



**Barningham  
Neighbourhood Plan  
Character Assessment**

**July 2024**

Prepared by Barningham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

With the support of



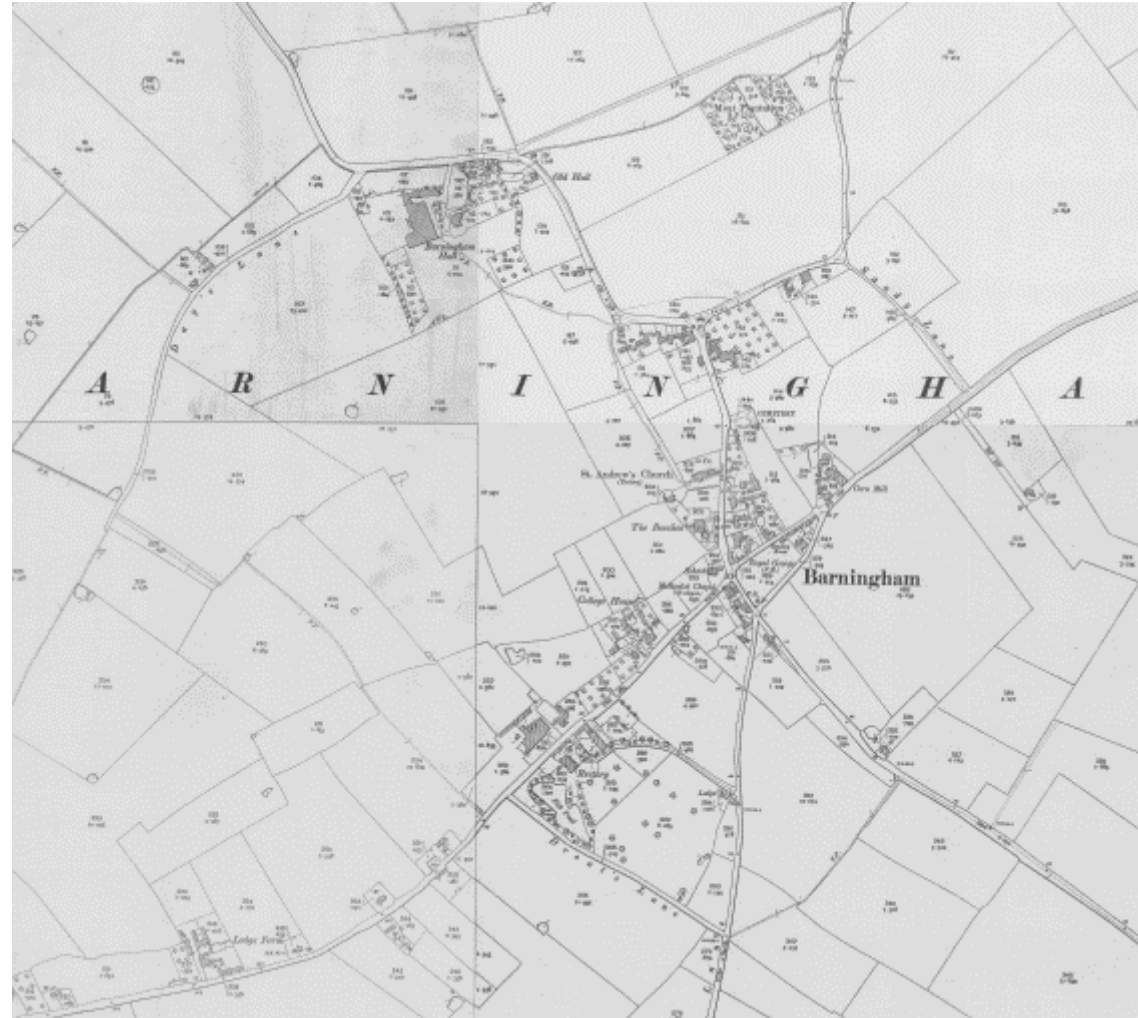
## Location

The village of Barningham consists of some 400 houses and lies some 12 miles north-east of Bury St Edmunds and just 2.5 miles south of the county boundary with Norfolk on the B1111. 8 miles to the north-west is the town of Thetford and 10 miles to the east is Diss.

It lies in open countryside on land gently rising from the nearby village of Stanton some 2 miles to the south. Other villages of Hepworth to the east, Coney Weston to the north and Bardwell to the west are all approximately 2 miles distant.

Originally an Anglo-Saxon settlement, it still retains the form of its early nuclear settlement pattern centred around the crossroads formed by the junction of several minor roads leading to the above villages and the through route of the B111 leading from the A143 in the south to the A11 in the north.

The Anglo-Saxon settlement pattern has been retained in spite of considerable housing development over the last 50 years. Many Listed Buildings remain along the original routes of the early village.



1904 Ordnance Survey Map of village centre

## Topography

The oldest buildings in the village are located along a ridge line following Bardwell Road and Hopton Road where heights are generally between 40 and 45 metres above sea level. To the north and south of this line the land drops gradually to 34 metres at the parish boundary on Stanton Road and, to the north, 28 metres at Aggies Piece.

## Geology

The underlying bedrock of this whole area is Cretaceous Chalk. This has been overlain by glacial deposits. These glacial deposits have created the gentle undulating countryside that we see today. These deposits are of 2 distinct types, the largest area around the village is of Lowestoft Till, a clayey deposit containing much chalk from the largest glaciation period (Anglian) to affect Britain. From approximately the centre of the village spreading northwards is a much coarser grained deposit caused by glacial outwash and contains elements of dolomite, granite and basalt. These are igneous rocks which have been carried from the far north of the British Isles and are known as Coney Weston Sands and Gravel. There are therefore two distinctive soil types to the north and south of the village leading to some differences in topography and farming use within the Parish.



Although many hedges have been destroyed, to allow more mechanised farming methods, the village is still largely cloaked by green hedgerows and mature trees on all approaches. Many of these existing hedges probably follow the lines drawn up during Anglo-Saxon settlement of the village. Important ones to the east and the south are certainly to be found on maps dating from the late 18th century.

## Landscape Character



The South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands National Character Area (NCA) covers most of the parish while the Brecks National Character Area can be found to north of the village centre. The published Area Profile for the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands NCA identifies a number of “statements of environmental opportunity” as detailed below:

*SEO 1: Maintain and enhance the rural character of the landscape and the contrast between the arable plateau and pastoral river valleys by maintaining agricultural productivity and encouraging sustainable land management practices that protect and enhance the landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity assets while benefiting water quality and water availability, as well as the rural sense of place and tranquillity.*

*SEO 2: Encourage measures that conserve and enhance the characteristic historic settlement patterns including notable village commons and greens, and historic features such as moated farmsteads and windmills, ensuring that access and educational opportunities are maximised; and ensure that the design and location of new developments add to the sense of place and history across the NCA.*

*SEO 3: Maintain and enhance the river valleys and their grazed flood plains which provide linkages through the landscape, including their valley fens and riparian habitats. This will support the operation of natural processes and their contribution to biodiversity, geodiversity, soil quality, water availability and regulating water flow and their function in contributing to the traditional rural character of the area.*

*SEO 4: Protect and enhance the area's ancient semi-natural woodlands, copses, river valley plantations and ancient boundaries including hedgerows and hedgerow trees, through the management of existing and the creation of new woods and hedgerows to benefit biodiversity, landscape character and habitat connectivity, and for the benefits to soil erosion reduction, water infiltration and quality, timber provision and carbon storage.*

Regionally, the East of England Landscape Framework shows that Barningham village is centred right on the edge of two different types of topography probably dictated by the effects of previously noted glaciation. To the east the topography is defined as "Wooded Plateaux Claylands" whilst to the north, west and south it is defined as "Forested Estate Sandlands".

Wooded Plateaux Claylands are formed from an ancient wooded landscape and consist of arable farms associated with heavy clay soils on gently rolling plateaux lightly dissected by minor river valleys which tend to create some more complex slopes in places. Typically these are areas of poor drainage creating waterlogged soils and ponds are a common feature. Around the Parish these ponds are easily identified on satellite photos although many are no longer in existence. They should not be confused with the many wet and dry Pingos (a feature of peri-glaciation) to be

found to the west and the north of the Parish. Normally in this type of topography one expects to see the scattered remnants of ancient woodlands connected by a network of ancient hedgerows. Within the Parish however there are few examples of remaining woodland. The exception being Square Plantation, woods around Barningham Hall and Aggies Piece. Many hedgerows do however remain. These hedgerows do contain many notable trees mainly oak, ash and field maple.

Typically the field pattern over this Wooded Plateaux Clayland part of the Parish is a mixture of irregular and sinuous boundaries still often defined by bushy hedgerows in spite of 20th Century boundary removal and regularisation of field shapes.

Neighbouring villages, Coney Weston, Hopton, Market Weston, Hepworth, Stanton and Bardwell are all largely within approximately 2 to 3 miles forming a fairly dense pattern of settlement for a rural area. There are also a number of large outlying farms in the Parish and all are



connected by a network of often hedged winding lanes. Barningham is atypical of villages in this type of topography as the majority escaped 20<sup>th</sup> Century development whilst Barningham suffered several significant developments.

To the north, west and south of the village is a simpler landscape, defined as “Forested Estate Sandlands”. Whilst still being gently rolling it becomes more open, with larger more rectilinear fields which tend to be the product of a more planned process of enclosure. A key feature of this part of the Parish are the many, largely dry, Pingos left by retreating glaciers which can easily be identified by small stands of trees dotted across these medium to large rectilinear fields.

Locally, the more detailed Suffolk Landscape Character Appraisal identifies that the majority of the parish falls within the definition of Ancient Plateau Claylands, characterised by arable farmland divided by an irregular sinuous field pattern, and scattered with ancient and plantation woodland. Settlements are scattered widely throughout this landscape, with parishes tending to have multiple built clusters of various sizes. The Landscape Character Appraisal identifies the following key forces for change:

- Expansion of garden curtilage
- Change of land use to horse paddocks and other recreational uses
- Settlement expansion eroding the characteristic form and vernacular styles
- Conversion and expansion of farmsteads for residential uses
- Impact of deer on the condition of woodland cover
- Large-scale agricultural buildings in open countryside
- Redevelopment of former airfield sites to new uses
- Development of wind turbines



The topography has also influenced the building materials used, which can still be seen in the ancient houses still remaining. Barningham contains in all 18 listed buildings including the Grade 1 listed church and the typical Suffolk white clapboard mill. The abundance of wood, clay and reed from near-by marshland means that, except for the church, all these buildings have fully utilised the locally available material. It is only later buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries that have utilised brick and stone when communication became easier and some of the local population more affluent.

## Character definition

The easiest way to approach an assessment of the village is to study the development of the village over its lifetime, as there is an obvious division between the village from earliest settlements until the 20th century and 7 separate developments which have occurred post Second World War.

The original settlement area which stretches to the west along the Bardwell road, north towards Coney Weston and East along Mill Road as far as the Mill on Hopton Road contains almost all of the listed buildings as well as the village school, shop, playing field (Cricket Meadow) and cemetery. There are then a further 7 distinct developments in the village which can easily be distinguished both in terms of chronology and building density.

In 2011 the population of Barningham was 956 having grown by 3% since 2001, while in 1901 the village population was just 399. Between 1901 and 2001 the population grew by 137% and in the subsequent ten years to 2011 by a further 3%. Much of this growth occurred with the construction of large new estates, such as at Millfield Road, Hopton Road, Bishops Croft and Church Gardens. More recently 21 new homes have been built at Lingwood Close bringing the 2019 population to an estimated 941.

## Characterisation




The built-up area of the village has been divided into distinct character areas, primarily defined by the age of the predominant buildings in the area. The extent of each character area is illustrated on the map below and the remainder of this document provides detailed characteristics of each character area. These will provide a basis for the formulation of a design policy in the Neighbourhood Plan and a reference document for the consideration of planning proposals in these areas.

## Character Areas



- 1 – Hopton Road
- 2 – Sandy Lane
- 3 – Bishops Croft
- 4 – Church Road
- 5 – Coney Weston Road
- 6 – Church Gardens
- 7 – St Andrew's Close
- 8 – Mill Road
- 9 – Millers Yard
- 10 - Lingwood Close
- 11 – Millfields
- 12 – Hepworth Road
- 13 – Bardwell Road, Stanton Road, Drout's Lane

## Key to symbols on Character Area Maps

-  Character area boundary
-  Bungalows
-  1½ storey dwellings
-  2 storey dwellings
-  3 storey dwellings
-  Village Services

-  Important green spaces
-  Important trees
-  Important hedgerow
-  Open frontages
-  Important views
-  Listed Building
-  Important gap

# 1. Hopton Road Character Area



General Characteristics	Land Uses	Landscape features
<p>Originally built by the local authority, the area primarily consists of semi-detached or terraced houses with two pairs of semi-detached bungalows at the B1111 entrance to the area. A further bungalow has been recently added at the rear of No 15 with access off Sandy Lane.</p> <p>Four new dwellings were constructed by Havebury Housing Association at 29A&amp;B and 30 A&amp;B following approval in 2003.</p> <p>The area is characterised by open gardens to the front and generally large rear gardens.</p> <p>A large green provides a focal point when entering from the B1111</p>	Residential plus an equipped Children's Play Area	The large green is important as is the overall impression of open frontages interspersed with the occasional picket fence or boundary hedge
	Density	Historic Buildings
	16 dwellings per hectare	There are no historic buildings of note on the character area
	Views / Landmarks	Roads, Streets and Routes
There are no important views of note into or out of the character area	Other than on the B1111, there are no footways in the development. There is a path between Nos 14 and 15 to Sandy Lane and the Play Area	

## 2. Sandy Lane Character Area



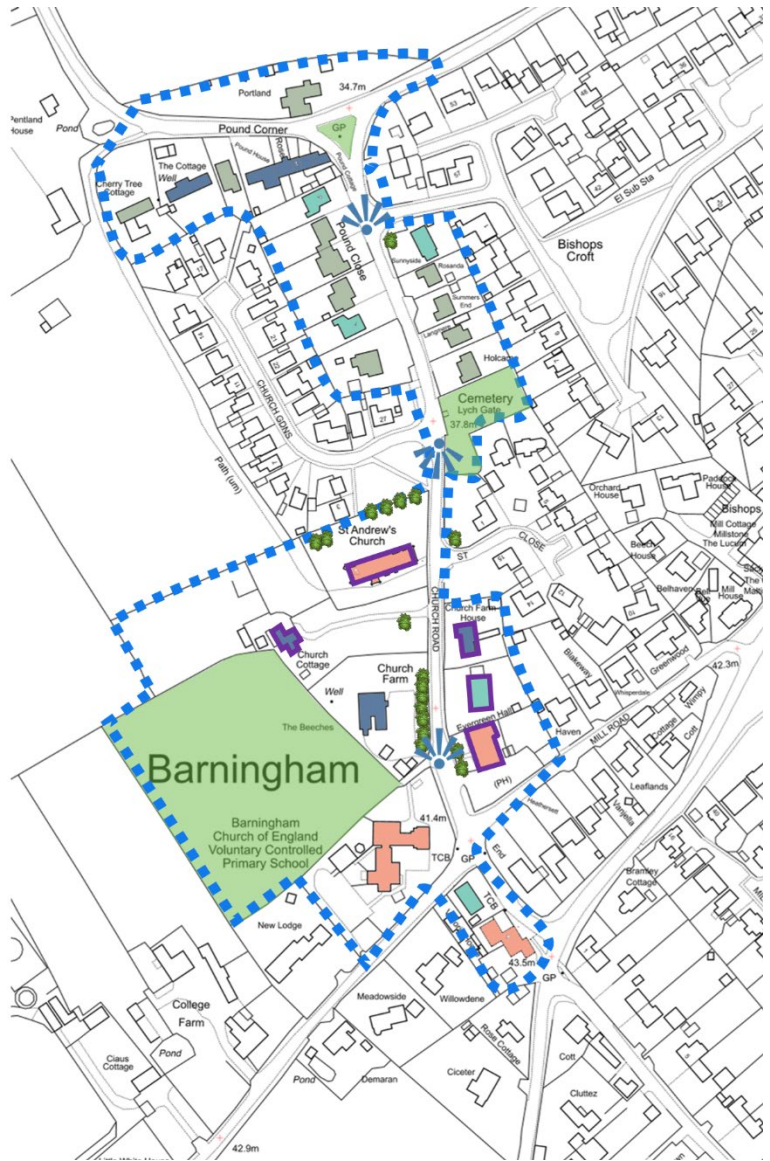
General Characteristics	Land Uses	Landscape features
<p>An area of mixed character accessed from Hopton Road and from Sandy Lane.</p> <p>Hopton Road frontage consists of two-storey dwellings whereas the remainder of the area is primarily bungalows.</p> <p>Some properties have distinctive long plots edging onto farmland to the east.</p>	Residential plus the Village Hall	The area does not contain any distinct landscape features
	<b>Density</b>	<b>Historic Buildings</b>
	21 dwellings per hectare southern end 7 dwellings per hectare north of Village Hall	There are no historic buildings of note on the character area
	<b>Views / Landmarks</b>	<b>Roads, Streets and Routes</b>
The view out of Sandy Lane to the south-east over agricultural fields is of significance that provides a linkage to the countryside.	Other than on the B1111, there are no footways in the character area. Sandy Lane is a public footpath running north of Hopton Road.	

### 3. Bishops Croft Character Area



General Characteristics	Land Uses	Landscape features
<p>A 1970's development focused around two green spaces. A mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings of 1½ and 2 storey houses as well as bungalows. Located along uniform building lines</p>	Residential	Two green areas dominate the area, both of which would qualify as Local Green Spaces.
	Density	Historic Buildings
	15 dwellings per hectare	There are no historic buildings of note on the character area
	Views / Landmarks	Roads, Streets and Routes
No views or landmarks of significance	The road is designed such that high speeds are not achievable and footways provide permeability through the area including a link to Sandy Lane to the east.	

# 4. Church Road Character Area



General Characteristics	Land Uses	Landscape features
<p>The historic core and hub of most of the village services. It includes the Parish Church, the Primary School, Village Shop and the Royal George Public House.</p> <p>The area has two distinct characteristics; the southern end is the historic core of the village where the church, public house and school are located while the northern end is predominantly single and 1½ storey dwellings which link the historic core and Pound Corner, a cluster of older dwellings.</p>	<p>Mixed uses. The northern end of the area is residential while the southern end is the location for the majority of the village's services and facilities including St Andrew's Church, the Cemetery, The Royal George public house, the Primary School and the Village Stores and Post Office.</p>	<p>The mature trees lining Church Road provide a distinct sense of place for this part of the village.</p> <p>To the north there are important views out onto the countryside while the green triangle at the junction of Coney Weston Road and Sandy Lane is a distinct and historic feature.</p> <p>A number of trees at the southern end are protected by preservation orders and the lych gate at the entrance to the cemetery.</p>
	<p><b>Density</b></p> <p>Dwellings to the north of the Church are constructed at 11 per hectare. To the south of the Church there is a wider mix of uses and residential development does not dominate. However, this area is characterised by buildings set in large grounds except in the vicinity of the shop.</p>	<p><b>Historic Buildings</b></p> <p>A cluster of Listed Buildings are located in the area including St Andrew's Church. Other buildings of local significance which are not designated as heritage assets include the Primary School</p>
	<p><b>Views / Landmarks</b></p> <p>Important views along the road incorporating listed buildings.</p> <p>To the north there are important views out onto the countryside.</p>	<p><b>Roads, Streets and Routes</b></p> <p>One of the main arteries of the village providing a link to Coney Weston and the north. Relatively narrow footways in places. Bardwell Road is very narrow in places, especially in the vicinity of the primary school, where there is a 20mph speed limit.</p>

# 5. Coney Weston Road Character Area



General Characteristics	Land Uses	Landscape features
<p>A distinct but separate area of the village that is outside the local plan settlement boundary and would once have been the location of the original Barningham Hall and grounds. The original hall, owned at one time by the Duke of Grafton, is believed to have been partly demolished in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the current Barningham Hall is not listed.</p>	<p>Residential properties set within mainly large curtilages which would have once been the grounds of Barningham Hall.</p>	<p>The area is largely screened from Coney Weston Road by hedgerows and trees and there are many fine trees within the area.</p>
	Density	Historic Buildings
	<p>The nature of the area means that the density of development is extremely low, but it is not appropriate to measure it in terms of dwellings per hectare.</p>	<p>Old Hall is listed Grade II dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and is believed to have been a hunting lodge. The timber framed barns forming Hobbits End, Midsummer Barn and Harvest Barn are also listed Grade II.</p>
	Views / Landmarks	Roads, Streets and Routes
<p>The screening and planting within the site mean that there are no significant views.</p>	<p>Coney Weston Road is the only highway in the area. Most of its length is outside the 30mph speed limit.</p>	

## 6. Church Gardens Character Area



General Characteristics	Land Uses	Landscape features
<p>A late 1970's development of single and two-storey dwellings in a cul-de-sac. Generally short front gardens except in corner plots.</p>	Residential	A green space at the entrance helps maintain the setting of St Andrew's Church and would qualify as a Local Green Space. Otherwise, limited landscape features.
	Density	Historic Buildings
	21 dwellings per hectare	There are no historic buildings of note in the character area
	Views / Landmarks	Roads, Streets and Routes
The view south along the close is punctuated by the Church tower which should be respected in any proposals.	Narrow cul-de-sac access road with footways and limited street lighting.	

## 7. St Andrew's Close Character Area



General Characteristics	Land Uses	Landscape features
<p>A development constructed in the late 1990's comprising 14 detached dwellings as well as a small car park that serves the church opposite.</p>	Residential	<p>A green space at the entrance helps maintain the setting of St Andrew's Church and would qualify as a Local Green Space. Otherwise, limited landscape features.</p>
	Density	Historic Buildings
	17 dwellings per hectare	<p>There are no historic buildings in the character area</p>
	Views / Landmarks	Roads, Streets and Routes
<p>The view out of the close is punctuated by the Church tower.</p>	<p>Narrow cul-de-sac access road with single footway and shared access road serving properties at the end.</p>	

## 8. Mill Road Character Area



General Characteristics	Land Uses	Landscape features
<p>Mill Road is a narrow lane that forms part of the historic core of the village. The lane is generally lined by hedgerows and two thatched properties are listed. More recent dwellings, primarily bungalows, have filled the gaps between these cottages and The George Public House.</p>	Residential	<p>The hedgerows lining Mill Road form an important feature and there is one tree protected by a preservation order. The open space at the junction of Mill Road and Hopton Road hosts the village sign.</p>
	<b>Density</b>	<b>Historic Buildings</b>
	13 dwellings per hectare	<p>There are two Grade II listed buildings in the character area.</p>
	<b>Views / Landmarks</b>	<b>Roads, Streets and Routes</b>
<p>There are no distinct views in the area.</p>	<p>Mill Road is a narrow lane without footways.</p>	

## 9. Millers Yard Character Area



General Characteristics	Land Uses	Landscape features
<p>Converted former corn mill with new dwellings constructed at the rear.</p>	<p>Residential</p>	<p>The hedgerows lining Mill Road form an important feature and there is one tree protected by a preservation order. The open space at the junction of Mill Road and Hopton Road hosts the village sign.</p>
	<p><b>Density</b></p>	<p><b>Historic Buildings</b></p>
	<p>Not appropriate to the conversion</p>	<p>The Mill and Mill House are both Grade II listed buildings</p>
	<p><b>Views / Landmarks</b></p>	<p><b>Roads, Streets and Routes</b></p>
<p>There are no distinct views in the area.</p>	<p>The access road is an informal access road designed for shared use.</p>	



General Characteristics	Land Uses	Landscape features
A new development constructed in the last five years on a site allocated in the Local Plan	Residential	The site is generally devoid of natural landscape features although a low level hedge fronts part of the Hopton Road frontage which softens the sudden contrast between open countryside and the built form.
	<b>Density</b>	<b>Historic Buildings</b>
	27 dwellings per hectare	There are no historic buildings on site
	<b>Views / Landmarks</b>	<b>Roads, Streets and Routes</b>
There is a view out to open fields to the south from within the development and along the southern edge	The access road has footways for a short length but then is a shared access way for the remainder of its length.	



General Characteristics	Land Uses	Landscape features
<p>A mixed development of detached dwellings, the largest estate in the village, constructed in the 1970's.</p>	Residential	<p>The frontage onto Hopton Road provides a large green area which doubles a surface water drainage reserve. A number of trees in this area screen the development from Hopton Road.</p> <p>Within the site there is generally little room for landscaping features other than one grassed area identified on the character map.</p>
	<b>Density</b>	<b>Historic Buildings</b>
	15 dwellings per hectare	There are no historic buildings in the area.
	<b>Views / Landmarks</b>	<b>Roads, Streets and Routes</b>
There is a view out to open fields to the south from within the development and a view of the Listed Mill from the development entrance.	The main spine road has footways while the smaller closes are a less formal access where vehicle and pedestrians share.	

## 12. Hepworth Road Character Area



General Characteristics	Land Uses	Landscape features
<p>A ribbon of development extending south-east from the village centre. On the northern side, many of the dwellings were constructed by the former Rural District Council and were typified by having large gardens set back from the road.</p> <p>The southern side properties are individually constructed in long plots.</p>	<p>Primarily residential but a small hair salon is attached to a property at the corner of Hopton Road and Hepworth Road.</p>	<p>The northern and southern edges to open fields are generally well screened. There is one tree on the southern side protected by a preservation order.</p> <p>Although the front gardens on the northern side are primarily fenced, the character is one of an open area with properties set back from the road.</p>
	Density	Historic Buildings
	<p>10 dwellings per hectare</p>	<p>There are no historic buildings in the area</p>
	Views / Landmarks	Roads, Streets and Routes
<p>There is a view out to open fields to the south from the edge of the character area.</p>	<p>The road has a relatively new footway on the northern side.</p>	

### 13. Bardwell Road, Stanton Road, Drout's Lane Character Area



General Characteristics	Land Uses	Landscape features
<p>Peripheral development on the edge of the village and clustered along Bardwell Road. A mix of large house including farmhouses and farm buildings as well as a row of dwellings originally built by the District Council.</p> <p>Hedgerows, woodland and distinctive walls also feature.</p>	<p>Primarily residential including some dwellings set in large grounds.</p>	<p>Hedgerows are dominant in the area as well as a number of ponds. Some trees are protected by preservation orders.</p>
	Density	Historic Buildings
	<p>Not measurable</p>	<p>Three Listed Buildings in the area</p>
	Views / Landmarks	Roads, Streets and Routes
<p>There are a number of important views across the plateau from this high point in the village.</p>	<p>The B1111 is fast moving as it approaches the village from Stanton, while Bardwell Road and Drout's Lane are less dominant highways but very narrow in places, especially in the vicinity of the primary school, where there is a 20mph speed limit.</p>	



**Barningham Parish Council**

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