertaken in partnership with Alison Farmer Associates.¹
3. It also draws on guidance in 'Topic paper 6: Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity'² and also uses definitions and concepts for valuing and assessing landscape provided in 'Guidelines for Visual and Landscape Impact Assessment 3'³

Definitions of sensitivity from Topic Paper 6 (page 5) :

Judging the sensitivity of the landscape as a whole, in terms of its overall character, its quality and condition, the aesthetic aspects of its character, and also the sensitivity of individual elements contributing to the landscape. This can be usefully referred to as landscape character sensitivity;

Judging the visual sensitivity of the landscape, in terms of its general visibility and the potential scope to mitigate the visual effects of any change that might take place. Visibility will be a function particularly of the landform of a particular type of landscape and of the presence of potentially screening land cover, especially trees and woodland. It will also be a reflection of the numbers of people who are likely to perceive the landscape and any changes that occur in it, whether they are residents or visitors.

4. The approach aims to be transparent, robust and defensible. It is consistent with good practice guidance on landscape character assessment and landscape and visual impact assessment, notably:

- 1 Ipswich Fringe sensitivity study Suffolk Coastal District Council 2018
- 2 Landscape Character Assessment Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for judging Capacity and Sensitivity . The Countryside Agency/ Scottish Natural Heritage
- 3 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013);

- Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage.
 - Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Spon.
5. The premise is that residential development should be more readily acceptable in the least sensitive areas, and where appropriate forms of mitigation would be possible. Development is least acceptable in areas of higher sensitivity and/or conditions are such that the landscape would not be sensitive to mitigation measures.
 6. The historic evolution of settlements provides an important insight for making judgements on landscape sensitivity in respect of settlement expansion. An understanding of the historic origins of settlement and its relationship to topography, and how much contribution the landscape makes to sense of place, is essential for directing future growth. The desk study phase gathered data on the location of the settlement, its historic evolution and the present day character of its fringes. This can be read in Part One of the landscape character assessment.

Scope of the study

7. The scope of the study was for assessment of broad sections of the village settlement fringe which displayed common characteristics. It looked at the land around the peripheries of each of the four Local Plan settlement clusters, in the zone adjacent to the settlement boundaries, where residential development might feasibly come forward. Using the parish character assessment for reference, eight Fringe Areas were derived and mapped.
8. A site or field level assessment was not feasible and the results of the study are not intended to suggest development sites or future settlement boundaries. The study also takes no account of other factors that would influence the suitability or availability of the land parcels for development such as flood risk, or whether access is possible.
9. The inner boundaries of the eight fringe areas generally interface with the village's 'physical limits' boundary. The outer boundaries attempt to follow some recognizable

landscape feature, such as a field boundary, watercourse or road. If no such feature was apparent, for example within a large field, a line was formed with the nearest such boundary feature. However, in reality the fringe areas should not be regarded as having a hard outward boundary, instead considered as extending outwards towards the Parish boundary. When consulting information on a specific fringe area, reference should also be made to neighbouring fringe areas where relevant.

10. Locations separated from the village edge were generally not included because development proposals would be much less likely to come forward in open countryside where no relationship to the existing settlement edge exists. In any such cases, the NPPF and local plan policy provide backing for landscape protection, and the parish character assessment should also be referred to.

Approach

11. The study was carried out using mapping at the scale of 1:10,000. The process began with reference to available baseline information including the Local Plan which identifies four separate settlement clusters, and the parish landscape character assessment which identified six village character areas (two of the four Local Plan settlement clusters were divided into two to better reflect differences in their character).
12. The settlement edges of each of the six character area were then divided into 8 'fringe areas' whose boundary lines generally reflected the differences in character identified in the parish character assessment in its respective adjoining rural area. These are labelled FA1 to FA8.
13. Conditions in each of the fringe areas were then recorded in tables, following a combination of desktop work and field observations. Professional judgement was applied to interpret the significance of the particular landscape and visual sensitivities.
14. To aid understanding of how judgements of value and sensitivity were reached, example circumstances indicating higher and lesser value are given on the following page. Mapped designated aspects of value were a key reference (see Appendix B).
15. Landscape sensitivity was assessed in relation to the following criteria:
- Recognised indicators of value; designations or landscape policy, e.g. Listed Building.
 - Landform and its contribution to character
 - Pattern and enclosure

- Settlement edge pattern
- The landscape's rarity and replaceability

16. The following criteria were considered in relation to the visual conditions and views:

- The visual prominence of the fringe area
- The types of receptors that would be affected
- Whether one or more key views would be affected
- Whether views from footpaths would be affected
- Whether views from principal routes would be affected - The degree of tranquillity
- The aesthetical value of the views affected

17. Following completion of the tables a text summary was provided for each fringe area under the following headings:

Sensitivities and aspects of value

A summary of the overall sensitivity in landscape and visual terms and reference to any particular aspects of high value and/or sensitivity.

Development Pressures

Summary of the number of recent completions and consented sites not yet built out, as an indicator of development pressure. Any particular landuse issues likely to result in increased pressure for development.

Mitigation notes:

Assessment of the likely ability of each fringe area to feature sympathetic and successful mitigation. Landscapes, where appropriate and successful mitigation can be undertaken, have more ability to assimilate development - they are, therefore, less sensitive.

18. The conclusions of the study set out recommendations for policy relating to aspects of highly sensitivity. It also identifies any fringe areas where moderate or lower sensitivity might mean there is the potential for some limited development to be assimilated, and where the potential for successful mitigation exists.
19. Mitigation is important as it must be recognised that regardless of the policies which might discourage development in areas of high sensitivity, applications may still come forward. Provision of mitigation guidance provides a basis for the determining authorities and the parish group to negotiate better design outcomes.

SUMMARY OF INDICATORS OF SENSITIVITY: Landscape
See further detail in appendix C

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

SUMMARY OF INDICATORS OF SENSITIVITY: Visual and Perceptual
See further detail in appendix D

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

Map 1: Settlement Fringe Areas

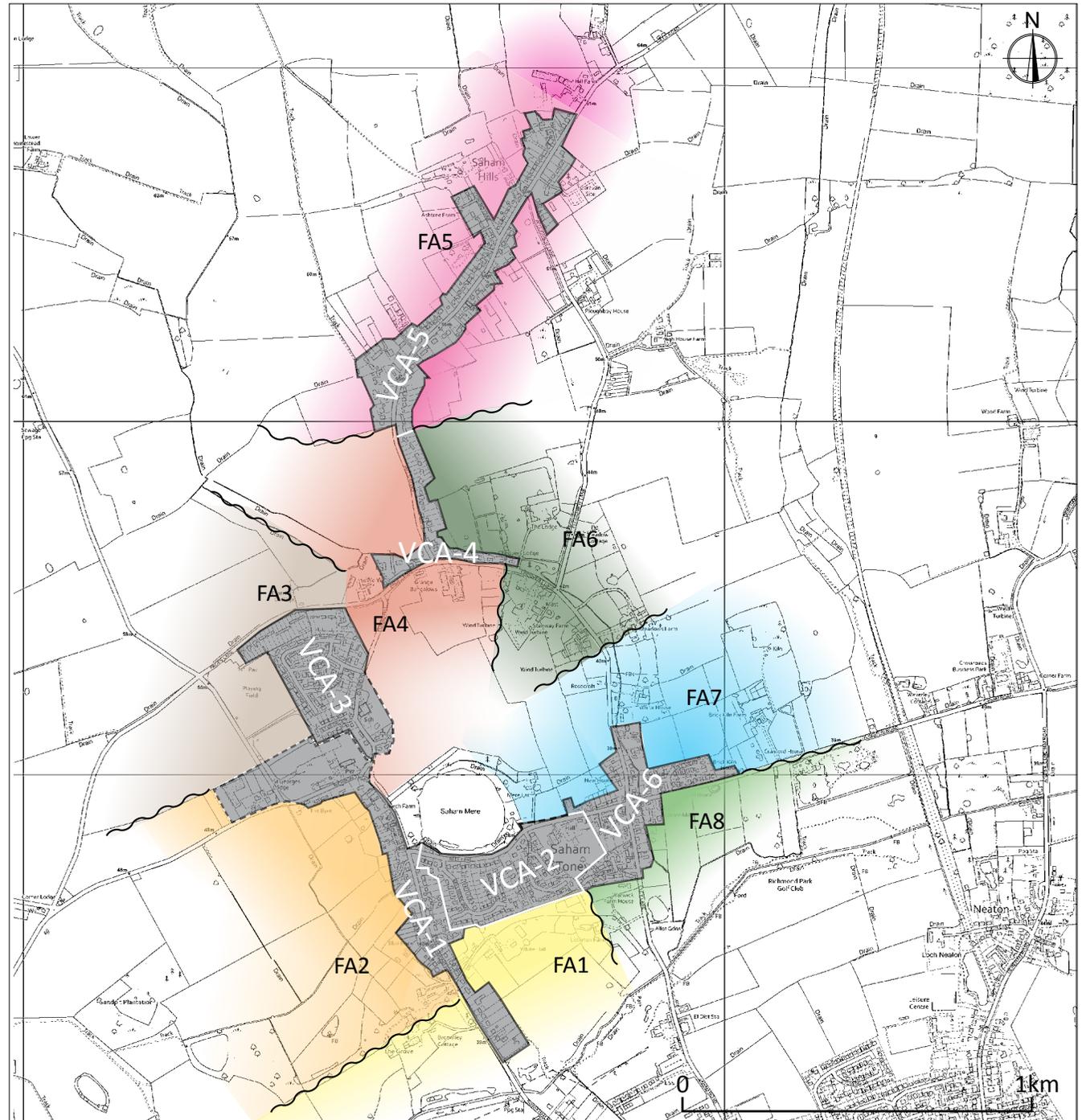
KEY

Defined fringe areas:

- FA1 - Richmond Road - south
- FA2 - Richmond Road - north
- FA3- Oval - west
- FA4 - Pages - north and south
- FA5 - Saham Hills - east and west
- FA6 - Chequers Lane
- FA7 - Mill Corner - north
- FA8 -Mill Corner - south

- Boundaries merge - no hard lines in reality
- Character area boundary correlates with Local Plan Settlement boundary
- Character area boundary extended to include settled areas excluded from Local Plan Settlement boundary

Please refer to the Saham Toney Landscape Character Assessment for more detail on the character of the village character areas (VCAs) and the rural areas (not labelled).



Assessment results

Assessment results: FA1 - Richmond Road - South

Fringe area	FA1 - Richmond Road south	Associated Character Areas:	RCA 1 - Watton Brook; VCA-1 Richmond Road; VCA-2 Bell Lane
Location and function	Low-lying valley bottom to the east and west of the linear settlement along Richmond Road. Found generally to the north of Watton Brook, but small part of the parish lies to the south of the brook. Gently sloping valleysides rise from approximately the 35m to 40m contour AOD. The area has important function as part of the rural gap between Watton and Saham Toney.		
Physical character	Landuse is pastoral and the eastern area is managed as part of the golf course.		
Landuse			
Physical/Landscape attributes		Visual and perceptual attributes	
Designations / aspects of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No statutory landscape or habitat designations but river meadows have intrinsic value as traditional managed landscape and as habitat - White Hall and adjacent 18th century barn are Grade II listed - Non-designated heritage assets: Broom Hall; - There are no rights of way in this area. 	Visual prominence and vulnerability of key views	Land to the east of Richmond Road is not visually prominent - a glimpse into the golf course possible, but otherwise inaccessible and contained by vegetation. To the west, higher sensitivity with scenic views possible from Broom Hall driveway, down onto the valley floor. Identified as Key view 7. More visibility to the west during winter months when trees and hedges are bare.
Landform	Valley bottom landform and river corridor provides distinct undeveloped buffer between Watton and Saham Toney. Land sloping gently towards small river promotes appreciation of river valley topography, albeit a shallow, subtle Norfolk valley, and is sensitive as a defining component of the landscape character.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	Receptors of visual change would comprise those in cars or on foot, passing in and out of the parish along Richmond Road. The residents of a small number of houses would also experience change.
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	Linear feel to the meadows that line the river corridor. Poorly drained land remains under pastoral use and historic patterns endure - no settlement found here historically. The lower valley slopes around Broom Hall have a parkland feel and feature strong structural planting - small woods/tree belts and specimen trees. These play important role in screening and separating the parish from Watton. The skyline feels wooded. The landscape is in moderate condition.	Tranquillity / activity	Close to the Richmond road limited tranquillity given the relatively high frequency of traffic. To the west, the meadows are grazed and the lack of public access means this is a belt of quiet and peaceful landscape.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	Interface with settlement comprises edges with large 18th century houses and their grounds, and some 20th century ribbon development on the southern end of Richmond Road. Undeveloped land to either side is sensitive in that it provides rural gap and sense of arrival to Saham Toney.	Aesthetic perception	Sensitivity from the scenic composition, with sense of time depth, from traditionally grazed river meadows in valley bottom, and associated wooded, farmed valleysides. Limited detracting features and limited intrusion from modern development.

Assessment results: FA1 - Richmond Road - South

Sensitivities and aspects of value

This area is **highly sensitive in landscape terms** and has **moderate to high sensitivity in visual terms**.

The valley floor either side of Watton Brook is highly sensitive in landscape terms as historically undeveloped grazing pastures, with additional value in terms of its riparian habitat (protected species potential). Historically, owing to poor drainage, it was not settled, and it functioned as to separate Watton and Saham Toney. This landscape character type is relatively uncommon and should be conserved for its special character and to maintain the separate identities of the two settlements.

The parkland-style pastoral landscape south of Broom Hall Hotel makes a positive contribution to rural landscape character and glimpses into this area form part of the sense of arrival on the approach from Watton.

Visually, much of the area is also sensitive. Key view 7 identifies a view to the west from Broom Hall driveway which offers a scenic view that should be conserved.

In general, development of any kind should be resisted in this area although land to the east of Richmond Road is potentially less visually sensitive, but has value where it forms setting to listed buildings. Any change or development here should seek to achieve landscape enhancement and care must be taken not to detract from the setting of heritage assets.

Development Pressures

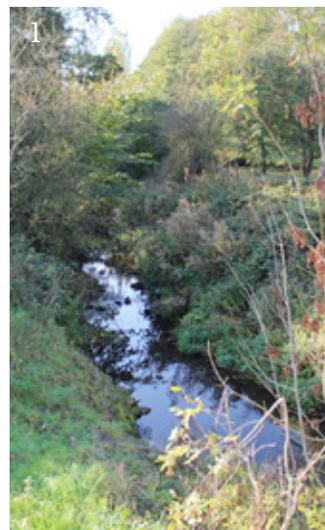
No new houses built since 2011 and one outstanding consent at the time of writing, but development on Broom Hall land has been previously refused.

Mitigation notes

Any development or land use change should be considered alongside planting schemes that are appropriate to this low-lying landscape, with sympathetic design and appropriate native species selection.

Management and Enhancement objectives:

- Preserve the undeveloped nature of the valley floor, potential residential development pressure on parish land south of the Watton Brook should be resisted. Resist leisure uses that could further erode the character of the flood plain.
- Restore and retain character through traditional management methods, and enhance using structural plant species that contribute to the distinctive valley bottom character.
- Enhance ecological value of habitats relating to the river.
- Seek opportunities for public access along river and through farmland, where compatible with other management objectives.
- Protect key view 7 from change leading to harm to its special qualities, as defined in the key views assessment.



1. Watton Brook glimpsed from the pedestrian bridge
2. Glimpses into the pastures south of Broom Hall offer scenic view
3. Glimpse into golf course

Assessment results: FA2 - Richmond Road - North

Fringe area	FA2 - Richmond Road - North	Associated Character Areas:	RCA-1 Watton Brook to the south; RCA-2 Western estates; RCA-3 Page's Manor to the north; and VCA-1 Richmond Road to the east and north
Location and and function	Gently sloping land between about 40 and 50m AOD. Streams and drains intersect the valleyside and help define a series of small meadows which back the settlement edge to the west side of Richmond Road, which then opens out, to the west, into estate farmland that characterises RCA-2. Bounded by Richmond Road and Cressingham Road to the north, otherwise no routes or rights of way are present.		
Physical character	Landuse is small scale pastoral along the back of the settlement edge, turning to larger scale arable fields upslope. Large commercial site - a pet food store with large scale sheds - north of Cressingham Road.		
Landuse			
Physical/Landscape attributes		Visual and perceptual attributes	
Designations / aspects of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No statutory landscape or habitat designations. - There are no rights of way in this area. - The churchyard and cemetery are designated Local Green Spaces - St. George's church and the Old Rectory are listed buildings; - Wisteria Cottage, The Old College and the Terrace are non-designated heritage assets 	Visual prominence and vulnerability of key views	From Richmond Road this part of the village edge is inaccessible and generally difficult to see into. Not generally visible from the Watton owing to dense vegetation in the valley bottom which provides screening. Views towards the church tower from approach along Cressingham Road and Richmond Road - Key View 2 and 6 respectively.
Landform	Gently sloping valleyside, falling from north to south.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	Views into this area are hard to achieve - no rights of way are available. A single point, in a field gateway, to the north offers traffic on Cressingham Road a brief view over the valley bottom. Although modern development is seen along the village edge, the feel is of quiet farmland.
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	Parts of the settlement edge are backed by small fields with vegetated boundaries. Field size increases further west where boundaries have been removed and the feel becomes more open and arable farming replaces the pastoral/equine use that edges the village. The wider landscape has an estate feel and it well managed.	Tranquillity / activity	Parts of this area can feel fairly still and quiet away from the roads.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	Continuous line of rear boundaries, but plot depths vary, giving indented forms to edge. This integrates well with adjoining countryside. Mature garden boundary trees and hedges help soften the interface with the small fields system, and merge into the wider network of vegetation across this well wooded piece of valleyside.	Aesthetic perception	Relatively scenic wooded valley side with limited intrusion from the modern world. Strong wooded edges to the south with a very wooded skyline. Some sense of time depth from glimpses of grazing stock.

Assessment results: FA2 - Richmond Road - North

Sensitivities and aspects of value

This area is **moderately sensitive in landscape and visual terms**.

The value in this landscape lies in its slightly elevated position allowing scenic views over the shallow valley, and its woodland belts north and west of Broom Hall which contain views towards Watton.

Despite its extent and openness this fringe area is generally not visually prominent in views from the village, or surrounding area. It does not form the setting to any listed buildings or support any rights of way - further indicators of reduced visual sensitivity. The wooded feel also gives the landscape better ability to absorb new development.

Valleysides are sensitive where new roofscapes can be easily seen and hard to assimilate but where there is containment from mature vegetation, there may be some scope for development. Historically, this zone, above c.40m AOD, was the position in the landscape that settlement began to develop in the parish, above the poorly drained valley floor.

The historic field patterns should be conserved and vegetative features must be retained and protected. Any development should be modest in height and positioned close to the existing settlement edge.

The valleyside does not have capacity for a large estate which would be seen from elevated points, and which would reduce the rural feel of the area. Single plots or one or two small groups could be accommodated if well integrated with the indented edge of the village and coupled with structural planting proposals.

Development Pressures

2 houses built since 2011 and a further 5 are consented. Less pressure potentially, as continuous line of development along Richmond Road hinders access.

Mitigation notes

Native hedge and tree planting would form effective and characteristic mitigation and improve the structure of the landscape.

Management and Enhancement objectives:

- Seek opportunities for public access where compatible with other management objectives
- Improve the condition of field boundary hedges where they are becoming gappy.
- Seek opportunities through future agri-environment scheme for landscape and biodiversity enhancement.



1. Views to church tower along Cressingham Road
2. Glimpse down to the village edge and valley floor from Cressingham Road



Assessment results: FA3 - Oval - west

Fringe area	FA3 - Oval- west	Associated Character Areas:	RCA-2 Western estates to the south; RCA-3 Page's Manor to the north, east and west; VCA-1 Richmond Road to the south and VCA-3 Parker's to the south and east
Location and function	Land to the west of Watton Road, west of the rectory, and north of Page's Lane. It forms an area of open, arable farmland but also includes the sport grounds south of Pages Lane. The area is crisscrossed by a number of roads, which sharply define the village edge. It forms the buffer to the northwestern extents of the settlement and part of the open land between Saham Toney and Ashill.		
Physical character	Plateau farmlands between 50 and 60m AOD.		
Landuse	The settlement edge is mixed; in addition to residential landuse, the sports ground sits in a well contained site on the village edge, and it bounds the commercial site - a pet food store with large scale sheds - north of Cressingham Road.		
	Rural landuse is generally arable farming.		
Physical/Landscape attributes		Visual and perceptual attributes	
Designations / aspects of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No statutory landscape or habitat designations. - Bounds the Old Rectory - non-designated heritage asset. - There are no rights of way in this area. - The sports field is designated as a Local Green Space 	Visual prominence and vulnerability of key views	Apart from the containment provide by vegetation to the sports ground, the land on this edge of the village is elevated, open and only lightly vegetated. Gentle topographic relief promotes longer views. Therefore, land is often very visually prominent and seen from more than one part of the village edge. Views to village of Ashill are not significant.
Landform	Land is elevated, feels flat and gently rolling, and occupies a position on the plateau edge. A stream has created gentle topographical relief to the northeast and this provides opportunities for longer views across the landscape to other parts of the village edge.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	Direct views out from 20th century houses that line Page's Lane, and overlooking from more distant dwellings along Hills Road. These constitute sensitive visual receptors.
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	There has been boundary loss in this area resulting in farmland with an open feel. Geometric patterns in the road network and field boundaries indicate good soil quality, with the landscape arranged for efficient farming over the past couple of centuries. As distinctive to much of Norfolk, oak trees stud the boundaries. Remaining arable hedges are in mainly good condition although roadside hedges are infrequent.	Tranquillity / activity	The area is bisected by a number of roads, the Watton Road is particularly busy, which brings regular noise and movement to the area and limits tranquillity.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	<p>Historic village 'centre' around St. George's church lies close by. Here the settlement edge to the rear of the Old Rectory is well integrated and softened by much vegetation.</p> <p>Beyond this, Watton Road strongly defines the settlement edge and the transition to open farmland to the west is abrupt, north of the pet food store on Cressingham Road. Vegetation conceals approaching village, giving rise to a sudden distinctive arrival point.</p> <p>Stark settlement edge along Page's Lane where 20th century linear development placed houses directly overlooking open farmland.</p>	Aesthetic perception	Relatively limited scenic qualities, given the only gentle topographic variation, and large scale, often featureless and open character of the farmland. No historic buildings to provide waymarkers, few views of the church tower. Tall poplars provide distant skyline features. Uniform local authority housing along Page's Lane lacks vernacular style and is of lesser architectural merit than some of the more locally distinctive cottages.

Assessment results: FA3 - Oval - west

Sensitivities and aspects of value

This area is judged of **low to moderate sensitivity in landscape terms** but is **highly sensitive in visual terms**.

In landscape terms sensitivity is lower because the landscape retains few historic or vegetative features, its field patterns have mostly been subject to 20th century agricultural amalgamation and hedge loss. Ecological value is low. The pastures west of Page's Place have higher landscape value as they are smaller scale, retain their historic field boundary patterns, and because they provide setting to the ancient farmstead at Pages Place.

Visual sensitivity is high because of the openness of the landscape and lack of structural vegetation. The related visibility of much of this parcel means views are possible from Hills Road and more distant points to the north and west. Development here would be highly visible with few features to assimilate with.

Incursions into the elevated open farmland west of Watton Road would be difficult to absorb, visually prominent and would be difficult to integrate with the adjacent settlement clusters.

Any proposals in this area would need to be of a scale that makes feasible substantial restoration of landscape structure to provide a new village edge. Houses could be integrated within wooded edges and result in an improvement to the sometimes stark village edges that are currently found.

Although obviously highly valued in cultural terms the sports ground offers the only location where a larger estate of houses might be accommodated in the village. This is because it is well contained by boundary vegetation. This scenario is highly unlikely unless an alternative and suitable location for the sports facilities was put forward.

Development Pressures

1 new house built since 2011 and no further houses are consented. Sharply defined settlement boundaries as a result of 20th century estate development means there are no areas of porosity.

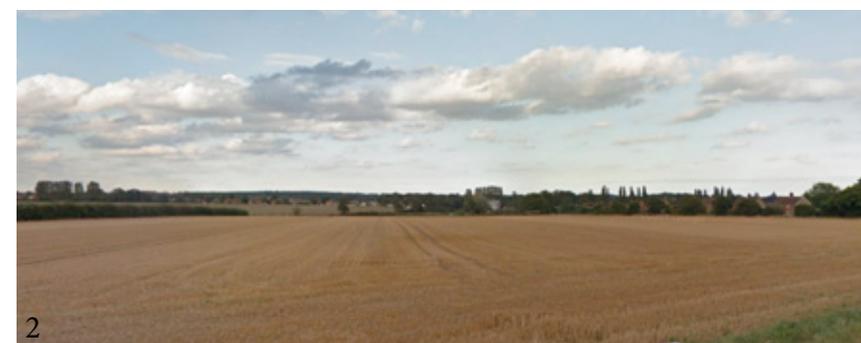
Possible pressure for extension of or residential development at commercial pet food premises on Cressingham Road in the future. This likely to be acceptable in landscape and visual terms.

Mitigation notes

New native hedge and tree planting would form effective and characteristic mitigation, and improve the structure of the landscape.

Management and Enhancement objectives

- Restore and manage field boundary hedges where they are becoming gappy.
- Maintain existing trees and add to the stock of oak trees along boundaries.
- Seek opportunities through future agri-environment scheme for landscape and biodiversity enhancement.
- Seek opportunities for public access where compatible with other management objectives



1. Open farmland west of Page's Lane and Watton Road
2. Landscape somewhat featureless west of Pages Lane.

Assessment results: FA4 - Page's - north and south

Fringe area	FA4- Page's - north and south	Associated Character Areas:	RCA 3 - Page's Manor; RCA-4 Ploughboy farmland to the north; VCA-1 Richmond Road and VCA-3 Parker's to the west; VCA-4 Chequers to the north
Location and function	Land comprises the valleyside north of Pages Place, and land east of Pound Hill and south of Chequers Lane where it forms the open farm land to the north of the Mere. It also includes the small triangular parcel of land to the west of Pound Hill, to the northeast of The Oval. It falls between 40 and 55m AOD.		
Physical character	It is contained and defined to the south by the roughly circular road pattern formed by Pound Hill and Chequers Road. It has an important function in separating the settlement clusters at Saham Hills from that which comprises the large estate of bungalows at The Oval.		
Landuse	It is generally arable farmland, with some pastures. There are a number of farmsteads, in various states of repair and under varying landuses - some now have a commercial purpose.		
Physical/Landscape attributes		Visual and perceptual attributes	
Designations / aspects of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No statutory landscape or habitat designations. - Adjoins the historic Mere to the south - Local Green Space - County Wildlife site 977 (the Mere) - Land forms setting of Page's Place (Grade II listed) to north and south. - Views to the church tower from approach on Pound Hill. - Setting to a number of attractive vernacular buildings including the Victorian school house (non-designated heritage asset) and some attractive cottages around the junction with Hills Road. 	Visual prominence and vulnerability of key views	This tract of land is very visually prominent and there is intervisibility in views between Pound Hill, Chequers Lane, and Pages Lane. The openness also allows views down to northern edge of the Mere (concealed within tree cover) and allows glimpses to Watton beyond. Long views are possible from elevated points.
Landform and cover	Gently sloping land, with gentle undulations from a tributary stream that provides relief across the plateau edge. Frequent woodland belts and blocks link up around the horizon to add to a wooded feel.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	Sensitive receptors would experience any change here. Multiple residential receptors overlook these fringes and views possible from within the setting of Page's Places (Grade II listed).
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	The historic maps show this area was much divided into smaller fields at the end of the C19th. Subsequent amalgamation has removed the traditional field pattern and landscape condition is only moderate. Poplar trees have been planted along field boundaries, perhaps as wind breaks, and these now have an over dominant vertical presence.	Tranquillity / activity	Moderately tranquil, rural village feel, but frequent traffic noise and movement from the network of roads and lanes.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	Settlement first developed in this area, and became scattered along the network of tracks and lanes that served the parish farms, a nucleated village never formed. Along Chequers Lane the scattered settlement pattern endures, and historic cottages are well assimilated within well vegetated plots. Relatively dense estate development at The Oval is single storey and well assimilated and has little impact on the landscape. 20th century linear local authority housing on Hills Road is less well assimilated on this more elevated land. The circular pattern of the lanes and scattered farms and settlement along them is distinctive and contributes to a strong sense of place.	Aesthetic perceptions	Generally scenic, settlement and farms dispersed through a fairly well wooded landscape. Perceptions of ruralness eroded by wide kerbed highway and footway and stark line of leylandis behind school. Recent houses at Parker's Close occupy a slightly elevated site and, partly because of the brightly coloured render, have an overly prominent presence.

Assessment results: FA4 - Page's - north and south

Sensitivities and aspects of value

This area is **moderately sensitive in landscape** and **highly sensitive in visual terms**.

Landscape sensitivity is moderate as much of the land has lost its historic patterns and hedgerows. Value focuses on Pages Place, an ancient farmstead with listed building (under renovation), and historic continuity is seen in the enduring scattered settlement pattern and traditional cottages that contribute positively to character and demonstrate the local vernacular. Open space plays an important contribution to character alongside built form in the interrelationships that result. Twentieth century housing has a less positive impact, although for the most part, at The Oval, is successfully assimilated.

The tract in the centre of the circuit of lanes appears to have remained historically unsettled. The pattern of small fields have been amalgamated. Today it functions to provide separation between the different outlying parts of the village, the dispersed nature of which is key to its character.

The parcel is visually highly sensitive as it is prominent in views from Pound Hill in the foreground of long views towards the Mere and Watton to the southeast. Visual sensitivity also associated with the slopes behind Pages Place where they form the backdrop to views of this heritage asset.

Development in open areas here would change the character of this piece of land significantly and potentially cause coalescence of different settlement clusters. Where the settlement edges are well defined, new intakes of land for development would be visually prominent and difficult to assimilate. There is more scope for sensitive redevelopment of existing farmsteads but any such proposals would need to be accompanied by substantial native planting proposals.

Development Pressures

No new houses built since 2011 but one currently under construction.

Mitigation notes

Any development proposals should be accompanied by new native hedge and tree planting which should be designed to help retain the rural character of this area, and form effective and characteristic mitigation and aim to improve the structure and ecological value of the landscape.

Management and Enhancement objectives

- Improve condition of open land where boundary loss has occurred. Protect and continue to manage existing field boundary hedges.
- Seek opportunities for public access where compatible with other management objectives.
- Seek opportunities through future agri-environment scheme for landscape and biodiversity enhancement.
- Replace belt of coniferous screening next to the school with native planting.
- Support the renovation of Page's Place and associated farmstead to enhance the village edge.



1. View to Church along Pound Hill
2. View south to the Mere
3. Triangle west of Pound Hill. Through privately owned it feels like a historic Green.

Assessment results: FA5 Saham Hills - north and south

Fringe area	FA5 - Saham Hills - north and south	Associated Character Areas:	RCA- 3 Page's Manor to the west and RCA- 4 Ploughboy Farmlands to the east; VCA-5 Saham Hills
Location and function Physical character Landuse	This encompasses land that backs settlement to the east and west of Hills Road above (approx) the 55m contour, and to either side of the northern end of Ploughboy Lane. Landuse is predominantly residential and there is also a small caravan site/cafe. The landscape feels fairly flat but indentation is provided by a small stream flowing eastwards along Ploughboy Lane. Land backing the settlement edges is often pasture, in a network of small and medium fields, often with well vegetated edges. To the north, this opens out to long views over the larger scale well-wooded arable landscape.		
Physical/Landscape indicators		Visual and perceptual indicators	
Designations / aspects of value	- No designations or policies for landscape or heritage in his area. - A public footpath heads northwest towards Ashill from Coburg Lane - the only one in the parish. - Victorian chapel (non-designated heritage asset) marks a way point in the streetscene. Hunts Farmhouse also a (non-designated heritage asset) - A number of vernacular cottages make a positive contribution.	Visual prominence and vulnerability of key views	The belt of land to the rear of the settlement is hard to experience owing to the continuous nature of the settlement along the Street. There are few points offering views into or along it.
Landform and cover	Flat and very gently rolling. Landuse fringing the settlement is pastoral and arable. There is a small tourism park - a cafe and camping and caravan site. Farms occupy positions within the streetscene, Hunts Farm now converted to residential use, Goddards Hill farm marks the end of the settlement.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	Some inter-visibility across some parts of the settlement edges but otherwise the continuous linear form means few prominent parcels of land exist. The exception is land south of Ploughboy Lane which projects into the settlement and brings the countryside right into the Street.
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	General pattern is for smaller pastures, backing the rear gardens, with much evidence of the original small scale field patterns enduring. This opens out into the wider landscape with 'dog-legging' field boundaries providing evidence of the amalgamation and intakes that have occurred over time.	Tranquillity / activity	Quiet village feel, interrupted only by light traffic. Rural character strengthened by glimpses of grazing sheep or farm machinery moving in fields.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	Ribbon of development lines Hills Road as a result of the historic patterns of scattered farms and cottages becoming infilled during the 20th century to form a more or less continuous line. Somewhat suburban character in places. Small scale field pattern provides transition from the edge of the settlement and help absorb the village edge.	Aesthetic perceptions	Rural feel where cottages remain, although 20th century built form is rather dominant and when associated with suburban style boundary treatments and ornamental hedges and plantings, the feel can be a little suburban and indistinctive. Few detracting features in surrounding landscape - strong agricultural rural character prevails.

Assessment results: FA5 Saham Hills - north and south

Sensitivities and aspects of value

This area has overall **moderate landscape and visual sensitivity**.

This somewhat more elevated land is set within a reasonably open arable landscape, and long views out are possible. But views back to this area are not easily experienced from the wider landscape owing to a lack of vantage points and vegetated edges.

Some parcels backing the village edge in the form of small meadows are remnants of original small scale field patterns. Such well vegetated parcels can successfully assimilate development but the patterns and structures should be retained.

The system of small scale poorly drained pastures associated with the stream are more sensitive as their loss could not easily be mitigated - replacement, or recreation difficult. They show a sense of continuation and time-depth.

Preserve the settings of the farms, avoiding development intruding into their historic settings.

Large scale development here would need to be well integrated and assimilated in the landscape such that the rural village character here was retained.

Development Pressures

5 houses built since 2011 and 9 further consented. These in single plots or small groups. Indicates general modest level of pressure - potential opportunities for small-scale infill.

Mitigation notes

Native planting effective in plateau locations. Look to native clayland species for hedges and tree planting.

Management and Enhancement objectives

- Maintain low key gateway approach to village from north.
- Conserve the character of the traditionally grazed pastures south of Ploughboy Lane. Prevent further development.
- Seek opportunities to create permissive rights of way, where compatible with other management objectives, and especially where link to other parts of the village.



1



2



1 and 2. New houses on Coburg Lane and Hills Road responding well to local vernacular
3. Flat open land along the northwest side of Saham Hills.

Assessment results: FA6 Chequers Lane

Fringe area	FA6- Chequers Lane	Associated Character Areas:	RCA 3 - Page's Manor to the west; RCA-4 Ploughboy farmland to the east; VCA-4 Chequers to the west
Location and function	Areas comprises the rural area east of the southern part of Hills road, and land to either side of Chequers Lane and Ploughboy Lane, east of the junction with Hills Road. It merges into the northern fringes of Mill Corner (FA 7).		
Physical character	It lies between the 40 to 50m contour AOD and generally feels fairly flat, the stream that runs along Chequers Lane provides gentle topographical relief.		
Landuse	It forms a lightly settled zone of countryside with scattered properties and farmsteads dominated by pastoral land use along the fringes of Chequers Lane. There are a number of farmsteads and large houses set in well vegetated grounds and the landscape is in good condition and has a strong rural feel. Commercial land use found on old farmstead - container storage.		
Physical/Landscape attributes		Visual and perceptual attributes	
Designations / aspects of value	- No statutory landscape or habitat designations. - The Lodge - large grade II property in extensive grounds	Visual prominence and vulnerability of key views	No key views present in this area, but the rural character of the sequence of views along Chequers Lane have value. The widespread tree cover in this parcel means visual sensitivity is reduced as built form is absorbed and is not prominent in views.
Landform and cover	Gentle roll in landscape from the slightly lower lying land alongside a tributary stream that drains to the Watton Brook. Poorer drainage alongside the small watercourse means pastures are often present, rather than arable land use. Frequent small woodland blocks and mature hedges, including along the roadsides, which together give a wooded feel	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	Few receptors here other than the traffic passing through. Occasional farmhouses. No rights of way present.
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	Small scale field patterns endure with associated well vegetated edges, and the lanes have intact hedges alongside. The landscape is in generally good condition and shows timdepth.	Tranquillity / activity	This part of the parish has a quiet feel, with only traffic on the lane bringing noise and movement.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	Settlement scattered lightly along Chequers Lane in the form of large properties and farmsteads. Limited evidence of 20th century intrusion or development. Exception is use of land south of Chequers Lane used for container storage.	Aesthetic perceptions	Mature trees and hedges and glimpses into enclosed pastures and farmsteads gives a sense of intimacy as well as historic continuity. General lack of modern intrusion and strong rural feel. Wires and telegraph poles detract from the Streetscene on Hills Rd. Some of the farmsteads have unsightly elements that would benefit from screening.

Assessment results: FA6 Chequers Lane

Sensitivities and aspects of value

This area is **highly sensitive in landscape terms** and **low to moderately sensitive in visual terms**.

Higher landscape sensitivity relates to the value of the small scale pastoral field patterns and the enduring intact boundary features and roadside hedge. It provides setting to sensitive heritage listed assets - The Lodge is an impressive large listed building set within a landscape of trees and grassland.

Tree cover is higher than in other parts of the village and a wooded feel prevails. The intact landscape structure provides a sense of time-depth, and twentieth century intrusion is limited. The exception is along Hills Road where the local authority style housing is poorly integrated and structural vegetation more limited.

However, generally, the high proportion of tree cover means visual sensitivity is lower - trees increases the capacity of landscapes to assimilate development without wider impact as they contain and screen built form.

Chequers Lane is not suitable for village expansion owing to its strong rural character and intact scattered settlement pattern - this area has not been subject to extensive 20th century infill that has taken place elsewhere in the parish and retains a rural feel. It has strong landscape structure and retention of its trees and hedges is key to its character. The area would be less sensitive to small scale development in the form of conversions or occasional single plots, that are carefully integrated.

Land east of Hills Road may have some capacity for small to moderate scale development, if integrated with tree planting along its eastern margins to integrate and improve this somewhat currently stark edge.

Development Pressures

No new houses built since 2011 and no others are currently consented.

Mitigation notes

Any development proposals should be accompanied by new native hedge and tree planting which should be designed to help retain the rural character of this area, and form effective and characteristic mitigation and aim to improve the structure and ecological value of the landscape.

Management and Enhancement objectives

- Improve stark edges of settlement along Hills Road
- Seek opportunities for public access where compatible with other management objectives.
- Protect the setting of listed buildings and ensure conversion of farmsteads respects and retains the agricultural character

1



2



1. Views from Ploughboy Lane to housing on Hills Road
2. Attractive cottages along Chequers Lane

Assessment results: FA7 Mill Corner - north

Fringe area	FA7 - Mill Corner - north	Associated Character Areas:	RCA-1 Watton Brook to the south, RCA-3 Page's Manor to the west; RCA-4 Ploughboy farmland to the east; VA-2 Bell Lane and VA-6 Mill Corner to the south
Location and function Physical character Landuse	This encompasses land between Ovington Road/Bell Lane in the south and land either side of Chequers Lane as far north as its junction with Ploughboy Lane. Area is low lying, rising little above the 40m contour. North of the Mill Lane housing cluster settlement is light and dispersed along Chequers Lane in small farmsteads and larger properties. The landuse is enclosed pastures and tree belts to the east, opening out to arable farmland beyond, and arable to the west side of Chequers Lane.		
Physical/Landscape indicators		Visual and perceptual indicators	
Designations / aspects of value	- No designations or policies for landscape or heritage in his area. - Two listed buildings - Meadow Farm and Brick Kiln Farmhouse.	Visual prominence and vulnerability of key views	Areas assimilated within vegetated edges not seen from the wider landscape. Land more visible, although not prominent, to the east of Chequers Lane, with distant intervisibility with Pound Hill to the northwest. Interference with glimpse of church tower - now seen above new roofs of Parker's Close in the foreground.
Landform and cover	Area feels fairly flat, the stream that tracks Chequers Lane causing just a gentle roll in the landscape.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	Few receptors as area not generally passing traffic would be considered of low visual sensitivity. Land parcels not prominent in views from elsewhere in the parish.
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	Cluster along Bell Lane and on Mill Corner. Otherwise light scattering of farms and roadside cottages. New housing being built in open land to west of Chequers Lane. Farmsteads in mixed states of repair.	Tranquillity / activity	Intimate feel in the lanes from well managed continuous hedges. Roads bring some noise and movement but overall feel is rural.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	Small estate at Mill View contrasts with prevailing linear settlement patterns. Organic shapes in the path of the lane and in the field boundaries. This area has undergone much less infill than other parts of the village and historic scattered settlement pattern is much more in evidence.	Aesthetic perceptions	Pleasant rural feel and well managed landscape, hedges in good condition for the most part. Good capacity for further native Structural planting to provide screening/mitigation.

Assessment results: FA7 Mill Corner - north

Sensitivities and aspects of value

This area has **moderate visual sensitivity** and **landscape sensitivity**.

Its value relates to its rural character and the enduring organic shaped, small scale, patterns east of Chequers Lane, but there has been loss of boundaries and condition on the west side. Development is taking place here which may offer opportunity to reinstate or create new vegetated edges to help integrate the new village edge.

The settings of the scattered farmsteads are sensitive to residential development adjacent as this would erode their isolated rural locations. Conversion of existing buildings acceptable provided the proposals and materials are sympathetic to the agricultural character of the farmsteads.

Generally development would be better associated with the settlement cluster to the south as development here will interfere with the sense of rurality and the scattered nature of the farmsteads.

Development Pressures

3 houses built since 2011 and 18 (across 3 sites) have consent. Further pressure for expansion likely west of Chequers Lane and close to the Mill Lane cluster. Potential future farm building conversion.

Mitigation notes

Structural planting schemes likely to be effective at assimilating development in this landscape.

Management and Enhancement objectives

- Conserve existing views of Mill tower. Consider ways of creating new views.
- Restore some structure to open arable landscape where boundaries lost. Protect the existing network of mature hedges and trees in this landscape.
- Seek opportunities to create permissive rights of way, where compatible with other management objectives, and especially where link to other parts of the village. Lack of footways likely a current deterrent to pedestrians.
- Ensure conversion proposals retain the agricultural feel of farmsteads



1. Farmsteads along Chequers Lane.
2. Open landscape offers distant glimpse to church tower

Assessment results: FA8 Mill Corner - south

Fringe area	8A - Mill Corner - south	Associated Character Areas:	RCA-1 Watton Brook; RCA-4 Ploughboy farmland to the north; VCA-6 Mill Corner
Location and function	This encompasses low-lying land between the river and Bell Lane/Ovington Road below the 40m contour. The southern area forms part of the undeveloped gap between Watton and Mill Corner. It is a flat feeling area and landuse is a mix of recreational uses and meadows divided by tree lined drainage ditches. A substantial part of the area is Golf course occupies the valley bottom and network of pasture but views in are not easy to achieve. They are separated often by well vegetated boundaries.		
Physical character			
Landuse			
Physical/Landscape indicators		Visual and perceptual attributes	
Designations / aspects of value	- No designations or policies for landscape or heritage in his area. - No listed buildings here. One non-designated asset - the mill sits back off from Ovington Road just east of Mill Corner. - Number of vernacular cottages make a positive contribution to the streetscene round the cross roads. Coaxial field patterns have historic value. - The allotments and bird sanctuary are designated Local Green Spaces	Visual prominence and vulnerability of key views	Views usually intimate and contained. Low visual prominence of much of this parcel, from the wider parish, owing to low-lying topography and belts of trees. Belts of poplars in the valley bottom are prominent in the skyline when viewed from the wider landscape.
Landform and cover	Mix of pastoral and recreational land uses surround the cluster of settlement. Meadows to the east are seasonally wet so more traditional uses endures - pastures for hay, and grazing by sheep. Also significant equine use. Village hall and its grounds sit west of Mill Corner. Golf course lies both sides of the Watton Brook and a wilderness style campsite around an artificial lake. Allotments and bird sanctuary east of Cley Lane.	Types of receptors experiencing potential visual change	Owing to intimate views and linear pattern, little overlooking/inter-visibility likely from existing properties. Lack of public access in this area limits the number of sensitive receptors. Visibility from Watton not assessed but likely some views from the edge from the residential areas along the north of the town. Passing traffic would be considered of lower visual sensitivity.
Pattern/ enclosure and condition	Remnant linear coaxial field patterns (linear fields arranged perpendicular to the water course) found south of Ovington Road. Elsewhere, eg across the golf course, the patterns (clearly seen on the early OS maps) have been lost or eroded. Landscape otherwise in generally in good condition. Combined pattern of linear fields and notably Straight lanes is distinctive.	Tranquillity / activity	Modest amount of traffic passes along Cley Lane, but Ovington Road and Bell Lane are narrow and relatively quiet. Intimate feel and surprising sense of ruralness and remoteness given the close proximity to Watton.
Settlement edge pattern / gateways	Historic settlement cluster grew up around the crossroads, of small scale cottages. These were likely associated with employment on the surrounding two farmsteads and in the Mill - Mere Farm and Brick Kiln Farm. Considerable number of recent housing completions well integrated within well vegetated settlement edge.	Aesthetic perceptions	Well managed equine holding within mature trees belts provide almost a parkland feel and enhances the gateway into the parish. Tree lined meadows and grazed pastures are scenic and draw the eye down to the river. Poorly screened allotments have a slight adverse visual impact.

Assessment results: FA8 Mill Corner - south

Sensitivities and aspects of value

This area has **high landscape sensitivity** and **moderate visual sensitivity**.

Landscape value is high along the valley bottom where historic landscape patterns are found, and the sense of ruralness and remoteness prevails. The coaxial meadow patterns to the east are rare. That's not to say all types of development would be inappropriate but conservation of the historic field patterns must be addressed.

Landscape character is distinctive where straight, heavily tree-lined roads, combine with glimpses into ancient shaped meadows. Further sense of historic continuity from the glimpses of the mill, and the positive contribution from older buildings. Less natural or modern elements, including the golf course, aren't prominent in perceptions of the area, which retains a rural feel.

In visual terms this is a less sensitive landscape. There is little intervisibility with other parts of the parish owing the combination of the lack of elevation and high proportion of vegetation. Apart from the openness at the gateway into the parish, the visual experience is more intimate.

Development Pressures

32 houses built since 2011 and a further 4 are consented. This area has seen considerable expansion in recent years and indicates high pressure for housing in this area. Yet this number of dwellings have been well integrated, they are not prominent and have had little influence on the character of Mill Corner.

Mitigation notes

Structural planting schemes likely to be effective at assimilating development in this landscape. Reflect riparian character in species selection.

Management and Enhancement objectives

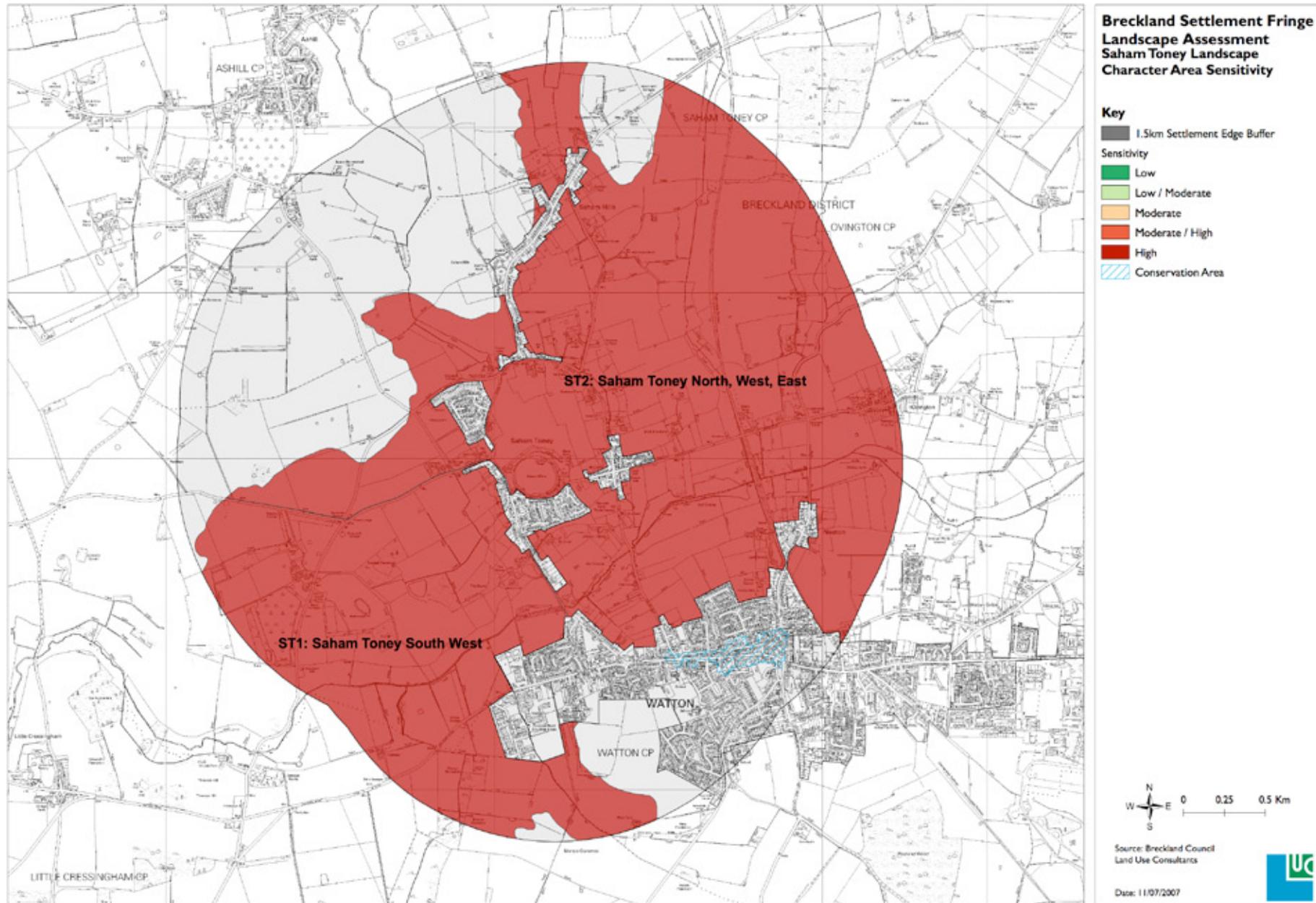
- Protect river corridor from development for its intrinsic value, and to prevent coalescence with Watton.
- Protect mature tree and hedges which are important to character and manage for biodiversity interest.
- Consider ways of conserving or creating views to mill tower.
- Conserve the character of the settings of the farms, particularly where they make contribution to gateways avoiding development that intrudes into their historic settings or urbanises their rural character. Any farm building conversion proposals must strive to retain agricultural character.
- Seek opportunities for public access where compatible with other management objectives



1. Village edge well absorbed behind tree line on approach along Cley Lane
2. View towards mill tower heading west on Ovington Road
3. Development infringing on valley floor character at the golf course

Appendix

Appendix A: Breckland settlement fringe sensitivity study - Saham Toney



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From Breckland Settlement Fringe Sensitivity Study (LUC, 2007)

ST1 - SOUTH WEST

1. In summary, the assessment of ST1 found:
 - The landscape here is not representative of the Heathland landscapes that generally characterise D2. It appeared to be more contiguous, or at least transitional, with B5.
 - character of the existing settlement edge here is low density and well integrated. This settlement form would be disrupted by blocks of development.
2. Its particular features of value include:
 - features of value within the intact network of parkland, farmland and plantation, and their role as estate settings to two historic Halls. Landscape condition here is generally good.
 - the church tower of St. George functions as a landmark to the surrounding landscape
 - the valley landscape between Saham Toney and Watton has an important function in providing separation between the two settlements and in providing a separate identity. This gap would be sensitive to encroachment.
 - settlement node around the church features older properties and has Strong sense of place
3. Strategic /management aims to comprise:
 - Conserve and enhance 'natural' features of the landscape - watercourses, grazing pastures, woodland blocks and wet woodland.
 - Conserve and manage parkland trees and other avenues. Manage designated woodlands with particular biodiversity interest.
 - Conserve the settings of the two historic Halls
 - Protect the sensitive gap between Saham Toney and Watton from encroachment
 - Landscape has capacity for characteristic mitigation plantings - plantations, copses and waterside trees
 - Seek opportunities to improve recreational access into these landscapes

Overall Sensitivity Judgment

Overall the sensitivity of the area to further expansion of Saham Toney/Watton is judged to be High. This judgement relates to the role of tributary valley and parkland/pasture and woodland setting in defining the separation of Saham Toney and Watton and creating a Strong rural character to this edge of the village.

ST2 - NORTH, WEST, EAST

4. In summary, the assessment of ST2 found:
 - distinctive, gently undulating tributary valley landscape, with Strongly rural feel, representative of character area B5
 - where landscape forms immediate setting to settlement often formed of wet woodland and pastures enclosed by hedgerows. Transition to more open arable landscape to the north.
 - Settlement pattern of several dispersed clusters. Open land between them maintains their separate identities and is sensitive to infilling.
 - Edges and interfaces generally well integrated with the landscape and its frequent tracks and lanes. Breaks in the settlement also provide views out at intervals.
 - The loose and informal form is sensitive to infill and consolidation, particularly where it would result in the merging of the existing small settlement clusters.
 - The setting of the church is sensitive
5. Its particular features of value include:
 - the historic, groundwater-fed Saham Mere
 - pastures, Streams and wet woodlands along the village edges forming a mosaic of habitats and function as enclosure to the settlement
 - Cluster of listed buildings (although judged not necessarily individually sensitive to small scale development)
6. Strategic /management aims to comprise:
 - Conserve the natural features including the Mere and the small scale valley bottom pastures, wet woodlands and hedgerows. Manage for biodiversity interest.
 - Conserve the setting of, and views to, the church
 - Seek opportunities to improve recreational access where compatible with other management objectives

Overall Sensitivity Judgment

Overall the sensitivity of the area to further expansion of Saham Toney is judged to be High. This judgement relates to the role of tributary valley landscape and pasture in providing a distinct setting to the settlement which would be sensitive to change, and the potential for further development to change the loose, informal settlement pattern and create a more consolidated developed area.

Appendix B : Designations

KEY:

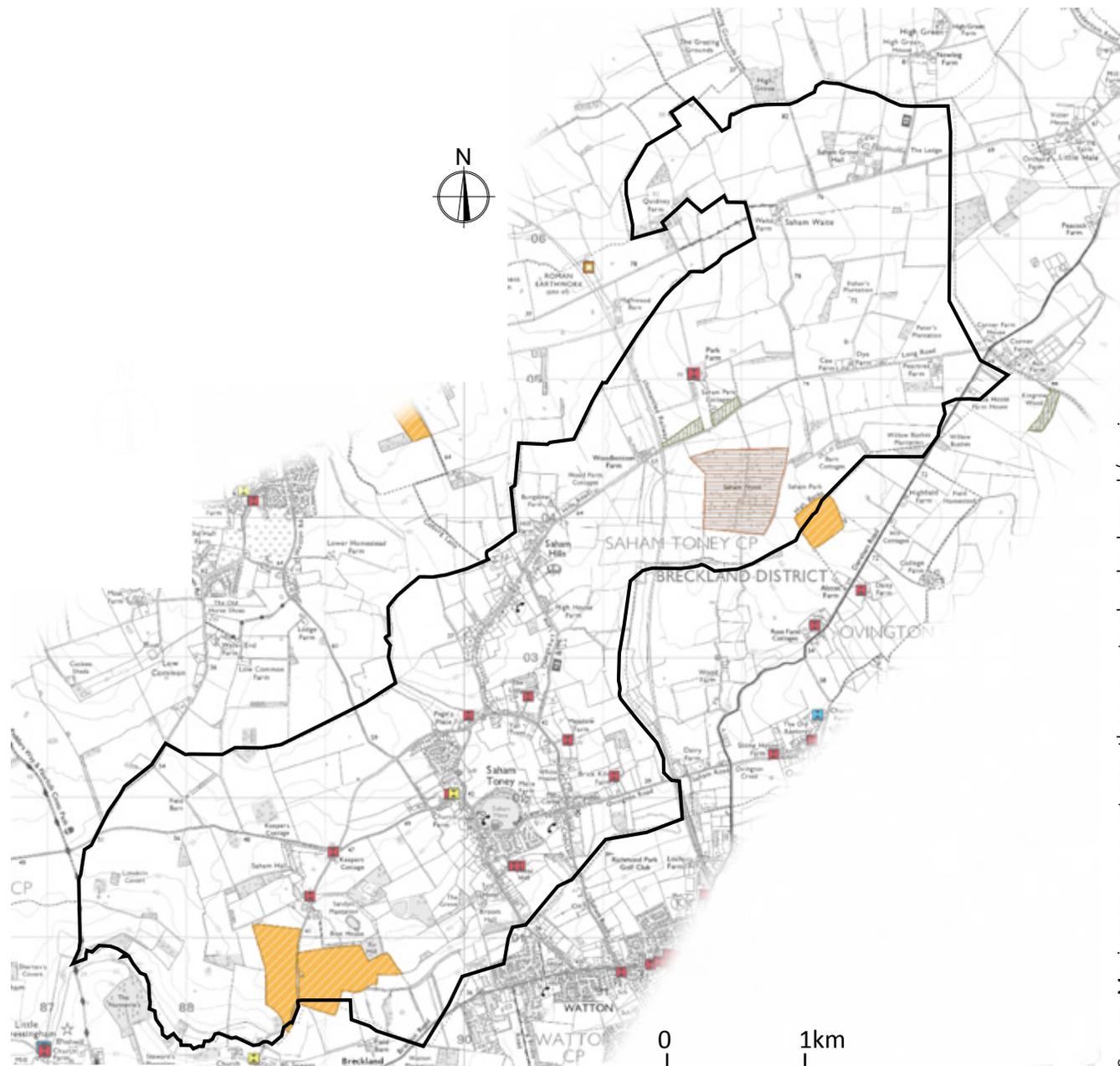
-  Scheduled Monuments
-  Ancient (replanted) woodland
-  Ancient and semi natural woodland
-  Grade I listed building
-  Grade II* listed building
-  Grade II listed building

See the Neighbourhood Plan for additional designations:

(a) Non-designated heritage assets;

(b) Local Green Spaces

See Part Three for key views



Source: Magic map. www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/magicmap.aspx



Lucy Batchelor-Wylam
Landscape architecture LucyBW@outlook.com



**Saham Toney Parish
Council**