

II. CI: YARE TRIBUTARY FARMLAND WITH PARKLAND

LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES

- II.1. The Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland occurs to the southwest of Norwich and is defined by the rural and urban reaches of the River Yare to the east and north, and by the settled plateau farmland around Hethersett and Wymondham (above the 40m contour) to the south. The character area is entirely within the Norwich Policy Area.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **Shelving landform with a gently undulating topography** created by the presence of small tributary stream valleys cutting through the landscape providing a variety of open/more intimate landscape settings and long/framed views.
- **Transitional landscape** occupying the mid ground between the upland plateau of the Wymondham-Hethersett settled plateau farmland and the principal Yare Valley and forming part of the transition between the rural and urban landscape.
- **Peaceful farmland with small farm woodlands** and intermittently wooded tributary valleys creating a quiet rural atmosphere.
- **Presence of large parkland estates**, particularly associated directly with the tributary valleys. Estate railings, boundary fences, tree-lined avenues and traditional wooded parkland contribute to landscape character.
- **Sparsely settled landscape** of small clusters of farmhouses, small villages and rural dwellings interspersed with large manorial buildings and halls.
- **A sense of impenetrability and remoteness** despite the presence of major transportation corridors. The Norwich Southern Bypass and A11 Wymondham Road trisect the landscape and the area is also traversed by the main Norwich-London railway line. These routes create corridors of movement and noise in this otherwise peaceful landscape. Elsewhere, there is an intricate network of narrow rural roads and lanes.
- **Yare Minor Tributaries Streams elusive** – evident but usually hidden within the landscape by topography or trees noticeable only at fording points or at close-range.
- **Arable and pastoral farmland** of cereals and sugarbeet with more pastoral land uses within the immediate tributary valley corridor. Fields surrounded by sparse hedges and hedgerow trees, with occasional mature/veteran oaks forming a distinctive feature alongside the lanes.

- **Vernacular architectural character**, predominantly of rural buildings and estate dwellings. More modern dwellings are found in the larger villages.
- **High number of large dwellings set in extensive grounds** including characteristic large detached halls and manor houses, usually constructed of brick, of high architectural quality, associated with the parkland estates of Keswick, Intwood, Thickthorn and Colney. These are frequently screened by woodland, and therefore visible only at close range.
- **Intermittent long views** towards the City of Norwich.
- **Presence of large institutional buildings** including new hospital and areas of the Research Park at Colney.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

- 11.2. The majority of the character area is underlain by the chalky Glacial Till known as Lowestoft Till. Where the narrow tributary valleys have incised the Glacial Till, thin linear bands of sand and gravels and alluvial deposits occur. This is one of the few areas where there deposits of the underlying chalk are exposed. However, this has no tangible influence on landscape character. The Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland lies predominantly between 10 and 40m AOD. This character area is more topographically diverse than much of the rest of Norfolk because of the combined influences of a landform which drops from the Wymondham Plateau to the Yare Valley and the indentations made into this by the minor (unnamed) tributary streams or becks, which cause shallow ripples in the landform. This leads to variability in the sense of enclosure/openness and leads to some areas with intermittent long distance views to the City and cathedral spire, particularly from the Southern Bypass, which bisects this area.
- 11.3. The numerous branching tributary streams of the Yare are responsible for much of the character of this landscape. The watercourses are frequently not visible in the landscape although the tree-lined corridors of willow, ash and alder are indicative of their presence. There are a small number of ford and bridged crossings, which are a characteristic feature of the area, as are the occasional farm ponds. The streams are the most ecologically interesting components of this landscape, and include a number of County Wildlife Sites. However, there are no national designations.
- 11.4. The predominant land use is arable farmland, mainly cereals, which occupy fairly large fields, often with denuded boundaries. This can be particularly dramatic due to the influence of the topography, creating wide open horizons and long views. Elsewhere the network of narrow rural lanes is lined by mature/veteran oaks creating a characteristic boundary feature. In some places, particularly associated with the immediate tributary valley corridor there are areas of pasture, usually grazed by cattle but with occasional areas of pig-rearing. The openness of the landscape is broken by deciduous woodland blocks, including plantation woodlands, characteristic clumps of Scots pine as well as the heavily wooded 'landscaped' parkland estates. These include both coniferous and deciduous species. The parkland estates, including

areas of English Heritage registered historic parkland, are one of the most distinguishing features of this area. Attractive and impressive gatehouses and railings provide visual reference to the presence of these landscapes and the Halls, which today frequently accommodate educational and commercial uses as well as residential uses. The main examples of this are Thickthorn Hall, Colney Hall, Intwood Hall, Keswick Hall and East Carleton Manor.

- 11.5. East Carleton Manor is a large Georgian style building built in 1964; Intwood House is a red brick Tudor-style manor built in 1807 and Keswick Hall, another brick mansion was built in 1818. Keswick has had a chequered history as a residence which was developed into teacher training college, which shut in 1981 and has now been redeveloped into offices and flats. There are also areas of historic parkland such as Great Melton, which has its origin as a mediaeval deer park. The use of brick, particularly in the large houses, can be partly attributable to the presence of a number of brick making concerns in these areas during the nineteenth century,
- 11.6. There are two principal settlements in this area, both of which are small villages – Swardeston and Little Melton. Both have flint-buildings and contain vernacular buildings with stepped gables. Throughout the area there are also a number of other attractive vernacular buildings such as the quaint flint and thatched cottage near Intwood Hall. There are also areas containing a number of more modern prestigious detached houses.
- 11.7. This area has a high number of churches including a number of the especially characteristic isolated churches, the most noteworthy of which is Keswick Church - a fine round-towered flint building which sits at the top of a dramatic sweep of arable farmland at the edge of the Yare Valley, surrounded by small wooded copses.
- 11.8. Part of the settlement of Cringleford is also within this character area (the remainder is in the Yare Valley Urban Fringe). This settlement, which has expanded considerably in recent times, is now virtually part of Norwich. Nearby are a number of large institutional buildings, principally the new hospital and the research park, at Colney. These are more conspicuous large elements and diminish the rural nature of this area of farmland, partially segregating the section of the character area north of the Bypass. This character area is an important transport hub with the A47 Southern Bypass, A11(T), and railway all passing through the area, including the major junction between the A47 and A11. These introduce noise and movement into this otherwise peaceful landscape.
- 11.9. The character of the Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland is illustrated in **Figure C1: Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland**

LANDSCAPE ASSETS

✓✓✓ very characteristic/important ✓✓ characteristic/important ✓ noticeably present/important

- Asset not present or present but by virtue of extent or quality does not contribute significantly to landscape character

ASSET/LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE		NOTES
NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL:		
Nationally important ecological assemblages	-	
Presence of Scheduled Ancient Monuments	-	
Presence of round-towered churches	✓✓	Keswick Church particularly noteworthy
Presence of isolated churches	✓✓	
DISTRICT/COUNTY:		
Strong regional vernacular character	✓✓	Mixture of stepped and Dutch gables.
Presence of historic parkland particularly EH listed.	✓✓✓	Numerous areas of parkland: very characteristic.
Wooded appearance	✓✓✓	
Distinctive valley landform	✓	
Waterways visible within the landscape	✓✓	
Watermills present	-	
Windmills present	-	
Moats present.	✓	
LOCAL:		
Pastoral Farmland with visible grazing animals.	✓✓	
Important Views that provide sense of place	✓✓	Views to and from Norwich and the Norwich Southern Bypass.
Willow pollard and/or poplar-lined watercourses	✓	
Drainage ditches	✓	
Wide grass verges alongside roads	✓	
Good hedgerow network	✓	
Mature hedgerow trees	✓✓✓	
Presence of river crossings	✓	
Sunken Lanes	✓	
Water bodies	✓✓	
Distinctive plateau landscape	-	

Area of or including significant strategic breaks between settled areas	✓✓✓	Very important strategic gap between Hethersett and Cringleford (Norwich).
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See summary table for greater explanation of Landscape Assets

SENSITIVITIES AND VULNERABILITIES

11.10. The principal sensitivities and vulnerabilities of this landscape character have been identified. They include:

- proximity to Norwich and loss of rural farmland character through expansion of the urban edge of the City beyond the Yare Valley, or development associated with the Southern Bypass/A11;
- particular vulnerability to loss of clarity of the rural/urban divide created by the Yare Valley;
- incremental change including upgrading of the rural lane network (e.g. kerbing and lighting) plus isolated developments (e.g. institutions) resulting in a more urban character;
- a gently shelving topography from the plateau and long views making this area especially sensitive to the location of any new development/infrastructure – and potential impact on views to the City;
- loss and degradation in the character of the historic parkland and designed landscapes, particularly with changing uses and demands;
- loss of mature tree boundaries (without replacement) resulting in further 'opening up' of views plus loss of woodland;
- suburbanisation of field and parkland boundaries.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

11.11. **The overall strategy is to conserve the peaceful rural character of the Yare Tributary Farmland and Parkland landscape and to maintain the clarity and distinction with the urban edge of Norwich. This will include:**

- conservation of the narrow tributary corridors with their areas of grazed pasture and wet woodland;
- conservation and enhancement of the historic parklands and designed landscapes and in particular ensuring that provision is made for appropriate long term management of these landscapes as new uses for sites come forward;
- management of the small farm woodlands which contribute to the more enclosed character, plus renewal of boundary hedgerow trees;
- maintenance of the character of the rural lane network;

- enhancement of the transportation corridors (Norwich Southern Bypass and A11) in this area and minimisation of their adverse impacts upon landscape character.
- protection of the remnant historic churches and their settings.

DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

11.12. Any development must respect the character of the Yare Tributary Farmland and Parkland Character Area and conserve and enhance the key landscape assets as described in the landscape character assessment. In particular it must seek to maintain the peaceful farmland landscape and a clear rural/urban transition. This will include reference to the following key criteria:

- respect the sparsely settled character of the area with small villages, isolated buildings of vernacular character and large institutional buildings in extensive grounds;
- protect the quality, character and setting of the key landscape assets, notably the tributary corridors and the historic parklands which characterise the Yare Tributary Farmland and Parkland;
- seek to ensure the restoration and management of historic landscapes as a condition of permission for new uses/development within these areas;
- consider impact of proposals on the intricate rural lane network – avoid widening, kerbing, lighting which will quickly impart a more urban character;
- consider impact on key views from the higher plateau landscape, the adjoining character areas (particularly the Yare Valley Urban Fringe) and views towards the City;
- ensure that the rural character of the landscape of the Norwich Southern Bypass Protection Zone is maintained and that differential development North and South of the road do not erode the unity of the Character Area.



- View from Langley Green at the edge of the character area towards the Norfolk Broads showing the characteristic open flat floodplain, boats and grazing.



- Characteristic 'isolated' round-towered flint church at Helington reached by winding rural lanes, illustrating the impact of pylons upon the rural landscape.



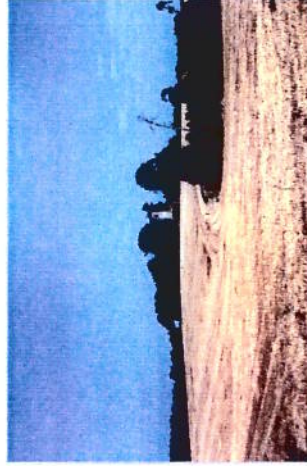
- Large scale arable landscape near Surlingham with sparsely distributed mature hedgerow standards.



- Bleak, open, character where loss of vegetation has created bald horizons punctuated by hedgerow trees and large farm buildings, for example near Langley.

Figure B3: Rockland Tributary Farmland

Figure C1: Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland



- Isolated picturesque round-towered flint church at Keswick set within undulating arable fields.



- The tributary valleys within this landscape are small and sometimes dry and as features have little influence on the character of the landscape.



- Attractive vernacular buildings such as this flint and thatch gate lodge at Intwood act as local landmarks in the landscape and indicate the presence of the adjoining parkland.



- Village pond at Swardeston - ponds are a characteristic feature of the district.

