



Landscape Appraisal

Character, Sensitivity and Value

For Westerfield Parish Council

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1. Introduction

Author's credentials

1. I am a Chartered Landscape Architect with 15+ years experience of working in the field of landscape assessment and appraisal in East Anglia. In recent years I have undertaken a number of Neighbourhood Plan studies in villages in Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, as well as a district level landscape character assessment and settlement fringe sensitivity assessment in East Suffolk, in association with AFA in 2018.
2. I was appointed in June 2022 by Westerfield Parish Council to undertake a landscape appraisal of the Parish, in order to provide an evidence base to support the development of policy within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. In particular the Parish Council required land surrounding the settlement to be assessed in detail to establish the sensitivity and capacity of the areas to accommodate housing development.

Objectives

3. The purposes of the document are:
 - to provide an overview of the landscape character in the parish of Westerfield;
 - to identify the functions of the landscape and to define and map its aspects of value;
 - to identify the key sensitivities in the parish, to future development or change, focusing on the area fringing the settlement. These are separately considered in terms of sensitivities relating to landscape value, and visual sensitivities.
 - to identify any area which might be considered 'valued' and worthy of additional policy protection.
 - to guide future opportunities for landscape enhancement or enhanced green infrastructure provision.
4. This information will be useful for the Parish Council in their policy making and in any site allocation process they may decide to do. The secondary purpose of the

- statement is as a future reference tool to help inform responses to speculative planning applications. Ultimately, both purposes aim to protect against inappropriate development causing harm to the landscape setting of the village.
5. This appraisal reviews existing documentary evidence on the settlement and its historic evolution, and on the character of the landscape that provides setting. Through Site work it goes on to identify key views or landmarks that aid identity and orientation, and analyse the quality and character of the village's gateways, greenspaces and public access routes.
 6. Where land parcels have been assessed in terms of sensitivity and capacity it is from a landscape perspective only. There are many factors that determine the actual capacity of land to be developed including ecological constraints, accessibility (highways), flood risk, and of course the intentions and aspirations of the owners of the land.

Context

7. Westerfield is a relatively small village of some 500 residents, although in the linear way it is laid out, it feels like a larger village. It is situated in the jurisdiction of East Suffolk District Council, just a mile or so outside the suburbs of north Ipswich. It extends 1.8 miles from its boundary along the railway line in the south, to the top of the plateau and the edges of Fynn Valley Golf Course to the north, where Witnesham parish begins. In the east it adjoins Akenham parish, accounting for approximately two-thirds of Lower Road, and stretches west to the junction with the Tuddenham Road and railway bridge some 1.3 miles away.
8. The village sits at the head of a shallow tributary valley of a stream that rises heads northwest through Akenham and towards the Gipping, running under the A14 north of the Whitehouse interchange. Settlement is found in the lowest parts of the parish, between the 30 and 40m contours in the east, south and west, rising to about 45m AOD along the northern edges of the village.
9. A succinct picture of evolution of the village was provided by Alison Farmer in 2018 who asserts that the historic evolution of settlements provides an

important backcloth to making judgements on landscape sensitivity and future growth options.¹:

Westerfield sits within a gentle dip in landform at the head of a tributary valley to the Gipping River. It lies within an area of undulating farming plateau which is defined as the 'Culpho and Westerfield Rolling Farmland' character area (Suffolk Coastal LCA)...

Westerfield is a Saxon settlement with possibly earlier origins recorded first in 1086. The current church dates to the 12th century and Westerfield Manor (located to the north of the village), dates to the 17th century. By the 19th century settlement had focused around the crossroads and the Great Eastern Railway had been built with a station immediately to the south. An area of open land called Westerfield Green is known to have existed between Swan Lane and Mill Farm. The Green was enclosed in 1908 being split into allotments and plots fenced. This area is still evident today retaining an open character and sense of separation between the village and Mill Farm.

Historic maps from the early 20th century indicate that farms were traditionally located on the outskirts of the village and small orchards were associated with individual properties. In the post war period linear development occurred along the roads, In the latter half of the 20th century, infill housing, comprising cul-de-sac developments, occurred between the main roads.

Westerfield is a small scale settlement with an agricultural character. Vernacular styles and building form varies due to different periods of infill. It remains closely connected to the wider rural landscape because landscape penetrates into or is visible from within the village or in places because development remain one-plot-deep.

10. There are 8 listed buildings in the village, including the Church (grade I) and which are scattered in a generally north-south distribution. The Church is grade I medieval building with important windows by William Morris. Other

listed buildings that are prominently seen in the streetscape include The Slade, a Georgian fronted brick house on a bend just north of the Swan pub, and Westerfield Hall to the north of the village edge.

11. The railway lines, which fork into two west of the station, form physical barriers in the landscape and help separate Ipswich and Westerfield. The lines are generally in cutting and so have little visual impact on the rest of the village on their journey along the parish boundary. The line crosses Westerfield Road at grade, clipping the edge of a finger of plateau, along which northern Ipswich spreads. The level crossing is elevated (circa. 40m) in relation to the core of the village (30 -35m) some 600m north. This elevated land helps prevents intervisibility between the edge of Ipswich and the settlement of Westerfield and helps Westerfield to feel separate and rural. Transit into the parish over the railway line is followed by a gentle descent in to the village from the south.
12. The functional 'centre' of the village is focused around the crossroads. Both the main road and Lower Road/ Church Road bring fairly constant traffic through the village, which uses Westerfield/Tuddenham Road and Humber Doucy Lane to avoid the more urban and congested Norwich Road/Valley Road route.

Gateways and approaches

13. Gateways mark the points of arrival into a settlement and help shape character and impressions. Westerfield Hall sits on the hill top close to the Northern gateway into the village. Set apart from the village edge in an isolated location, and flanked by its impressive brick barns and outbuildings (also heritage listed), it is an impressive historic group of buildings which convey the historical agricultural purpose of the landscape.
14. From the west the approach to the village is along Lower Road. This is a busy route for 'through' traffic. The valley bottom location is easily perceived by the views to the rising land to the north. Hedge removal and field amalgamation in the farmland is evident here. There is a white gate village sign and then (20th century) houses begin in a one plot deep linear pattern on the north side. After

Sandy Lane the houses swap to the south side of the road before there is a green gap - old meadows meet the edge of Lower Road along the south side. These are lined with impressive oak trees along the road side, which mark the approach to the village centre. There is no sense that there used to be a village green on the north side - development is modern and continuous.

15. The east gateway (from Tuddenham Road) is preceded by a distinctive informal avenue of roadside oak trees that Church Road seems to weave between, given the regular passing places that have been worn between the tree trunks on this narrow lane. The Lane gets a good deal of through traffic that is not commensurate with its narrow width. Glimpses of the church are seen on the approach, now interrupted by modern houses in the foreground. The old quarry lies opposite the group of new houses, supporting a block of vegetation, and although is out of sight, is sensed from the disrupted contours. The recent growth of the village towards the east means this edge now has a modern feel but the houses here are bespoke and of good design quality.
16. Traffic leaving Ipswich and heading north towards Westerfield through its southern gateway, first passes through a rural gap about 1km wide. The roadside and field margins here are well hedged, and the road gently curves gently, making views between the two settlement edges impossible. The well vegetated mature nature of the road margins, punctuated by mature craggy oaks, creates a sense of a fairly rapid transition into countryside, and reinforces the sense of Westerfield as a rural village. There is a cluster of houses south of the level crossing here, with the Station pub the most notable. The railway crosses the road at a high point and then the approach to the village centre is experienced as a distinctive gradual descent. Views into the small scale meadows to either side of the main road have a historic feel to them. The commercial land use to the east side is a somewhat detracting feature.

Ipswich Garden Suburb

17. Westerfield is facing imminent encroachment via the urban extension of Ipswich's



Approach to the village from the south. It is rural feeling with tree lined verges and glimpses into meadows to either side

northern fringe known as the Ipswich Garden Suburb (IGS), which has been many years in the pipeline. Work has now started on phase one on the east side of Henley Road. The expansion will fill in the wedge of farmland between the Henley and the Westerfield Roads, and then continue westwards, south of the railway line. The total number of dwellings likely to be accommodated at the Northern Fringe is expected to be around 3500. The suburb comprises three areas named Fonnereau; Red House and Henley Gate. Each of the three areas is to be largely controlled by different developers.

18. Henley Gate is the section nearest to Westerfield and will comprise circa. 1100 houses, a retail area, land for a school and sports facilities. The built development associated with the IGS is located wholly within the Ipswich Borough Council administrative area.
19. However, part of the provision of green space, in the form of a Country Park, is to be partly located in Westerfield parish. This indicated on figure 3.1. Parameters are set out in Policy SSP35 'Land off Westerfield Road and Lower Road, Westerfield (Ipswich Garden Suburb country park)' As well as providing some of the green space and play provision for the suburb, the provision of the Country Park is also a requirement to mitigate indirect impact on sites beyond

the immediate environs, designated as being of international importance for their nature conservation interest (e.g. Orwell and Deben estuaries European designated sites). Proposals include a visitor centre (in Ipswich Borough) attached to the proposed Country Park. When built, the facilities and education provision will be available to residents of Westerfield.

20. Two fields within Westerfield parish are required for the Country Park. Proposals include a small car park to serve the Country Park, accessed from Westerfield Road, as well as pedestrian link paths. These are important because Westerfield's train station will be an key service for the new residents of IGS. The station currently has no dedicated parking provision but it understood there are also moves to identify land for car parking for the station.

Other planned change

21. The village is also expecting growth from a Site allocated in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. This is known as Lower Meadow and is covered by SCLP12.67: Land South of Lower Road, Westerfield. This sets out allocation for approximately 20 dwellings plus Open Space to provide a new village green. The policy states; *'the developer is required to involve the Parish Council in the design and layout of the village green type facility and its long term maintenance'*;
22. As will be highlighted in this report, the character of the village is strongly influenced by the low-lying meadows near the village centre. It is imperative that the parish council ensure that any proposals here are appropriate and sympathetic.
23. The Business Park Site is also earmarked for development. At the time of writing it is up for sale, with reserved matters awaiting approval on the outline planning permission for residential use for 75 houses. This development could cause the population of the village to increase by up to 40%



Google streetview image of the residential site adjacent to the business park with permission for 75 dwellings.



Glimpse into the allocated Lower Meadow site



Glimpses of the Henley gate development are now possible from the parish

2. Historic evolution of Westerfield

1. There is evidence of human occupation in this area going back to the late Stone Age, from the finding of a stone mace and flint axe head in the village which are now in Ipswich Museum. Roman coins have also been found close to the Main Road and several burnt clay urns of the Roman-British period were unearthed near the railway crossing. At Domesday the village was called “Westrefelda”, meaning a clearing or open space to the west.
2. The 1729 Hodkinson’s map shows Westerfield to be a group of dwellings clustered around a green on the west side of Westerfield/Ipswich Road.
3. By the end of the 19th century, the early OS maps show the village had evolved only a little more, and remained concentrated around the crossroads and the Green, along what is today, Swan Lane. The Green was common land but in 1808 records show approx. 52 acres at Westerfield Green was enclosed under Private Acts of Lands 1807.
4. It is somewhat surprising that the village remained small despite the arrival of the railway to the south. However, the Ipswich–Beccles railway line had opened in 1854, but it was not until 1891 that the station was added.
5. The Green was subject to ‘Inclosure’ in 1808 which saw the area of approximately 50 acres of open land split into fenced plots - used for allotments. It then first experienced building on it in the 1880s with creation of a dedicated school building. A school had first been established in the 1840s, as a result of the National Schools movement, initially utilising the former north porch of the church building.
6. The new school building was likely a result of funding by the Bridget Collett Educational Foundation¹. This organisation, still going today, traces its origins back to the Will of the philanthropist Bridget Collett (d.1660s). She lived, and was buried in London but it is believed that she was related to the family who lived in the Manor house Westerfield. In her Will of 23 September 1662 she left property in trust, the profits from which she directed to the *‘teaching and keeping to schools only of poore children borne in the said parish of Westerfield ...’*. The school was closed in 1968 and the building was demolished and the area then succumbed entirely to housing development.

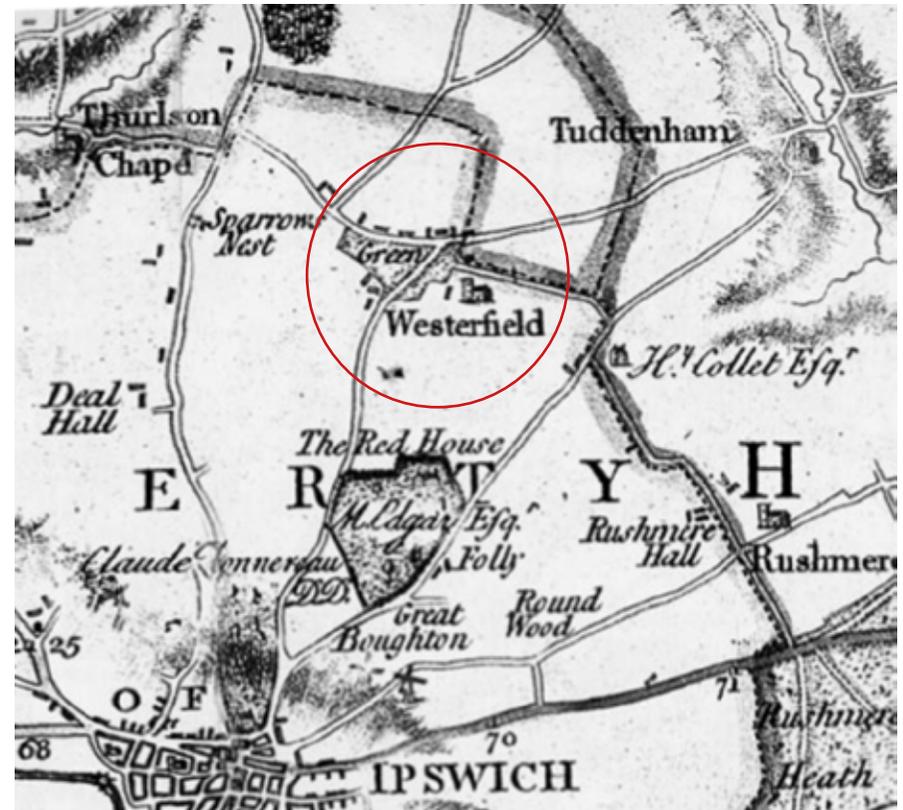


Figure 2.1 Hodkinson’s map (1729)

1 <http://www.bridgetcollett.org.uk/history.html>

Figure 2.2 OS map 1882



7. There are few clues that Westerfield was once a 'Green' village remain. Swan Lane is now lined predominantly by modern houses on either side and few old houses are seen along the streetscape. The feel is now of a primarily modern village but a few houses along the main street - the Slade and the Swan Pub, have prominent enough locations that they help convey the historic character.
8. The old OS maps show that in between the dwellings, and encircling the village centre is a system of small fields, which feature ponds and lines of trees (which are known to be fairly accurately located on this map series). By 1927 there were a number of orchards in the parish. The scale of these fields contrast with those in the wider landscape. Those that remain today can therefore be demonstrated as remnants of the ancient landscape and worthy of protection.
9. Whilst larger fields had certainly created in the 1880s, there has been considerable change in the farmed landscape that surrounds the village.

Figure 2.3 OS map 1927



Amalgamation after 1927 has led to very large fields sizes, especially to the northeast of the settlement.

10. The character of rural settlements like Westerfield are defined by their history. Landscape elements that pre-date the 20th century are of value and their contribution to character and sense of place should be recognised. In Westerfield aspects of historic value include:
 - The historic rights of way network
 - The remaining small fields clustered around the village centre
 - Any remaining orchards
 - Lines or individual trees, particularly where they are visually prominent or where they continue to help provide enclosure to the small scale meadows.

3. Designations and policy

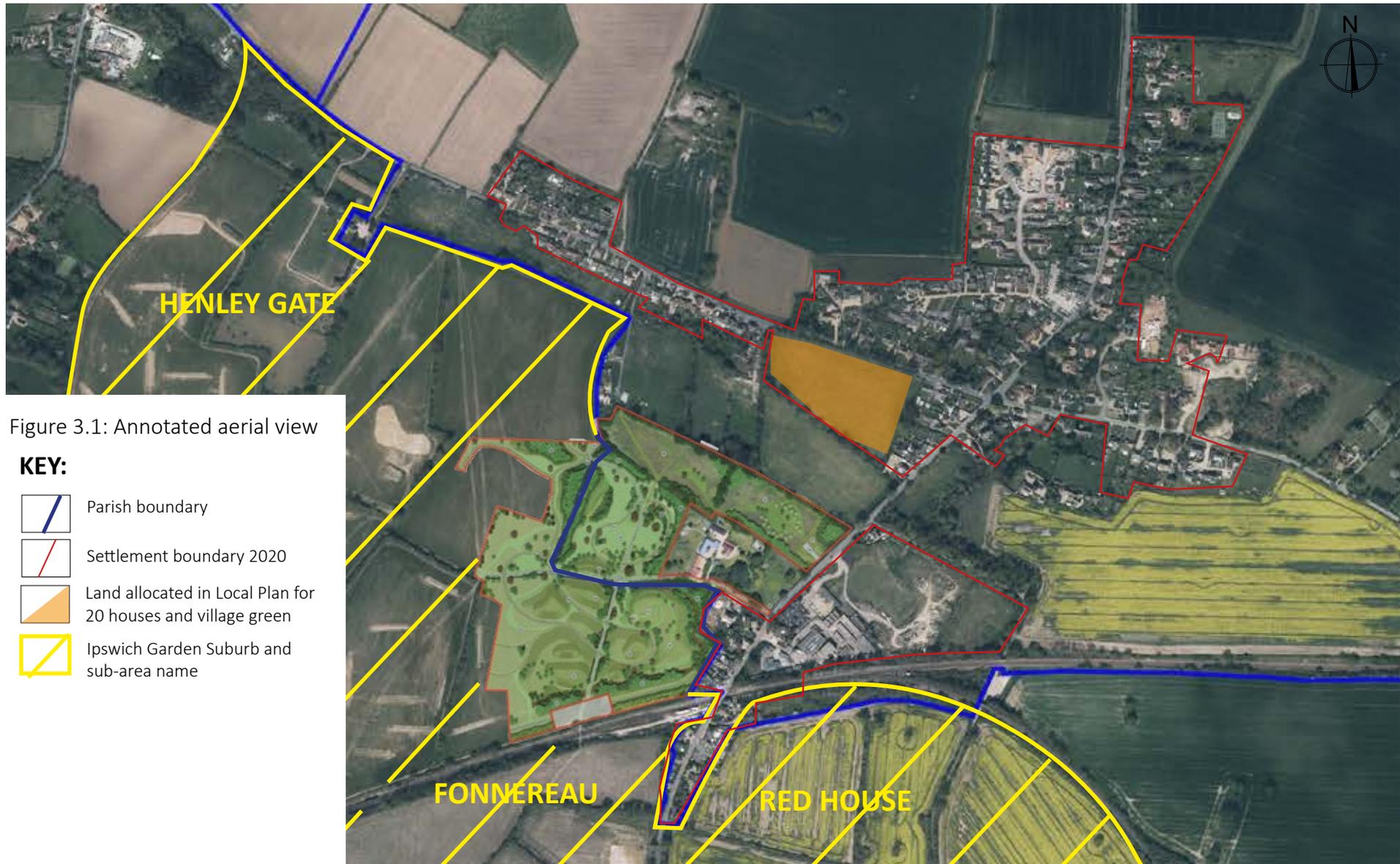


Figure 3.1: Annotated aerial view

KEY:

-  Parish boundary
-  Settlement boundary 2020
-  Land allocated in Local Plan for 20 houses and village green
-  Ipswich Garden Suburb and sub-area name

3. Designations and policy

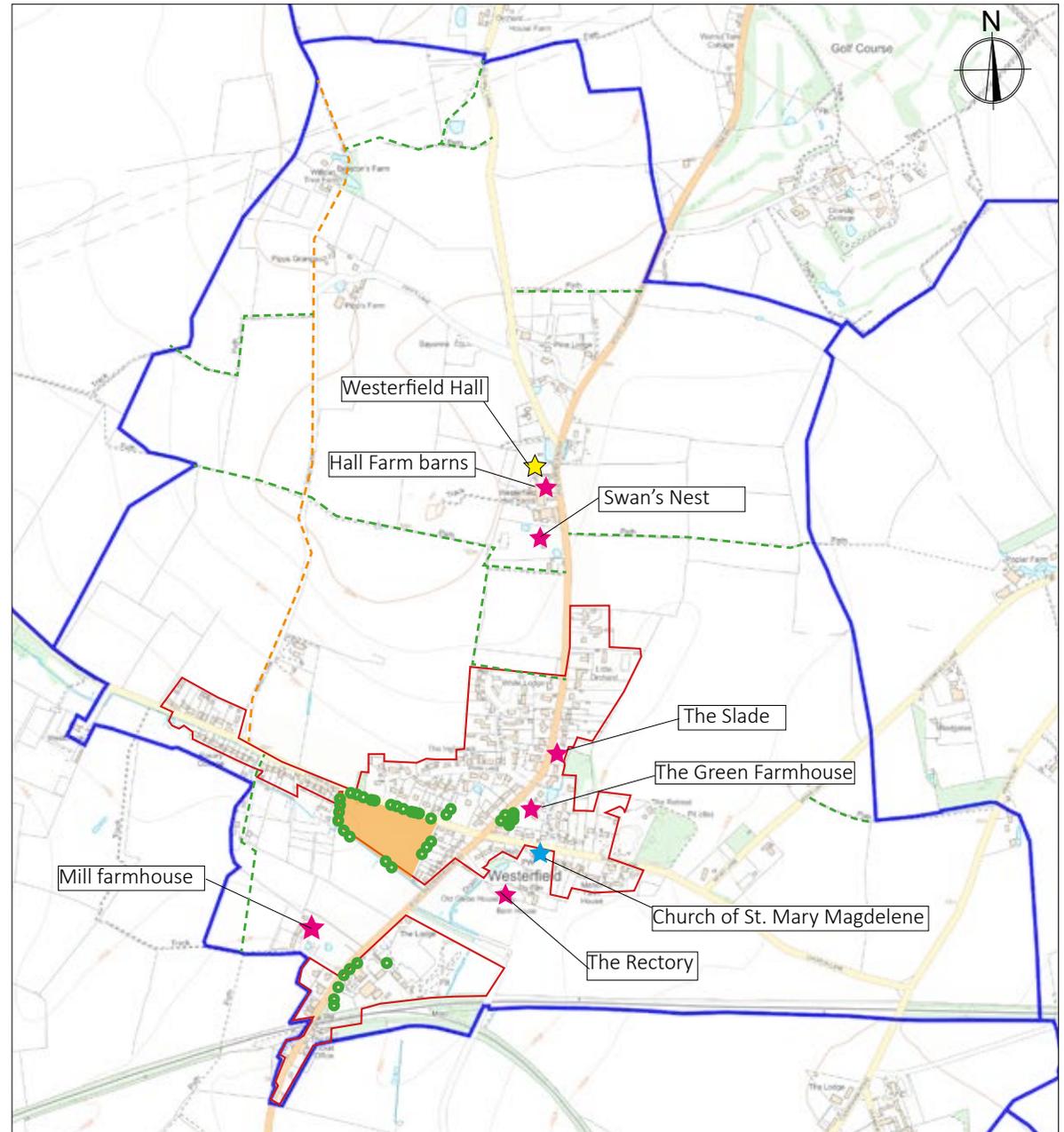
Designations and aspects of value

1. There are eight Listed buildings in the parish as mapped in figure 2.2. Apart from the church and its rectory, they are all scattered to each side of the Westerfield Road. Landscape plays a particular role in the setting of Westerfield Hall which enjoy an isolated location and outlook over fields to the east.
2. There are no formal designations for habitat or County Wildlife Sites in the parish or on surrounding land. At the time of writing the Suffolk Wildlife Trust have been commissioned to carry out a survey into biodiversity to better understand where areas of greatest value for wildlife lie.
3. Mature trees (predominantly oak) are a recurrent feature along the roads and lanes, as well as along field boundaries in the countryside. Some in the village centre are protected both as individual trees and tree groups by Tree Protection Orders. These make a particular contribution to the character and sense of place, and are prominent on the approaches to the village. The Woodland Trust, which maps veteran trees, does not have any entries for Westerfield, and areas of ancient woodland are not present in the parish.

KEY:

	Parish boundary		Listed building grade I
	Settlement boundary 2020		Listed building grade II*
	Footpaths		Listed buildings grade II
	Bridleway		Land allocated in Local Plan for 20 houses and village green
	River and drains		Tree Protection Orders

Figure 2.2: Mapped designations



3. Designations and policy continued:-

4. There are a several footpaths in the parish, the most extensive network is accessed from the west side of the village via Sandy Lane, which is also a bridleway.

recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and

c. local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Planning Policy in relation to landscape and open space

5. There are no landscape designations or policies in the parish, and nor is there is evidence of previous designation (eg under a Special Landscape Area or equivalent). The parish is therefore subject to the general Local Plan policy in relation to landscape, namely Policy SCLP10.4: Landscape Character (see appendix 1). This requires all development proposals to express a sympathetic response to local character and distinctiveness.
6. This document provides the relevant information for applicants to understand the special qualities and features of Westerfield, in order they can respond in a way that protects and enhances this character.

Green Infrastructure - Ipswich

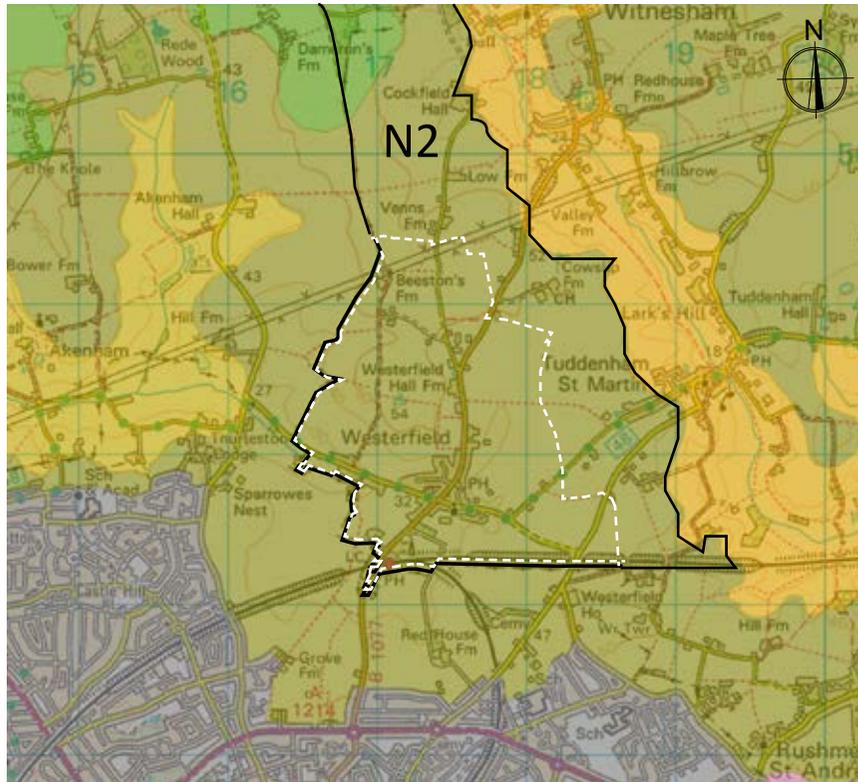
10. In 2008 a Green Infrastructure Strategy was first developed as part of the Haven Gateway. This was subsequently reviewed and updated by Ipswich Borough Council / Babergh / Suffolk Coastal in 2015. The review highlighted the northern edge of Ipswich to be deficient in accessible natural greenspace , and larger scale (20ha+) woodland, however the report identified the provision of the country park at Ipswich Garden Suburb would help to address this deficiency.

Open Space

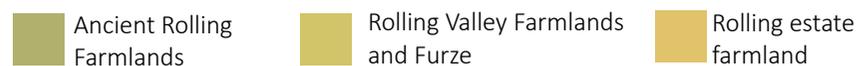
7. East Suffolk Council's Local Plan was adopted in September 2020. The Local Plan does not define any Areas of Open Space within the Parish.
8. NPPF (2019) Section 8 (paragraphs 99 and 100) enables local communities, through the development of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans, to identify green areas for special protection that are particularly important to them.
9. Local Green Space (LGS) designation must include land which is locally special offering unique benefits to the local community. It may not be appropriate for some areas or open space to be designated. The NPPF sets out the criteria for designating LGS Sites which can include areas which are:
- a. in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - b. demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance,

4. Landscape Character and sensitivity

Figure 4.1 Landscape character - county and district



Suffolk LCA types:



Suffolk Coastal LCA areas:



1. Change management through the planning system is now focused on analysis and understanding of landscape character at all scales, from the NPPF through to Neighbourhood Plans. Landscape character assessments identify areas of similarity and divergence in the landscape by looking a range of factors that combine to create a sense of place. These include topography and hydrology, patterns of enclosure, land use types and tree cover, traditional building materials, and perceptive qualities of openness, scenic value and sensory perceptions. See the appendix for a further glossary of terms.
2. Published Landscape Character Assessment are also available at different scales and are the first port of call when understanding landscape character. This part of Suffolk is in the National Landscape Assessment as 'NCA Profile 83: South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands' which provides a broad overview of the landscape character of Suffolk's claylands.
3. More detail about landscape character in the parish is defined in two, more focused, published assessments - County and District-wide - which provide mapping and descriptions of landscapes types and areas sharing similar characteristics. These are summarised here.

County Assessment

4. Westerfield sits within the 'Ancient Rolling Farmlands' landscape type of the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment. This is a rolling landscape of medium clay soils studded with blocks of ancient woodland. Its key characteristics are listed as:
 - Rolling arable landscape of chalky clays and loams
 - Dissected widely, and sometimes deeply, by river valleys
 - Field pattern of ancient random enclosure. Regular fields associated with areas of heathland enclosure
 - Hedges of hawthorn and elm with oak, ash and field maple as hedgerow trees
 - Substantial open areas created for airfields and by post WWII agricultural improvement
 - Scattered with ancient woodland parcels containing a mix of oak, lime, cherry, hazel, hornbeam, ash and holly

4. Landscape Character and sensitivity continued:-

- Network of winding lanes and paths, often associated with hedges, create visual intimacy
 - Dispersed settlement pattern of loosely clustered villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads of mediaeval origin
 - Farmstead buildings are predominantly timber-framed, the houses colour-washed and the barns blackened with tar. Roofs are frequently tiled, though thatched houses can be locally significant
 - Villages often associated with village greens or the remains of greens.
5. A more focused set of studies was carried out in 2018 by Alison Farmer Associates (assisted by this author) which assessed the landscape character of the area under Suffolk Coastal District Council ¹. This work was commissioned as evidence base documents for the Suffolk Coastal part of East Suffolk Local Plan and can be accessed here: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/local-plans/local-plan-evidence-base/>
6. The boundaries of the Suffolk LCA types were used to generate the character areas in the District character assessment.
7. Westerfield parish was assessed as part of these studies and lies on the edge of the study area in the character area named 'N2 - Culpho and Westerfield Rolling Farmland'. This description gives a more locally tailored overview of landscape character and is a key reference.
8. The character of N2 can be summarised as:
- Plateau landscape of open arable farmland on clay soils
 - Topographically much of N2 is relatively flat (it is plateau type landscape), but Westerfield sits in a shallow depression where a west facing tributary valley has cut down into the plateau edge.
 - Settlement comprises the village of Rushmere St Andrew and dispersed farms- Hill Farm and Villa Farm.
- Regular pattern of field enclosure defined by well trimmed hawthorn hedges with mature veteran trees (reflecting areas of former landscape grounds).
 - Settlement edge is well vegetated.
 - Ponds are a particular landscape feature.
 - Elevated views across the plateau and Fynn Valley towards the church at Tuddenham.
 - Narrow and sinuous, rural lane network radiate out from village.
 - Vernacular architecture in old farms and historic core of village, rural lanes, veteran trees and church landmark give rise to scenic quality and pleasing composition.
 - Extensive recreational use of land to the south of the village, including floodlighting, signage, fencing and car parking.

1 Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment, AFA, 2018



The church tower is a local landmark



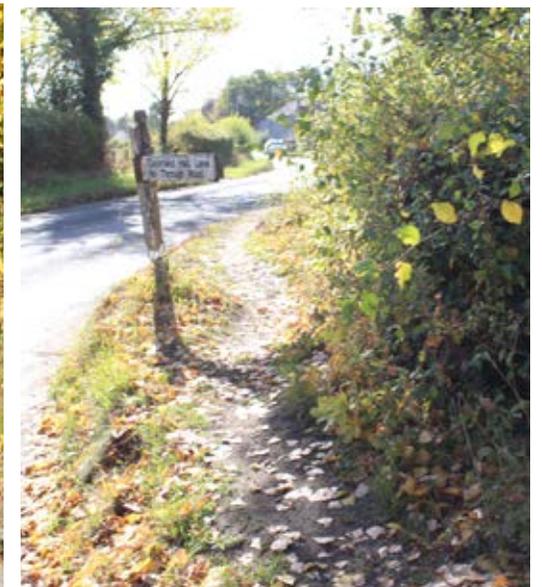
View on Westerfield Road toward the level crossing and Business Park



Views into grassland meadows are characteristic south of the village centre



Insufficient provision for pedestrians on Lower Road



...or connecting the village to Cockfield Hall Lane



Typical view over Lower Road from the plateau to the NW of the village



Pond forms part of the community greenspace next to the Village Hall



Wooded curtilages along By Road

4. Landscape Character and sensitivity

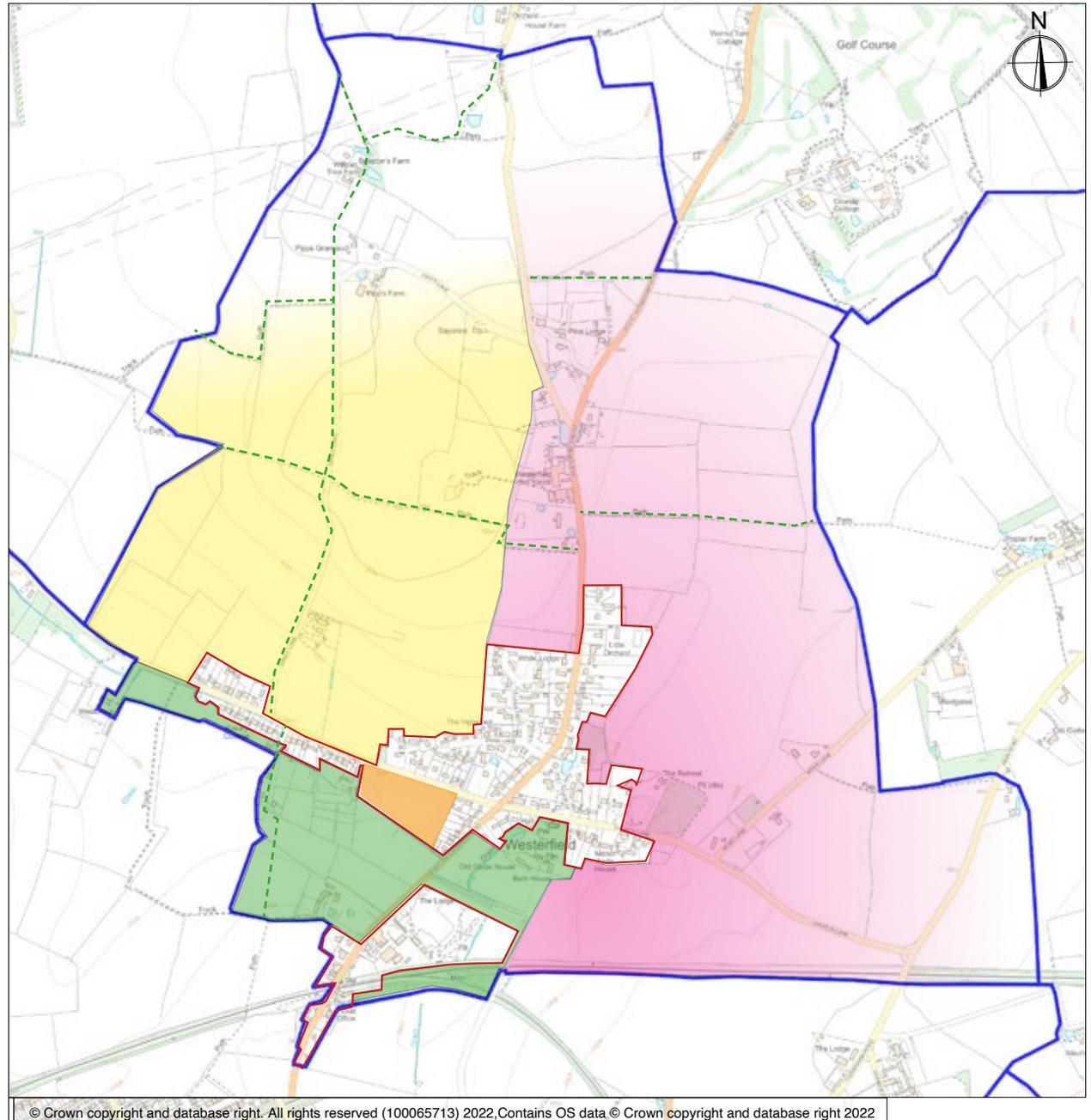
continued:-

9. In 2018 the Ipswich Fringe Sensitivity Assessment, also by Alison Farmer Associates, looked at landscape sensitivity in several villages on the periphery of Ipswich, including Westerfield ².
10. The study split the N2 landscape character area into three settlement fringe character areas - WF1, WF2 and WF3, as mapped. These boundaries developed by Alison Farmer Associates in 2018 were reviewed as part of this study and deemed to remain a sound basis for assessment. Their boundaries have therefore generally been carried though into this parish-level study, with only slight adaptations to ensure the lines are reflective of actual features on the ground. The area, have also been given a descriptive name in this report.

² Settlement Sensitivity Assessment Volume 1; Landscape Fringes of Ipswich, AFA, 2018 (p.45)

KEY

-  WF1: Western farmlands
-  WF2: Eastern farmlands
-  WF3: Lower Meadows
-  Allocated Site - part of WF3



4. Landscape Character and sensitivity continued:-

Parish level Characterisation

1. This study aims to bring further detail to the work on character and sensitivity already completed by Alison Farmer Associates, and illustrate the contrasts between the different parts of the village fringe. The tables on the following pages aim to build on the work undertaken in the Ipswich Fringe Assessment and provide a more detail assessment of the character of the three fringe areas defined.
2. Methods of assessment follow nationally accepted best practice and available guidance on undertaking Landscape Character Assessment 1. In addition to the existing character assessments, the following specific sources of information were used to develop and describe parish character area boundaries:
 - Topography data from OS maps
 - Soils and geology data from Landis
 - Designations for heritage and ecology information from government GIS website Magic Map ²
 - Historic mapping from National Library of Scotland website
 - Google's aerial photography
 - Historic England designation maps
 - Suffolk Landscape Character map
 - Suffolk Historic Landscape character assessment map
3. A site visit was also undertaken on October 11th 2022.
4. Suffolk Wildlife Trust also carried out a survey on 2023 which touches on landscape character and value. A 'Phase 1 type' field survey and ecological audit was undertaken in November 2022. The objectives of the field survey were to investigate and record land use, habitat types and notable plant and animal species.
5. The executive summary of the document states:

The principal landscape character type within the parish of Westerfield is 'Ancient Rolling Farmlands'. There are no statutory or non-statutory (County Wildlife Sites) designated wildlife sites within the parish.

Three Priority habitats have been identified within the parish, which include Lowland Deciduous Woodland, Hedgerows and Ponds.

Across the Parish a range of protected and Priority species have been recorded including otter, hazel dormouse, hedgehog, great crested newt and several Priority bird species including skylark and yellowhammer. There is also a significant number of stag beetle records, which are a Priority invertebrate species.

Species-rich hedgerows in the south and north of the parish form the backbone of the ecological network of the parish. Habitat creation and enhancement within the parish should look to find opportunities to link the Ipswich Garden Suburb Country Park, with habitats which already exist within the parish such as the wildlife friendly planting at Westerfield train station.

Sensitivity appraisal

6. After the process of understanding landscape character, the next step was to understand how those characteristics combined to form conditions of greater or lesser sensitivity. This generally understood to mean in relation to development or other land use change.
7. Tables relating to issues of sensitivity are found in section 5.

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

² magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap

Character of WF1 - Western Farmlands: The detail

Table 4.1

Physical landscape	Location, function and underlying character type	Land to the west and northwest of the village, elevated over the settlement. It lies on the west side of Cockfield Hall Lane. It is 'Ancient Rolling Farmland' landscape type in the Suffolk County LCA and is in district character area N2. The south of the area provides backdrop and setting to the western edges of the village, seen on the approach along Lower Road.
	Topography / hydrology / position in the landscape	Sloping valley side and plateau top topography rising from around between 30m along Lower Road to around 55m AOD, forming a rounded hill to the northwest of the village. There are no significant water courses but some ponds are present in the far north of the parish, associated with farmsteads.
	Landcover/Landuse	Strong rural feel as land use is a mix of arable farmland and grassland. There is a farmstead with a small cluster of dwellings/ converted barn at the end of Pipp's Lane but this area is otherwise generally unsettled. There is little influence from modern built form.
	Trees and woodland Cover	There is no woodland in this area but there are many mature roadside or field boundary oaks, and trees clustered around outlying farms and the small meadows. These form the significant tree cover, connecting up along the skyline in places to give a more wooded feel, and form intermittent biodiversity networks.
Cultural perceptual, and aesthetic:	Scale and enclosure	The rising land provides containment and provides backdrop to the western part of the village. The arable fields are moderately large in scale, as there was much amalgamation and hedgerow loss in the 20th century, so the landscape is primarily open and visually sensitive as a result. Today, gappy hedges limit the sense of enclosure along the lanes. The meadows clustered around farmsteads and along the lanes are smaller in scale and provide a greater sense of enclosure.
	Historic landscape/time depth	Sense of historic continuity felt in the more isolated north of the parish along the single track lanes. Smaller scale enclosures have survived here and where associated with mature oaks provide a sense of the landscape through time. The farmsteads here pre-date the early OS maps but do not feature post-medieval Suffolk farmhouses often found in such locations.
	Settlement interfaces and road network	The edge of the settlement are straight and modern. They are generally well screened by vegetation and have a mature, well established feel - hedges and garden trees fringe the curtilages as well as larger scale oak trees. The single track lanes have a quiet feel - Sandy Lane, Pipp's Lane (privately owned) and Cockfield Hall Lane cross the character area carrying only local traffic and farm vehicles. These are valued for their historic character and for the recreational routes sometimes on offer.
	Perceptual and visual experience/tranquillity	Visual and perceptual experience is mixed. In the valley bottom, the settlement style is somewhat modern and suburban, and perceptual experience is influenced by the traffic passing by. Conversely, on footpaths in the north, on the plateau top, there are long rural views and a sense of ruralness, isolation and tranquillity. A double row of pylons passes over the elevated land across the northern edges of the parish and are visible from a wide area.
Management issues	Aspects of value and ROW	This character area has a good network of rights of way connecting both north-south and east-west into adjoining parishes. Sandy Lane is a historic route and now an important bridleway/footpath, that links to Witnesham parish to the north.
	Issues / Change pressures	Hedges are present but are not always in good condition - there are many gaps and missing sections. The recent routing of the Anglia One electric cable through this area has also caused some hedge loss which is being addressed with new hedge planting along Cockfield Hall Lane. This is not all establishing successfully after the very dry summer. The predominantly rural character of the plateau top views will alter as the IGS gets built out, seen under the skyline on the opposite side of the valley. Ipswich is currently out of sight, beyond the plateau edge, but it will come into view with the planned northern extension.

Illustrative photos of WF1



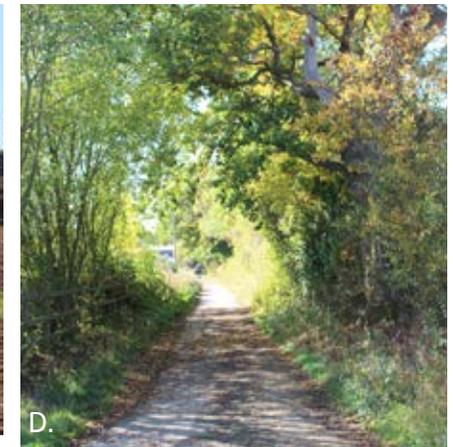
A.



B.



C.



D.



E.



F.

A. Vegetated village edge seen from Sandy Lane.

B. Pylons cross the highest ground in the north of the parish

C View north from Lower Road communicates Westerfield's valley bottom location.

D. The lower part of Sandy Lane

E. Elevated views of towards Ipswich from the top of the plateau.

F. North end of Sandy Lane - individual oak trees contribute to distinctiveness.

Character of WF2: Eastern farmlands - The detail

Table 4.2

Physical landscape	Location, function and underlying character type	Land to the north and east of the village centre. To the north it includes Westerfield Hall, and land between Cockfield Hall Lane and the main road. It then comprises all the land on the east side of the parish, wrapping round to the southeast corner of the village and as far south as the railway line. The function of this parcel of land provides separation between Westerfield and Tuddenham village. It also provides separation between Westerfield Hall and the main village. The underlying landscape type is Ancient Rolling Farmlands and is in district character area N2.
	Topography / hydrology / position in the landscape	This part of the parish is flat or gently rolling and gently undulates between the c.35 and c.45m contour. The highest point is in the NW in the area of Westerfield Hall which has a slightly elevated view across the character area. There is also a little ridge on the eastern entry point to the village which marks the experience of arrival.
	Landcover/Landuse	Arable farmland is dominant.
	Trees and woodland Cover	There is no woodland as such, but the fields are enclosed by hedges which are regularly studded by trees - ash and oak - so there is sense of tree cover. Where trees group into a feature - around the old gravel pit, or clustered along the backs of curtilages, the feel of wooded edges increases.
Cultural perceptual, and aesthetic:	Scale and enclosure	Moderate scale to the landscape in terms of field size and sense of openness.
	Historic landscape/time depth	The landscape retains more of the ancient enclosure pattern than in WF1 - there is some amalgamation but field size is generally smaller here and boundaries are more organic in shape. The historic buildings grouped at Westerfield Hall are seen overlooking much of the area. The narrow lanes are also historic elements of the landscape.
	Settlement interfaces and road network	Where the rural edges meet the settlement there is a mix of modern straight edges and more indented historic edges with more organic lines, most noticeable where the character area abuts the historic buildings - i.e. the church and Rectory. Most edges are well vegetated but very new residential development at Green Farm is unscreened and starkly perceived as result.
	Perceptual and visual experience/tranquillity	This area can feel less isolated and rural than WF1 owing to the greater influence of the road network, which is often busy with through traffic even on the smaller lanes. There are some distinctive views of Westerfield Hall and of the church tower on the approach from the east
	Indicators of value and Rights of Way	Three rights of way link east-west, connecting across the valleyside, linking up farms and connecting the lanes and roads to Tuddenham and Witnesham.
Management issues	Issues / Change pressures	Distant glimpses of the planned 'Red House' phase of the IGS may become visible along the skyline to the south of the railway lines in future years. The parcel of land along the south of the parish may be vulnerable to future development pressure.

Illustrative photos of WF2



- A. View across the northern edge of the village from By Road
- B. Oak trees are distinctive, in staggered locations along Church Road
- C. View to Westerfield Hall from footpath
- D. New houses at the gateway to the settlement on the east side
- E. Westerfield Hall - Grade II*



Character of WF3- Lower Meadows: The detail

Table 4.3

Physical landscape	Location and underlying character type	The smallest character area, it comprises the zone between the southern edges of the village and the parish boundary/railway line. It excludes the business park land (which has residential permission for 75 houses). It is pastoral land and it provides a rural setting to the settlement. It helps separate Westerfield from Ipswich and in future it will function as important rural gap between the village and the edge of the IGS. It also has functions as flood plain.
	Topography / hydrology / position in the landscape	These are low lying flat and gently sloping meadows. There are ditches associated with some of the meadows on the east side of the main road which drain towards the .
	Landcover/Landuse	Land use is grassland. There is some equestrianism but generally the meadows are ungrazed. It is probable that a summer hay cut is likely taken. Some of this area is now fenced as part of the IGS Site.
	Trees and woodland Cover cover	There are many mature and impressive oak trees lining the meadows and the roadside. Often these are in good hedges. Th
Cultural perceptual, and aesthetic:	Scale and enclosure	This is much smaller scale landscape than the other two character areas. Here the historic field pattern endures and field sizes are much smaller. The many trees and hedges create sense of intimacy and enclosure in these meadows which contrast with the much more open landscapes of the plateau to the north.
	Historic landscape/time depth	The survival of the system of small scale meadows, rich with mature oaks, is a strong indicator of time-depth. They are intact and feature no modern elements; all factors that enhance their value.
	Settlement interfaces and road network	The well vegetated boundaries of the meadows provide layers of screening and softening of the village edge. The well vegetated, often deep front gardens also contribute and mitigate the impacts that the modern (20th century) built form would otherwise have.
	Perceptual and visual experience/tranquillity	The meadows, fringed with trees and hedging, have a peaceful rural feel, despite the reasonably busy adjoining roads. Their sense of 'naturalness' and lack of modern features means they make a strong contribution to the perceptions that Westerfield is a countryside village.
	Indicators of value and Rights of Way	TPO's indicate the value of trees around the Allocated Lower Road Site - tree of equal quality are found across the character area. There is one right of way through the western edge of this area which connects Lower Road, through two of the meadows, to Westerfield Road, passing beside Mill Farm. This character area provides community green space south of the village hall and the bowls club. Here, the open spaces also provide setting to listed assets, most notably the Grade II listed church.
Management issues	Issues / Change pressures	This area is facing considerable potential change. The character of the low lying areas meadows could be adversely affected by the building out of the Allocated Site as well as potential land management changes associated with the open space that is being provided for the IGS in this area. Increased traffic from the IGS will also likely to have a significant impact on the already high levels of traffic passing along the roads in this character area.

Illustrative photos of WF3



- A. Glimpse into the green space beside the Village Hall
- B. View into the allocated site adjacent to Lower Road
- C. Small scale meadows close to the village centre
- D. Mature trees line the green lane beside the Business park site forming a skyline feature
- E. The main road through Westerfield has a leafy feel and offers glimpses into the meadow system to either side

5. Landscape sensitivity

1. The AFA is useful source of information relating to sensitivities in the landscape. The following text is summarised from the 2018 'Settlement Sensitivity Assessment' Vol 1. by Alison Farmer Associates. Refer back to the map

Table 5.1

	Sensitivities	Recommendations
WF1 	<p>Pronounced open slopes which form important setting. Coupled with hedgerows and mature oaks form an attractive backcloth, although evidence of hedgerow loss.</p> <p>Elevation of slopes makes them highly visible in approaches to village as well as in longer range views from the edge of Ipswich on Henley Road.</p> <p>Important public access routes.</p>	<p><i>Area is sensitive to both residential and commercial development. Area should instead be retained as rural setting and gateway to the village - important and distinctive to identity of village.</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities exist to reinstate hedgerows, create skyline woodland and enhance habitat networks along field margins.</i></p>
WF2 	<p>Sensitivity of the area related to its relatively flat/gently undulating character and openness which makes it visually prominent from surrounding areas. It reads as part of the wider agricultural landscape, arranged in ancient patterns, with the village tucked into a fold in the topography at the head of the valley. It also has a role as the perceived physical and visual gap between Westerfield and Tuddenham/Witnesham.</p> <p>Scenic qualities highest along Church Lane - views of the church are sensitive on the approach.</p>	<p><i>Any housing development should be accompanied by strongly landscaped edge which also seek to improve habitat networks. Other opportunities exist to improve landscape structure.</i></p>
WF3 	<p>Important valley floor character that signifies the head of the valley. Intimate, small scale pastures and mature trees provide strong rural character. Valuable habitat networks.</p> <p>Heritage significance as once part of wider common/Green and because it provides setting to a number of Listed Buildings - Church, Rectory and Mill Farm.</p>	<p><i>Housing development should avoid undermining the open land that extends across Westerfield Road which reinforces the separation between the main village and the Station and what will be the IGS. Rural buildings should reflect the rural heritage of the village.</i></p> <p><i>Where there is lack of management in the meadows this should be addressed and improving biodiversity should be key objective.</i></p> <p><i>Restore the valley floor meadow/common character and ensure open space retain a simple informal character.</i></p>

5. Landscape sensitivity continued:-

1. The following text summarises the author’s professional opinion relating to aspects of landscape and visual sensitivity. The parish council must be mindful of these issues when considering their response to development proposals, Local Plan policies or allocations. Any policy or changes that could harm the described qualities of the landscape should be avoided, instead the aim must be to conserve and protect the qualities identified.

Table 5.2

WF1	WF2	WF3
<p>Sensitivities in the south relate to the visual prominence of the sloping valleysides which forms a backdrop in views of the village edge and are a key part of the sense of arrival into Westerfield. The topography and land use together communicate the contained, valley bottom position of the settlement and the rural setting of the village.</p> <p>Any development on these slopes would be very visible from Lower Road and mitigation on valleysides through planting is intrinsically less successful than on flatter landscapes.</p> <p>Sensitivity in the northern part of WF1 relates to its elevated position, again resulting in high visual sensitivity - land use change here could potentially be perceived over a very wide area, although perhaps from other parishes as the top of the plateau is out of sight from Westerfield village itself.</p> <p>Its strong rural character is sensitive - there are few built features within it.</p>	<p>North and west: Land that adjoins and forms setting to heritage assets is sensitive for example the undeveloped farmland that faces Westerfield Hall. Any land use change or development here would have a direct impact on the perceptions of the Hall as a historical rural feature separated from the village edge. The undeveloped quality of the landscape in which it is seen is central to its significance as a Hall farm complex.</p> <p>In all parts of WF2 the landscape is also visually sensitive as it is regularly bisected by roads and footpaths offering views across most of the area that connects the Witnesham Road and By Road. Its gentle topography and only sporadic wooded features means that fairly long views across the parcel</p>	<p>The sensitivities in WF3 relate to their intact, small scale historic character. The little system of meadows has good vegetated boundaries with many fine mature trees, and high biodiversity value. They provide a strong sense of rural character close to the centre of the village, key to defining sense of place.</p> <p>They also have an important function as a physical buffer to the edge of the new Ipswich Garden Suburb.</p> <p>Where land is adjacent to, and provides setting to listed assets, such as the Church or Mill Farm, land has additional heritage related value.</p>

6. Key views

Key Views

1. As part of the assessment of local character, and the value people attribute to local landscape, understanding which views local people particularly appreciate is useful. This assessment seeks to provide a brief but robust and objective evidence-base to potentially inform and underpin a Neighbourhood Plan Key View policy.
2. There is not an accepted definition of what constitutes a Key view in any of the published accepted landscape guidance. The selection of views is a result of people's perceptions, so is somewhat more subjective than other landscape appraisal techniques.
3. However, Key Views are usually understood along the lines of a view that defines the special character and qualities of a settlement and contributes to its 'sense of place'. Such views could have a particularly notable or distinctive composition or scenic quality, that makes them stand out in the eyes (and memories) of local people and visitors. They might feature distinctive and/or historic buildings, local landmarks, or an appealing or historically intact arrangement of topography, natural features and built form that together help give a settlement its identity, and perhaps come with particular recognised cultural associations.
4. The following factors are considered:
 - Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views - including complexity, appreciation of topography, depth of field, naturalness, and arrangement of natural and vegetative features.
 - Number of people likely to be experiencing it - i.e. value relating to shared experience. The more people that experience a viewpoint, the higher the value attributed. For example, a view from a well-used footpath on a village edge, identified by numerous people as important, might be considered more valued than one selected from an isolated point on a quiet lane.
 - Presence of a landmark feature, perhaps with skyline presence, aiding orientation in the landscape or along a route.
 - View contributes to the setting of a Heritage asset.
 - Other locally distinctive points of interest or cultural associations that particularly define the character of Westerfield. Views that are indicative of a special 'sense of place' which reflect its intrinsic character and key characteristics.

Selection process

5. The Key Views were selected by the Parish Council in 2023. The author helped to provide the supporting text justification and Change Management Objectives. The text sets out the aspects of value in each view and focuses attention on what may threaten them and considers how this could be addressed.
6. The Key Views are mapped and presented on the following pages. They are identified as specific point views, although some might represent a number of similar or sequential views which might be experienced along a road or footpath. However, it should be noted that the final list is not an exhaustive list of the only views with special qualities in the parish, there are many other views that contribute to local distinctiveness and rural character and it should not be inferred that other views in the parish have little value. The selected views, however, are held in high public regard and demonstrate particular qualities or features.

Method

7. The photos were taken with a SLR camera with a 50mm fixed lens. The panoramic photos presented are made up from two or three consecutive images, with approx. a 50% overlap. They are a Type 1 Visual Representation¹ (for illustrative purposes and not be treated as 'verifiable'). This level of accuracy was sufficient for a project of this scale/nature.

¹ Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19 17 September 2019

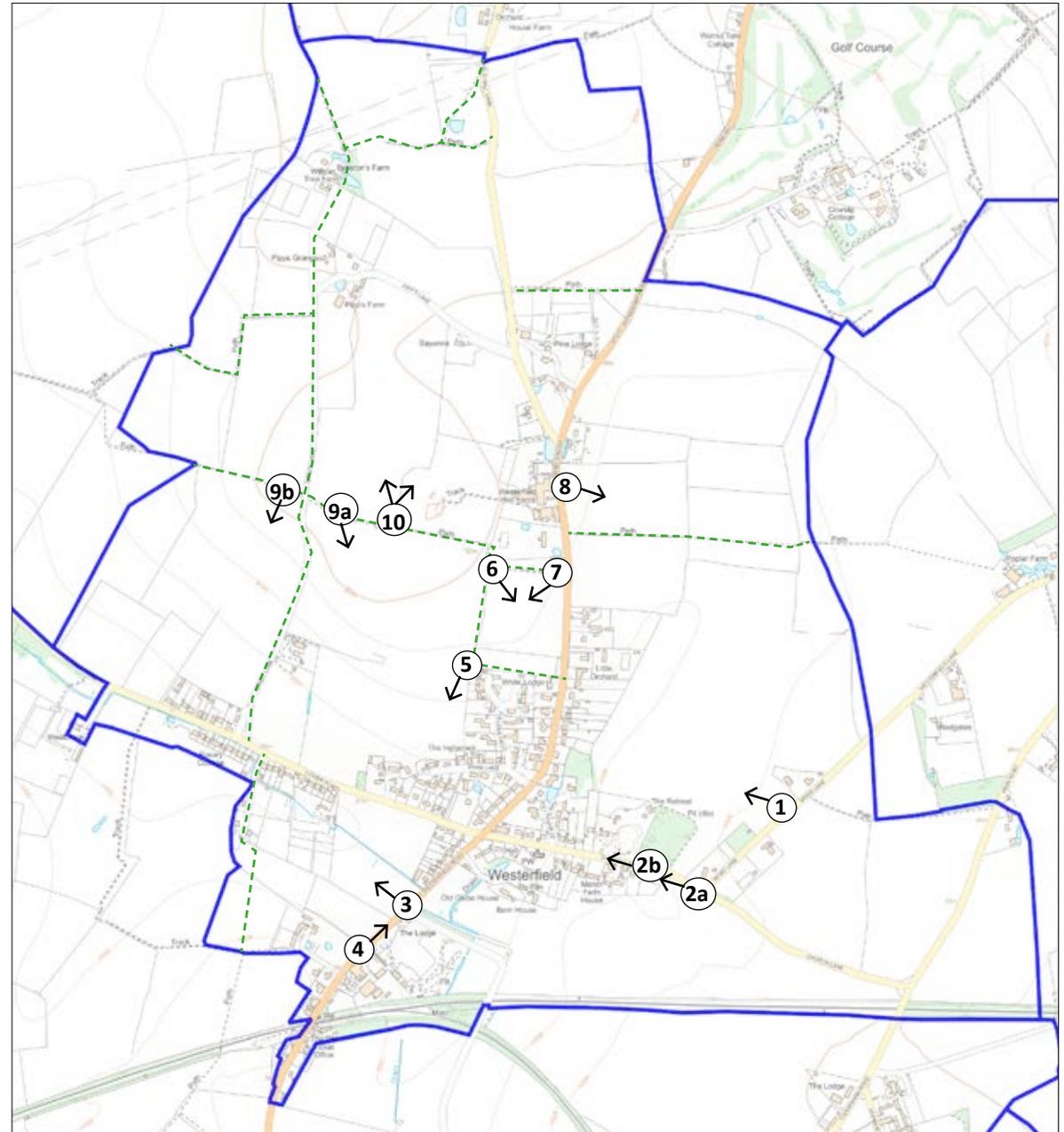
Figure 6.1: Important viewpoint locations

6. Key Views continued

⑧ → Viewpoint with direction of view indicated

List of Key Views:

1. By Lane/Westerfield Lane, towards the west
- 2a and b. Church Lane approaches, towards the west
3. Westerfield Road meadows, towards the west
4. Westerfield Road, towards the north
5. Footpath west of Fullers Lane, towards the southwest
6. Path south of Cygnet House looking southeast
7. Path south of Cygnet House looking southwest
8. Witnesham Road, looking east
9. Footpath 2, facing south
10. Footpath 2, facing north



6. Key Views continued

View 1: By Road/Westerfield Lane looking the west



Location and description:

Example photo of a series of views available to walkers and traffic on By Road/Westerfield Lane, facing westwards towards the village edge.

Comprises farmland in the foreground with the village rooftops appearing from within tree cover in the middle distance, sinking gently out of sight into the valley bottom. There are some telegraph poles in the farmland but otherwise no detracting features in the view.

Justification:

The well vegetated village nestles in the bottom of the valley and has a well established, historic feel. The scene conveys Westerfield's rural setting and character. The village edge is well assimilated within mature tree cover.

Change management objectives:

- Protect the open rural character of the farmland to allow the valley bottom setting of the village to be understood and appreciated.

- Conserve the stock of mature trees - plan for their replacement encourage residents towards planting new trees.
- Ensure any new development replicates the well vegetated edge character.

6. Key Views continued

View 2a: Church Lane approaches, towards the west



View 2b: Church Lane, on approach to village



6. Key Views *continued*

View 2a and b: Church Lane approaches

Location and description:

Example photo of a series of views available to traffic approaching the village on Church Lane - a gateway point to the settlement.

Comprises gently rolling farmland to the side (south) with the new houses at Fieldfare Way forming the relatively recent village edge.

Justification:

These quality modern houses interact positively with the viewers' direction of travel and form an attractive arrangement. The church tower is a landmark within these views, on the approach, especially when leaf cover is absent in winter (although obscured by built form in this photo). The scene forms an attractive gateway and conveys Westerfield's rural setting.

Change management objectives:

- Protect the open rural character of the farmland to the south.
- Enhance the stock of mature trees - encourage residents towards planting new trees.
- Protect glimpses of the church tower on this approach to ensure it continues to read as a landmark.

6. Key Views *continued*

View 3a: Westerfield Road meadows, towards the west



Location and description:

Views from Westerfield Road and from Lower Road into the traditional meadows that lie on the west side of Westerfield Road.

Justification:

The meadows that lie alongside the centre of Westerfield are key to the sense of place and distinctiveness of the village. The glimpses experienced into these undeveloped and uninhabited green spaces have a strong sense of historic continuity, of wildlife value and tranquillity.

Change management objectives:

- Protect the rural character of the meadow system, and their features - their hedges, trees and ditches.
- Encourage traditional management practices with grazing or hay making with an annual cut.
- Maintain the screening properties of the structural planting to screen the expansion of Ipswich taking place at Henley Gate.

6. Key Views *continued*

View 4: Westerfield Road, towards the north



Location and description:

View from Westerfield Road on the gentle descent into the heart of the village.

Comprises the road ahead, encircled overhead by mature trees, usually oaks.

Justification:

This is a village gateway type view, although not strictly at the entrance to the village which lies further south, just before the level crossing. It conveys the rural feel of the village and how mature trees are key to its sense of place.

Change management objectives:

- Protect the stock of mature trees and plan for a future replacement strategy.
- Ensure any new development is set back from the road edge behind soft green edges to replicate the character of Westerfield Road.

6. Key Views *continued ww*

View 5: Footpath west of Fullers Lane, toward the southwest



Location and description:

View from footpath over farmland down the slope toward the village edge - the rear of Lower Road. The tall trees of the meadow beyond break the skyline, merging into the well treed valley side behind.

Justification:

This is a view enjoyed by walkers on the footpath, pausing to take in the long view. The wooded character of the skyline and the well vegetated edge convey the rural setting of the village.

Change management objectives:

- Protect the rural character of the view.
- Conserve and protect the stock of mature trees in the valley bottom and plan for a future replacement strategy.

6. Key Views *continued*

View 6: Footpath south of Cygnet House, towards the southeast



Location and description:

View from footpath towards the Witnesham Road over farmland. The northern edge of the village is tucked into mature tree cover in the middle distance. Beyond, very gently rolling farmland is seen as the setting to the village.

Justification:

This is a view enjoyed by walkers on the footpath, pausing to take in the long view. The wooded character of the skyline and the well vegetated village edge convey the rural setting of the village, tucked into the shallow valley.

Change management objectives:

- Protect the rural character of the view.
- Conserve and protect the stock of mature trees in the village and plan for a future replacement strategy.

6. Key Views continued

View 7: Footpath south of Cygnet House, towards the southwest



Location and description:

View from footpath adjacent to the Witnesham Road, south of Cygnet House. The modern village edge is seen behind a hedge in the middle distance.

Justification:

This is a view enjoyed by walkers on the footpath, across open land. Much of the village is out of sight on the valleyslopes below. Oak trees break the skyline.

Change management objectives:

- Protect the rural character of the view.
- Conserve and protect the stock of mature trees in the village and plan for a future replacement strategy.

6. Key Views continued

View 8: Witnesham Road, looking east



Location and description:

View from Witnesham Road close to Westerfield Hall, looking east. View is experienced by the Hall, passing traffic and walkers.

Justification:

Scenic long views across the very gently rolling shallow valley, revealing much of the west side of the parish. Farmland is enclosed by hedges studded with oak trees. A farm is seen nestled in the distance. There are no detracting features.

Change management objectives:

- Protect the rural character of the views.
- Protect the skyline.

6. Key Views continued

View 9a: Footpath 2, facing south



View 9a: Footpath 2, facing south



6. Key Views continued

View 10: Footpath 2, facing south



6. Key Views continued

Views 9a and b and 10: Plateau top footpath facing south and north

Location and description:

Views from the footpath that passes through the northern part of the parish. It is elevated farmland on the edge of the plateau and offers long views towards the north and south.

Justification:

Particularly long views across the shallow valley to the south, and across the plateau edge to the north. The views reveal much of the parish, and having a strong rural and tranquil feel despite the expanding edge of Ipswich at Henley Gate. The large scale pylons are a detracting feature.

Change management objectives:

- Protect the rural character of the views.
- Protect the skylines.

7. Landscape Value

1. It is clear from the work done that WF3 has greater landscape value than WF1 or WF2. The meadows have an intact historic appearance, they are rarer and more distinctive, they provides important views, and offer natural features with greater wildlife value than the farmland in other parts of the parish.
2. The next question to consider is whether WF3 meets the criteria to be considered 'valued landscape' in planning terms. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states: 'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by...protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...' Value is identified by statutory designations such as AONBs but outside of those, there remains scope to identify and protect landscapes with greater value than 'the everyday'.
3. The definition of a 'Valued Landscape' has recently been clarified through guidance published by the Landscape Institute. Previously it was understood following various well documented planning appeals and inquiries which sought to test how the definition should be applied outside designated landscapes.
4. Guidance Note TG02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' was published in 2019 and states that a 'valued landscape' is an area identified as having '*sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes*'. It goes on to state, '*it is not possible to set a definitive threshold ... It is a judgment that must be made on a case-by-case basis, based on the evidence. There should be a weight of evidence that supports the recognition of a landscape as valued above more everyday landscapes.*'
5. The guidance supports identification of higher value landscapes at the Neighbourhood Plan level. It advises, in paragraph 2.2.1; '*Landscape value at the local authority or neighbourhood level can be assessed and mapped spatially, i.e. through identifying areas for local landscape designation. Studies to support spatial designations should identify the landscape qualities of each area of landscape proposed for designation.*'
6. It gives guidance on the approach, in paragraph 2.3.2 it states; '*In undesignated areas, landscape value should be determined through a review of existing assessments, policies, strategies and guidelines and, where appropriate, by new survey and analysis*' and suggests assessing value under the following 8 headings:
 - Natural heritage
 - Cultural heritage
 - Landscape condition
 - Associations
 - Distinctiveness
 - Perceptual (Scenic)
 - Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity)
 - Functional aspects.
7. This appraisal, therefore, uses this approach to provide evidence that WF3 should be considered a 'valued' landscape. Whilst the scale of the Lower Meadows character area is possibly insufficient to apply a landscape scale designation, the criteria are useful as a framework for evidencing a designation of this type. Another designation available at Neighbourhood Plan level is 'Local Green Space'. The Neighbourhood Plan group should consider which approach is preferred.
8. A table summarising a response to of the 8 headings is provided on the following page. It cites relevant published studies and assessments, desktop sources such as the GIS website, aerial photography and historic maps as well as professional judgement by the author following the parish walk.

6. Landscape Value continued:-

Table 6.1: How meadows in WF3 meet the criteria for 'valued' landscape as defined by TGN 02/21

Criteria (from TGN1 02/21):	Evidence - designation or policy	Comment
1. Natural heritage	Tree Protection Orders Habitats as identified in the SWT Ecological Assessment	Considerable number of mature trees - particularly fine oak specimens. Those bounding Lower Road meadow allocation site have Tree Protection Orders but there are others in the parish of equivalent age and value. Ditch and hedge systems along the boundaries. Grassland although quality, species richness and type unknown.
2. Cultural heritage	Listed buildings - Church, Rectory and Mill Farm all have parts of WF3 as setting	Landscape provides setting to three Listed Buildings - Church / Rectory / Mill Farm. Strong sense of time-depth from the small-scale pattern of enclosures, mature trees, and long standing traditional management of the meadows
3. Landscape condition	Professional judgement. Habitats as identified in the SWT Ecological Assessment	The wealth of mature trees and generally intact boundaries is an indicator of good condition although a proportion of elm means they are somewhat cyclical. The floodplain meadows are managed by a traditional annual hay cut (??).
4. Associations	Web reference sources	The history of Westerfield as a village on a large (c.50 acres) Green is not manifest in the village today but these meadows were likely part of the common land in past centuries. Further investigation of maps at the Suffolk Records Office would be recommended.
5. Distinctiveness	Refer to this appraisal and N2: Culpho and Westerfield farmland Landscape Character Area description.	The meadows, located so close to the village centre, are distinctive for their survival and for their important contribution to village character.
6. Perceptual/Scenic	Key views identified by the community	Glimpses into the meadows are scenic and provide a sense of 'naturalness' and lack of modern intrusion. The community value these views for their quiet, rural appearance.
7. Wildness and Tranquillity	<i>These factors are less in evidence - adjacent busy roads</i>	-
8. Function	Multiple ecosystem services	Functions such as flood water storage, carbon sequestering. Recreation potential. Green spaces as benefit to community physical and mental health services.

8. Conclusions

1. This report encapsulates the key landscape and visual character and sensitivity issues in Westerfield. It is a resource to which both applicants and the parish and district authorities should refer to ensure that any proposal meets the requirements of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, and those of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, particularly SCLP10.4 'Landscape Character'. It should also provide guidance for the detailed design of allocated Lower Meadow Site as well as suggest future environmental improvements.
2. Despite its close proximity to the edge of Ipswich and the presence of a train station, Westerfield has remained a small village. It has retained a rural character, despite the loss of its historic Green, and the often busy roads that pass through. Contained to the north by valley sides of rolling farmland, the village boasts a stock of mature oaks, and is fringed on the south side by tree lined meadows, which extend through the village centre. It is important the factors which have created this rural feel are identified and therefore, prioritised for protection and enhancement.
3. Although Westerfield has managed to avoid modern, large estate developments, and its appearance has changed little over recent decades, two prominent sites adjacent to the main road now have either allocation or planning permissions in place. Also of significance will be the gradual building out of the Ipswich Garden Suburb that will have direct and indirect effects on Westerfield. This is a key reason the parish are pursuing their own Neighbourhood Plan.
4. Given the evidence gathered, and through the application of professional judgement, the following is a summary of value statements and recommendations that the Neighbourhood Plan could look to address.

Conserve the historic meadow system in the heart of the village

5. The small meadows either side of the main road, in parish character area WF3, south of the village centre, are key to the setting and character of Westerfield. Having already lost its Green during the 20th century, it is essential the remaining meadows are conserved. Glimpses into these enduring traditional features, enclosed within mature vegetated boundaries, contribute strongly to village

character. They demonstrate a level of historic intactness that is lacking elsewhere in the farmland landscape, which has been subject to amalgamation and reorganisation.

6. The meadows are sometimes divided by ditches, and the combination of the ground flora, the small watercourses, shrub layer and overhead trees form an important habitat network. Given the lack of woodlands or other wildlife sites in the parish, these features have additional importance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

7. The landscape in character area WF3 should be considered of greater value than that in WF1 or WF2. It meets several of the criteria that relate to valued landscapes, as set out in TGN 02/21. This could be reflected by a designation in the Neighbourhood Plan such as 'Area of Greater Landscape Value' or attribution of 'Local Green Space' to help protect the remaining meadows from development.
8. However, it is important that they are not just physically conserved, but their simple, intact, historical character must also be conserved. The meadows will function as a physical and visual buffer to the edge of the IGS but care should be taken they don't become an extension of the IGS suburban amenity space. The right management is critical, as transition into tidy, clipped amenity spaces could erode their traditional appearance and negatively impact the character of the village.
9. Any proposals affecting the meadows within the framework of the IGS or allocation in the Local Plan must be scrutinised to ensure they don't seek to erode or harm their character. Traditional management methods should continue (hay making, grazing by cows/sheep). Alternative activities, such as Equestrianism, with associated tape fencing, outbuildings, parked cars, and paraphernalia would be visually intrusive and for these reasons, should be avoided. All unnecessary tree and hedge removal must be avoided.
10. It is unfortunate that the 'Land south of Lower Road' allocation is in place as loss of the meadow will likely have an adverse effect on the character of Lower Road

and the village centre. Any opportunities for alternative ways of meeting the housing need (such as on the business park site) that avoids development of the meadow would be welcomed.

11. If development is unavoidable, then any opportunities to shape the site design should be sought. Design Briefs are one way that the parameters for design can be set. A Design Brief as part of the Neighbourhood Plan could address dwelling numbers, locate access, identify features for protection, identify public access requirements and what form Public Open Space should take, for example. As the proposals include for provision of a village green, it would be very important to ensure the green is appropriately designed as usable greenspace and is not simply earmarked for flood water attenuation, for example.
12. The Parish Council should take advice from a landscape professional when responding to any development proposals on WF3 or neighbouring land to ensure this traditional, important landscape is conserved, so that Westerfield maintains its distinctiveness, its rural feel, and does not become gradually but surely subsumed into the garden suburb.
13. Policies SCLP12.23 and 12.67 both apply broad principles to land in this character area. But the delivery of the detail in these parcels is really important and the parish council should take all opportunities for early engagement with those delivering the schemes to ensure outcomes that do not harm village character.

Protect the stock of oak trees

14. The many mature oaks, are a distinctive feature of Westerfield. They are a historic feature and contribute positively to its rural character and sense of place. They are also very important individually and collectively for biodiversity, summer cooling, and air quality, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

15. The trees should be regularly surveyed (and managed) for health, especially where they overhanging the roads and footways. A programme for planting new oaks could be considered to ensure continuity of this highly characteristic feature.

16. With regard to Allocation Policy 'SCLP12.67: Land South of Lower Road', Westerfield' - the trees around the site have Tree Protection Orders so their importance is already flagged. Nevertheless, a high level of vigilance should be extended to them - they need to be integrated very sensitively into the site design so that their future retention is not compromised.
17. Other development plans that might encroach into the space and root zone of significant parish trees must be reviewed vigorously and challenged where risks are identified. Future proposals for the business park are a good example as this borders a significant belt of trees to the north.
18. Once a development is complete, boundary trees and hedges must be managed strategically to ensure they are not neglected or removed. For this reason ownership of mature features should not pass to the residents of newly built houses.
19. Applying for an expansion in the number of TPOs in the parish could be considered by the parish council, given the quality of some of trees that are not covered. Arboricultural advice is recommended in respect of any tree issues.

Protect the setting of Westerfield Hall and Swan's Nest

20. Beyond the northern edge of the settlement this group of historic buildings, with considerable heritage value (includes grade II* Westerfield Hall) occupy a hill top location, set apart from the rest of the village. Their separation, and outlook over open farmland, is an important part of their significance and they form an important component in views across character area WF2.

RECOMMENDATION:

21. The openness of the farmland that provides setting to these assets must be protected. Future development should not be directed to this part of the village fringe and any land use change which reduces the undeveloped gap to the village edge should be resisted. In any case, extending the village up beyond the 42m contour is not characteristic of Westerfield and is not appropriate.

Integrate new development edges

22. New houses recently completed at Old Green Farm have been built right up to the boundary, seemingly leaving no space for enclosure by hedges or trees. This means the development is prominent along views of the village edge and appears stark compared to the rest of the village edge which is well assimilated behind planting. Planting does not have to be a continuous, tall screen but space for a hedge and a few skyline impact trees makes a very positive difference.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

23. New development edges must be well integrated with native boundary vegetation - this was a recommendation in the 2018 study by Alison Farmer Associates but recent development proposals have not adequately responded. This should be addressed through Neighbourhood Plan Policy and, additionally, a simple parish landscape design guide could be commissioned to help both applicant and consultees/planning authority understand what is required and why.

Improve pedestrian access / connections to the footpath network

24. Whilst the main road is served by a roadside pavement, there is a marked lack of footways going east-west, leading to dangerous conditions for pedestrians. The situation is particularly poor along Lower Road. Having to share the road with the oncoming traffic is unpleasant and acts as a barrier to people who might otherwise wish to access the footpath network.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

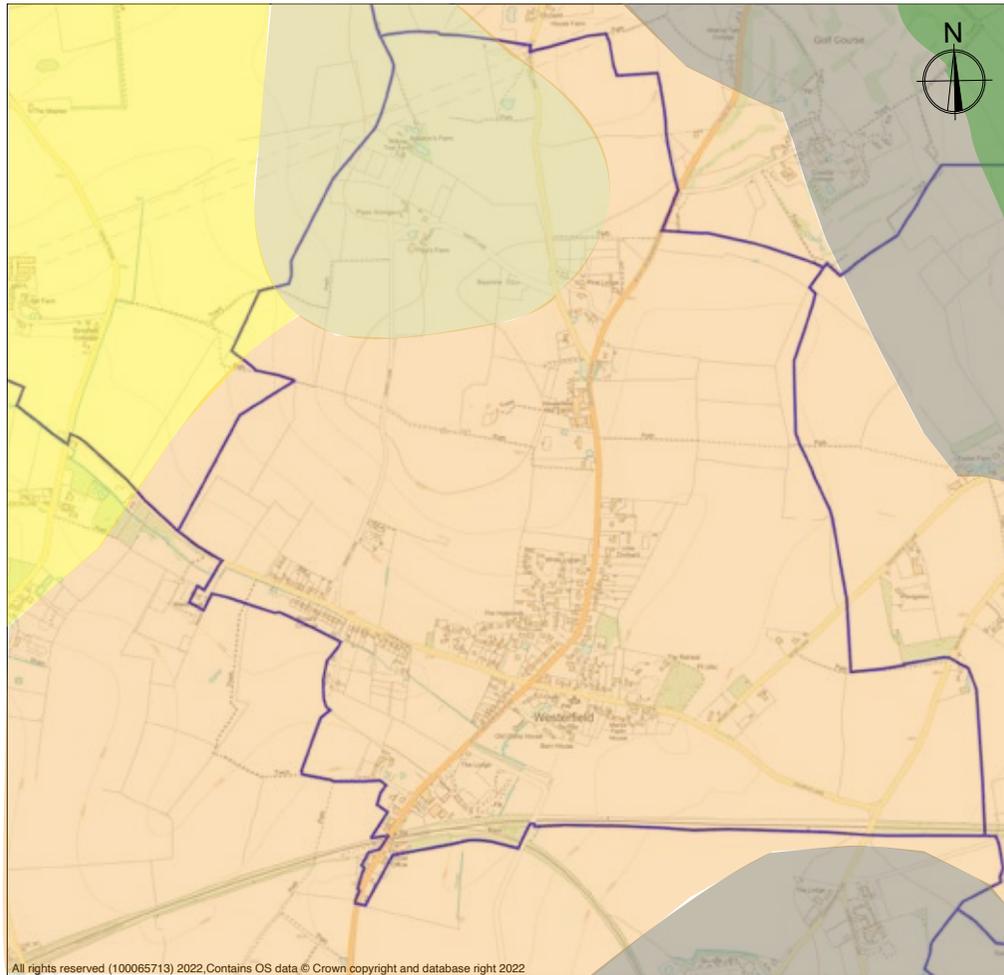
25. The parish may wish to explore ways of providing permissive off road routes, for example, along field edges, to provide alternative routes to the footpath network. The only mechanism normally available is negotiation with landowners, but any opportunities to provide better access through allocations/planning consents or the delivery of the IGS should be explored fully. Access to footpaths is vital for healthy lifestyles and for promoting good mental health and improving access across the village to the countryside footpaths would be a notable benefit.

26. A further project could be to improve pedestrian experience along existing minor roads. Cockfield Hall Road could be given Quiet Lane status, or similar. Whilst a recent round of funding for villages to designate Quiet Lanes in Suffolk is now complete and no longer available, there may be the opportunity to confer a designation of this type via the Neighbourhood Plan. A 'Quiet Lane' is a nationally recognised designation of single-track road (i.e. no line markings), typically with less than 1,000 vehicles using it per day. They are routes where people can enjoy the lane and its natural surroundings for activities such as cycling, horse-riding, jogging and walking. The idea is not to restrict motor vehicles on these rural routes, but to express a more equal sharing of the surface and encourage considerate behaviour between the different user groups.

27. Figure 8.1 shows a spatial plan to help direct potential policies:

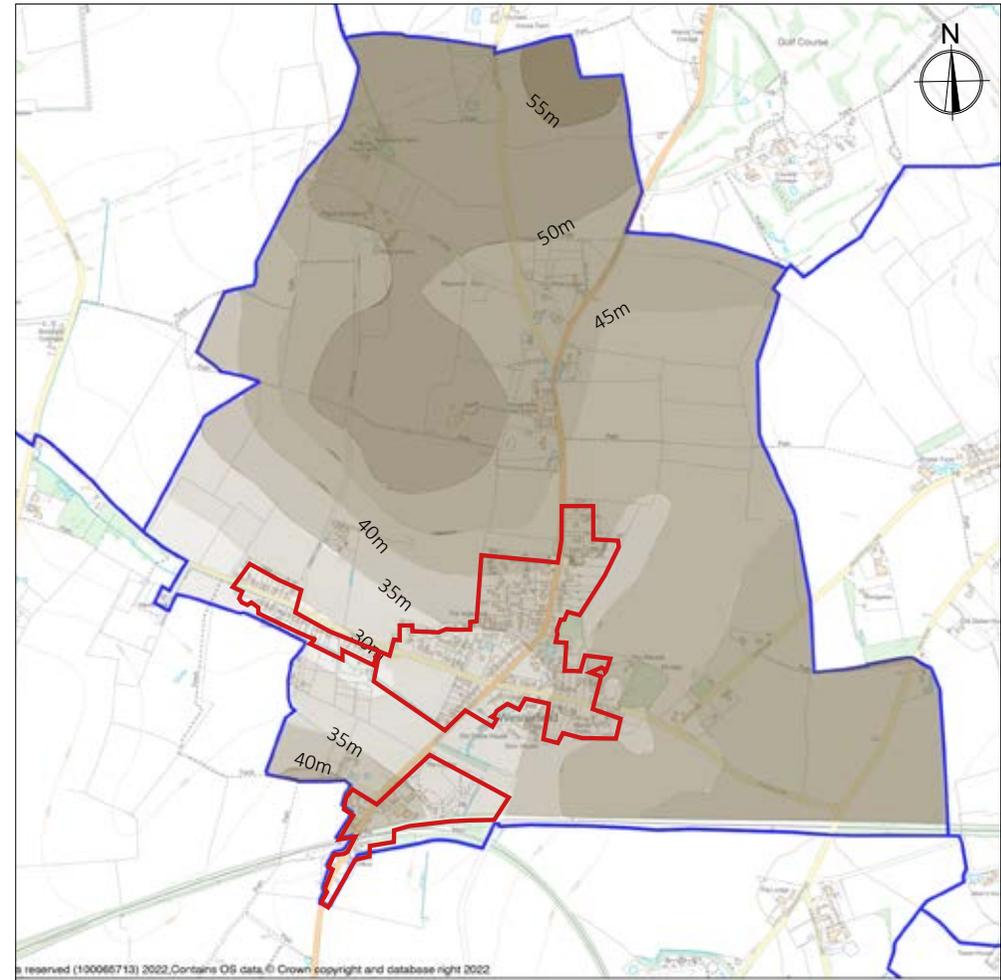
Appendix

Soils map

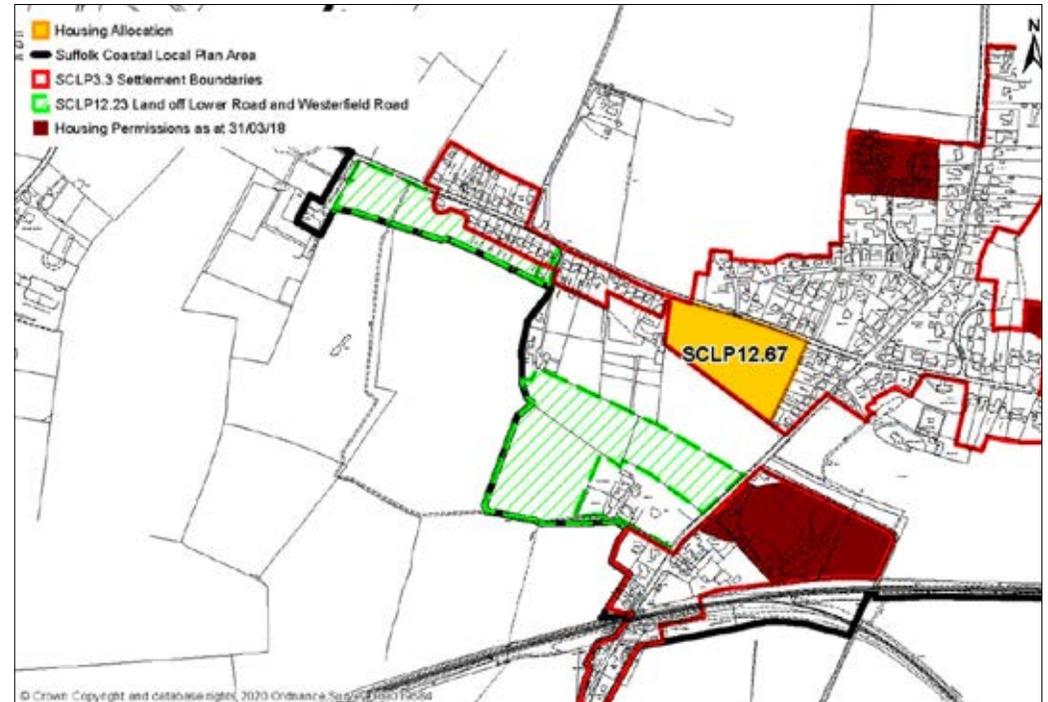


- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soilscape 9:
Lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage Soilscape 18:
Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils Soilscape 7:
Freely draining slightly acid but base-rich soils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soilscape 8:
Slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage Soilscape 10:
Freely draining slightly acid sandy soils |
|--|--|

Topography map



3. Local Plan continued:-



3. Local Plan continued:-

Allocation Policy SCLP12.67: Land South of Lower Road, Westerfield

2.45ha of land south of Lower Road, Westerfield, as shown on the Policies Map, is identified for the development of approximately 20 dwellings and public open space provision.

Development will be expected to accord with the following criteria:

The housing is required to enable the provision of a village green type facility as a focal point for the community. When determining the viability of the scheme, the need to provide this facility will be given priority over affordable housing contributions;

The developer is required to involve the Parish Council in the design and layout of the village green type facility and its long term maintenance;

If the housing element extends over 1ha or more, a flood risk assessment will be required to consider impacts on receptors off site;

An archaeological assessment will be required;

Design of the scheme should provide for a pedestrian footway along the Lower Road frontage within the site to avoid detrimental impact on the oak trees which are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order; and

Provision of a comprehensive landscaping scheme for the site which provides for the retention of trees and hedgerows along the site boundaries except where it is required to provide access to the site.

Policy SCLP12.23: Land off Lower Road and Westerfield Road (Ipswich Garden Suburb Country Park)

Two parcels of land, as shown on the Policies Map, are designated as public open space. This land is intended to form part of the country park (minimum of 24.5ha total) required to be provided in association with the new Ipswich Garden Suburb, the built area of which is located within the administrative boundary of Ipswich Borough Council. The detailed scheme for the country park as it relates to East Suffolk will be expected to:

Safeguard existing pedestrian and cycle access points and provide suitable links to the existing public rights of way network;

Make provision for a car park to serve the country park within that parcel of land fronting Westerfield Road;

Make suitable provision for any necessary maintenance tracks and access points;

Provide detailed boundary treatments and be required to demonstrate that the residential amenity of dwellings which abut the boundary of the country park and the public rights of way has been safeguarded; and

Provide net gains for biodiversity.

Sensitive treatment will also need to be given to Mill Farm, which is a listed building, and its setting. An archaeological investigation may be required dependent on the nature of the groundworks involved.

Appendix 1: Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020

Policy SCLP10.4: Landscape Character

Proposals for development should be informed by, and sympathetic to, the special qualities and features as described in the Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment (2018), the Settlement Sensitivity Assessment (2018), or successor and updated landscape evidence.

Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate their location, scale, form, design and materials will protect and enhance:

- a) The special qualities and features of the area;
- b) The visual relationship and environment around settlements and their landscape settings;
- c) Distinctive landscape elements including but not limited to watercourses, commons, woodland trees, hedgerows and field boundaries, and their function as ecological corridors;
- d) Visually sensitive skylines, seascapes, river valleys and significant views towards key landscapes and cultural features; and
- e) The growing network of green infrastructure supporting health, wellbeing and social interaction.

Development will not be permitted where it will have a significant adverse impact on rural river valleys, historic park and gardens, coastal, estuary, heathland and other very sensitive landscapes. Proposals for development will be required to secure the preservation and appropriate restoration or enhancement of natural, historic or man made features across the plan area as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment, Settlement Sensitivity Assessment and successor landscape evidence.

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Proposals should include measures that enable a scheme to be well integrated into the landscape and enhance connectivity to the surrounding green infrastructure and Public Rights of Way network. Development proposals which have the potential to impact upon the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or other sensitive landscapes should be informed by landscape appraisal, landscape and visual impact assessment and landscape mitigation.

Proposals for development should protect and enhance the tranquillity and dark skies across the plan area.

Exterior lighting in development should be appropriate and sensitive to protecting the intrinsic darkness of rural and tranquil estuary, heathland and river valley landscape character.

Neighbourhood Plans may include local policies related to protecting and enhancing landscape character and protecting and enhancing tranquillity and dark skies.

Policy SCLP8.2: Open Space

The Council supports the provision of open space and recreational facilities and their continued management across the plan area. Primarily to encourage active lifestyles and to increase participation in formal and informal recreation for all sectors of the community, and also to support the biodiversity, promote effective water management and to enhance the public realm. New residential development will be expected to contribute to the provision of open space and recreational facilities in order to benefit community health, well-being and green infrastructure.

There will be a presumption against any development that involves the loss of open space or community sport and recreation facilities.

Proposals for development that results in the loss of open spaces will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where:

- a. The proposal is ancillary to the open nature of the area and will enhance local character, increase local amenity and be of greater community or wildlife benefit;
- b. An open space assessment demonstrates the site is surplus to requirements including its ability to be used for alternative open space uses;
- Or c. The loss resulting from the proposed development will be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity, quality and in a suitable location.

Neighbourhood Plans may identify areas of Local Green Space and include policies relating to their protection

Glossary/definitions of terms used:

Landscape Character analyses the many influences acting on the landscape and how they come together to shape how it looks and feels. It is an interaction of the physical underlying factors such as soil type and topography, often the strongest driver determining modern-day land cover, as well as human influences exerted by agriculture, settlement patterns and road networks, infrastructure etc.. Together these expressions of pattern, resulting from particular combinations of natural (physical and biological) and cultural factors make one place different from another.

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

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

Landscape Sensitivity is the ability of the landscape to accommodate a particular type of change (usually considered in terms of development) without adverse effect. It is determined by considering the potential impacts given its character, value, condition and visual sensitivity.

Visual Sensitivity is a measure of how visible an area is to people - in houses, on roads, using footpaths. Land that is prominently seen and that has an 'open' character, ie where trees or hedges are absent, tends to be more visually sensitive and any change could be perceived at long range. In contrast, small scale patterns and high degree of tree cover could indicate less visually sensitive land.

Landscape Value is defined as the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. In this study, value has been assessed with reference to Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3rd edition).

Landscape Capacity considers the extent and nature of development which may be accommodated and includes consideration of opportunities for enhancement or mitigation which may improve the degree of fit and increase capacity of the landscape to accommodate change.

Landscape condition is the state the landscape in terms of how its historic characteristics or natural features continue to be well managed and looked after, and expressed, or whether they have been neglected, poorly managed or lost over time.

Enclosure Pattern

A cultural dimension of the landscape defined by the inherent pattern of its fields, defined by its hedges, boundaries and lanes. Ancient patterns tend to have developed irregularly and are organic in shape, more modern enclosures tend to reflect rational organisation and feature straight edges.

Veteran Tree

A Veteran Tree is one that has reached a great age and size compared to others of the same species, or that shows characteristic veteran features such as hollowing and fungal rot, cracks and cavities in the trunk, or retraction of the canopy (often leaving bare stag-headed branches). Different species of tree grow and age at different rates and will therefore become ancient at different stages of their lifespan. They have huge interest historically, culturally and ecologically.

TABLE 6.1 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT: HEADINGS AND EXPLANATION:

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