

13. D2: PORINGLAND SETTLED PLATEAU FARMLAND

LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES

- 13.1. The Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland is defined by the 40m AOD contour and is located in the southeast of the Norwich Policy Area. Almost all of this character area falls within the NPA and this area covers a significant proportion of the NPA.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **Flat landscape, which rises to a gentle central dome**, with strong open horizons.
- **Densely settled core area**, predominantly of ribbons of post-war bungalows and other development which interconnect the older village cores. These older cores have a stronger vernacular appeal;
- **Large scale open arable fields** including sugarbeet, cereal and oilseed rape monoculture.
- **Long views from plateau edge** including to Norwich from northern plateau edge and to the Tas Valley.
- **Poor hedgerows but wide roadside verges** and numerous remnant hedgerow standards, particularly around settled areas.
- **Wooded character in parts and when viewed from afar**, particularly around the settlements and due to the presence of woodland blocks in the north of the character area.
- **Prominent landmark telecommunications towers** (radio and radar) located at the high point of the plateau and visible from a large area of the surrounding countryside.
- **Vernacular buildings present** but somewhat 'diluted' by more recent development.
- **Recreational routeways** including Boudica's Way leading to the Tas Valley.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

- 13.2. The geology of this area is Glacial Till with areas of glacial sand and gravel. The topography here appears flat or rippling, however from afar it is observable as being a single distinctive gentle dome. In combination with the elevated topography this has resulted in the potential for long open views of the plateau including views to Norwich from the northern plateau edge. In some parts this potential has been

interrupted by landcover elements (woodland, hedgerows and settlement) which have restricted plateau views or created intermittently framed long views. The plateau is nevertheless very prominent from the surrounding landscape.

- 13.3. Settlement is characteristic of the plateau and there is a fairly even balance between residential areas and farmland. The farmed plateau appears as a rural 'setting' for the built-up areas. The farmland is almost exclusively arable cropland, particularly cereals, which tend to occupy large fields. Hedgerow removal is evident and the remaining hedgerows are generally gappy and overgrown. Some large, attractive, mature hedgerow trees are evident, particularly along roads, marking the location of former hedgerows. Wide roadside verges are also characteristic – usually closely mown but sometimes diverse and flowery. Roadside ditches are also sometimes present.
- 13.4. Throughout the plateau and particularly in the north there are a number of large mixed coniferous-deciduous woodland blocks, which impart a wooded and more intimate character. Two of these woodlands, located east of Stoke Holy Cross, are classified as ancient. There were two areas of parkland: one on the north plateau edge at Framingham Pigot and the other at Bixley on the eastern plateau edge but these have now declined.
- 13.5. There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the Poringland Plateau, clustered around Arminghall in the north west of the character area. These monuments are the remains of Bixley Hall (with associated water features) and the remains of a medieval settlement close to Arminghall. There are a number of further monuments near to these along the boundary of the character area.
- 13.6. Settlements in this area include Poringland, Framingham Earl, Framingham Pigot, Yelverton and Arminghall. Most of the settlement in the area is of a post-war character, including ribbon bungalow development along the small roads which connect the older settled areas of the plateau which in part blurs the transitions between villages making them indistinct. The churches in these villages tend to be round-towered, with the notable exception of Framingham Pigot (a later spired church replacing an older round tower). The buildings of the older settled areas are frequently brick, with some flint or flint details. Where ornamental gable ends occur they tend to be of Shaped or Dutch character although stepped gables also occur e.g. Yelverton Hall. The principal landmarks of this area, visible for some distance across South Norfolk, are the water towers located on the northern plateau edge and the large communications towers centrally located at the high point of the plateau. The area has a number of important recreation routes, including parts of Boudica's Way which leads down from the settled plateau to Venta Icenorum in the Tas Valley and interconnects with other routeways.
- 13.7. The character of the Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland is illustrated on **Figure D2: Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland.**

LANDSCAPE ASSETS

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

- Asset not present/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	✓	Some areas of ancient woodland.
Presence of Scheduled Ancient Monuments	✓	
Presence of round-towered churches	✓	
Presence of isolated churches	✓	
DISTRICT/COUNTY:		
Strong regional vernacular character	✓	
Presence of historic parkland particularly EH listed.	-	-
Wooded appearance	✓✓	Large mixed coniferous-deciduous blocks
Distinctive valley landform	-	
Streams 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/from Norwich – telecommunications towers are distinct local landmarks
Willow pollard and/or poplar-lined watercourses	-	
Drainage ditches	✓	
Wide grass verges alongside roads	✓✓	Often wide and flowery, particularly where they are a result of hedgerow removal.
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	✓	

See summary table for greater explanation of Landscape Assets

SENSITIVITIES AND VULNERABILITIES

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

- further ribbon development along the rural lanes particularly where this would blur the distinction between individual settlements;
- developments that intrude upon plateau edge views either from the plateau or visible from the surrounding countryside, particularly the visually sensitive area between the plateau and the city of Norwich;
- developments that impact upon or intrude upon the setting or views from recreational routes;
- location of further tall structures such as communications towers which would break the skyline and would adversely affect the perception of a rural hinterland to the city of Norwich;
- further opening up of the landscape through loss of woodland, hedgerows or hedgerow trees;
- improvement of remaining rural lanes including kerbing, lighting or loss of verges.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

13.9. **The strategy for the Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland is to maintain its character comprising a settled core with distinct smaller outlying villages within a context of open agricultural fields and woodland blocks. Enhancement of the landscape quality is also sought, in particular through:**

- improved maintenance and selective restoration of hedgerows and hedgerow trees particularly on the outskirts of settlements;
- encouragement of wildflowers on verges.

DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

13.10. Any development must respect the character and landscape assets of the Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland. This should include consideration of the following:

- maintain the distinction and separation between the core settled area around Poringland and the smaller outlying settlements;
- consider the impact of developments upon views from and to the sensitive edge of the plateau, particularly in the north of the area which is intervisible with Norwich;
- limit further intrusion of masts, pylons and other tall structures upon the skyline;
- ensure that any new development is well-integrated into the landscape and maintains the quality of the transition between the settled and agricultural landscape;
- avoid settlement that accentuates the linear quality of the post-war settlement pattern
- avoid developments that adversely affect recreational routes through the area.



- Typical Wymondham street with appealing timber-framed and brick vernacular.



- View of the plateau demonstrating the flatness and sense of openness, in part due to the removal of field boundaries.



- Mulbarton church and pond illustrating the character of the smaller settled villages on the plateau.



- Typical Wymondham street with appealing timber-framed and brick vernacular architecture.

Figure D1: Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland

Figure D2: Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland



- Characteristic wide verge near Upper Stoke in this case with a diverse assemblage of wildflowers.



- Large open fields near Framingham Earl broken by wooded blocks that help integrate the settlement into the landscape.



- Tall communications pylons at the high point of the plateau are visible throughout much of the eastern part of the district.



- Rural road outside Poringland with denuded roadside hedgerows and attractive mature oak hedgerow trees. Hedgerows around the settlement are more intact than elsewhere.

