

Great Barton Parish Council

Landscape Appraisal at Cattishall, Bury St Edmunds

**Strategic landscape proposals to
protect settlement identity**

March 2012



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Front cover photo: Cattishall c.1980, timber barn, now demolished.

1. Introduction

The intentions of this report

This report has been prepared for the residents of Cattishall, a small hamlet in the parish of Great Barton, to the north-east of Bury St. Edmunds, in relation to the proposed strategic growth areas adjacent to Moreton Hall. The arable land to the west of the hamlet has been designated for 1250 new dwellings and other associated uses. To the south, expansion of Moreton Hall further east is also proposed which will assimilate the southern end of the lane, beyond the old level crossing, on which the hamlet sits.

The residents wish to conserve the character of their hamlet, screen the new development and ensure important local landscape features are retained. It is hoped the land owners, the developers and St. Edmundsbury BC will give this submission due consideration.

St. Edmundsbury BC launched a consultation exercise in March 2012 through the publication of their 'Vision 2031'. In the 'Preferred Options' document relating to strategic growth (p75) questions 47 and 45 relate to these land parcels (see Figure 3 Strategic growth areas). They invite consultees to respond to the proposed development boundaries. This study is timely to allow the residents to respond to consultation and it will help inform the residents' response.

Method of approach

This study takes a historic landscape approach to evaluate the landscape for its key characteristics and to identify any features of value that should be retained and integrated in any future masterplan. It also uses Landscape and Visual Impact

Assessment methods to identify who will experience the effects of the new development and the nature of the change.

In addition to observations from a site visit the study draws on the following sources:

- landscape character assessment by Suffolk County Council
- Historic landscape character mapping by Suffolk County Council
- St. Edmundsbury planning policies
- maps and references from archives
- aerial photographs

The report concludes with a landscape strategy and sketch concept to suggest a form to the interface between Cattishall and the new developments to both the west and south, and a set of recommendations which aim to influence the site masterplans. These will minimise detrimental effects on the wider landscape and benefit not only to the residents of the hamlet, but to all those who enjoy the amenity it offers.

Planning background

Two of the five strategic growth areas proposed in the Core Strategy, adopted in 2010, will affect Cattishall. (See Figure 3: Strategic growth areas.) The areas of proposed expansion known as 'North-east Bury St Edmunds' and 'Moreton Hall'. The former is earmarked to deliver 1250 homes and other land uses and comprises 3 arable fields to the west and north-west of Cattishall. It comprises the land east of the A143, from where access will be provided, to the green lane on which Cattishall is located.

Within the parcel the developers, Berkeley homes, have proposed their preferred concept for the layout of the development. (See fig 3 Strategic Growth areas) This will be developed into a masterplan during the course of 2012

Across the railway line to the south the proposed eastward expansion of Moreton Hall will mean a change from the current arable land use to 500 houses and a secondary school. The hamlet will, therefore, eventually be bounded on two sides by new development.

2. Description of site

Cattishall comprises an old farmhouse and 4 cottages that date from the 20th century. Old maps show earlier cottages here that would have been associated with the farmstead. A large timber barn complex also existed until the early 1980s which is currently under pheasant cover. Across the railway line are two further cottages on the far end of the lane where it meets Mount Road, and the Flying Fortress pub is located south of these. The original pub building was previously the farm manager's cottage so was strongly associated with the farmstead.

The dwellings sit either side of a spur of the isolated Green Lane, severed when the level crossing was closed in the 1970s. The ancient Green Lane links the Thurston road to the east, past Gt. Barton church, and across farmland to the Bury/Gt. Barton road to the west (A143) at Anglenook Cottages. It continues beyond as 'Coltons Ride' which bounds the Barton Stud. The lane is surfaced only as far as the route into Cattishall and is an attractive feature

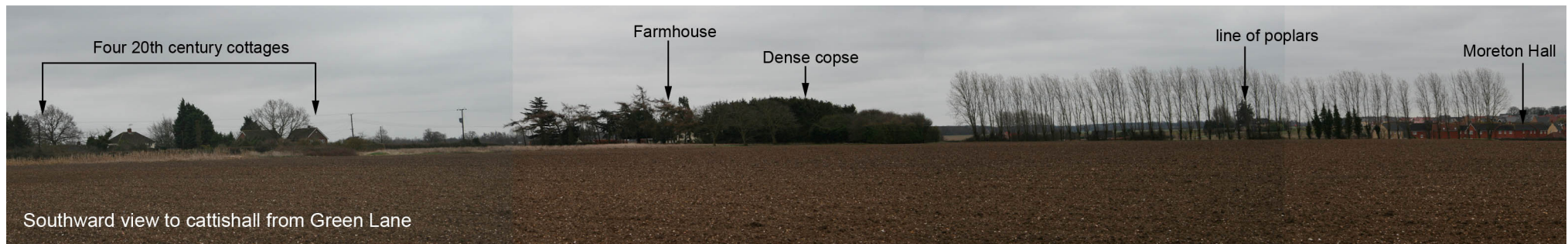
with wide grassy verges, well managed hedges to either side and mature trees within. The westerly, unsurfaced part is used for farm access and by walkers for whom it is a valued local route.



View along Green Lane

A linear T-shaped track is shown on historic and current OS maps which connects Cattishall farm with Green Lane and land due south. This partly aligns to an old field boundary (see figure 6) and the underpass beneath the railway. It is not marked as a footpath on the current OS maps.

In terms of topography, the land to the east and north is on the plateau and is relatively level, between 55 and 60m AOD, but to the west land begins to fall gently away towards the River Lark.



3. History of Cattishall

The ancient meeting place of the court of the Abbott of Bury St Edmunds was at Cattishall. The Saxons held a local parliament here (the Hundred Moot) which continued after the Normal invasion as a court of the King's justices. In 1305 the location of this Shirehall was moved to Henhow, to the NW of Bury. An artificial tumulus would have marked the location of the moot of the local 'hundred', the administrative unit of the day. It is probably this moot mound, no longer present, that gave rise to the original name 'Cateshill'. The tumulus is no longer present or mentioned on current OS maps although its site is noted on OS maps of 1926. However, the Cattishall moot is much older than the existing medieval records indicate as it was probably Roman in origin. The tumulus was excavated in 1957 and was found to contain Romano-British as well as medieval pottery. On earlier OS maps a collection of buildings is seen here. On the 1904 OS map the barn is named 'Tyburn Barn'. Tyburn is a word synonymous with execution as Tyburn was the part of west London where hangings took place. Together with the association of a place of justice, Cattishall may therefore also have had its own gallows.

The sequence of historic maps provides a good picture of how the character of the current landscape, which is relatively recent in

appearance, came about. The land around the farmstead was historically heathland. On maps from the 1700's a narrow strip of land can be seen around which the buildings were organised which was a protrusion of Blowthorn Heath to the south. There was 'Upper Green' and 'Lower Green' in 1741, in 1783 it is named 'Catshall Green'. (see Figures 4 and 5) Perhaps this is why the lane is named 'Green Lane' as it led to the Green, rather than because of its grassy appearance

Agriculture in this part of Suffolk was generally on common arable fields, with areas of grazed heathland in between, up until the 18th and 19th centuries when the land was enclosed by Acts of Parliament. Such enclosure was relatively late and resulted in larger open fields than is associated with earlier enclosure. As a consequence field patterns tend to be regular and linear and, as a consequence, surrounding roads and hedges also tend to be straight. In this area it is also known that there were large areas of heathland, across which straight, direct routes would also have been standard.

There is marked change in field pattern from an 1805 map to the c.1887 map (Figure 6) when irregular small field shapes and strips

have evolved into regular, rectilinear forms. This might be due to Parliamentary enclosure, although records show that land in this area was under the ownership of the wealthy Bunbury family from 1746 to the early 20th century, and other wealthy families prior to this. The smaller square fields west of the farmhouse seen on 1958 maps were amalgamated by 1971 into the large field seen today. Around the farmhouse there are remnant landscape features. There is a line of poplars, which appears to follow an old east-west field boundary, and 3 walnut trees adjacent to the mixed copse behind the farmhouse, These features mean the scale of the landscape is finer grained here than to the west which is much more open and featureless.

4. Landscape character

The landscape around Cattishall is a relatively recent manifestation but it clearly also contains ancient features within it. The area demonstrates close fit with the prevailing landscape character typology developed by Suffolk County Council in its LCA (Landscape Character Assessment – www.suffolklandscape.org.uk. See Figure 7). It places Cattishall in its 'Plateau Estate Farmlands' landscape type. There are a series of landscapes of this type in the area, along the A14 from Gazeley in the west to Thurston in the east as well as a stretch to Sapiston in the north. It's an area where the transition from the distinctive Breckland character changes into that of the Suffolk claylands to the east. This type is characterised by:

- Flat landscape of light loams and sandy soils
- Large scale rectilinear field pattern explained by late, parliamentary enclosure

- Network of tree belts and coverts. Woodland cover is scattered but can be found in greater density around Rougham.
- Large areas of enclosed former heathland
- 18th- 19th & 20th century landscape parks (as seen in nearby in Gt. Barton and Rougham. Barton Hall burnt down c.1914 and its park has been redeveloped for housing, Rougham Hall was bombed in WWII and left as a ruin surrounded by conifer plantations)
- Clustered villages with a scattering of farmsteads around them
- Former airfields (Rougham)
- Vernacular architecture is often 19th century estate type of brick and tile.

Another feature of this landscape type is the pressure it is under from settlement expansion. The LCA concedes that the simple, regular and open structure of this landscape type gives it higher capacity for absorbing settlement expansion, however, it warns: *"It is important to integrate the settlement into the surrounding rural and sparsely settled countryside to minimise the impact on the character of the wider countryside"*

It also states the prevailing settlement pattern has a:

"strong tendency towards clustered villages surrounded by a scattering or rural farmsteads. Where ever possible this clear distinction should be maintained."

These two statements give a clear indication that hamlets such as Cattishall are important contributors to local character and should not be assimilated by encroaching development.

The LCA also provides guidance on land management and recommends that this character type is well served by attempts to restore and enhance tree belts, plantations, historic parklands and their elements. St Edmundsbury BC also gives relevant direction in its planning policy regarding the interface between rural areas and development. In the Natural Environment Chapter in 'Protection of the Landscape' the Local Plan notes (para. 10.11):

“There is considerable scope for improving the landscape around built up areas and the adjoining countryside. It is important to reduce the visual intrusion of development and to protect and enhance the landscape features of the area.”

Local character

On a more local level the area around Cattishall can be sub divided into 4 local areas where distinctions in character can be detected. (See Figure 8 Local character areas)

- Character Farmstead and Green Lane
Area 1 : Straight lane with wide grass verges and well managed hedges. Houses of hamlet are not readily apparent and are well concealed behind vegetation. Hedges provide enclosure and conceal views to wider landscape/urban area. Landscape features are generally in good condition.
- Character South of railway
Area 2 : Sense of interrupted landscape, with railway, strong visual presence of new houses and infrastructure of Moreton Hall Hedges removed, only remnants remain.

- Character Open rolling land
Area 3 : An uncharacteristically large open field for the area. Little screening from tree cover and in combination with falling contours, views toward Bury and Moreton Hall define the skyline and bring sense of urban influence.

- Character Enclosed, estate fields
Area 4 : Repetitive linear arable fields with enclosure through well managed hedges creates farm estate feel. Slightly more wooded feel north of Green Lane where in field copses and belts of woodland form skyline. Here the well managed hedges have more trees within them. There are fewer trees to the south/east of Green lane but the hedges still provide strong sense of enclosure and order.

5. Visual effects - Views

The front of the farmhouse faces east and to the rear of the house and gardens is a dense copse and line of poplars. The arrangement of the grounds and boundary hedges to the south also make views in this direction very limited. This arrangement means the views to the new development, from the farmhouse, will be effectively screened.

The four cottages to the north, on the other hand, face west and currently experience long views to the sugar beet factory on the horizon. These four cottages will, therefore, experience views over the new development at close range albeit through the partial screening offered by the intervening farm hedge and garden vegetation. Additional screening would therefore be beneficial on

the development boundary here, in a form that would be in keeping with local character.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

To summarise, Cattishall has local value as an isolated hamlet for the following reasons:

- it is a contributor to locally characteristic settlement pattern
- it is sited on an historic Green
- it had an important role in relation to the ancient Abbey settlement at Bury
- the Green lane is an important landscape and biodiversity feature, uncommon and distinctive, and should be conserved as far as possible, in its current form.

Therefore, it is proposed to respond to the Vision consultation with the following points:

- 1) To retain hedges on Green Lane within a green framework of pedestrian and cycle routes, and a wider network of rectilinear greenspaces. This will help conserve the character of Cattishall. Their future management must be properly addressed through the planning process.
- 2) North of the farmhouse the eastern development boundary of the 'B.S.E.NE' parcel should be redrawn some 100m further west. This will allow the planting of a continuous linear woodland belt as shown in Figure. 9 to reduce the visual effects of the new development on the residents of the cottages. This form would be in keeping with the linear

arrangement of the fields and preserve the isolation of the hamlet. A landscape belt here would conserve the site of the tumulus and the Tyburn Barn. If public access was permitted, interpretation could be provided here in relation to the importance of the site in Medieval times. A belt of vegetation on the edge of the plateau would also have the added effect of softening and breaking up the skyline from views from the west of otherwise hard, angular rooflines.

- 3) Immediately south of the farmhouse the incursion of the development could come further east towards the lane, as the visual impact here would be low, although a belt of boundary vegetation would still be recommended to screen the houses from the wider landscape.
- 4) South of the railway line the landscape is of lesser value. (see photos in figure 9) After the building of the railway this southern end of the lane was severed and the character degenerated and is now strongly influenced by the adjacent residential area of Moreton Hall. However, it was once part of the historic Green and the view southward along it would be conserved if it could be retained as a greenway route for pedestrians/cycles. Restoration of the hedges here (only remnants remain) would contribute to St Edmundsbury's policy for the protection and enhancement of landscape features in countryside adjoining built up areas.
- 5) The green lane represents the most significant landscape feature of value and should be left intact along its length to retain its special character. Ideally, severing it with roads should be avoided by creating two separate development parcels unlinked by roads, with only pedestrian/cycle provided between the two. The future management of the lane should be considered carefully to ensure it is managed

appropriately for its continuing importance to the landscape character, to biodiversity and amenity. Additionally, other trees/vegetation features such as ‘Severals Clump’ a copse in the northerly part of the site should be retained for the same reasons.

7. Landscape Strategy

The conclusion to the appraisal process is a landscape strategy which aims:

- To ensure that existing landscape elements and features, which are significant due to their landscape, amenity, ecological or historic value are retained and appropriately accommodated within the proposed development.
- To protect the identity and segregation of Great Barton Parish including Cattishall Green.

Objectives

All these points refer to corresponding letters / numbers on ‘Figure 10: Strategic landscape masterplan’.

Open Space

- A) Part of Open Access Land / Country Park as shown in ‘Vision 2031’ document.
- B) ‘Cattishall Green’ strategic open space to protect the setting of the hamlet and maintain its contribution to public amenity as part of a green link to the open countryside.
- C) ‘Severals Clump’ woodland area to be retained within green space attached to green link. It is suggested that the Green space be rectilinear in form.

Structural Planting

1) 20m wide woodland plantation:

- Mixed broadleaf and conifer woodland plantation using similar species as mature woodland plantation on opposite side of A143.
- Required to screen development and segregate from adjacent ‘Estate Farmland’ landscape associated with Great Barton Parish.
- Reflect woodland pattern on opposite side of A143 to augment ‘Estate Farmland’ landscape character and form wooded entrance into Great Barton Parish.
- Existing field hedgerows to be retained on edges of woodland.

2) 50m wide woodland plantation:

- Mixed broadleaf woodland plantation using indigenous species.
- Required to screen and segregate development from Cattishall Green, Great Barton and rural landscape vegetation pattern that is in keeping with the local landscape character.
- Required to protect the character of ‘Cattishall Green’ in order to mitigate the effect on the existing settlement and maintain open space setting of Cattishall.

3) 10m wide buffer planting and hedgerows:

- Retain & reinstate hedgerows to enclose lane.
- Mixed native shrubs and small trees to form buffer between existing dwellings and proposed development.

Existing Green links:

4) Green Lane

- The existing lane and its associated trees and hedgerows and verges shall be retained in their entirety, allowing only a limited number of openings for pedestrian links to other paths.
- Adjacent development shall be carefully planned to avoid visual dominance of buildings on Green Lane and to avoid conflicts between development and existing trees and hedgerows.
- The lane should not be subject to any highway improvements that would detract from its existing rural character.
- The hedgerows and trees should be retained and remain under a single ownership in order to prevent piecemeal management by residents.

5) Cattishall - North of Railway

- Existing historic green link protected within 'Cattishall Green' strategic open space

6) Cattishall - South of Railway

- Existing historic lane to be retained to provide pedestrian and limited vehicular access. New buildings to be set back to allow retention / reinstatement of verges and hedgerows on either side of lane.

Proposed Green links:

7) North link

- Green link through development site incorporating existing field boundary hedgerow.

- Adjacent development shall be carefully planned to avoid conflicts between development and existing trees and hedgerow.

8) South Link

- Green link through following locally characteristic straight course development and linking Green Lane with footpath on southern side of railway.

9) East / West Link

- Green link alongside railway to accommodate additional circular routes

The objectives of this strategy are in accordance with the 'Vision 2031', which sets out the following principles for the delivery of strategic growth areas:

"a clear network of quality public spaces which will link into the existing built form of the town and the surrounding countryside, promoting connections between the old and new developments and enhancing both recreational and ecological diversity;

good movement connections which will enable each area to be easily walkable and will link to established routes and facilities and to the town centre and surrounding communities. There will be clear opportunities for cycling and walking and other alternatives to using the car; the overall character of areas will be locally distinctive and will contribute to the character of Bury St Edmunds."

Furthermore, Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy identifies the area to the north-east of the town for development that:

"maintains the identity and segregation of Great Barton".

Part 2: Figures

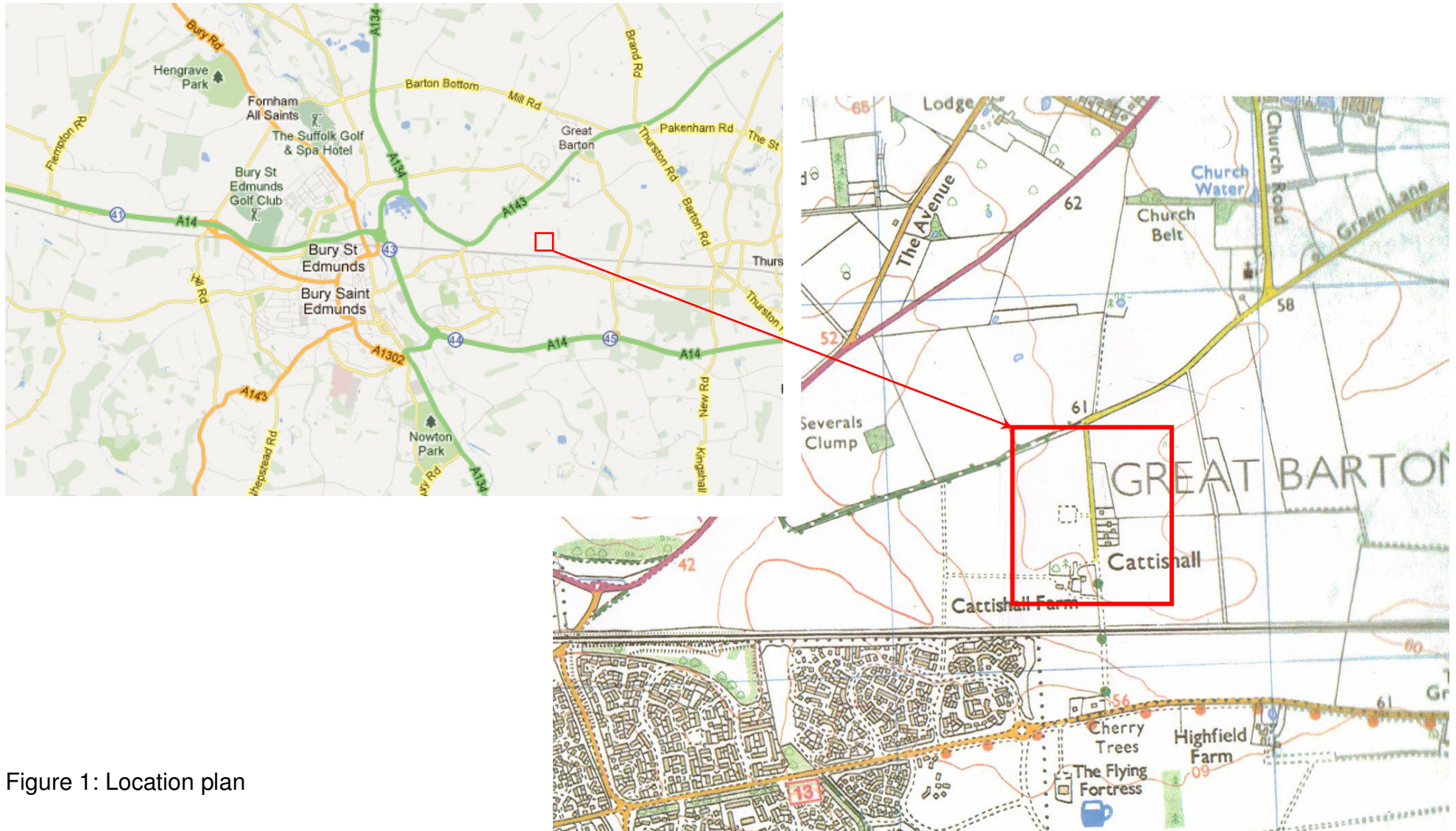


Figure 1: Location plan



Figure 2: Aerial view

BURY ST EDMUNDS VISION | 2031

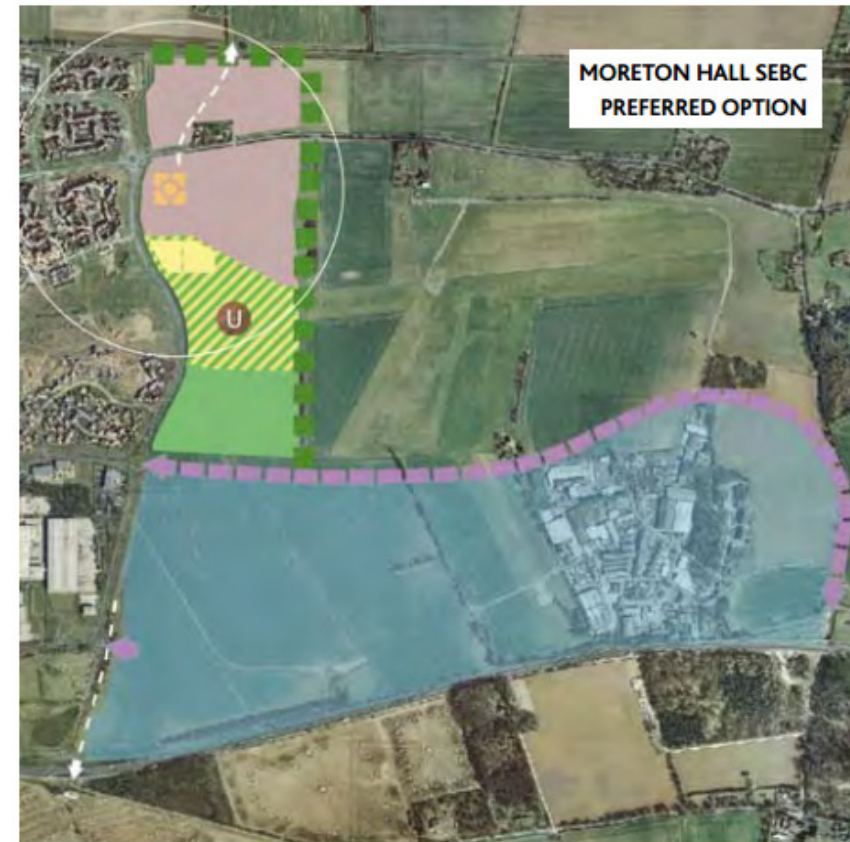
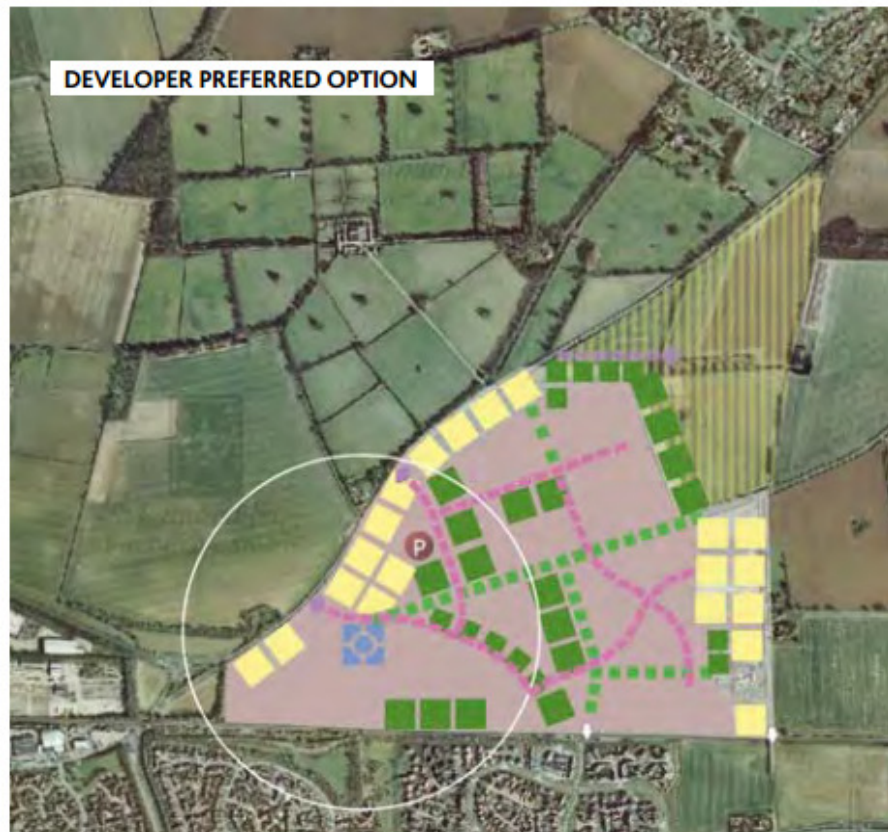


Figure 3: Strategic growth areas

<http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/live/pdf/Planning/Vision2031/BuryStEdmundsVision2031PreferredOptionsDocument.pdf>

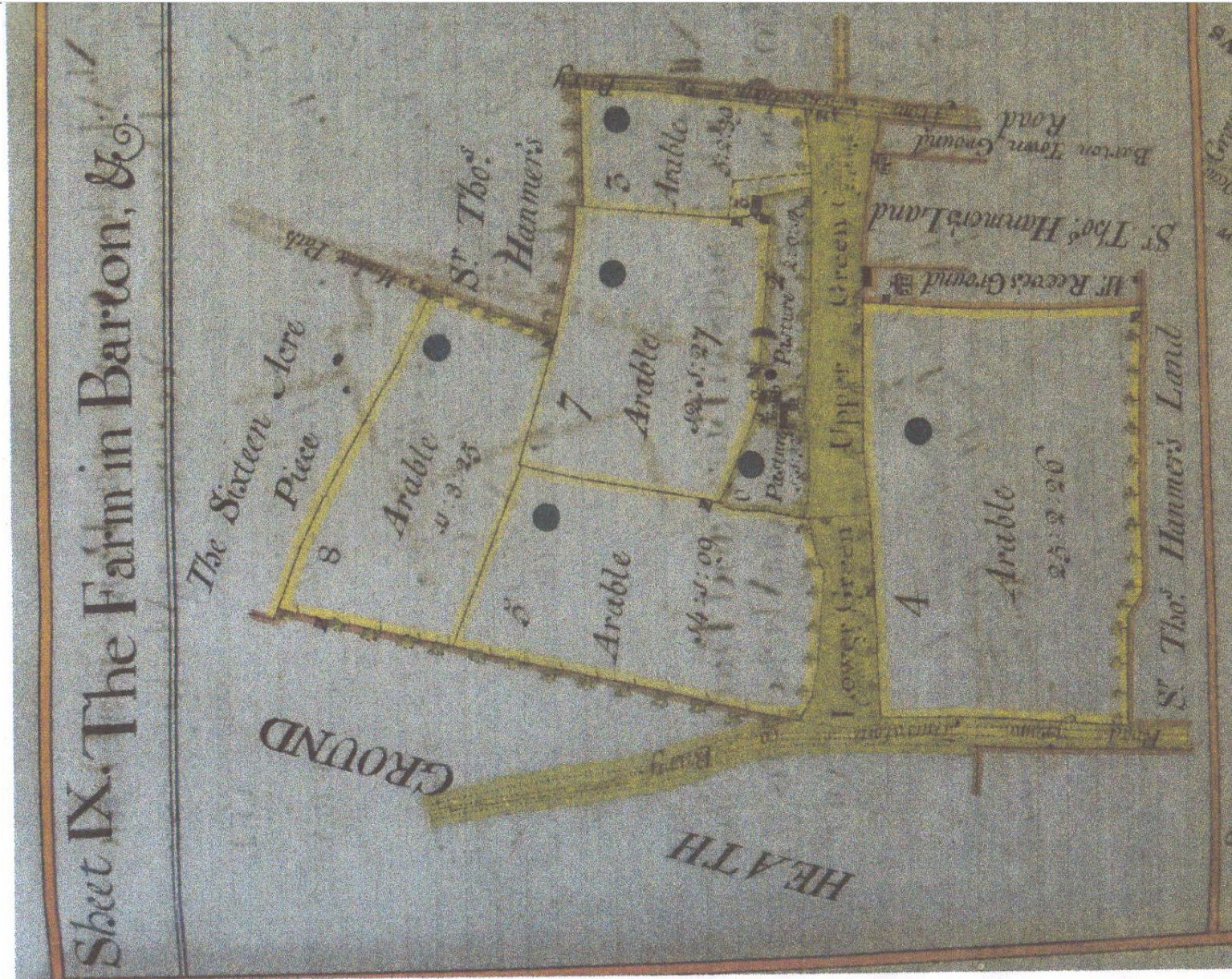


Figure 4: Map 1741

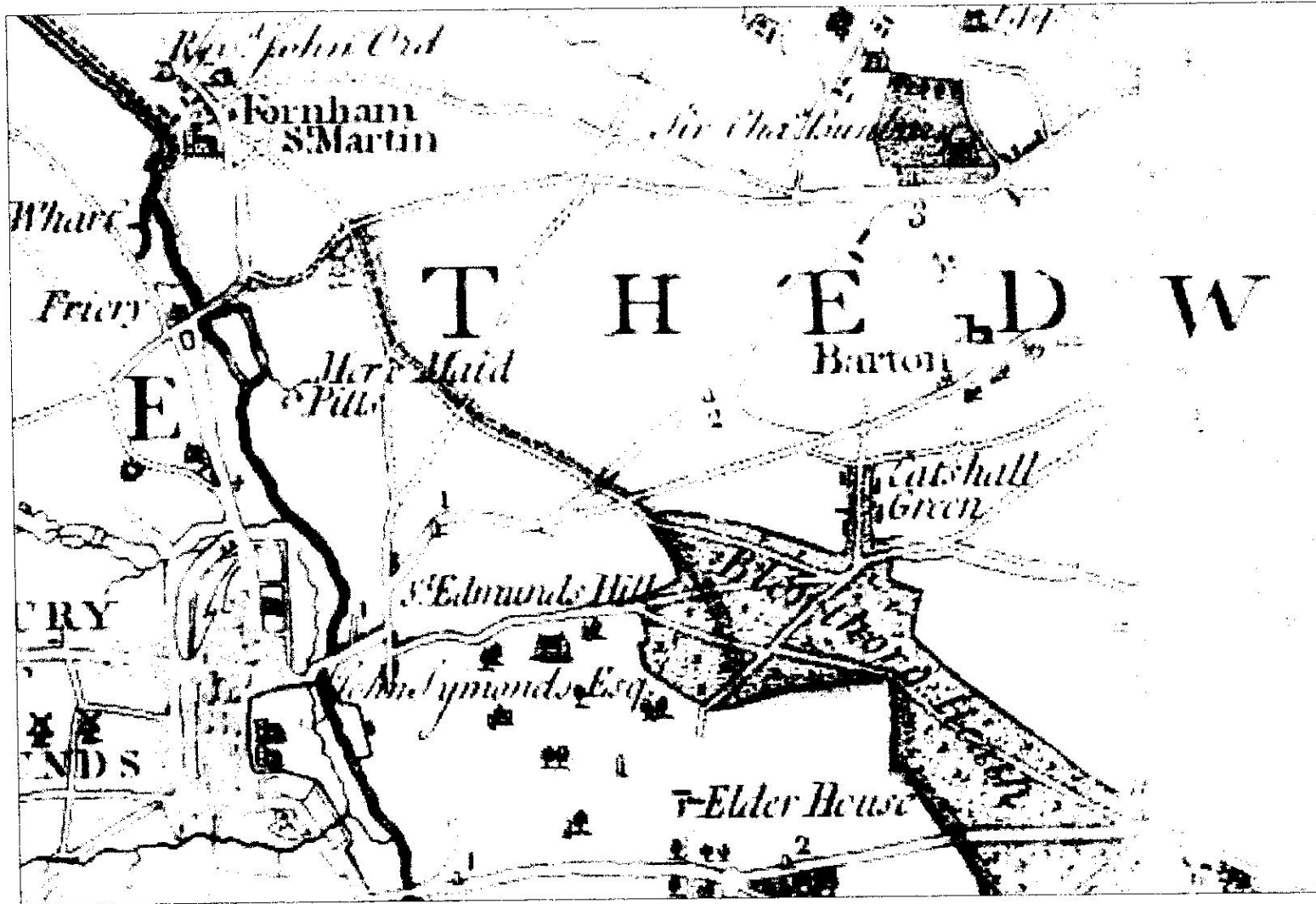


Figure 5: Map 1783



Figure 6: Map late 1880s

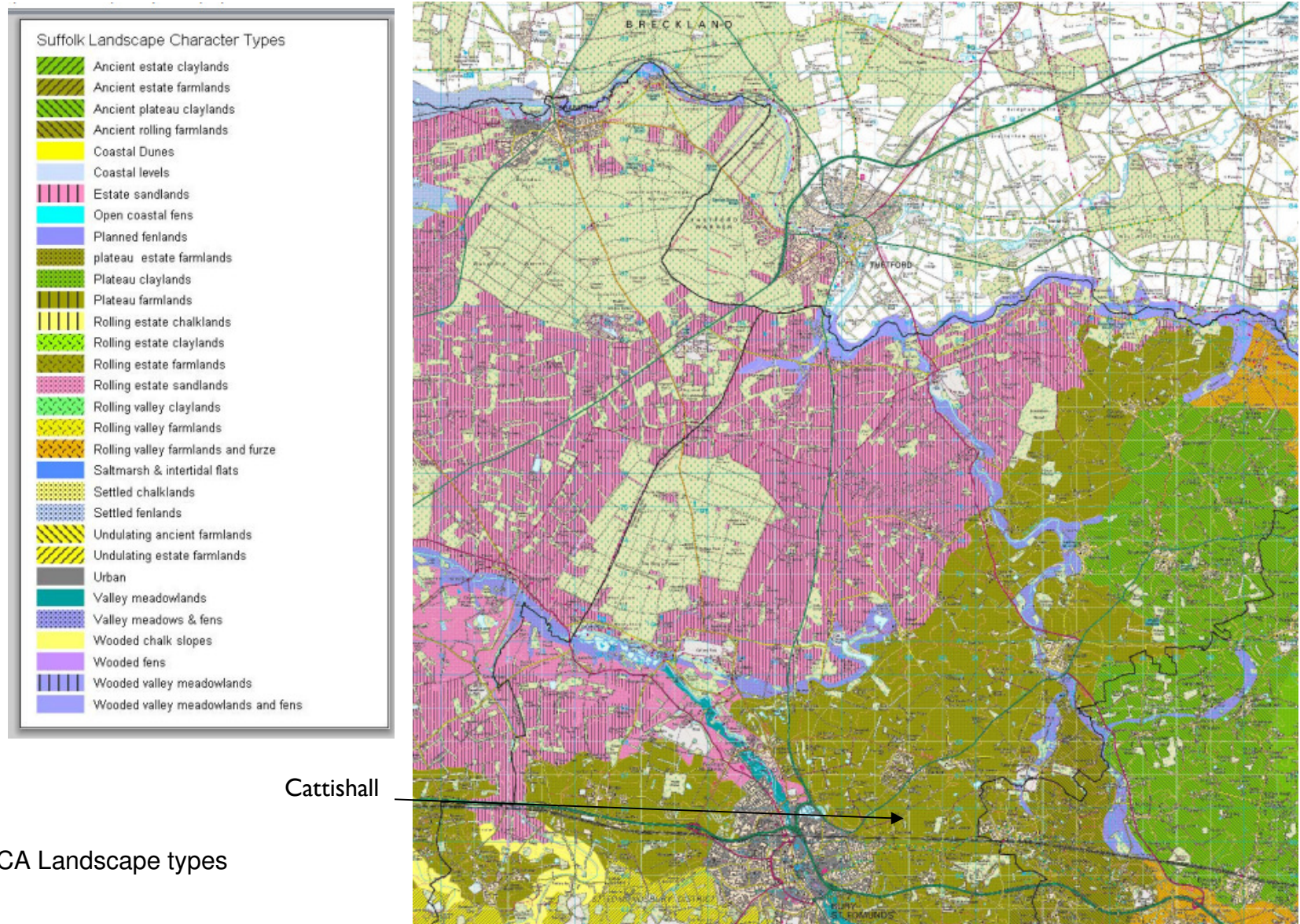


Figure 7: Suffolk LCA Landscape types

Source: <http://www.suffolklandscape.org.uk/downloads.aspx>

Local character areas:

- 1 – Farmstead and Green lane
- 2 – South of railway
- 3 – Open rolling land
- 4 – Enclosed, estate fields

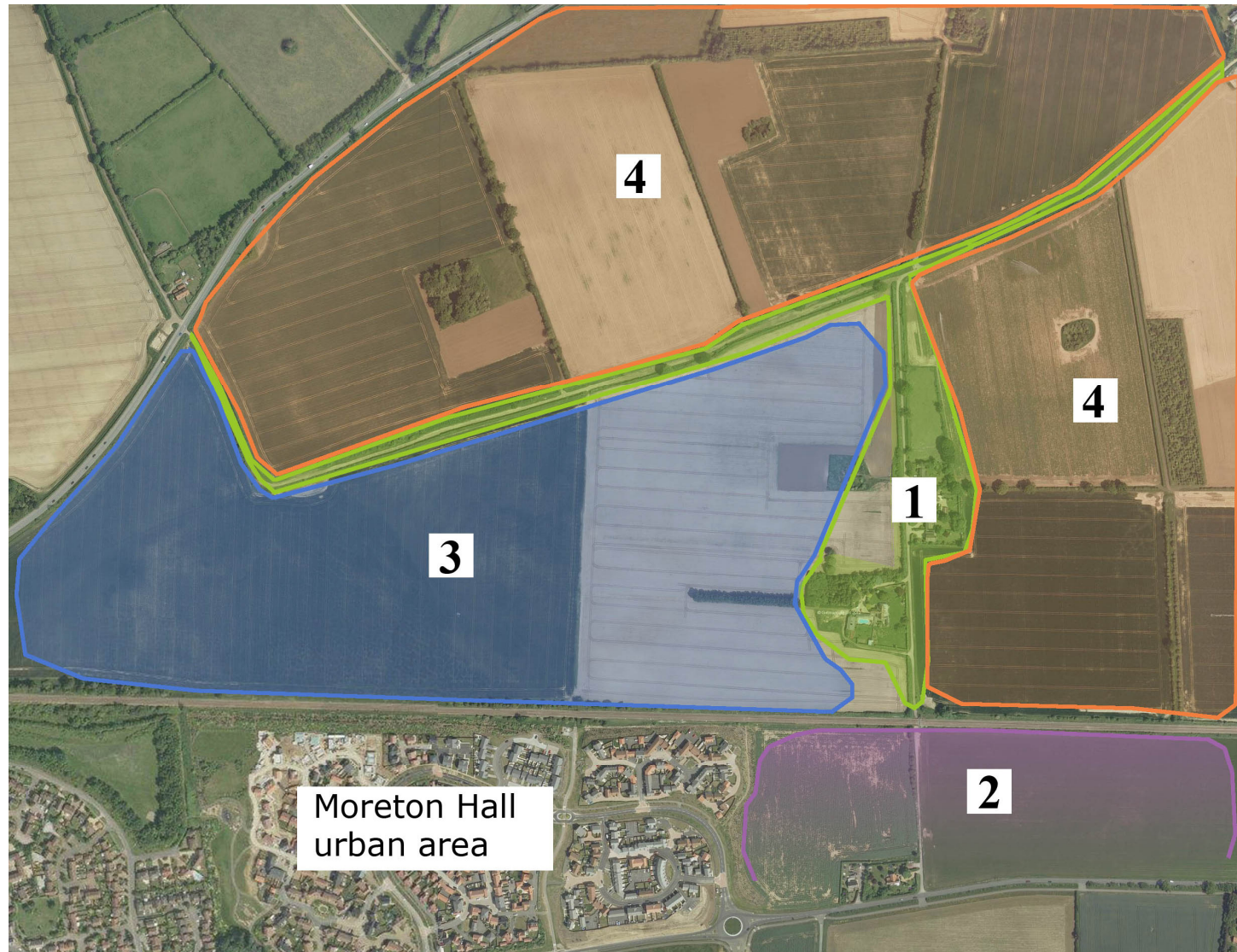


Figure 8: Local character areas



Figure 9: Photos from Green Lane.

Upper: from level crossing southward.
Lower: from south corner of farmhouse curtilage, northward.