

BIDWELLS

Appendix E

Green Belt Analysis and Visual Appraisal

**Barratt Eastern Counties and
The North West Cambridge Consortium of Landowners
Darwin Green Two/Three
October 2013**



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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report is submitted on behalf of Barratt Eastern Counties and The North West Cambridge Consortium of Landowners for the promotion of land between Histon Road, Huntingdon Road, the A14 and the existing built up edge of Cambridge. It is known as Darwin Green Two/Three and it is currently in the Green Belt.
- 1.2 South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) is currently consulting on the Local Plan Proposed Submission and this report supports representations to the Council on behalf of Barratt Strategic.
- 1.3 Whilst this land is within the administrative boundary of SCDC, it abuts land in Cambridge City Council (CCC) known as Darwin Green One (previously known as NIAB I) and land within SCDC (previously known as NIAB II) both of which have allocations for residential development (Figure 1).
- 1.4 This report shows how the land proposed for allocation within Darwin Green Two/Three can be released from the Green Belt without harming the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt.
- 1.5 Figure 1b shows the land promoted for release comprising 4.173 hectares of residential development and 3.415 hectares for Commercial Development.

Structure of the Report

- 1.6 The report is structured as follows:

Section 2: Policy background

Section 3: Background to the establishment of the Green Belt

Section 4: Previous Green Belt Reviews

Section 5: Methodology

Section 6: Baseline

Section 7: Qualities to be safeguarded

Section 8: Benefits of Development on Darwin Green Two/Three

Section 9: Conclusion

2 POLICY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 2.2 The NPPF defines sustainable development as five principles as set out in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy: living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.
- 2.3 NPPF paragraph 150 states that '*Local Plans are the key to delivering sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspiration of local communities*'.
- 2.4 Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 2.5 NPPF paragraph 152 states that in plan making '*local planning authorities should seek opportunities to achieve each of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and net gains across all three*'.
- 2.6 The NPPF shows how sustainable development should be interpreted. To deliver sustainable development the NPPF outlines thirteen factors of which 'Protecting the Green Belt land' is one. The principles for protecting the Green Belt are outlined in paragraphs 79-92 of the NPPF.
- 2.7 The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

The Green Belt serves five purposes:
 - to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 2.8 In Cambridge, the primary relevant purpose is taken to be to preserve the setting and special character of the historic town and to a lesser extent preventing neighbouring villages from merging

into the built up area of Cambridge. These are the purposes which historically have been cited as important to the Cambridge Green Belt.

- 2.9 Whilst the NPPF is silent, PPG 2 paragraph 1.7 states that '*although Green Belts often contain areas of attractive landscape, the quality of the landscape is not relevant to the inclusion of land within a Green Belt or to its continued protection*'. This must still be the case as the Green Belt contains a variety of quality of landscape.
- 2.10 NPPF paragraph 83 states that for local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area, that, once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.
- 2.11 NPPF paragraph 84 states that when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries the local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of growth.
- 2.12 The spatial strategy adopted over previous decades up to the turn of the century, outlined in more detail in following sections, resulted in imbalances and unsustainable travel patterns. A review of the Green Belt was regarded as necessary and directed through the Regional Planning Guidance 6 2000. This approach was acknowledged in the 2003 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan directing new development in the following sequence:
 - i within the built up area of Cambridge;
 - ii on the edge of Cambridge subject to a review of the Green Belt boundary;
 - iii a new settlement at Longstanton/Oakington (Northstowe); and
 - iv market towns, previously established new settlements and rural centres.
- 2.13 Urban extensions are widely recognised as a particularly sustainable form of development which allows for strategic development needs to be met through the delivery of significant levels of new housing and other complementary uses, whilst maximising the benefits associated with proximity and accessibility to existing employment opportunities, services and facilities. Such extensions go to the heart of the NPPF.
- 2.14 Significantly there is a major out-migration of workers from South Cambridgeshire to Cambridge because of the imbalance between jobs and housing. The combination of large flows of employees to the City and the reliance on the car for such journeys results in considerable traffic congestion problems, noise, pollution and accidents, particularly at peak times. These problems are not only short term. In the longer term, such an imbalance with a continued need to make journeys will result in burning more fossil fuel which adds to the problems of climate change.

- 2.15 This is the exceptional circumstance for the alteration of the Green Belt - development should be provided in the most sustainable location which, after development within the built up area of Cambridge, is the edge of Cambridge. This will reduce the need to travel now and in the future, and not only provide economic and social benefits but environmental benefits also.
- 2.16 Fundamental reviews of the Cambridge Green Belt were undertaken around that time to help identify sites which could be released from the Green Belt without undermining the core principles of the Green Belt as set out in planning policy at that time.
- 2.17 The areas of land released from the Green Belt to come forward to provide sustainable urban extensions with housing delivery on the edge of the City were identified in the CCC Proposals Plan 2006 as well as Area Action Plans, including the allocated land in SCDC.
- 2.18 Currently SCDC is consulting upon its Local Plan Proposed Submission. Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire have strong links and their aim has been '*to provide many new homes close to the jobs in and around Cambridge as possible*'. SCDC states that the '*the new development strategy for South Cambridgeshire needs to recognize the links with Cambridge, particularly in terms of providing employment to support the successful economy of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and housing to provide opportunities for the workforce, both existing and new, to live close to where they work*'.
- 2.19 The exceptional circumstances for a Green Belt review have been recognised by both SCDC and CCC to provide housing close to jobs so that development can be achieved in the most sustainable way. A joint Green Belt Review has been undertaken.
- 2.20 Additional land, on the edge of the land within the Darwin Green Triangle already allocated for development is particularly sustainable as it is on the edge of Cambridge and the supporting infrastructure will be in place.

3 BACKGROUND TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GREEN BELT

- 3.1 The Cambridge Green Belt had its roots in the 1930s, began to be firmed up in the 1950s and was formally defined on the Town Map in 1965. The intervening sixty years have seen huge change which now warrants a substantial and thorough review.
- 3.2 The history of the Green Belt shows a number of modifications over time although one area of uniformity was that when compared with the five purposes of Green Belt policy set out in PPG2 and now in the NPPF (the purpose which is consistently mentioned in all the historic Plans for Cambridge) is its role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. Safeguarding the countryside from encroachment is emphasised less and assisting in urban regeneration is not considered relevant. Preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another is usually taken to mean preventing villages from merging.

Challenges to the Green Belt

- 3.3 The future of the Cambridge Green Belt has been challenged throughout this period. The controls over new industry and commerce were relaxed in the 1970s. New businesses were attracted to Cambridge, especially 'high-tech' firms which benefit from a close relationship with the University. The buoyancy of the local economy led to a rapid increase in the population. Attempts were made to release additional areas, through representations on the Green Belt Local Plan and through the Cambridge Local Plan. There were a number of changes to the Green Belt boundary between 1965 and 1996, illustrated in Figure 2, including some additions and some land releases such as on the northern fringe of the City. So, it is clear that the boundary over time has not been 'absolute' and has been modified to accommodate need.
- 3.4 However, with Cambridge unable to expand to accommodate increasing business and housing need, newcomers have largely settled in the outlying villages, now effectively detached suburbs. This has generated a large increase in local road traffic. The pressures on Cambridge and its sub-region caused by these trends called for a review of planning policies.
- 3.5 The concept of restraint surrounding Cambridge was questioned as early as 1966 when the 'Future Shape of Cambridge' was published by the then City Architect and Planning Officer, Gordon Logie. It looked at how the City should develop over the next forty to fifty years, suggesting future tongues of development which would allow the City to grow, while maintaining the essential qualities of the City.
- 3.6 In the early 1970s Professor J Parry Lewis was commissioned by national and local government to undertake a Study of the Cambridge Sub-Region 1974. This study was concerned with taking the pressures off the historic centre of Cambridge. Parry Lewis concluded that Cambridge '*must grow*

in order to retain as much of its character as it can' and that that the only way to conserve the historic centre was to have a major expansion.

- 3.7 Whilst the economic and social argument for Green Belt release was strong and was accepted at regional policy level and through the Structure Plan, it was recognised that '*Green Belt designation is not in itself any guide to the quality and value of the landscape*' finding that '*not all of the Green Belt is of equivalent value with parts of it playing no important role*' of supporting the purpose of the Green Belt '*other than by being part of a blanket presumption against development*'.
- 3.8 The economic and social arguments now significantly outweigh the need to preserve 'blanket' Green Belt and so a Green Belt review must be considered.

4 PREVIOUS GREEN BELT REVIEWS

- 4.1 Widely accepted sustainability principles of allowing development close to the places people work was accepted through the RSS with the review of the Green Belt set out in policy terms by RPG 6 2000, and then through the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003 accepting the need for Green Belt release.
- 4.2 The process of identifying land to be released from the Green Belt was through local plans. Both SCDC and CCC undertook Green Belt reviews.

David Brown 1998 Landscape Setting Study

- 4.3 This study concluded that the open fields between the City Boundary, Girton village and the A14 provide an important landscape setting to Cambridge.
- 4.4 Volume II of the study represents case studies of sectors of the City which would have the capacity for development without harming the Green Belt. It identifies land where development would have a low level of impact on the setting of the City and land where development would have a moderate level of impact on the setting of the City. These areas approximate to NIAB1 to the east of the PROW and within Cambridge City.
- 4.5 The remaining land is indicated as the Girton-Histon Green Finger where '*development would have an unacceptable impact and undermine the purpose of the Green Belt in protecting the special character and setting of Cambridge*'.
- 4.6 A view cone of the City in its setting is indicated as emanating from the A14. The study also shows a 'critical gap' on Histon Road.
- 4.7 Whilst it is acknowledged that development on Darwin Green Two/Three would have an impact on views from the A14 to the urban edge of Cambridge, it would not impact on the historic setting of Cambridge. There is a view cone of the City in its setting glimpsed obliquely from the A14. This is not considered an issue as this view cone is not affected by the proposals.

Buchanan Cambridge Sub Region Study 2001

- 4.8 This study sets out the primary purpose of the Cambridge Green Belt and its contribution to the setting of the City as having two aspects, specifically:
 - views of the City; and
 - the interface between the City and the countryside within the context of the villages within the Green Belt.

- 4.9 This study refers to Cambridge City Council's *Cambridge Green Belt – Towards 2016* at Figure 8 'Environmental Capital' at 8.4.20 as indicating a number of vantage points in the area surrounding Cambridge where the setting, urban edge and skyline are regarded as being of particular importance. This is reproduced here at Figure 3. It should be noted that there are no views which extend across the NIAB area shown on this plan where setting, urban edge and skyline are regarded as being of particular importance.
- 4.10 The land in question is referred to as Site No. 124 in this publication. The site summary states that '*the site is clearly visible from the A14 to the north. Development within this site would adversely affect the current interface between the edge of the City and the surrounding countryside. Coalescence would also be created between Girton and the City*'.
- 4.11 Whilst it is agreed that development of this site would affect the interface between the built edge of Cambridge and the surrounding countryside, it would only result in the effect of moving the built edge closer to the A14. This is not considered significantly adverse to the setting of the historic City, especially as an 'edge' of small fields and paddocks with significant boundary vegetation is proposed to be retained. This would allow the edge of Cambridge to be observed from the A14 with an intervening green, vegetated fringe.
- 4.12 Coalescence between Girton and the City is not considered to be an issue as the essential Girton Gap is proposed to be retained.

Landscape Design Associates 2002 Cambridge Green Belt Study. A Vision of the Future for Cambridge in its Green Belt Setting. South Cambridgeshire District Council.

- 4.13 This study focuses on the fourth purpose of including land in Green Belts set out in NPPF which is '*To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns*'. A baseline study including topography and geology, environmental designations, cultural and access designations, townscape character, landscape character and visual assessment was undertaken.
- 4.14 This study identifies the land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road in Drawing Number 1641LP/09 as having no distinctive and supportive townscape and landscape and therefore no particular qualities to be safeguarded. Figure 1641LP/10 indicates there is '*potential for some land between Cambridge and the A14 to be sensitively developed. Setting and separation of Girton to be retained. Retain some open land between A14 and the urban edge. Views from A14 to historic landmarks should be retained. Green edge of the city to be enhanced*'.
- 4.15 Plan No 1641LP/07 of this report shows the area of 'Distinctive Cambridge'. Development on any part of the NIAB site would not impact Distinctive Cambridge. This plan also shows a green arrow depicting 'open countryside separating inner necklace villages and these villages and Cambridge'.

A green arrow depicts the 'Girton Gap' to the north of Huntingdon Road. A green arrow depicts the 'Histon/Impington Gap' south of the A14.

Cambridge City Council Green Belt Review 2002

- 4.16 CCC undertook a review of the Green Belt in 2002 which guided the release of areas of the Green Belt ratified in the Cambridge City Council Local Plan 2006.
- 4.17 Whilst this report looked at land parcels, the worst case scenario for each land parcel was taken in that the worth to Green Belt function was attributed as the highest value for each parcel.
- 4.18 It was submitted that an extensive amount of land should be considered for Green Belt Release in this area.

North West Cambridge Area Action Plan Green Belt Landscape Study May 2006

- 4.19 The Opportunities and Constraints Plan shows fields within the north east corner with heritage and landscape value. It is proposed to retain the major part as Green Belt.
- 4.20 The Study refers to the Girton Gap and the Local Plan Inspector's conclusion that '*The requirement to provide an open space buffer between Cambridge and Girton is the subject of objection. I am satisfied from my site visits that there is a significant separation between the two, appreciated from Huntingdon Road, and that the separation should be retained. The Felix Hotel has an undeveloped frontage. Opposite is open land forming part of the University Farm and behind the Hotel are playing fields*'.
- 4.21 This report also notes the strategic gap between Impington and Cambridge important to the quality of the City and its necklace villages.

Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road – Green Belt Analysis and Visual Assessment 2006 and Further Comments on Green Belt Issues October 2007

- 4.22 This report was undertaken by Landscape Design Associates (LDA) and concludes that the undeveloped land within SCDC in the Darwin Green Triangle can be removed from the Green Belt and developed without harming Green Belt purposes. It notes that the whole area of land, which is isolated from the wider rural Green Belt and which will become further isolated by future widening of the A14, should be planned comprehensively as part of the historic City of Cambridge.
- 4.23 This report also undertook a detailed landscape assessment and analysis and identifies that '*the view from the A14 is an isolated glimpsed view, experienced at speed and perpendicular to the direction of travel. The most visible building of interest is the spire of St Luke's Church, which is not within the historic core. The square tower of St John's College is the only building visible within*

the historic core and this is a minor element in the view, low lying and hard to distinguish, even when standing stationary on the hard shoulder focusing on the view'.

2012 Inner Green Belt Boundary Study

- 4.24 This is a joint review undertaken by SCDC and CCC on the inner Green Belt.
- 4.25 Darwin Green Two/Three is identified as part of Sector 1, Area 1. The importance to the Green Belt is determined as Very High. This is due to the views over pasture/arable land from the A14, curtailed by hedge and tree cover, and the contribution the land makes to the setting of Girton Village.
- 4.26 The proposed release does not significantly affect these attributes.

Summary

- 4.27 The early reviews informing the release of Green Belt were undertaken according to the circumstances at that time and have in common the protection of elevated land and views to the City centre. There are no elevated views in this location and the views towards the City centre are at best fleeting.
- 4.28 The reviews tend to be undertaken at a broad brush, generic level, and the finer details of site setting and topography were not taken into consideration so that generalisations were made over sweeps of countryside.
- 4.29 The early reviews were relevant at the time and helped inform Green Belt release as shown in Figure 4.
- 4.30 The later LDA reports of 2006/7 are more site specific and conclude that undeveloped land within South Cambridgeshire District in the Darwin Green Triangle can be removed from the Green Belt and developed without harming Green Belt purposes.
- 4.31 The broad consensus of these reports is that land could be released between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road without significant harm to the purpose of the Green Belt.
- 4.32 The study undertaken in 2012 deals with a large parcel of land with variations across it as to the importance to the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 4.33 A contemporary and more detailed review is undertaken here to assess if further land could come forward in this area and be released from the Green Belt to help address the significant economic and social issues which require new, sustainable development. The search was confined to areas in the east of the overall area of Darwin Green Two, as these were seen to be the most sustainable in regard to being contiguous with Cambridge and the urban extensions proposed.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The methodology carried out in this study involves a broad appreciation of the planning context and issues as well as a desk top study of Green Belt reviews previously undertaken. It uses a variety of well established assessment and professional, widely-accepted, assessment techniques, namely: The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2002 and Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002.
- 5.2 Of the reasons for including land in Green Belts in the NPPF, the most relevant to the situation in Cambridge are:
 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, and
 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
- 5.3 In Cambridge, the latter is usually taken to mean preventing neighbouring communities merging into one another.

STAGE 1 – Baseline

- 5.4 This was undertaken through desk top review of various studies which have been undertaken and by site survey.
- 5.5 Photographs were taken at various locations to illustrate the visual qualities of the area. The lens used was 50mm, generally selected as being the closest to the view from the human eye.
- 5.6 The panoramic views consist of the photographs taken and then merged together in Photoshop© software with no distortion. No other photographic manipulation was undertaken. Even so, these panoramas should be considered as illustrative and are not intended to replace the experience of visiting the site.

STAGE 2 – Understanding the Setting, Special Character and Qualities to be Safeguarded

- 5.7 Two publications are of particular importance to these considerations:
 - LDA's Cambridge Green Belt Study 2002 SCDC; and
 - Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment and Technical Summary 2003 CCC.

STAGE 3 – Conclusions and Recommendations

6 **BASELINE**

- 6.1 This sets the framework for subsequent sections. The baseline data is described under the following headings:
- Environmental designations;
 - Topography;
 - Townscape;
 - Landscape character; and
 - Visual assessment.

Environmental Designations

- 6.2 Figure 5 shows the area still within Green Belt, listed buildings, public footpaths (PROW) and Conservation Areas.
- 6.3 There are no designated areas or features on the site, although a PROW runs along the south east boundary of the SCDC land allocated for housing.
- 6.4 Another footpath runs to the south, linking Footpath A with Thornton Close.

Topography

- 6.5 Figure 6 shows the local topography. The site is mostly between 10m and 15m AOD (Ordnance Datum). The land rises to a gentle ridge to the south west, approximately along Girton Road and Huntingdon Road.
- 6.6 The A14 junction with the B1049 Cambridge Road/Bridge Road is a raised roundabout, with the slip roads dropping down to the A14.
- 6.7 The parcel of land between the old Cambridge Road and the new road layout accommodating the A14 roundabout is much lower than the road by a number of metres in the north east corner.

Significant Vegetation

- 6.8 There is a considerable amount of vegetation in the area as shown in Figure 7. There are substantial hedgerows, possibly historic, to the north east and north west of the site. There is an area of scrub vegetation. Altogether the area, especially to the east, appears to be well tree'd.

Existing Landscape Features

- 6.9 Figure 8 shows the existing landscape features in the locality.

- 6.10 There are a number of sports fields in the area. That fronting Huntingdon Road and Howes Close Sports Ground constitutes the gap between Girton and Cambridge.
- 6.11 There are two areas adjacent to the A14 of well defined paddocks. These are in the north east corner around Woodhouse Farm and to the north west, although mostly to the north of the A14 with some remnant hedges to the south. These fields are pre-date the construction of the A14 as shown in the Ordnance Survey maps of 1890 (Figure 9) and 1940 (Figure 10).
- 6.12 The Histon/Impington gap is constituted by the A14 which totally separates Impington from Cambridge physically and visually. Additionally, the village of Impington is separated from the A14 by a significant tree screen. This ensures the perception of a physical gap between Impington and Cambridge.

Townscape

- 6.13 The progressive development of the City includes peripheral areas of more recent residential development. The coherence of these areas derives from a unity of housing style and period of development.
- 6.14 Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment 2003 describes a number of residential character areas in the locality. Residential Villas and Modern Movement characterise the Huntingdon Road frontage. There is an area of Pre 1900's Residential Terraces to the west of Histon Road, and further north, Residential Post 1900 suburbs.

Landscape Character

- 6.15 A combination of desk study and fieldwork helped identify landscape character.
- 6.16 The National Character Area describes the site as being in the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands Character Area 88. The key characteristics of this landscape type which are relevant to the site are described as:
 - Gently undulating topography and plateau areas divided by broad shallow valleys;
 - Predominantly an open and intensive arable landscape. Fields bounded by either open ditches or sparse, closely trimmed hedges both containing variable number and quality of hedgerow trees; and
 - Woodland cover variable.
- 6.17 SCDC Green Belt Study 2002 describes the site in the 'Fen Edge' landscape type, describing it as transitional between the low lying Fens and the higher land beyond.

- 6.18 Cambridge City Council Landscape Character Assessment 2003 describes the site in the West Cambridge Claylands although there are certainly elements of the Northern Fringe Character Area where one landscape type merges with another.
- 6.19 The Darwin Green Triangle is heavily influenced by the urban edge of Cambridge to the south and the A14 to the north. The influence of the built environment on the remnant open areas will be greater in the future as the current development and the allocated site come on stream. Agriculture is the primary land use of the unbuilt areas, particularly arable, but there are also areas of grazing pasture. This is located in the extreme north east of the site and is contained by a small scale field pattern defined by, often significant, hedges.
- 6.20 Hedgerows elsewhere on the site are more infrequent. There are a number of small copses and an area of scrubby woodland in the north east corner (Figure 7).

Visual Assessment

- 6.21 The opportunities to see the site are very limited, almost entirely limited to views from the A14, from the north end of Histon Road and from PROW.
- 6.22 Whilst the development proposals for the site are for both residential and commercial development, this assessment is for how land supports the purpose of the Green Belt rather than the significance of impact of development proposals. It is acknowledged that the impact of commercial development is likely to be of greater magnitude than residential, but assumed that this will be partially mitigated by the built form being set within a landscape setting.
- 6.23 The sensitivity of the viewers using the A14 is Low – viewing opportunities for anyone travelling along the A14 are generally limited due to the speed of travel and the oblique nature of the views. The topography is flat and due to the enclosed nature of the fields adjacent to the A14 the viewing opportunities are limited.
- 6.24 There are no PROW that approach the site from open countryside, all are contained within the Darwin Green triangle and consequently users have no sense of being in open countryside. The views from these will change completely once development comes forward.
- 6.25 The north east corner of the site can be glimpsed by pedestrians on Histon Road. At this location the road is elevated above the paddock areas and there is a considerable drop to the site. A proportion of the boundary is well vegetated so that there are no views into the site. Users of the footpaths will generally be few and the sensitivity of the viewers will be no greater than Medium.
- 6.26 The opportunity to see the site in the context of the City is extremely limited to the A14.

- 6.27 Tall elements within Darwin Green such as the pylons, telecom masts and trees are evident from further afield.
- 6.28 The viewpoint locations to illustrate the visual qualities of the area are illustrated in Figure 11 followed by the panoramas from each viewpoint location. As discussed, the area of search is limited to the east part of the Darwin Green Two/Three land-holding as being the most sustainable location as well as ensuring the Girton Gap and the viewpoint from the A14 are respected.

Viewpoint 1

- 6.29 This is taken from the junction of the Old Cambridge Road and the track serving the access to Woodhouse Farm in an approximate south – south west direction. The properties to the south off Orchard Close and off Cambridge Road are visible in the panorama.

Viewpoint 2

- 6.30 This is taken from the junction of the Old Cambridge Road and the track serving the access to Woodhouse Farm in an approximate north – north west direction. The pylon is clearly visible as well as the significant tree screen to the Old Cambridge Road on the right hand side of the image, and the trees to the north and on the west boundary with the paddock area are seen on the left of the image.

Viewpoint 3

- 6.31 This image is taken from the junction of the east - west track and the north east – south west track which runs into the PROW. The direction of the photo is to the south with the track clearly in view.

Viewpoint 4

- 6.32 This image is taken close to View 3 in a westerly direction. The residential area of Thornton Close can be seen in the distance on the left of the image. The significant boundary vegetation to the paddock area can be seen on the right hand side of the image.

Viewpoint 5

- 6.33 This image is taken at the junction of the track serving the access to Woodhouse Farm with the field boundary to the paddock in an approximately north east direction. The significant boundary vegetation with the paddock is on the left of the image. The trees to the north are in the mid ground. The pylon is on the left of the image.

Viewpoint 6

- 6.34 This is a view from the track to Woodhouse Farm across the paddock in a north direction. The trees between the A14 and the photo location provide a significant visual screen.

Viewpoint 7

- 6.35 This view is from the track to Woodhouse Farm to the south west along the line of hedgerow. Thornton Close can be seen in the right hand of the image in the distance.

Viewpoint 8

- 6.36 This viewpoint is taken from the track to Woodhouse Farm to the west – south west. The bridge over the A14 can be seen in the mid-ground. The image demonstrates the significant tree screen to the north, seen on the right side of the image.

Viewpoint 9

- 6.37 This image is split into 9a and 9b, both taken from viewpoint location 9. These panoramas demonstrate the open character of the arable area.

Viewpoint 10

- 6.38 This image is taken from the Cambridge Road footpath along the Old Cambridge Road. The significant vegetation is apparent.

Viewpoint 11

- 6.39 This image is taken from the Old Cambridge Road towards the King's Hedges Road across the paddock area.

Viewpoint 12

- 6.40 This image, taken from the Old Cambridge Road, is split into two panoramas. The image is taken in an easterly direction towards the Cambridge Road. To the left side of image 12a the significant tree screen to the north is notable. This tree screen wraps around the B1049 junction with the A14 slip road on the north and east side.

Viewpoint 13

- 6.41 This image is taken from the Cambridge Road in a north direction. The significant vegetated boundary is notable.

Viewpoint 14

- 6.42 This image is taken from the Cambridge Road to the north west over the area of paddock. To the left of the image the tree screen with the Old Cambridge Road is notable. To the mid-ground and the right hand side of the image is the tree screen which wraps around the B1049 junction with the A14 slip road. The B1049 is significantly higher than the site at this location.

Viewpoint 15

- 6.43 This image is taken from the Cambridge Road in an east-south direction. The boundary vegetation to the Old Cambridge Road is notable. The B1049 is significantly higher than the site at this location as it rises towards the roundabout over the A14.

Viewpoint 16

- 6.44 This image is taken from the Cambridge Road to the north approaching the slip road to the A14. The boundary vegetation screens the site. The B1049 is significantly higher than the site at this location as it rises towards the roundabout over the A14.

Viewpoint 17

- 6.45 This image is taken from the Cambridge Road junction with the west slip road to the A14 in a south east direction. The boundary vegetation screens the site. The road is significantly higher than the site at this point.

Viewpoint 18

- 6.46 This image is taken from the Cambridge Road junction with the west slip road to the A14 in a west direction. The significant boundary vegetation screens the site which is significantly lower than the road at this point.

Viewpoint 19

- 6.47 This image is taken at the top of the west slip road of the A14. There is significant boundary vegetation which screens the site. The site is considerably lower than the road at this point, but as the road drops down to join the A14 the levels even out.

7 QUALITIES TO BE SAFEGUARDED

Key views of the City

- 7.1 It has been shown that the only viewing opportunity of seeing the City in its setting is from very brief, glimpsed views from the A14. Even so, the City skyline is not distinctive. The approved development within Cambridge City and the allocated site in South Cambridgeshire will affect this view to a certain extent, but the configuration of the allocated land in SCDC allows longer views towards the City.
- 7.2 From the outset, it was decided to assess the land to the east of the Darwin Green Two site as to whether it could be released from the Green Belt and developed without undue detriment to the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 7.3 The key view will therefore not be affected.

Girton Gap

- 7.4 The gap between Cambridge and Girton (one of the purposes of the Green Belt to prevent neighbouring towns (in Cambridge this is taken as villages/settlement) merging) is considered an important quality to be safeguarded.
- 7.5 The Inspector for the Local Plan determined that '*there is a significant separation between the two, appreciated from Huntingdon Road, and that the separation should be retained. The Felix Hotel has an undeveloped frontage. Opposite is open land forming part of the University Farm and behind the Hotel are playing fields*'.
- 7.6 This will not be affected by the proposals.

Histon/Impington Gap

- 7.7 The A14 lies between the urban edge of Cambridge and Impington.
- 7.8 To the south of the A14/roundabout/Histon Road, there is a significant tree screen. The site is considerably lower than the Histon Road/roundabout at this point, so that the road infrastructure bifurcates the area between the two settlements visually. From Histon Road/roundabout/A14 to the immediate west of the roundabout there is no sense of the village of Impington to the north.
- 7.9 To the north of the roundabout and slip roads to the A14 there is a considerable tree screen and the village built form does not become apparent until approximately the junction of B1049 and Cambridge Road.
- 7.10 This is illustrated in Figure 3 which was extracted from the document Cambridge Green Belt Towards 2016 and illustrates the land which is considered to be a Defining Characteristic of

Cambridge. It shows the Girton Gap which should be retained, a 'buffer zone' to the south of the A14 and the Impington gap.

- 7.11 These factors have all been considered in the assessment so that there is no impact on either the setting of the City, or the separation of the City with surrounding settlements.
- 7.12 It is considered that the area shown in Figure 1b could be released from the Green Belt and developed without undue detriment to the purpose of the Green Belt.

8 BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT ON DARWIN GREEN

- 8.1 Development on the edge of Cambridge is particularly sustainable. It is considered that there are areas within the Darwin Green Triangle (Figure 1b) which can be released from the Green Belt and developed with no adverse affect on the Green Belt.
- 8.2 Issue 9 of the joint Issues and Options Report: Development Strategy (SCDC and CCC) and Issue 11: Considering Exceptional Circumstances for a Green Belt Review, allow for an option of providing more development on the edge of Cambridge through a further review of the Green Belt.
- 8.3 The exceptional circumstances requiring Green Belt release have been set out in this report. In addition, the benefits that additional development on Darwin Green would bring forward and which would support many of the emerging issues which are seen to be important for South Cambridgeshire are set out here for the consideration of SCDC:
 - help deliver homes where people can access work in a sustainable way;
 - help redress the balance between the location of jobs and homes; and
 - help mitigate and adapt to climate change by providing homes near jobs thereby encouraging a shift away from vehicular travel modes.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Darwin Green Triangle was previously intensively farmed with large open fields and some areas of paddock. The area will change due to development. The area is heavily influenced by surrounding urban areas and infrastructure associated with the A14 and its junction with Histon Road/Cambridge Road.
- 9.2 It is considered that part of the Darwin Green Triangle can be developed without harm to the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 9.3 The proposals will have no significant detrimental impact on special qualities to be safeguarded, namely the setting of Cambridge, and the separation of Girton with Cambridge and Histon/Impington with Cambridge.
- 9.4 Development in the areas shown could come forward in a positive way. The proposed retention of some historic paddock and boundary vegetation will ensure that a green foreground on this edge of Cambridge will be retained.

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Figure 1 - Location Plan

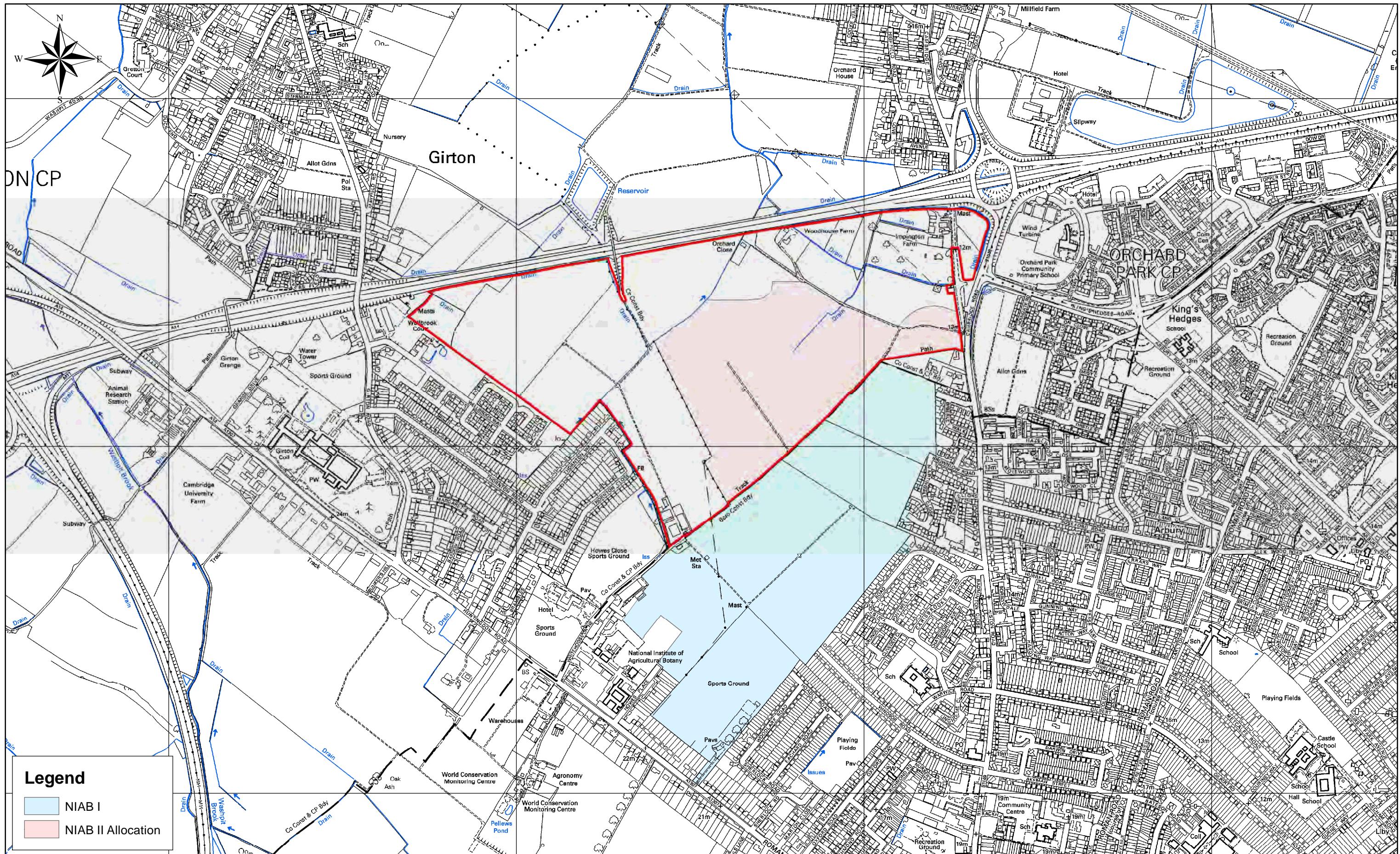
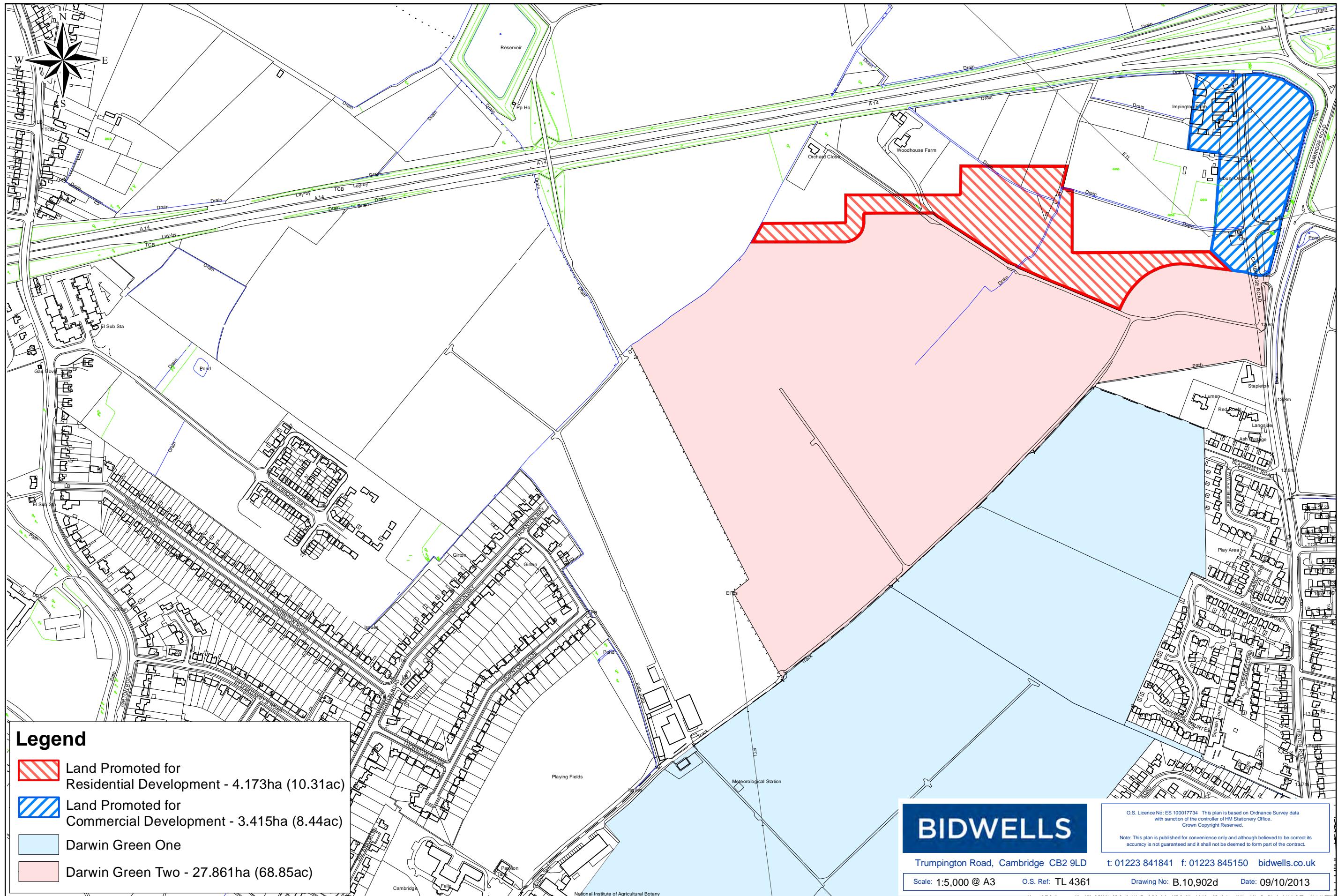


Figure 1b - Land Promoted for Release Darwin Green Two & Three



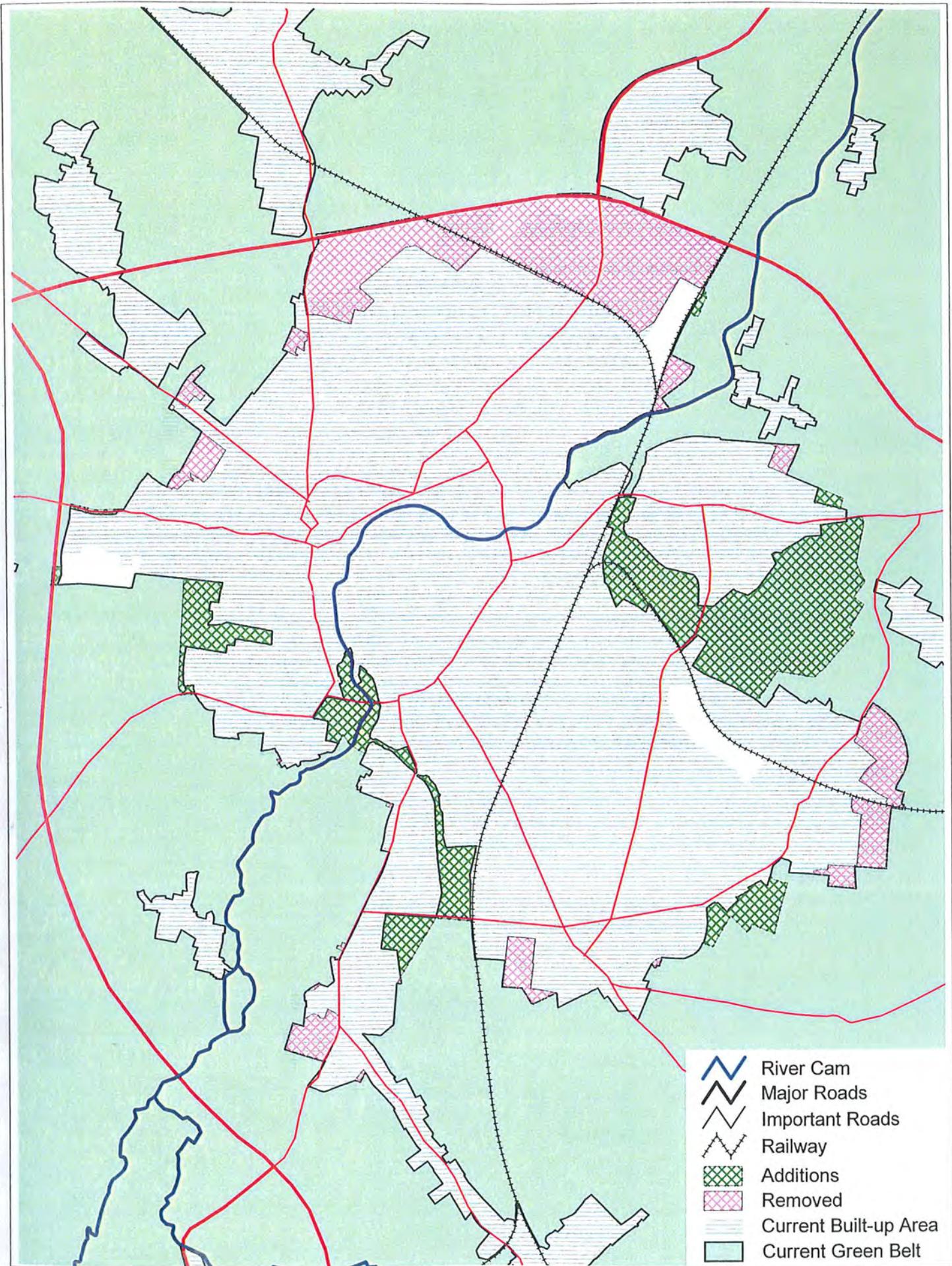


Figure 2

Green Belt Changes 1965-1996



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Section / Department:	Policy Group, Planning

Scale: 1:45,000



Figure 3

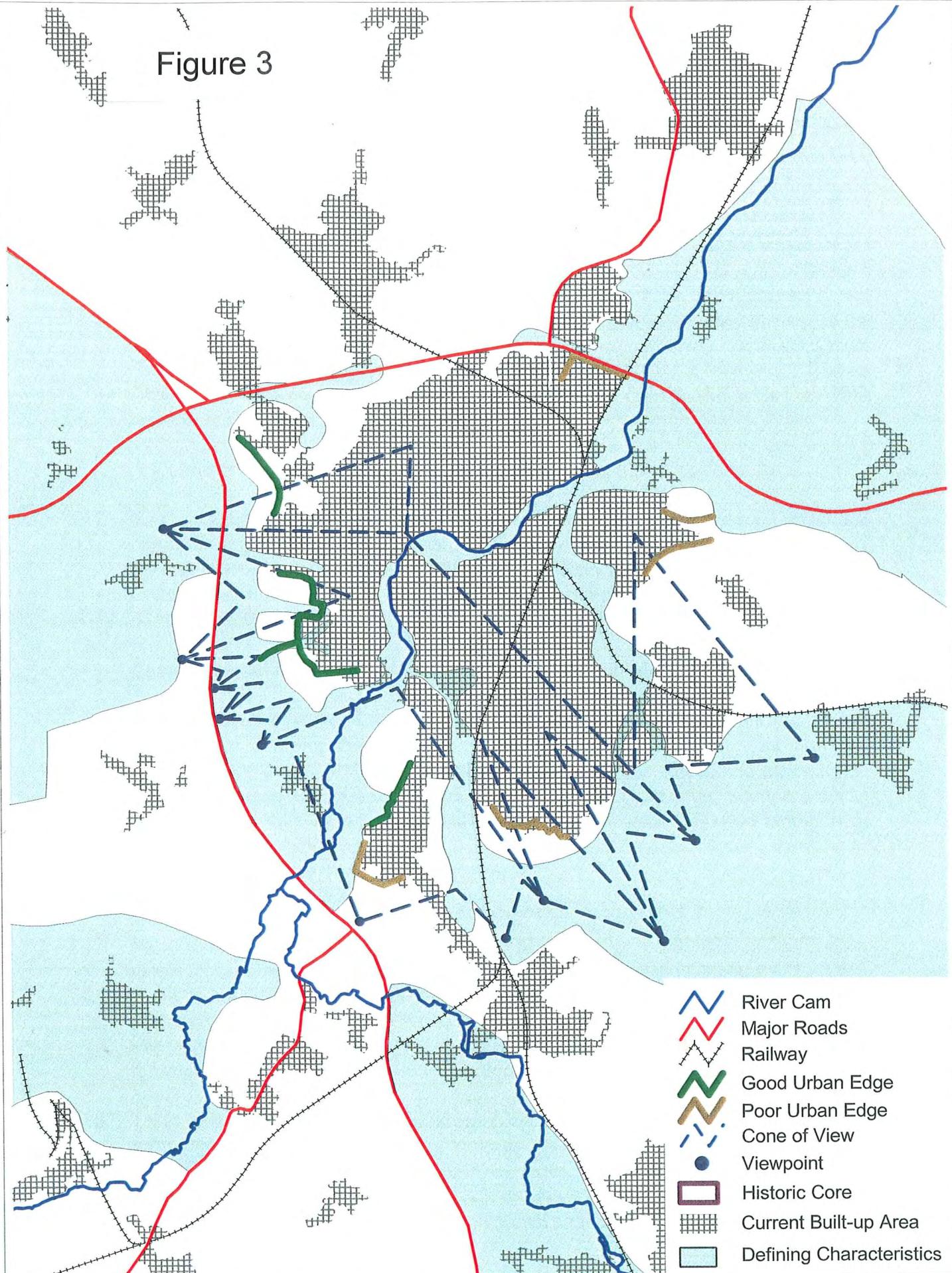


Fig. 8

Environmental Capital



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Section / Department:	Policy Group, Planning
Scale:	1:75,000



Cambridge Inner Green Belt - Land released from Green Belt 2006

Figure 4

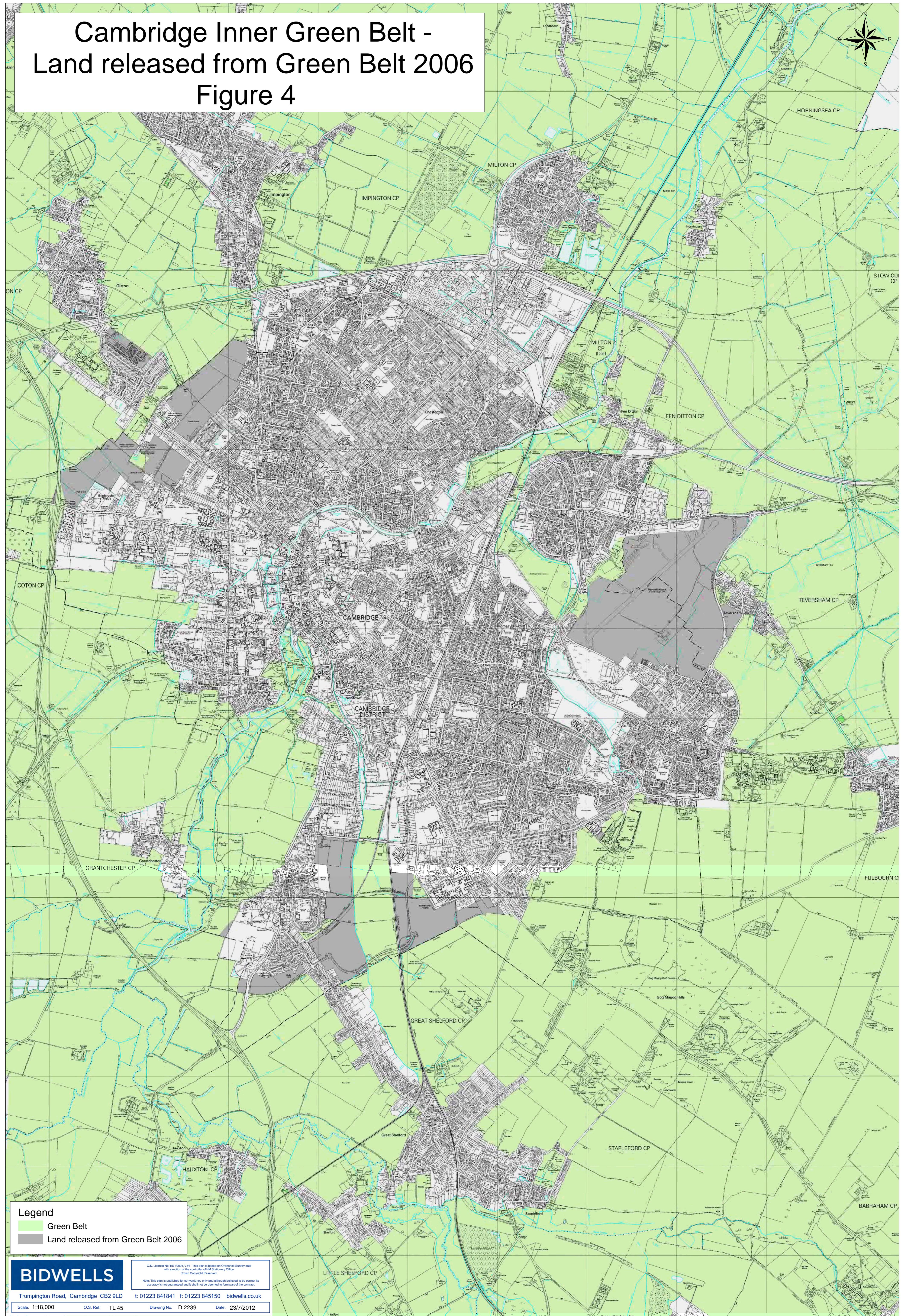


Figure 5 - Environmental Designations

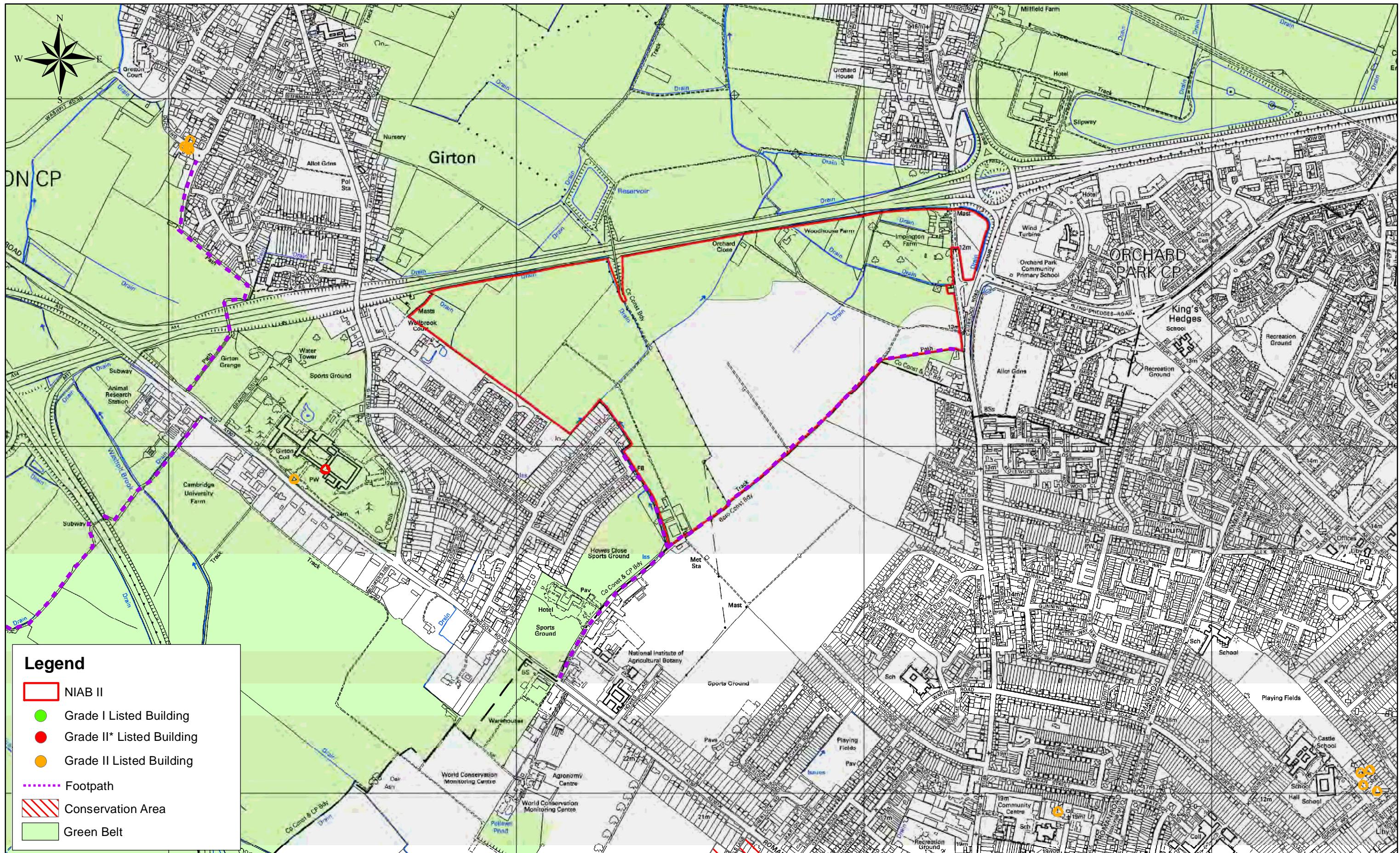


Figure 6 - Topography

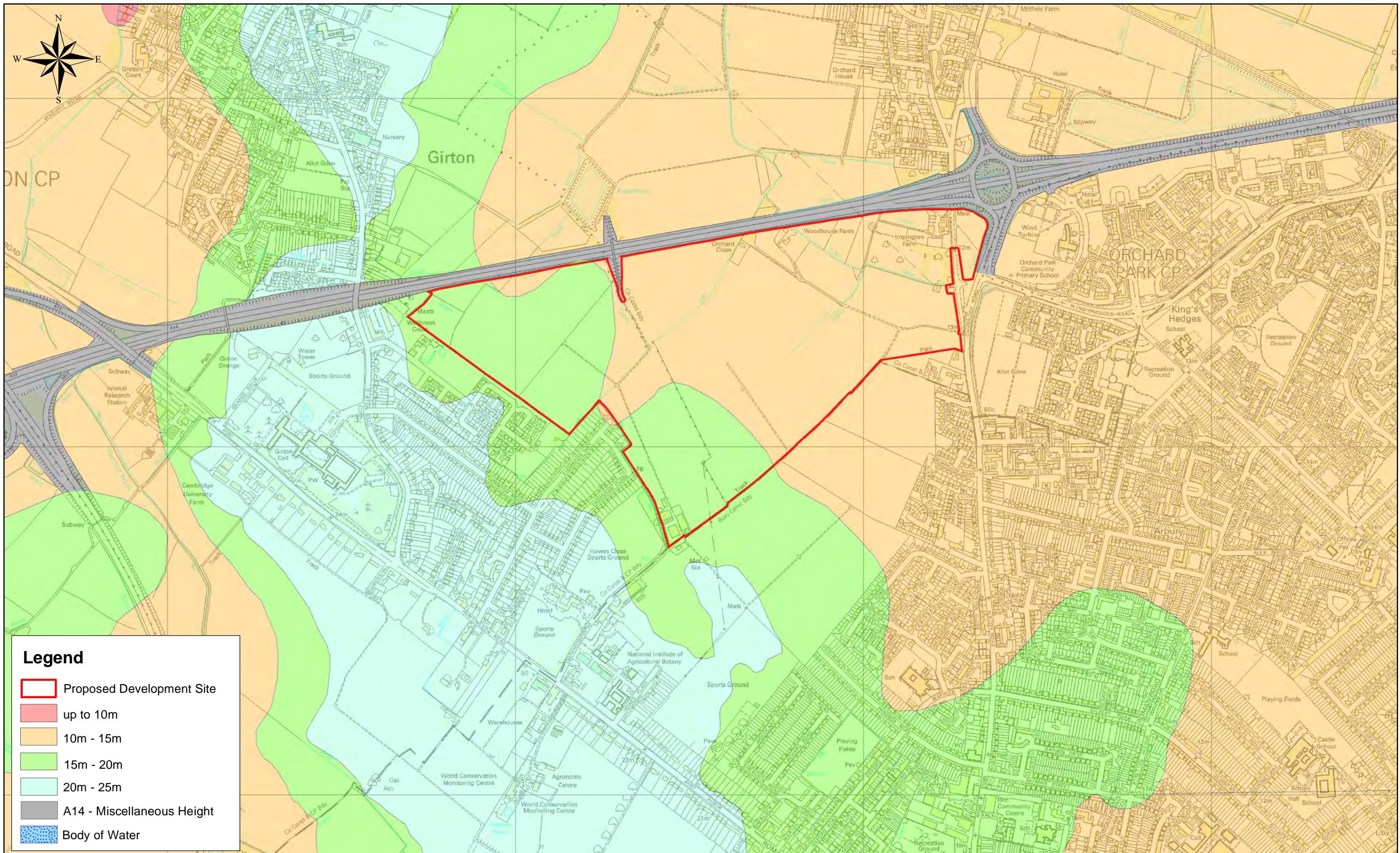


Figure 7 - Significant Vegetation

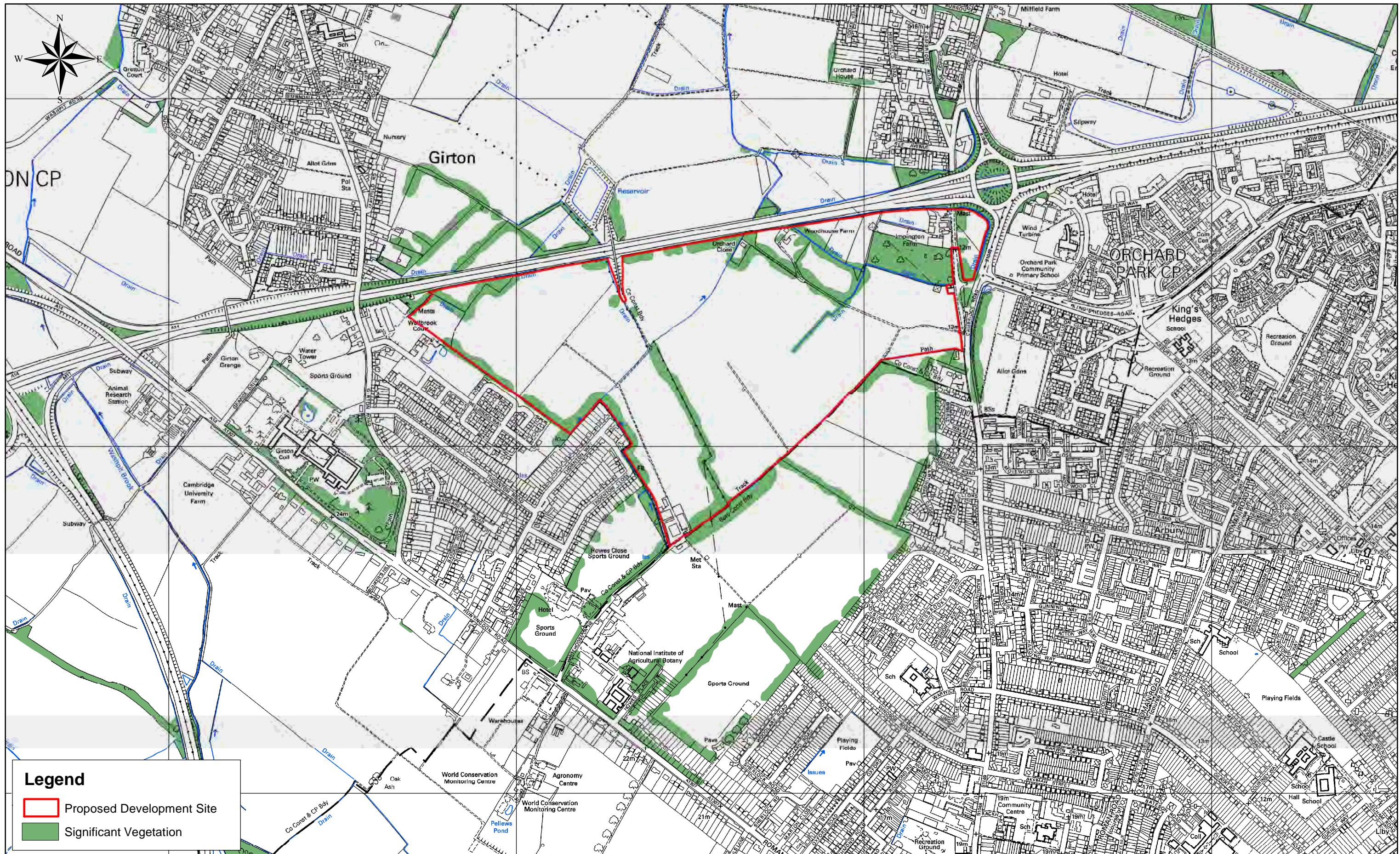


Figure 8 - Existing Landscape Features

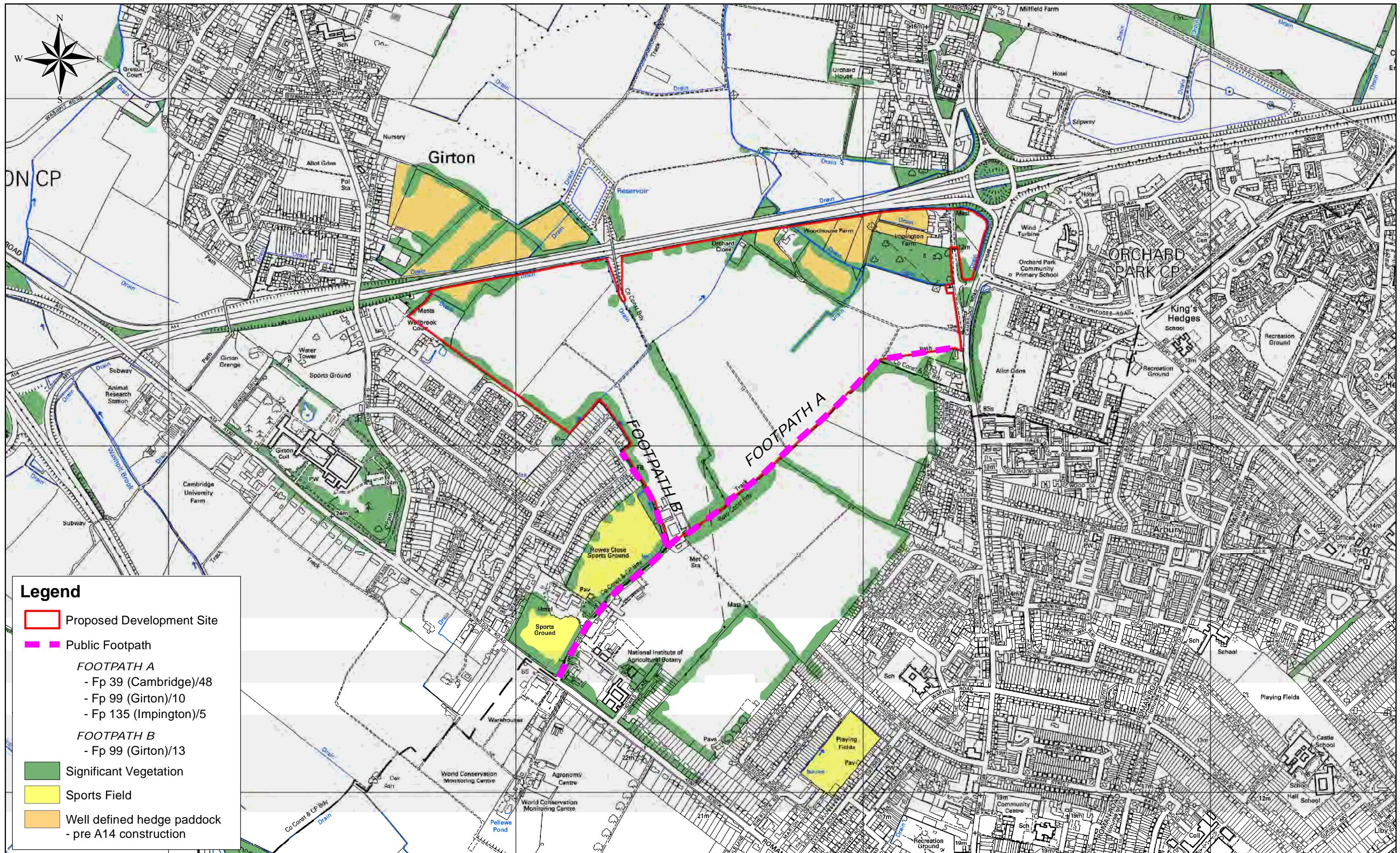


Figure 9 - 1890 Historic Plan

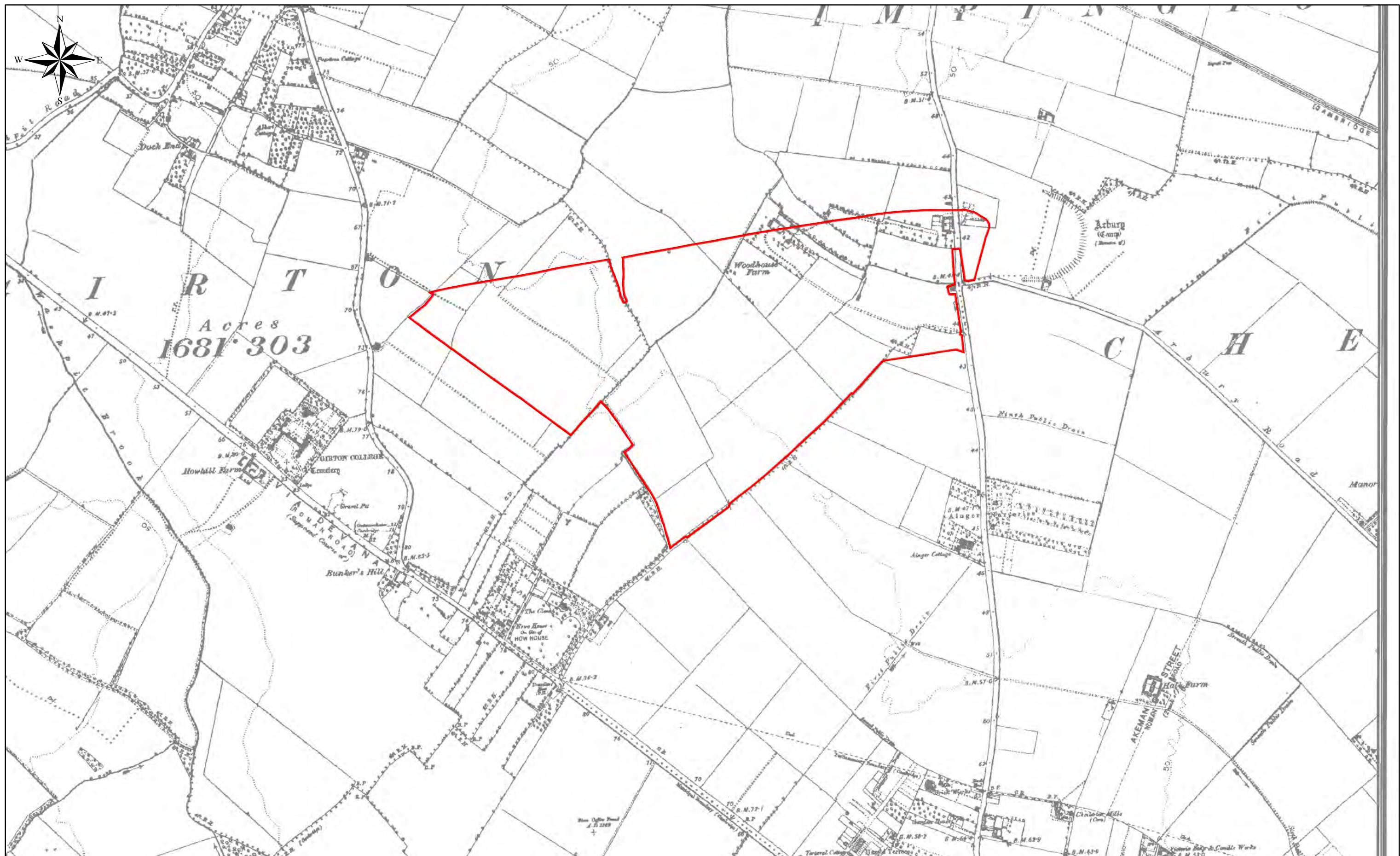


Figure 10 - 1940 Historic Plan

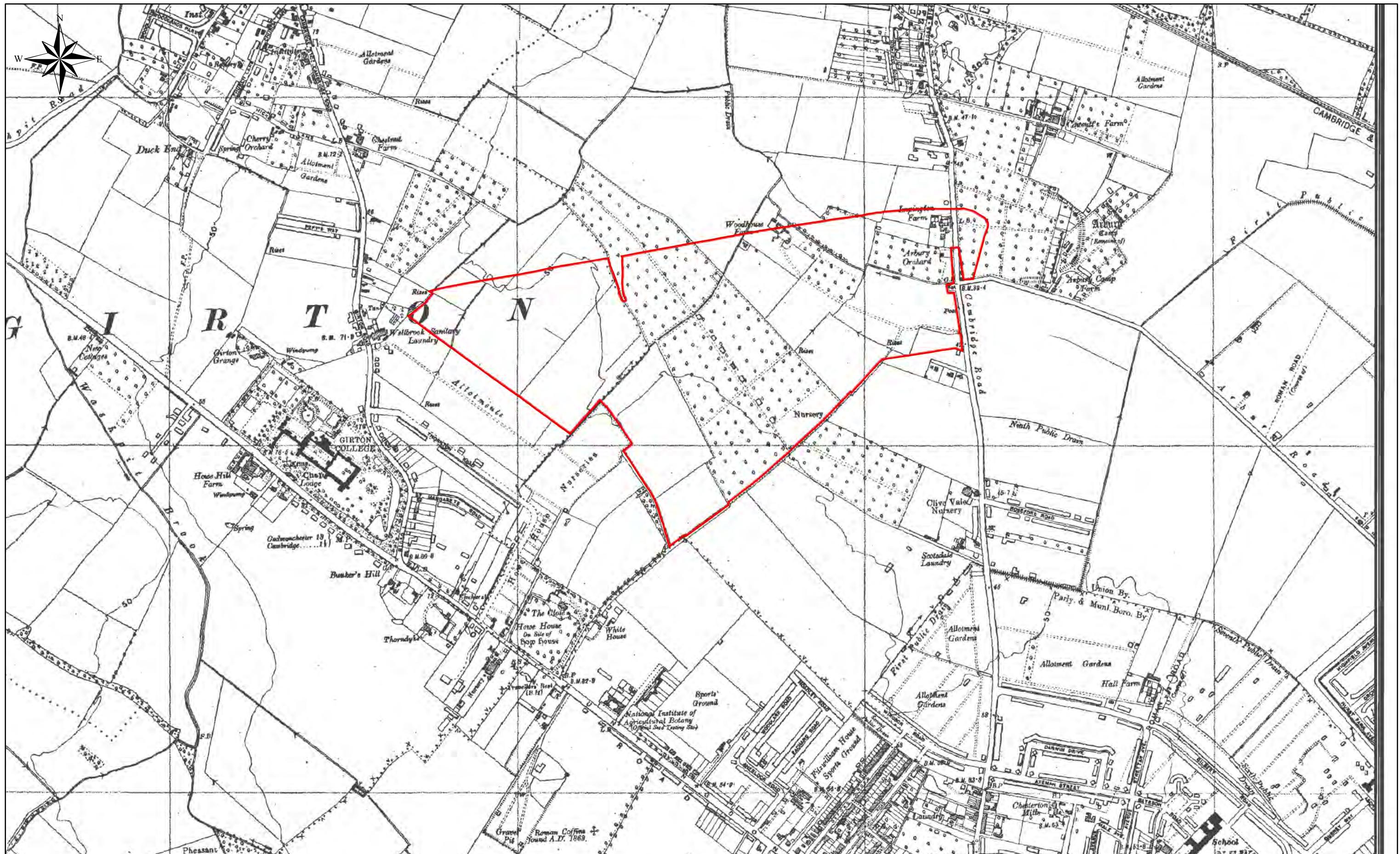


Figure 11 - Viewpoint Locations



Viewpoint 1



Viewpoint 2



Viewpoint 3



Viewpoint 4



Viewpoint 5



Viewpoint 6



Viewpoint 7



Viewpoint 8



Viewpoint 9A



Viewpoint 9B



Viewpoint 10



Viewpoint 11



Viewpoint 12A



Viewpoint 12B



Viewpoint 13



Viewpoint 14



Viewpoint 15



Viewpoint 16



Viewpoint 17



Viewpoint 18



Viewpoint 19

