

GREAT STAUGHTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Draft Landscape and Townscape Assessment

Version 4.0

28 April 2023

Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan Landscape and Townscape Assessment

1. The purpose of the assessment

- 1.1. The purpose of this Landscape and Townscape assessment is to support the landscape and design policies of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood plan. The Parish Council of Great Staughton sought acceptance of the Parish as a neighbourhood plan area and this was granted by Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) in February 2021.
- 1.2. The Neighbourhood Plan for Great Staughton to date has been produced from online, leaflet surveys as well as a workshop and specific on-site inspections of the Parish. Views have been sought from local environmental groups, and the Community Land Trust as well as the Parish Council and residents. These have been assimilated into the documents by the Neighbourhood plan group.
- 1.3. The Townscape and Landscape Assessment was developed in consultation with a steering group of Great Staughton residents that included representatives of the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan group. The assessment is intended to capture the community's priorities for the design of future development within the parish and where development can improve and enhance the village's character. It is also intended to ensure that the key townscape and landscape characteristics of the parish are identified and where appropriate are protected or indeed enhanced.
- 1.4. The methodology adopts the approach set out in Appendix 1 to the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD. This is to compliment the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document 2022, but the local assessment contains much greater detail for the area that can inform Neighbourhood Plan policies. It provides a more distinctive and finer grain of detail that reflects the key characteristics of the parish.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Neighbourhood Plan is supported by a Planning Policy Context Document prepared by Cambridgeshire ACRE. This paper sets out the key strategic planning policies that will need to be considered in developing the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.2. The adopted Development Plan for Huntingdonshire comprises Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 adopted on 15 May 2019. The development plan is also supported by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The following SPD's will be complemented by this assessment:
 - Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2017

- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2017
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD 2022

2.3. The Great Staughton Landscape and Townscape Assessment will complement the following Development Plan policies and guidance. It is intended that the Neighbourhood Plan and this assessment will provide a more distinctive parish approach where appropriate rather than a district wide perspective. The relevant Local Plan policies are detailed in section 3.

3. Local Plan Policy

3.1. Strategic Policy SP 3 of the Local Plan-- Green Infrastructure states proposals will be expected to support green infrastructure and development will be supported where it demonstrates that it aligns with the Council's SPD, Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Network, Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, improves access to Natural Green Space Standards, enhances the public rights of way network and contributes to the renaturalisation of water bodies. The Great Staughton Landscape and Townscape assessment identifies distinctive green infrastructure within the parish.

3.2. Policy LP 3 states that proposals are expected to support and incorporate green infrastructure; protecting and enhancing linkages between green infrastructure priority areas (potential to consolidate less important habitats and facilitate access improvements) and the Cambridgeshire Strategic Green Infrastructure Network, improve accessibility and connectivity to green spaces, provide replacement provision where it harms or results in the loss of existing green infrastructure where it provides a net benefit (Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy). The Great Staughton Landscape and Townscape assessment identifies green infrastructure priority areas.

3.3. In view of the Parish boundary's proximity to Grafham Water, Local Plan Policy SP 3 is relevant and states - 'Grafham Water: A proposal within the Grafham Water Landscape Character Area, defined in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment Supplementary Planning Document, will be supported where it enhances or creates ecological or landscape linkages between Grafham Water and woodland in the vicinity. Enhanced access will also be supported subject to compatibility with the landscape and biodiversity. A proposal will be supported where it involves the role, function and continued operation or enhancement of Grafham Water Reservoir, its Treatment Works and associated networks.' This reflects the Green Infrastructure Priority Area. The Great Staughton Landscape and Townscape assessment identifies the key landscape characteristics to the north of the parish.

3.4. The policies map to the Local Plan details two Cambridgeshire Wildlife Sites, and 3 areas comprising SSSIs at Perry Wood. Local Plan Policy LP 30 seeks to ensure that there will be no net loss of Biodiversity and geodiversity including at sites of Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar site, SSSI, National Nature Reserve, Protected Species, Priority

Habitat, and Sites of Local or Regional Importance. Regard is to be had to the Natural Cambridgeshire publication 'Developing with Nature Toolkit'.

- 3.5. Policy LP 31 seeks to conserve trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows. The Great Staughton Landscape and Townscape assessment identifies important areas of trees, woodlands, hedges and hedgerows which are key components of the characters areas identified in the parish.
- 3.6. Policy LP 34 Heritage Assets and their settings states that Great weight and importance is given to the conservation of heritage assets (see "Glossary") and their settings. Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to the positive conservation of natural heritage assets in the district as they make an important contribution to the identity, distinctiveness and character of Huntingdonshire as well as to the quality of life. Huntingdonshire has few significant areas of woodland but the ancient and semi-natural woodlands are noted including Perry Wood which is particularly valued.
- 3.7. Policy LP 11-- Design Context states a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings, including natural, historic and built environment, to help create distinctive, high quality and well-designed places. In order to achieve this a proposal will need to have applied the guidance contained in the Council's Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017), the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD (2007) or successor documents and applicable conservation area character statements. A proposal should also have had regard to relevant advice or guidance that promotes high quality design, details the quality or character of the area or describes how the area should develop in the future. The Great Staughton Landscape and Townscape assessment identifies the key design characteristics for each of the Character areas which are distinctive to ensure that proposals respond positively to each of the Character Areas.

4. Supporting Assessments and Guidance-- Landscape

- 4.1. Great Staughton is located within National Character Area 88: Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands. At a more local level, the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2022) defines the Parish within the Southern Wolds and Great Staughton stands within Area 3: Western Claylands, of the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (1991). To the North is The Grafham Water Landscape Character area which impacts that the adjoining part of the Parish.
- 4.2. The Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (1991) identifies Great Staughton within the Western Claylands and describes this area as a gently undulating landscape which is subdivided by the shallow Ouse Valley. The area generally consists of large scale arable farmland with open fields, sparse and trimmed hedges and watercourses which are cleared of bankside vegetation. However, the Western Claylands is distinctive for a number of reasons. Firstly, the area is characterised by remnants of deserted medieval villages including ridge and furrow fields, medieval settlement earthworks, moated

sites and ruined churches. Secondly, scattered woodlands and particularly ancient, semi natural woodlands which are of importance in terms of their visual and nature conservation interest but which can appear isolated. Church spires enliven the skyline and views. Finally, existing and former wartime airfields including the airfield at Staughton have a significant impact on the area.

4.3. The relevant principles for landscape improvement and management in the western claylands in Great Staughton includes:

- In the valley bottoms, the objective should be to create small-scaled streamside landscape zones with trees, copses, meadows and other features. This will necessitate setting aside 5-15m or more either side of streams to create semi-wooded corridors of diverse habitats.
- Where remnants of the old ridge and furrow survive as grassland or in woodland they should be preserved.
- The careful management of ancient semi-natural woodlands and selective re-stocking and creation of 'edge areas' and new woodlands, woodland belts elsewhere. The guidelines set out clear advice on appropriate species to be used in the Western Claylands.
- Selected hedgerows should be reinforced or managed for particularly significant impact, based upon their visual and wildlife potential. Historically significant hedgerows should be carefully conserved, and new hedges planted to emphasise the existing landscape.
- Village approaches: increased tree cover with trees along road margins, woodland belts alongside roads, planting at edges of villages and hedgerow planting is desirable; it is important to ensure key views are not lost.
- Old airfields: there may be unsightly buildings which require fresh landscape treatment.

4.4. The Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2022) defines the Parish within the Southern Wolds. The key characteristics are defined as the relatively gentle topography, including the broad valleys of the river Kym and well-wooded landscape, with hedged fields, and some more recent plantations. The significant modern influences on the landscape are described as conifer plantations, power lines, housing estates, industrial areas, airfield, prison and the Anglian Water buildings around Grafham Water. A particular concern is the harsh edges of many new developments, which are often poorly integrated into the surrounding landscape. It is important that this is addressed in any future developments, and also that improvements are made where possible to improve the quality and reduce the adverse visual impact of existing developments.

4.5. Key issues for the Southern Wolds landscape character area looking forward include:

- Preservation and management of existing deciduous woodlands to maintain and enhance biodiversity

- Promotion of opportunities to integrate soft edges to existing developments and reduce the landscape impact of visually harsh or intrusive settlement edges
- Management of streams and rivers and their associated valley floors to maximise their ecological value
- Protection and restoration of riverside meadows Protection of the rural character of long distance view from the Kym Valley

4.6. The assessment therefore concludes that Development proposals should:

- Ensure high quality landscaping to soften the impact of any new building on the edges of settlements to improve integration with the surrounding countryside.
- Enrich the area by reinforcing its special qualities and acknowledging its local character.
- Protect the rural character of long distance views of and from the Kym Valley.
- Promote opportunities for conservation and wildlife initiatives to support the area's contribution to biodiversity.
- Improve the nature conservation value of the rivers and their immediate valley sides.

4.7. To the North of the Parish is the Grafham Water Landscape Character Area and it is important to note that this area is defined and dominated by the reservoir and its immediate landscape setting. The area is completely surrounded by woodland and fields leading into the Southern Wolds landscape character area. It is the largest Site of Special Scientific Interest in Huntingdonshire at 806ha and has been designated for over 30 years. The Grafham Water area hosts one of the most important clusters of ancient woodlands in Cambridgeshire, along with reed beds and regionally important populations of several wildfowl and amphibian species. The basin topography creates an inward looking landscape although the ridge surrounding the lake is only shallow to match the scale of the water body. Although the Grafham Water landscape is an artificial one, it is important that efforts continue to integrate the area effectively into its surroundings. The landscape offers significant opportunities for enhancement and broad landscape management and improvement principles are included within the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (pages 61 to 63).

5. Supporting Assessments and Guidance— Settlement

About Great Staughton

- 5.1. Great Staughton is a small village in Huntingdonshire to the south of the A14 and west of the A1. Great Staughton lies approximately 11 miles (18 km) south-west of Huntingdon and 6 miles (10 km) north-west of St Neots. The parish itself covers 2,055 hectares making it the second largest parish by area in Huntingdonshire, after Sawtry. Its nearest village neighbours are Perry to the north-east, Kimbolton & Stonely to the northwest and Hail Weston to the South East.
- 5.2. The location of the Parish close to the A1 and A14 provides good transport links for businesses and people. The village is close by the local leisure attraction of Grafham Water. Its closest urban environment is the expanding town of St. Neots which provides shopping, entertainment, and rail services.
- 5.3. The Parish of Great Staughton has evolved over many years of History. (A book of the history of the village is available on the Great Staughton Parish website (greatstaughtonpc.org.uk) . An edited extract is shown below published by Anthony Withers.

An Extract from the History of Great Staughton and its people by Anthony Withers

The historical significance of the parish is clear. There was a settlement of the Roman period near the village of Great Staughton with two barrow-like mounds suggesting burials from a more sumptuous household somewhere in the area. Rushey Farm and sites one mile south of the Highway over a medieval ridge and furrow field system, across the river Kym have been excavated to reveal roman villas with Stone Age building, dating from c. 500 BC, under the Roman foundations.

In Britannia (1586), a geographical and historical survey of the islands of Great Britain and Ireland, William Camden (1551–1623), the English antiquarian and historian described it is between two of these 'rising hills' that the village of Great Staughton is located, in the broad valley of the river Kym.

The Town is a cluster of houses around the church; opposite is Place House; to the south is Staughton House (now the Manor) and the rectory. A mile to the south-west on a ridge overlooking the village, is the thirteenth-century motte and bailey castle of Sir Adam de Creting. Three-quarters of a mile to the north-east of the Town lies Agden Green, more populous in previous centuries than now. The Highway, the principal thoroughfare through the village, has also been its commercial heart since at least the sixteenth century. To the north of the Highway is the ancient hamlet of Dillington, recorded as far back as the seventh century; it was for three centuries the

domain of the Engaine family as was the hamlet of Perry and the mansion that commemorated their name, Gaynes Hall.

The woods here, known as Perry Woods, are all that remains of the forest, which at the time of Domesday clothed the entire area. In 1154, Henry II decreed that Huntingdonshire should be a hunting park, reserved for the king and his retinue. Finally, to the south of the village is Staughton Moor, an isolated hamlet referred to in the Hundred Rolls of 1279 as La More.

- 5.4. Given the strong historic evolution of the village, HDC have designated 2 defined Conservation areas in the village as shown on the map below. The two Conservation Areas do not have the benefit of a Conservation Area Appraisal. However, the designation of a conservation area recognises that it is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.
- 5.5. There are 48 Listed Buildings within the Parish, most of which are located within the two Conservation Areas. However, a number of listed buildings are located in large grounds in the countryside with a number of listed buildings in Dillington. Additionally, there are six scheduled ancient monuments: Village Cross, Roman site at Rushey Farm, The Old Manor House, Cretingsbury; a motte and castle and moated manor house, Staughton Green moated site, two bowl barrows east of Old Manor Farm and Bushmead Priory; an Augustinian priory north east of Bushmead Cross.



6 This historical analysis of Great Staughton's beginnings shows its place in history from Roman times to its more recent history as a Second World War airfield with its associated buildings. The rich and varied set of buildings include a church first built between the 13th and 15th centuries, historic structures such as Place House and The White Hart as well as many thatched premises. There is no

one consistent theme but there is rich mix of building character which needs to be preserved.

5.7. The long and rich history of the Parish has resulted in a number of specific character areas throughout the village. These range from the historical hamlets including that based around the Church, the main thoroughfare through the village from Roman times to the more modern estates. All the areas having due regard to the River Kym which winds its way through the village.

6. The scope of the assessment under the Great Staughton NP is stated below.

6.1. The emphasis of the assessment is to define the key landscape and settlement characteristics of the Parish that represent the built and natural assets that are important to the community of Great Staughton. The assessment identifies areas where it is necessary to ensure that development appropriately preserves the rural and village character of the area and maintain the sustainability of the community. Early consultation with residents emphasises the need to ensure that the setting and visibility of the significant existing structures must be retained when new development takes place. Additionally, the scale and density of any development must be limited such that it does not reduce the significance of the existing character of the village. This assessment seeks to more closely define the key attributes that need to be safeguarded and reflected as development proposals come forward in the Parish.

6.2. The area of this assessment is limited by the Parish boundaries of Great Staughton. Guidance on specialist information was sought from Cambridgeshire Acre. Local views from Landowners, Farmers, businesses, environmental groups, and Parishioners were sought.

7. Protect and Enhance Historical Character of the area.

7.1. There are a number of distinctive character areas within the Parish. These areas can be identified as follows.

Character area 1: **The Highway**; The Causeway; Green Lane and The Green; Marked in Red on the map

Character area 2: **The Town** Marked in Blue on the map

Character area 3: **Dillington** Marked in purple on the map

Character area 4: **Modern Built up Area** Marked in Green on the map

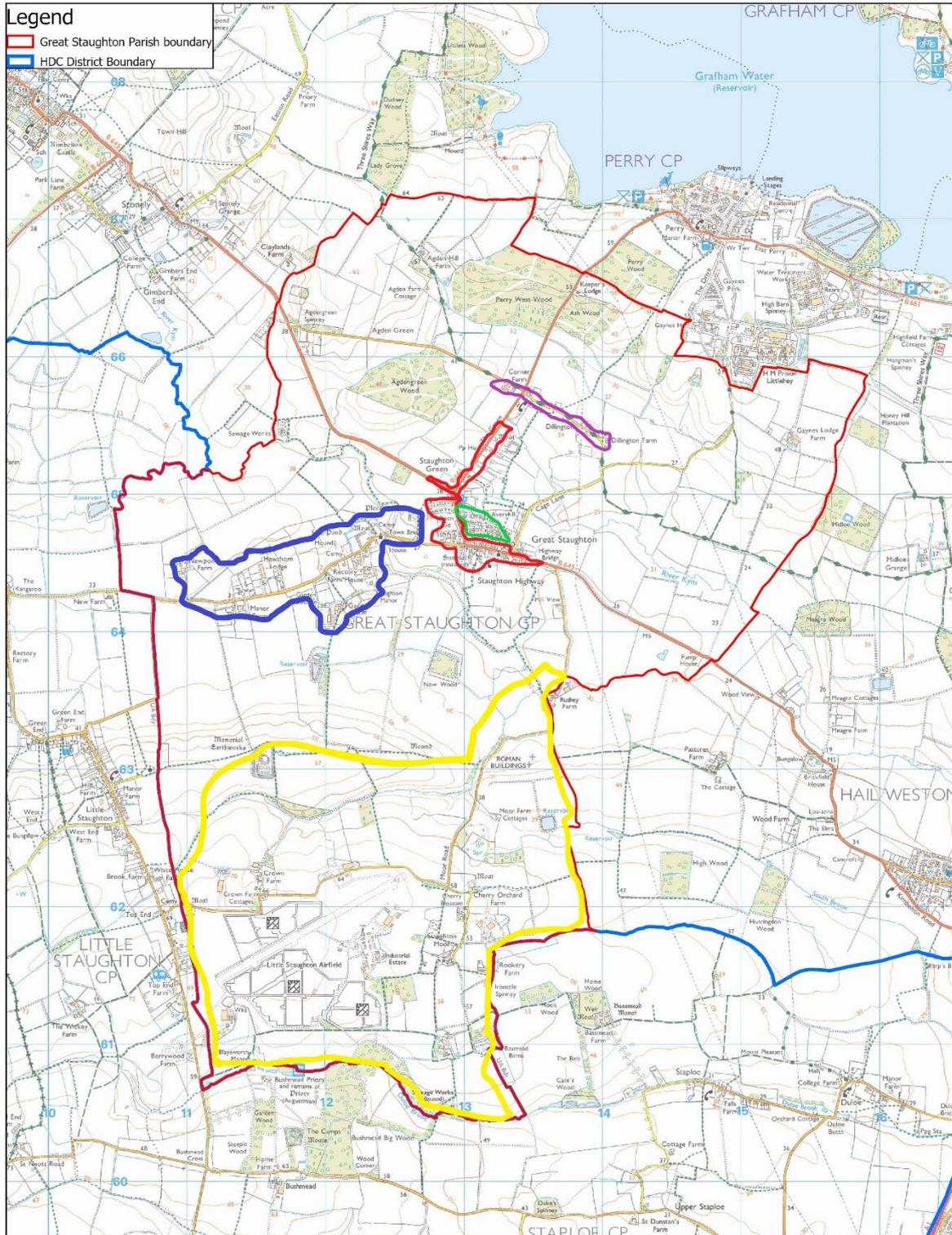
Character area 5: **The Moor** Marked in Yellow on the map

Character area 6: **Natural**: Kym Valley; The Meadows; River Walk

Character area 7: **Cultural:** Other specific elements such as the sundial, Second World War buildings on airfield in the Moor area, Ridge and Furrow Fields as identified in the Western Claylands, of the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (1991).

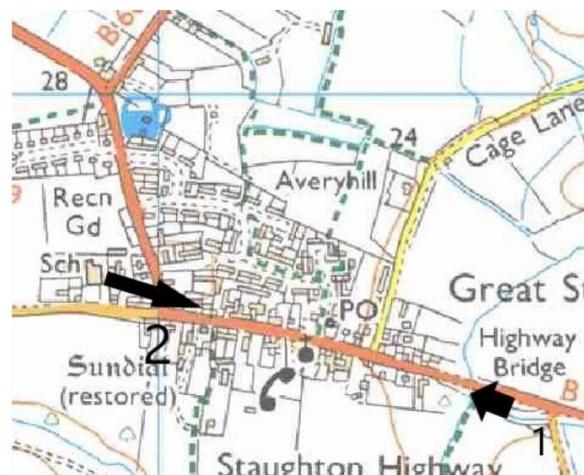
Description: Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan Area

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8. Character Area 1: The Highway; The Causeway; Green Lane and The Green

- 8.1. The Conservation Area situated around the Highway includes many significant buildings and the whole aspect of the Highway and its character area (as shown in Photos below) is important to preserve. It is an area of mixed age of dwellings. The architectural styles vary from ancient thatched cottages and Georgian fronted houses right through to post-war homes and some more modern homes. The mix of the old and new sits well in the landscape. Many older properties tend to be close to the pavements with little or no front gardens, but the more modern properties are more set back.
- 8.2. Most of the Highway and one side of Green Lane has large areas of grassed and treelined borders which gave a distinct rural village setting. The preservation of this treelined and grassed borders is important to the aspect of the area. The building materials used range from red to yellow brick with clay and slate roof tiles. Use of traditional building materials and styles should be encouraged in this area. Many of the properties are detached but there is terraced cottage housing which were probably agricultural workers residencies. At the Eastern end of the Highway the entrance is the bridge over the River Kym. This is marked as point 1 on the map together with photos from this point.
- 8.3. Traffic continues to be a problem in this area. The speed of traffic along the B645 and along the Causeway passed the school is a considerable concern to all residents. The school and Doctor's surgery are areas of traffic and parking congestion particularly at specific times.
- 8.4. Towards the other end of The Highway is the Iconic Sundial erected in 1637 it is an important feature of the Highway and the 2 photos of the sundial below show how this area has developed but also remained a central feature to the village. This is marked as point 2 on the map.





8.5. As you progress along The Highway contains properties stretching back over 400 years with particular landmarks being various Victorian houses which originally were the homes of local trades people such as blacksmiths and bakers.



8.6. Original farmhouses now made into residences



8.7. The local shop building now also a residence.



8.8. The original Baptist Church now a residence



8.9. Most new developments on the Highway have complimented these older buildings perhaps a particular set to note is the properties built in 2011 on the corner of Beachampstead Road. These were built to a similar scale to neighbouring buildings having a similar height and were bordered by hedges along the Highway which is in keeping with most other properties along the road.



8.10. A number of agricultural worker cottages



8.11. The White Hart an original coaching Inn.



8.12. The Highway extends into The Causeway and this again contains many significant buildings. The Old School House now also a domestic residence is a reminder of schooling in Victorian times. Next to the school house is the old Headmasters house.



8.13. Further along the Causeway is the Victorian house the Manse which has been sympathetically extended, and also the 20th century 'new' vicarage.





8.14. Also in the Causeway is a row of relatively new houses, the design of which compliments the area and which won design awards.



8.15. Off of The Causeway on Causeway Close is Highway Farm, which is again a residential dwelling and is not associated with a farm, but is a building of note in the village.



8.16. Further along The Causeway set back from the road is the most impressive Old Vicarage.



- 8.17. The Highway also extends into Green Lane and the Green. Once again there are buildings of note. The village hall now updated but originally used as a drill hall in the first world war.



- 8.18. The Snooty Tavern Pub which marks the entrance to the village from Kimbolton.



8.19. Also tucked away in a small cul-de-sac is Orchard cottage on the Green which is another building of note.



8.20. The character of the Causeway, The Highway and The Green (see photos) should continue to be protected. Any development in these areas should take particular note of the varied but important historic nature.

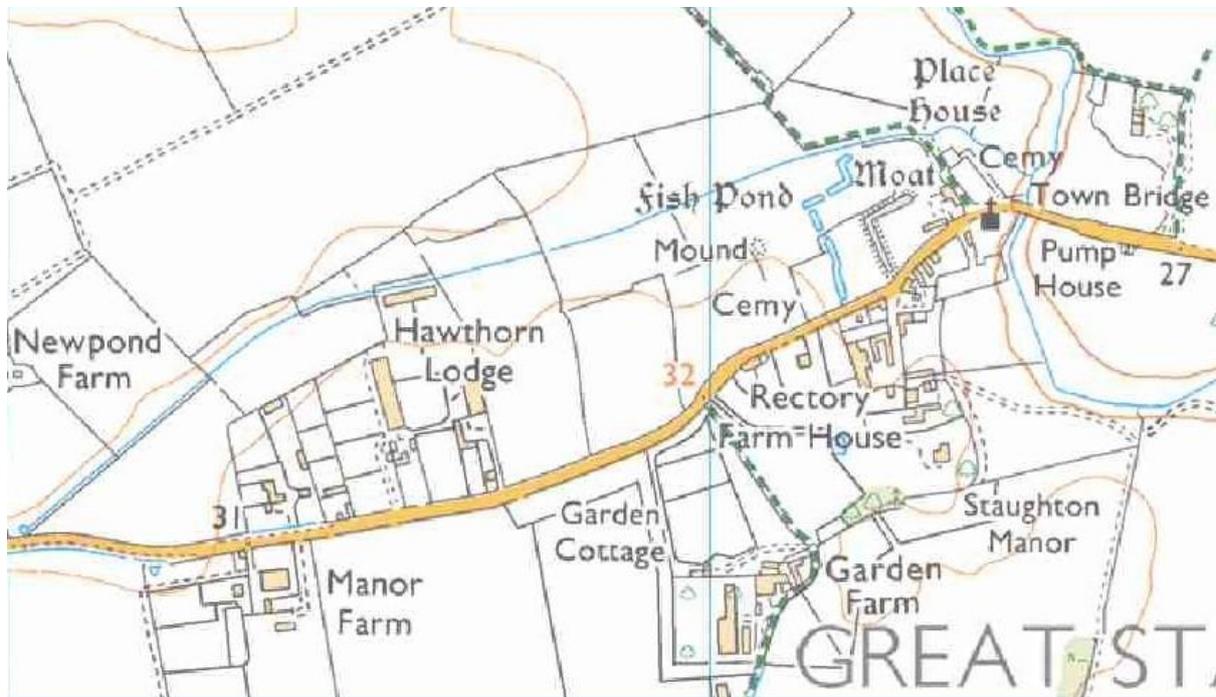
8.21. Within Character Area 1, The Highway; The Causeway; Green Lane and The Green, development Proposals should:

- continue to protect and reflect the rich varied and important historic mixture of buildings in this area.
- preserve and enhance whole aspect of the Highway and its character area including the Conservation Area as it includes many significant buildings of historic and architectural note.
- preserve the treelined and grassed borders.
- use traditional building materials and styles.
- where opportunities arise, address key traffic hotspots.
- protect the Iconic Sundial erected in 1637 and
- not harmfully impact the vistas as shown on the map along The Highway Causeway, and The Green.
- improve village approaches: increased tree cover with trees along road margins, woodland belts alongside roads, planting at edges of villages and hedgerow planting is desirable; it is important to ensure key views are not lost.

8.22. The setting and visibility of the significant existing structures along this Character area must be retained when new development takes place. The scale and density of any development must be limited such it that it does not reduce the significance of the existing character of this part of the village.

9. Character Area 2: The Town

9.1. The Town area has a very identifiable set of characteristics. Many of the buildings are over 50 years old and there are the remains of cobbled pathways. Many houses are very close to the road a mix of ages and styles that work well, all have a “cottage feel. There are also prestigious farm dwellings with workers cottages. This area has some of the most historic properties in the village including St. Andrews Church and Place House. The crossing for the river Kym over an old bridge with a post and rail fence marks the entrance to the Town area. This area contains many buildings of note in addition to the Church and Place House. It is essential in this area in particular that traditional building materials and methods are used. The proximity to the road of many older dwellings makes traffic type and speed an important issue for residents. The limited or non-existent pavements in this area must be important considerations in any development in this area.





Rectory Farm and cottages



The Manor (set back from the road)



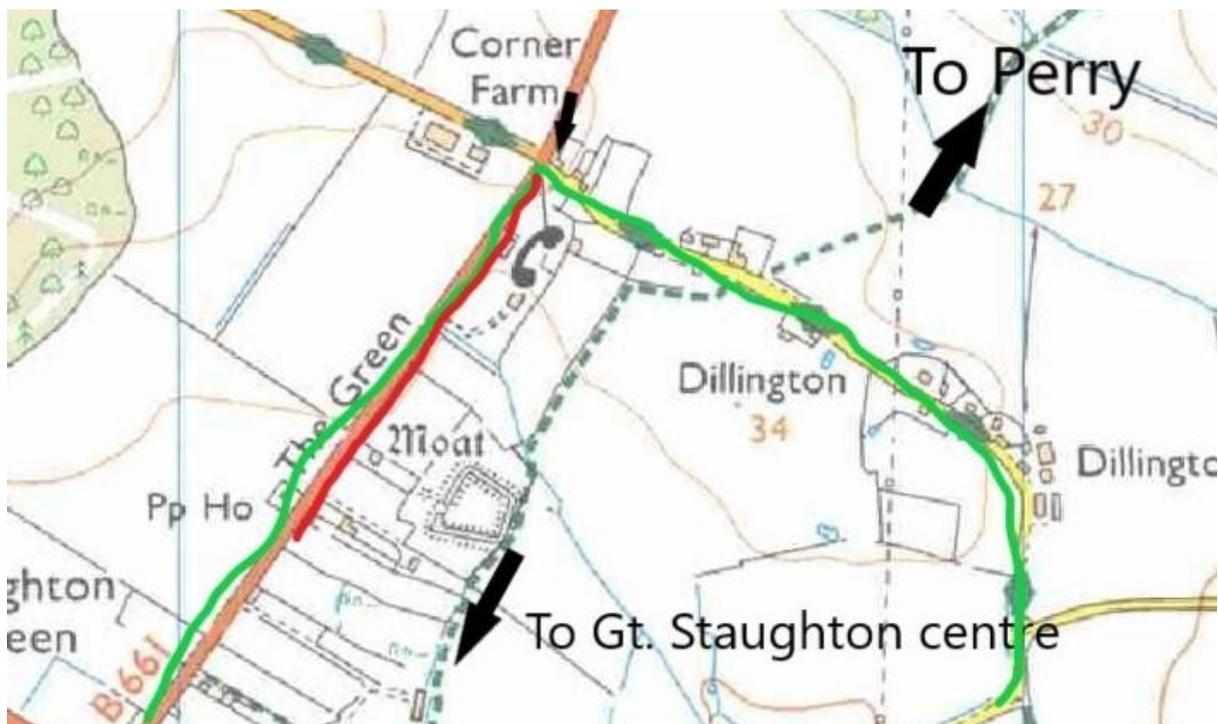
The Old Coach House (set back from the road)



9.2. Development Proposals should ensure that this unique character of The Town is sustained and retained. The cottage style with prestige housing is an important mix of the village heritage. It is felt this is not a suitable area for significant new buildings as it is so historic in nature and any new structures should be sympathetic to this special local setting. Any new build should ensure the use of traditional building materials for new builds, renovation projects or extensions are in keeping with the Conservation Area. The approaches to The town should increased tree cover with trees along road margins, woodland belts alongside roads, planting at edges of villages and hedgerow planting is desirable; it is important to ensure key views are not lost.

10. Character area 3: Dillington

10.1. This is one of the original Hamlets of the Parish. It contains a group of buildings of mixed vintage. The original buildings were associated with agricultural farms and small holdings. The Corner Farm house (marked on the map) is a well-established building of this context. The road through Dillington is single track with no pavements and residents are keen for this to be more tightly controlled in terms of traffic use. There are important footpath links to the main village area from Dillington and also to the neighbouring Parish of Perry. The circular walk (marked in green on the map) through Dillington to the village is enjoyed by many. It could be significantly improved by an extension of the pavement from part way along the B661 to the Dillington crossroads. This part is shown in red and green on the map.



10.2. Photos of the rural nature of Dillington and the single track road



The Corner Farmhouse



This is the B661 with no footpath and regularly walked by villagers

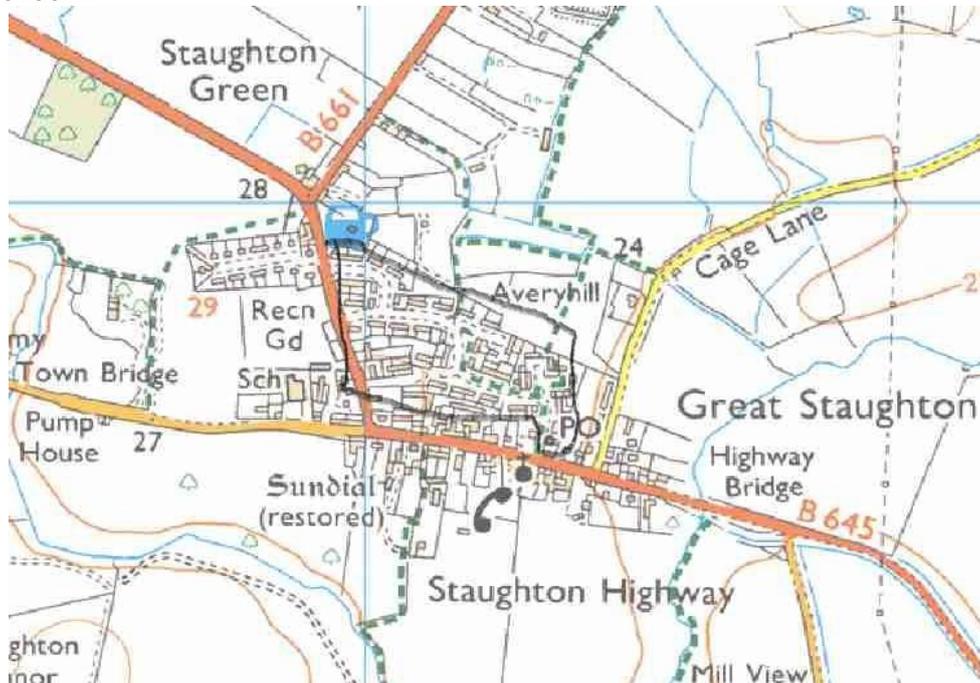
10.3. Development Proposals should:

- ensure that this part of the village is not over developed and retains its small holding and agricultural feel to the area.
- use of traditional building materials and styles is important in this area.
- maintain and improve the footpath links to the main village area from Dillington and also to the neighbouring Parish of Perry and the circular walk
- improved footpath along the B661 to the Dillington crossroads.
- increased tree cover with trees along road margins, woodland belts alongside roads, planting at edges of villages and hedgerow planting is desirable; it is important to ensure key views are not lost.

11.Character area 4: Modern Built Up area

11.1. This is the estate added to the village in the 1970's. Many of the houses have been modified and extended but it has a distinctive open plan character with front gardens and driveways. There is a feel of space with a number of green areas included on the estate. This open aspect is important to be maintained in any developments.

11.2. The area marked in black on the map below represents this estate area.



11.3. Development Proposals should: ensure the area retains its open aspects with a feel of space between dwellings. The open plan style should be retained.

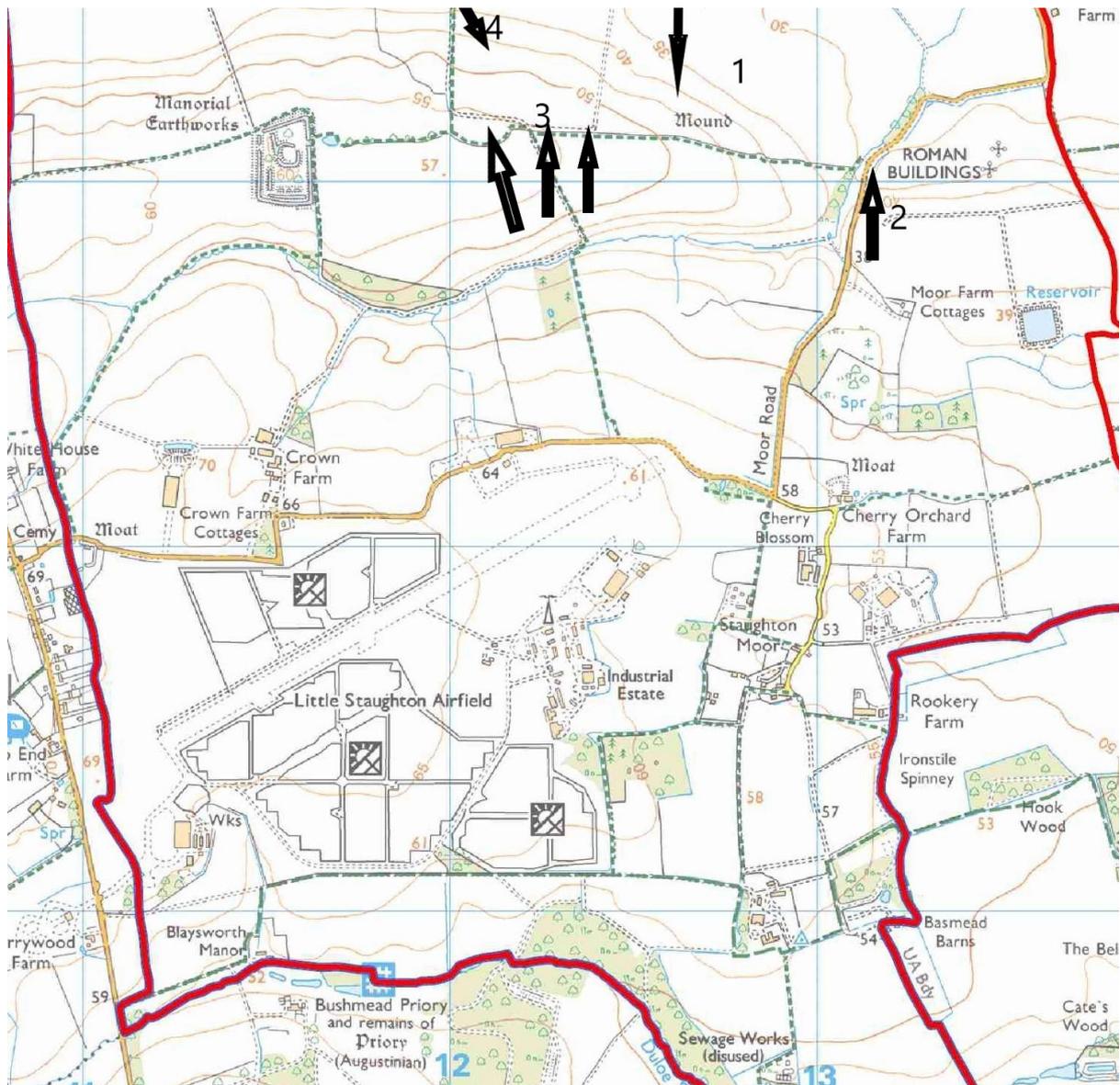
12. Character Area 5 – The Moor

12.1. The Moor area is a sparsely populated area of the Parish, but contains some important aspects of the past from Roman remains to the 13th Century moat of Cretingsbury and the Second World war buildings associated with

Little Staughton airfield. The rural nature of this area should be preserved. The hedgerows, woods and ponds should all be preserved. There is no sewer connection in this area and no streetlighting. The roads are narrow often single track, not suitable for large vehicles and have no streetlights.

12.2. The Moor area fits well with the description of the Southern Wolds *Relatively gentle topography, ... A well-wooded landscape, with hedged fields, and some more recent plantations. Scattered villages and few isolated farms*

12.3. It is though distinctive in the nature of its increased elevations which provide beautiful views of the Parish. It has a number of streams and small wooded areas as well as some remaining hedgerows which should be preserved. The current use of the area is predominantly agricultural, but a disturbing aspect is the unsuitable intrusion of random commercial and industrial development. There are a number of small ponds and reservoirs in the undulating countryside. There are some important footpaths in this area which provide good views of the village and surrounding area. They also provide foot and bridleway connections into neighbouring Parishes.



View from Kym looking towards Moor. (Arrow 1 on the map)



View from Part way on to Moor looking back at Village (Arrow 2 on the Map)



Views from along the ridge of the Moor. (Arrows 3 on the map)



Looking back towards the Moor (Arrow 4 on the Map)



12.4. A separate Views and Vistas Assessment Paper details these and other important vistas and views which development should not have a harmful impact upon. Proposals should: not allow intrusive development. The scattered nature of the dwellings, the isolated farms, hedgerows and woods should be retained. The lack of main drainage, adequate roads, must constrain developments in this area.

13. Character Area 6: Kym Valley; The Meadows; River Walk

The map below shows how the village mainly surrounds the broad valley of the Kym and is generally bordered by hedged fields. It is important as HDC's assessment states that any future developments avoid harsh edges to this countryside. The river is home to otters, water voles (rare), kingfishers and some fish species. Some residents have expressed concern that sewage discharge is affecting the biodiversity of the river.



13.1. **Meadows** (Marked in Green on the map below). The meadows between the school and the Old Vicarage, around behind Vicarage Walk to the Snooty Tavern and along the river following the footpath are very special and should be protected. A wide variety of wildlife uses these meadows, species include kestrels, barn owls, tawny owls, red kites, buzzards, sparrowhawks, green woodpeckers, a wide variety of small song birds (some migratory), foxes, hedgehogs and a variety of mustelids including polecats and badgers. This includes the thick hedges that run along back of the Vicarage Walk gardens, down the side of the playing field, along the boundary with the Old Vicarage and down to the river, and also the copse on the side of the B645. The hedges are particularly important as a hunting ground for pipistrelle bats (and possibly other species) and a nest site for turtle doves, which are now very rare. Recently visits from ecologists from the RSPB and the Wildlife Trust both commented on how valuable this meadow, hedge, scrub and river area is and how rare it is in this mainly arable area. If we were to lose this it would be a great loss to the people of the village and to the biodiversity of the area. The meadows are also very important for many species of insect, there are some rare butterflies to be found here. This means the meadows are also a valuable feeding ground for summer migrants such as swallows, house martins and swifts. There are also glow worms living in the meadows behind Vicarage Walk. This is significant as they are affected by light pollution (as are other insects and birds).

13.2. A long term regeneration along the river has commenced, now that the Environment Agency has stopped dredging, and with wider margins each side. This provides the possibility that some of the non-historic meadows could be rotated back into partial agricultural use, and sometimes trees (eg the cricket bat willows by the river) will be felled for timber and replanted or allowed to regenerate. This should be done with the need to preserve the ecodiversity as indicated in the paragraph above.

13.3.



Views behind Vicarage Walk and across the Meadows towards Vicarage Walk.

Examples of wildlife



- 13.4. **Views** The vista from the main village area towards the Church across the river bridge is particularly significant. (Marked as 1 on the map below.) The view across Birds Meadow opposite the School is also particularly significant. (Marked in Purple on the map below).



13.5. The river walk leading off of The Highway near number 63, (Marked in red on the map) is special for many residents and otters have been seen in the river here. There are many large Willow trees along the river here and herons and little egrets can often be seen feeding in the water.



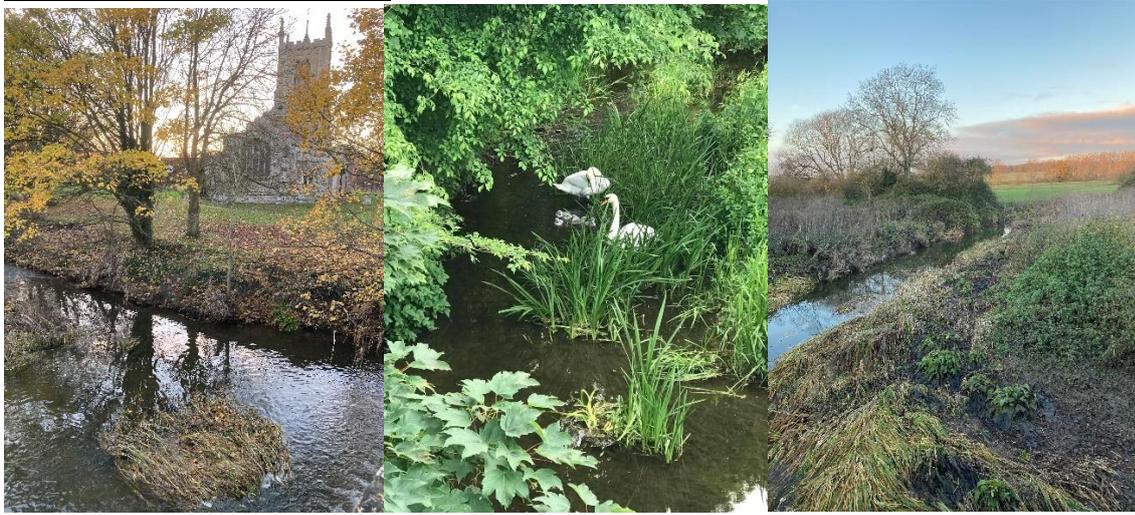
River Walk start from Bridge on Highway at St. Neots End of the Village



On River Walk



From bridge near Church



- 13.6. Development proposals should:
- ensure that the nature and aspect of the countryside is protected.
 - The rural nature and wide vistas of the countryside should not be polluted by industrial development and associated traffic movements.
 - Developments should be empathetic to the countryside and wherever possible related to this rural aspect.
 - create small-scaled streamside landscape zones with trees, copses, meadows and other features. This will necessitate setting aside 5-15m or more either side of streams to create semi-wooded corridors of diverse habitats.
 - Ensure that where remnants of the old ridge and furrow survive as grassland or in woodland they should be preserved.
 - Secure the careful management of ancient semi-natural woodlands and selective re-stocking and creation of 'edge areas' and new woodlands, woodland belts elsewhere. The Cambridgeshire Landscape guidelines set out clear advice on appropriate species to be used in the Western Claylands.

- Selected hedgerows should be reinforced or managed for particularly significant impact, based upon their visual and wildlife potential. Historically significant hedgerows should be carefully conserved, and new hedges planted to emphasise the existing landscape.
- Village approaches: increased tree cover with trees along road margins, woodland belts alongside roads, planting at edges of villages and hedgerow planting is desirable; it is important to ensure key views are not lost.
-

14. Character Area 7: Cultural

14. There are also many other listed buildings and Schedule Ancient Monuments in the Parish (see attached.) Some of these require a specific mention:

14.1.1. Cretingsbury a 13th Century moated site.



14.1.2. Various 2nd World war buildings on Little Staughton Airfield including the Control tower.



14.1.3. Rushey Farm <https://ancientmonuments.uk/105083-roman-site-rushey-farm-great-staughton>

14.1.4. Rookery Farm [ROOKERY FARMHOUSE, Great Staughton - 1214551 | Historic England](#)

14.1.5. The Moated site near The Green



14.2. Blayworth Manor, Little Staughton Rd

14.3. Development proposals ensure these important historical and cultural sites are preserved.

15. Green Spaces and Important Natural Features

15.1. There are many specific green spaces, trees and wooded areas of importance historically and to the village.

15.2. The Perry Woods are part of an original forest which covered the area at the time of the Domesday book. The wood pasture was more prevalent in some areas and would have probably extended from the existing perry woods to Gaynes park, perhaps with a link to wood pastures (hunting forest) around Huntingdon. But the Kym valley itself would not have been forested then.



15.3. The playing field, which has been designated a Queen Elizabeth field to ensure its continuance.



15.4. The Ridge and furrow fields. These are specifically referred to in HDC's description in the Southern Wolds.



15.5. Agden Woods.



15.6. There are also some lovely old oak trees that are worth noting, one on the meadow side of the copse along the B645 and one on the hedge line of the meadow that faces the bridge along the river.

15.7. The horse chestnut tree near the New Vicarage and those in the churchyard are considered important to residents and to wildlife.

15.8. Also the large trees at the end the old vicarage driveway and on the opposite side of the road near the cow sheds.