

APPENDIX 4

Extract from Historic Landscape Character Assessment –
“The Wash” and “WSH4”

The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project for Lincolnshire



The Historic Character of The County of Lincolnshire

English Heritage Project No. 4661 Main

Report

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Lincolnshire County Council

With contributions from

Adam Partington

September 2011

3.10 Regional Character Area 10

The Wash

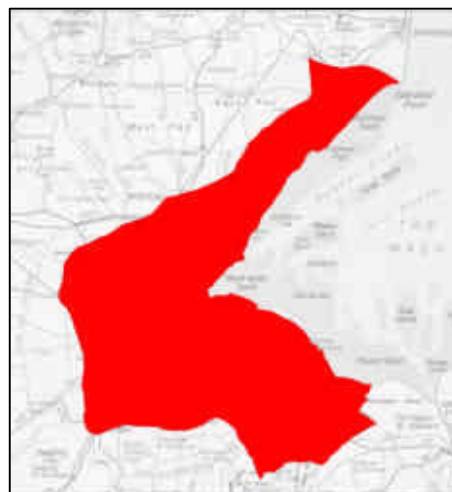
ARS sub-province: EWASH

Countryside Agency Countryside Character Areas:

46 – The Fens

Total area: 660.3 km²

Percentage of Overall Project Area: 15.1%



Description of Present Landscape

The Wash is a large estuarine complex on the east coast of Lincolnshire. It is fed by the Rivers Witham, Welland, Steeping, Great Ouse and Nene, which are themselves fed by numerous drains and streams across the East Midlands. The western edge of the character area is dominated by a silt ridge which stands about 4m above sea level. The land between this ridge and the Wash Estuary itself is typically at or below sea level, with earthen banks at regular intervals parallel to the coast marking the extent of former coastlines.

The shoreline of the Wash has changed dramatically over the last thousand years, not least because of human influence. Although the shape of the coast has changed naturally as a result of changes in sea level, rainfall and climate, much of the dry land of the character area owes its existence to successive periods of artificial drainage for agricultural purposes. The rural landscape is one of broad, open views with occasional vertical intrusions from buildings or features, such as the tower of St Botolph's Church in Boston, wind power facilities or relict sea banks. Roads are typically elevated from their surroundings by up to a metre, and even this modest height allows views over great distances, especially on the drained marshland.



Large Modern Field at Croft Marsh

© Richard Croft

The area is predominantly agricultural, with the highest proportion of modern fields by area in the county, which is indicative of the high rate of field boundary loss. There is also a surprisingly high proportion of surviving ancient enclosure. Perhaps the most striking element of the modern landscape is the occurrence of very large modern fields, sometimes referred to as 'prairies'. These large flat arable fields are almost industrial in character, with parallel lines of uniform crops, such as lettuces or brassicas stretching away into the

distance. The enormous quantities of produce grown require a large infrastructure for processing, and the rural landscape is punctuated by industrial complexes such as canneries and freezing plants. The main roads of the area are often busy with large articulated lorries carrying the produce to distant markets, and these can be seen for miles around.

The flat open expanses of the coastal farmland have proved suitable for the construction of wind farms. This is not a new development, as wind power has been used in the area for centuries, both for milling grain and pumping water, and remains of these windmills can be seen in villages across the character area. However, modern wind power generators are generally much larger than historic windmills and tend to be built in groups, as at Gedney Marsh. The wind farms are visible over great distances, and, as elsewhere in the county, have proved controversial.

Settlements are typically found on high ground, particularly on the silt ridge known locally as the Townlands, extending from Wainfleet in the north, around the coast to Boston, Spalding, Holbeach and Long Sutton. The formation continues across the county boundary to Kings Lynn and around the eastern edge of the Wash, and is roughly parallel to the current coast of the Wash. The Townland settlements are typically nucleated in character, although there has been some development along the main roads that threatens to merge some of the smaller settlements with their larger neighbours, and some ribbon development along the historic drove roads leading north from the Townlands to the drained marsh. The major settlements tend to have a broad mix of housing types from a variety of periods. The historic cores are generally surrounded by increasingly more recent housing, with modern residential estates on the periphery.

Away from the main settlements there is a relatively high proportion of dispersed rural settlement. This was historically made up of isolated farmsteads and associated cottages but new dwellings have been added at a steady rate over the last century. Although parts of the drained marsh can feel isolated due to the large fields and vast skies, it is generally possible to see at least two farmsteads from any position in the landscape, and often five or six, making the landscape a little more intimate than it might at first appear.

Landscape History

The modern landscape of the area has been created by the interplay of two factors. The first is the struggle to drain and retain land from the encroachment of the sea. The second is the exploitation of the rich, fertile land gained by doing so.

It is likely that the entire character area has only existed as dry land since the end of the Roman period. At some point in the centuries following the departure of Roman authority, the land on the seaward side of the Townlands was drained either by human activity or by receding sea levels. The Townlands themselves may have existed as islands before this point, but there is little evidence for extensive occupation until the



Inland View from Friskney Sea-Bank
© Ian Paterson

Anglo-Saxon settlement of the area. By the time of the Domesday survey, the main settlements of the Townlands were in existence in some form. The survey also recorded the presence of salterns along the length of the coast, whose mounds may have been partly responsible for the next phase of reclamation recorded by the fourteenth century. This strip of former marsh, running parallel to the silt bank on the seaward side, is likely to have formed by accretion after numerous high spring tides, which would eventually have left the land dry enough to enclose and surround with a sea-bank. At this point the reclaimed land was most likely to have been used for year-round pasture, with the salt marsh on the far side of the bank providing further grazing when not inundated by the sea.

The process of gradual accretion followed by defence and enclosure continued gradually for several centuries. This resulted in a series of sea banks, which can still be seen in the landscape today. The subsequent phases of enclosure are also indicated by the pattern of field boundaries, which become increasingly more planned and straight the closer they are to the coast. In many places, the former courses of creeks are preserved within the field pattern, presumably still forming an important part of the drainage system. An interesting variation on this theme can be seen at Friskney and Wrangle Tofts, where the field boundaries continue their long straight course across several sea-banks. Taken together with the line of settlement from which these fields emanate, this pattern indicates a continuity of ownership over a considerable period of time, with initial plots, laid out at the back of small farmsteads along what is now the A52, being extended each time a new phase of enclosure was completed.

Over the last century, much of the farmland of the area has been turned to arable cultivation. The fertility of the land has been augmented by the adoption of modern farming techniques, but the same techniques require increasing use of machinery, such as tractors and combine harvesters. In order to accommodate the machinery, farmers here, as elsewhere in the county, have consolidated their fields by removing some of the historic boundaries. This has resulted in the creation of large 'prairie' style fields across the character area.

The battle against the sea has been an important part of the historic development of the area. This battle continues, but has recently become more urgent with the impending challenges presented by climate change. It is predicted that sea levels will rise sufficiently to threaten much of the low-lying farmland of the character area in the next fifty years. In order to combat this threat new techniques have been employed, such as the managed retreat at Freiston Shore. As the current policy is that no more land should be surrendered, other methods will need to be employed, such as enhancing existing sea-defences, building new sea walls and adding to the existing array of pumping stations. The threat of climate change has also led to the construction of wind farms across the area, with notable examples at Gedney Marsh and Bicker Fen. These can have a significant visual impact within the landscape, but do not typically damage historic landscape elements, such as field boundaries or standing archaeology. Sub-surface archaeology is, of



Wind Farm at Gedney Marsh
© Glyn Drury

course, as vulnerable to the erection of wind turbines as it is to any other ground disturbance.

Although less than optimal as a site for airfields, the landscape of the Wash nevertheless experienced the effects of the twentieth century conflicts. The remains of pill boxes and other defensive installations can still be seen throughout the character area, having been constructed in order to slow the advance of a potential German invasion force.

Legibility

Despite the many changes to the landscape, much of its historic character remains evident to this day. The marshland that once covered the entire area is still visible from the outermost sea wall, and indeed is a major tourist attraction, as it provides a habitat for large numbers of migratory birds. There are several specific nature reserves, and the whole estuary has been designated as a National Nature Reserve.

Away from the semi-natural landscapes of salt marsh, the rest of the area is entirely man-made. The various phases of drainage can be identified in the field patterns and relict sea-banks and former creeks are seen throughout the area. Despite the removal of many field boundary ditches, the underlying patterns remain well preserved. This is largely due to the inadvisability of removing too many drains in a landscape that is largely below sea level.

Drivers of Change

Agriculture

- Introduction of tall-growing bio-mass crops
- Consolidation of fields leading to further loss of historic patterns around settlements
- Creation of large 'prairie' fields on drained marsh

Climate Change

- Flood alleviation schemes – storage pools, pumping facilities, dykes
- Enhancement of existing sea banks
- Introduction of new crops capable of dealing with drought

Industry

- Construction of new energy production facilities – especially wind power
- Creation of associated energy infrastructure, such as pylons and substations

Settlement

- Regeneration of historic settlements - Boston, Spalding
- Expansion of residential areas around larger settlements
- Ribbon development along main connecting roads
- Infill developments in straggling linear villages

Tourism & Recreation

- Wider appreciation of biodiversity leading to increase in Nature Tourism
- Local economic regeneration through promotion of tourist destinations

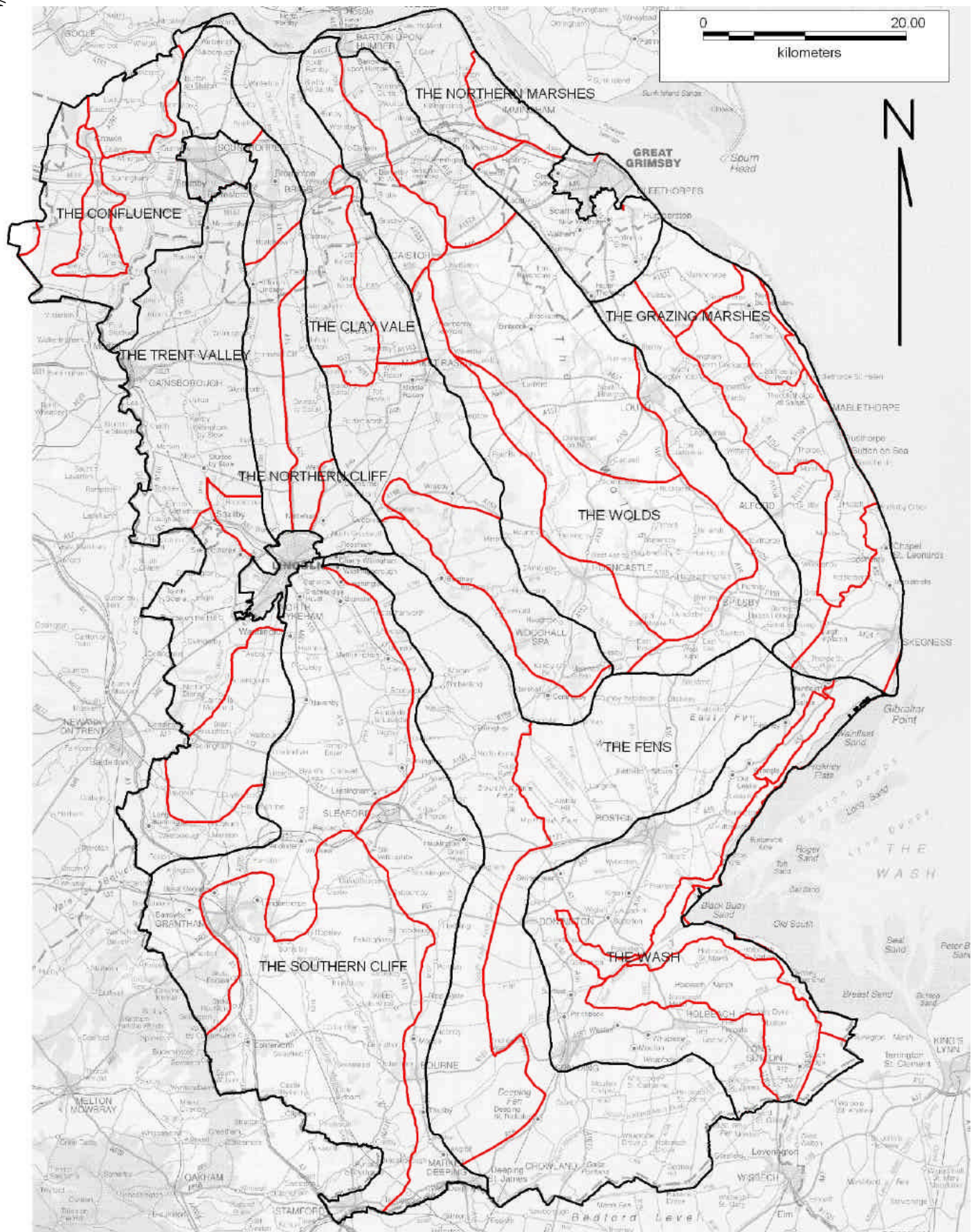


Figure 7. Historic Landscape Character Zones with indicative raster map data
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Character Zone WSH4

Reclaimed Wash Farmlands within The Wash Character Area

ARS sub-province: EWASHW

Natural England National Character Area:
46 The Fens

Total area: 138 km²

**Percentage of Regional Character
Area:** 20.9%

**Percentage of Overall Project
Area:** 1.98%



Description

Land use throughout the entire zone is primarily agricultural, and there are a number of large scale farmsteads of industrial size in the zone. A small number of orchards exist in the south-west of the zone.

Industrial sites are few, comprising light industry along the A17 corridor as well as storage, processing and distribution sites associated with expanded farmsteads.

The agricultural landscape of the zone comprises a semi-regular pattern of field enclosures, with occasional areas of coherent rectilinear field divisions in the east of the zone and around Moulton Common. Field boundaries predominantly comprise narrow and shallow wet dykes, although embanked natural watercourses form continuous linear boundaries across the zone. A small number of fields around Holbeach St Matthew and Dawesmere are bounded by hedgerows.

Relict sea-banks around the periphery of the zone are associated with successive stages of coastal land reclamation. Sea-banks run roughly parallel to the coastline, with few perpendicular banks dividing inland areas.

The west edge of the zone is formed by the canalised river channel of the Welland, while the east edge of the zone is the large straight drainage channel of the North Level Main Drain and the canalised River Nene.

Settlement in the area is mainly dispersed and, where grouped, is linear. It mostly adheres to the road infrastructure, with the exception of some large, often industrial sized and isolated, farm complexes which are located along dedicated trackways. The southern limits of the zone have a higher population density, with settlement following the course of the 'Roman Bank' (a sea-bank dating to about 1300) and forming more nucleated settlements, such as Holbeach Hurn or Moulton Seas End, that are satellite villages to inland market towns. The northern limits of the zone similarly feature a string of smaller post medieval satellite hamlets such as Gedney Drove End and Holbeach St Marks. The far east of the zone is dominated by the port of Sutton Bridge.

Western parts of the zones are characterised by a network of curvilinear minor roads and tracks running perpendicular to the coast, connecting satellite settlements with their larger parent market towns in the Townlands Zone (WSH6) to the south. Towards the coast, the road system is aligned more east to west and connects the outlying settlements. Road infrastructure in the east of the zone is more organised in nature, with a rectilinear layout of minor roads and trackways.

Woodland in the zone is sparsely distributed throughout, and mainly consists of thin rectilinear plantations and holts located along field boundaries or adjacent to buildings. The south-west of the zone has a limited number of orchards. Numerous small agricultural reservoirs are scattered within the zone.

Historic Landscape Evolution

The entire zone was reclaimed from semi-natural and natural saltmarsh between 1660 and 1811. Prior to embankment and drainage, the saltmarsh was an extensive common grazing area serving livestock from the market towns inland.

Interest from the Crown under James I led to the reclamation of coastal land from the mid seventeenth century. Inhabitants of local villages had the opportunity to purchase their common marsh providing they embanked and drained the land. Tenancies on the remaining land was offered to private individuals who had to embank and drain the shares of Common, Crown and private land as part of their tenure agreement.

Land reclamation occurred from the mid seventeenth century with 17,374 acres of saltmarsh embanked between Moulton and Gedney. The size of the intake suggests that the extent of saltmarsh during this period was substantial. Semi-regular field patterns in the zone, and retained small scale natural watercourses indicate that drainage and enclosure utilised the existing natural drainage infrastructure (Lutton Leam, Fleet, Moulton and Whaplode River systems and the saltmarsh creeks). Areas of more organised enclosure patterns around Moulton and Long Sutton correlate with common land purchased by the villages prior to reclamation, and represents possibly later parliamentary style enclosure of common lands during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Reclamation and drainage of land provoked the development of post medieval satellite villages and hamlets on the seaward side of the 'Roman Bank', and inland of the new sea-bank. A new network of roads, accessing and interlinking the satellite villages, formed subsequent to the reclamations. Isolated farmsteads, associated with Crown and private estates, will have been constructed soon after enclosure. Further coastal reclamation between 1793 and 1811 was carried out under the South Holland Embankment Act, increasing the total area reclaimed by 4,695 acres.

Large drainage infrastructure in the south-east of the zone includes the canalised River Nene (1770-72 Wisbech to Gunthorpe Sluice and 1827-30 Gunthorpe Sluice to current outfall), the North Level Main Drain (about 1828), and the South Holland Main Drain (about 1793). The channels cut across former seventeenth- and eighteenth-century coastal reclamation landscapes in the zone, and derive from the drainage of vast tracts of former freshwater fenland in southern Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire.

Canalisation of the River Nene and subsequent land reclamation in the Cross Keys Wash Zone (WSH4) led to the development of the port of Sutton Bridge in the late nineteenth century. Although the original Victorian port was short lived, the modern day port was opened in 1987 and continues to operate today.

Elsewhere in the zone, the pattern of settlement indicates twentieth-century expansion of the more southerly satellite villages, with infill and suburban development along linear features such as sea-banks and minor roads. The northerly satellite villages underwent comparatively less expansion, and in some cases their populations have diminished as industrialised farming techniques reduced the demand for labour.

The modern landscape is a result of widespread amalgamation of enclosures into larger field units mainly from the 1950s, and the growth of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century farmsteads into agricultural complexes of industrial size.

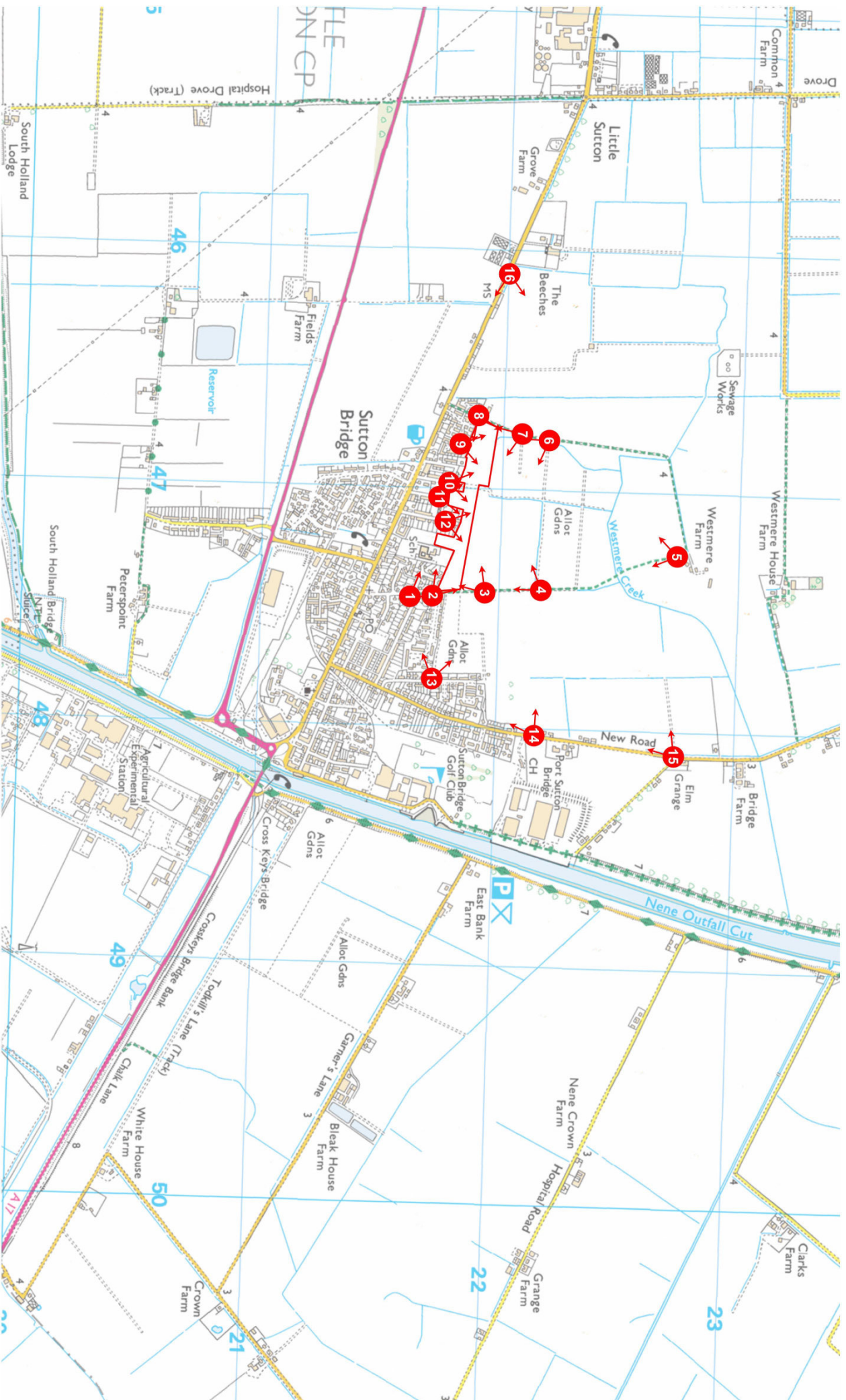
Legibility

The zone clearly demonstrates the successive reclamation of coastal marsh from the thirteenth century onwards, and shows in particular the different approaches to land drainage and enclosure. Subsequent colonisation of the area is visible in the pattern of settlement and infrastructure, and in the place-name evidence of satellite hamlets and villages.

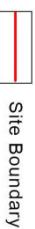
Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century freshwater drainage channels in the zone provide clear evidence for the episodic evolution of the landscape in this zone and the drained fen landscapes lying inland.

APPENDIX 5

Photographic Record



Key



Not to Scale

Drawing note: Based on Ordnance Survey data with permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright.
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Land North of Sutton Bridge
Viewpoint Location Plan

Client: ABDS Ltd

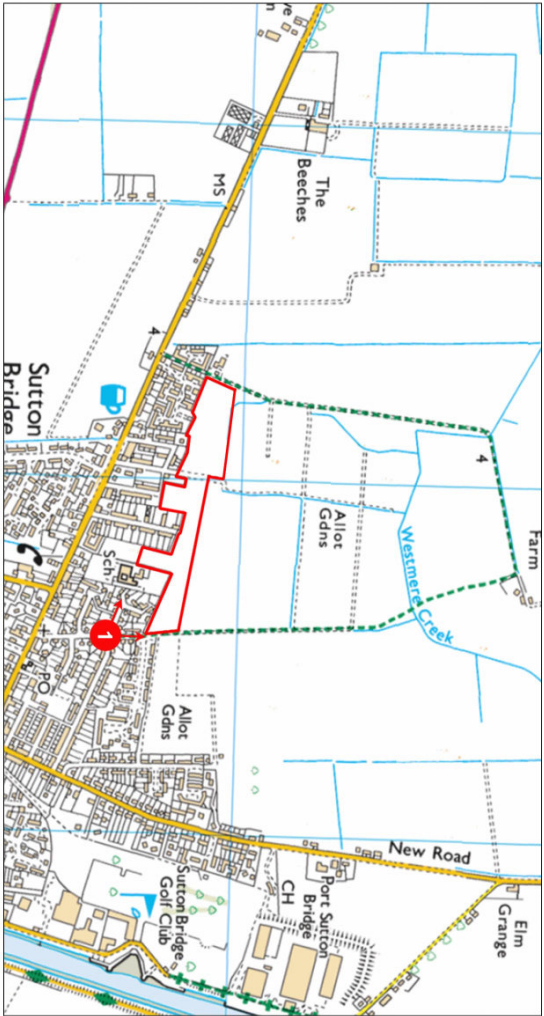
Drawing Ref: 9198L.VLP.003
Date: August 2020 Drawn: AM

Checked: AM

Site located beyond intervening residential built form



Approximate extent of the proposals



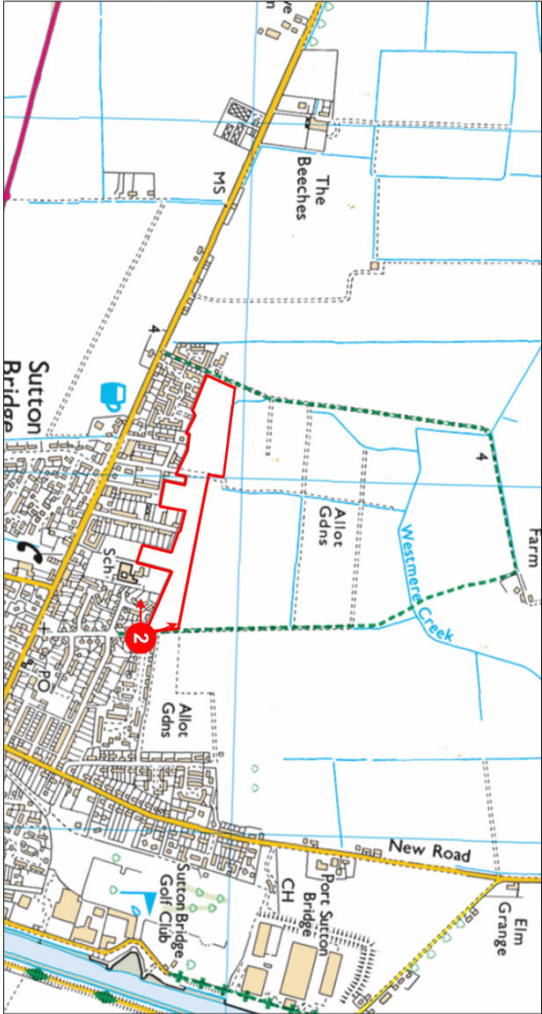
Viewpoint 1
View taken from Allenby's Chase, looking north west

Distance & Direction from Site: 110m South East
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 547460, N 321627
AOD & Viewing Height: c. 4.0m AOD 1.7m
Date & Time of Photograph: 06/08/2020 12:03
Weather Conditions: Clear, good visibility.
Camera: Canon EOS 20D

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera in line with best practice and current guidance. The camera is a cropped sensor model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 35mm focal length which most closely reflects a 50mm focal length on a full sensor DSLR. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 66° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context. This sheet can be scaled by 200% and printed at A1 then viewed at a distance of 520mm.



Approximate extent of the proposals



Viewpoint 2
View taken from Allenby's Chase, looking north west

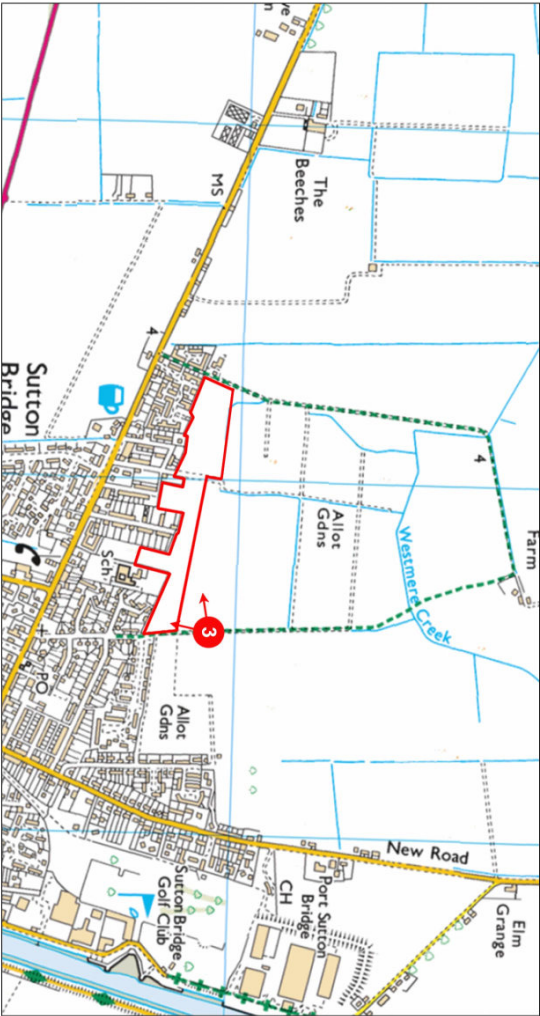
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Viewpoint Coordinates: E 547463, N 321725
AOD & Viewing Height: c. 3.5m AOD 1.7m
Date & Time of Photograph: 06/08/2020 11:03
Weather Conditions: Clear, good visibility.
Camera: Canon EOS 20D

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera in line with best practice and current guidance. The camera is a cropped sensor model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 35mm focal length which most closely reflects a 50mm focal length on a full sensor DSLR. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 66° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context. This sheet can be scaled by 200% and printed at A1 then viewed at a distance of 520mm.



Approximate extent of the site

Viewpoint 3
View taken from footpath SuBr/1/1, looking south west

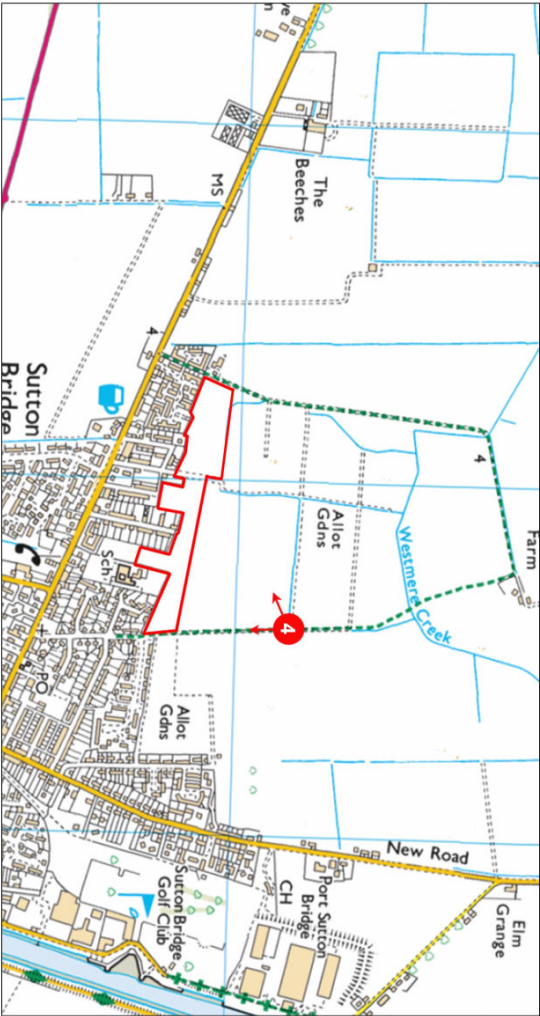


Distance & Direction from Site: 90m North East
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 547433, N 321921
AOD & Viewing Height: c. 3.0m AOD 1.7m
Date & Time of Photograph: 06/08/2020 11:05
Weather Conditions: Clear, good visibility.
Camera: Canon EOS 20D

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm focal length with best practice and current guidance. The camera is a cropped sensor model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 35mm focal length which most closely reflects a 50mm focal length on a full sensor DSLR. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 66° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context. This sheet can be scaled by 200% and printed at A1 then viewed at a distance of 520mm.



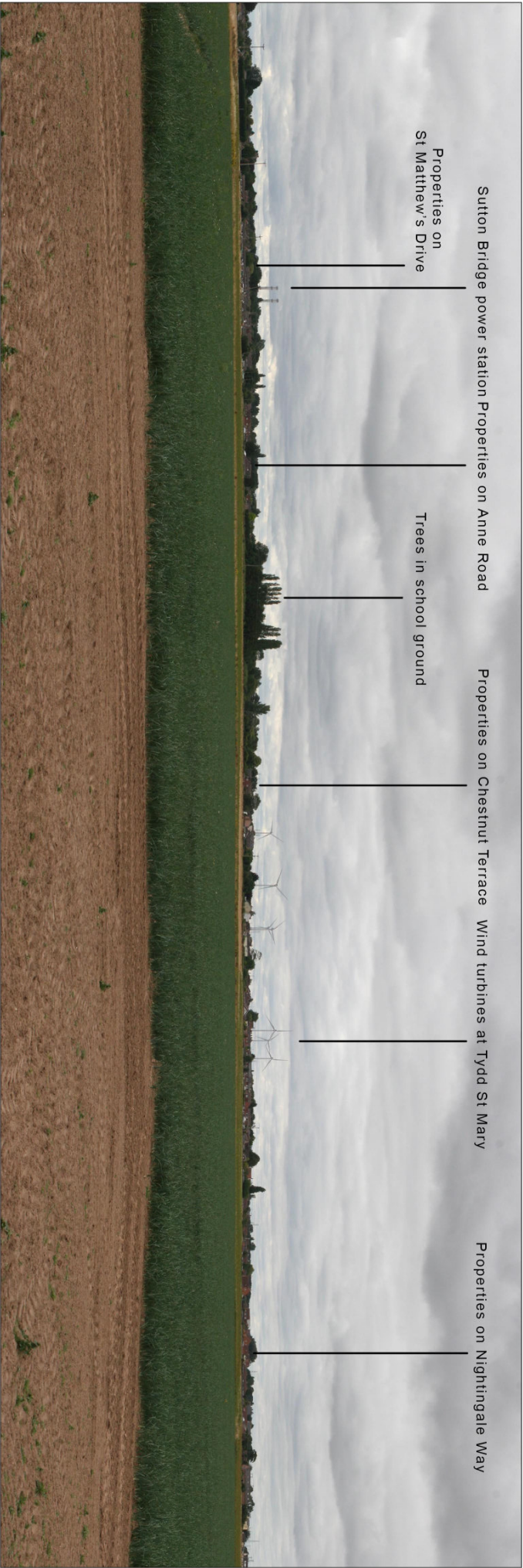
Approximate extent of the site



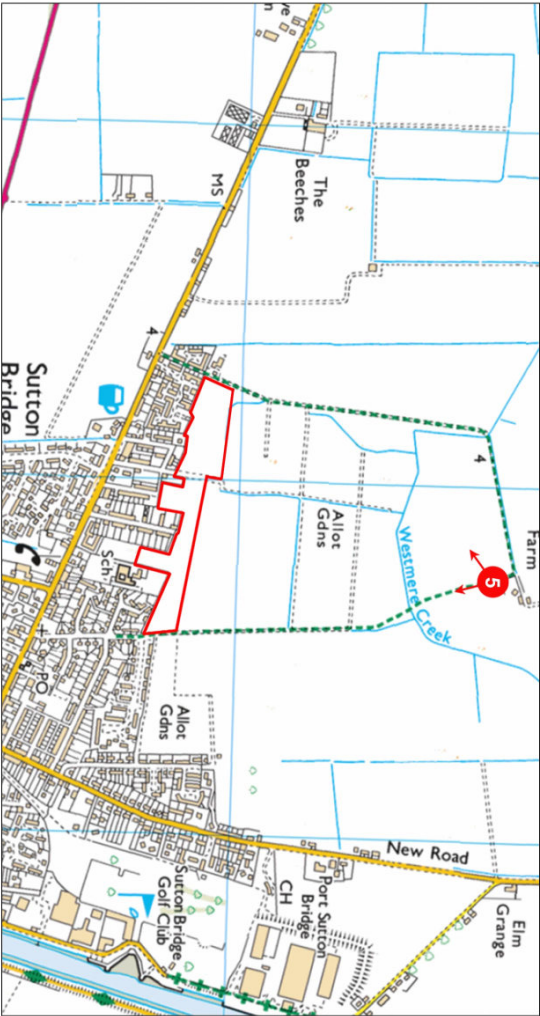
Viewpoint 4
View taken from footpath SuBr/1/1, looking south west

Distance & Direction from Site: 320m North
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 547423, N 322148
AOD & Viewing Height: c. 3.0m AOD 1.7m
Date & Time of Photograph: 06/08/2020 11:08
Weather Conditions: Clear, good visibility.
Camera: Canon EOS 20D

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera in line with best practice and current guidance. The camera is a cropped sensor model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 35mm focal length which most closely reflects a 50mm focal length on a full sensor DSLR. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 66° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context. This sheet can be scaled by 200% and printed at A1 then viewed at a distance of 520mm.



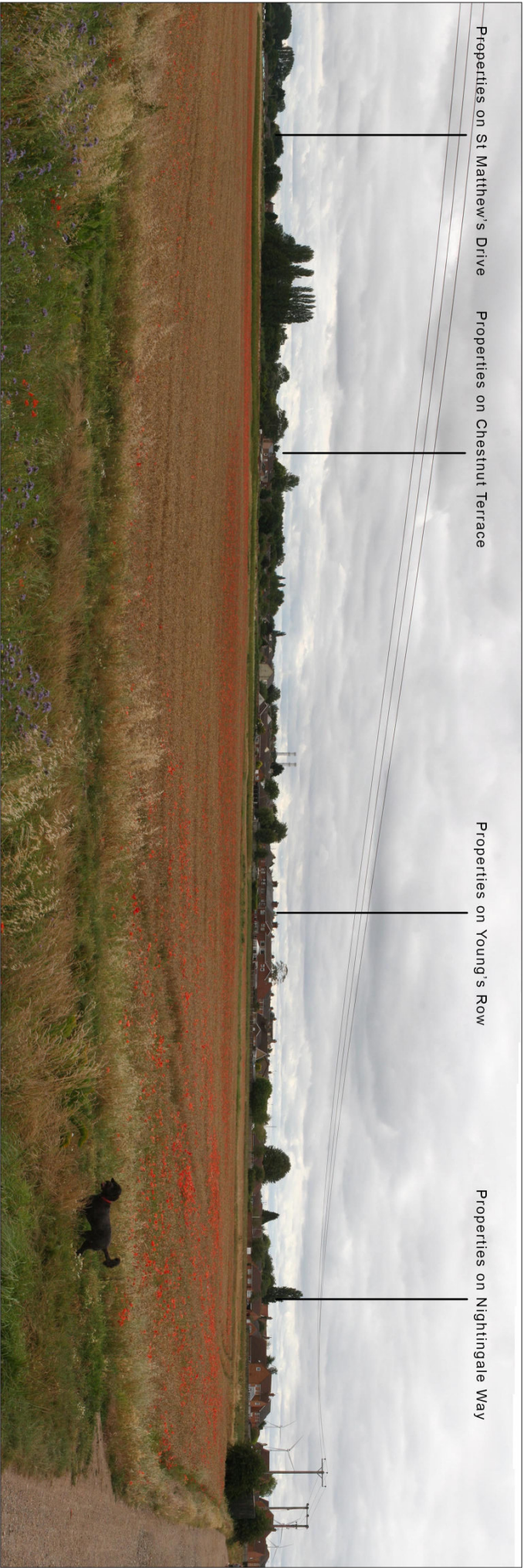
Approximate extent of the site



Viewpoint 5
View taken from footpath SuBr/1/1, looking south west

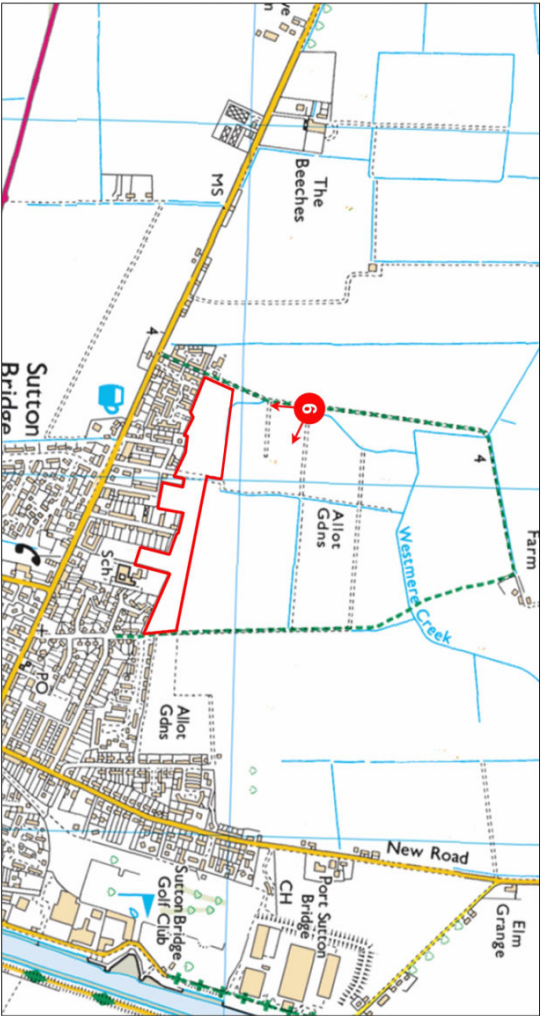
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Viewpoint Coordinates: E 547286, N 322721
AOD & Viewing Height: c. 4.0m AOD 1.7m
Date & Time of Photograph: 06/08/2020 11:15
Weather Conditions: Clear, good visibility.
Camera: Canon EOS 20D

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a 35mm camera in line with best practice and current guidance. The camera is a cropped sensor model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 35mm focal length which most closely reflects a 50mm focal length on a full sensor DSLR. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 66° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context. This sheet can be scaled by 200% and printed at A1 then viewed at a distance of 520mm.



Approximate extent of the site

Viewpoint 6
View taken from footpath SuBr/1/1, looking south east



Distance & Direction from Site: 220m North
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 546786, N 322179
AOD & Viewing Height: c. 4.0m AOD 1.7m
Date & Time of Photograph: 06/08/2020 11:25
Weather Conditions: Clear, good visibility.
Camera: Canon EOS 20D

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a 35mm camera in line with best practice and current guidance. The camera is a cropped sensor model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 35mm focal length which most closely reflects a 50mm focal length on a full sensor DSLR. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 66° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context. This sheet can be scaled by 200% and printed at A1 then viewed at a distance of 520mm.