

Former Land Settlement Association's Estate, Great Abington, Cambridge

Character Assessment



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1. Introduction

1.1 This character assessment describes the present day distinct appearance and feel of the former Land Settlement Association (LSA)'s Estate at Great Abington (the Land Settlement). The area shown in Figure 1 below was designated as a neighbourhood plan area on 5 September 2016.

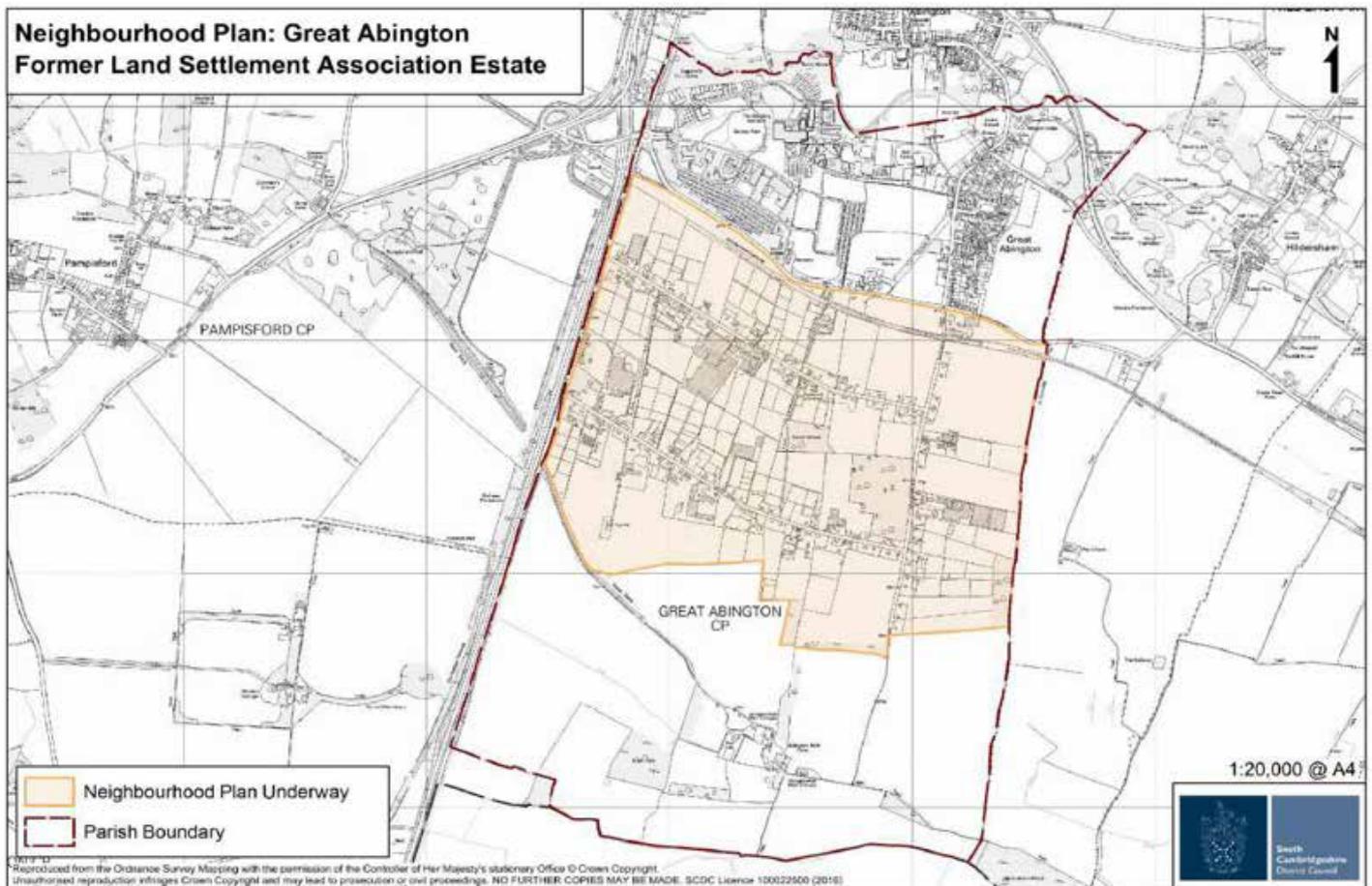
1.2 The character assessment has informed the direction of the Neighbourhood Plan. It should be used by developers/ applicants and decision makers to ensure that any future proposals which come forward will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.

1.3 The character assessment also shows how this area has changed, diversified and developed since its inception in 1936 until the sale of the LSA 'holdings' by the UK Government in 1983.

2. Overview of the former LSA

2.1 The Land Settlement is situated on the south edge of Great Abington Parish, eight miles south-east of Cambridge

Figure 1: Great Abington Neighbourhood Plan Area



2.2 The area covers 688 acres of mainly arable land laid out on a regular grid pattern of roads. There are 60 original houses from 1983, many of which have been extended, and two houses which have been demolished and rebuilt. There are also a number of new houses/annexes, some of which have planning permission. There are six horticultural businesses and a number of other businesses ranging from livery yards to garage workshops to home based workers.



Figure 3: LSA sites 1935 (Source Dearlove 2007)

3.5 The original Land Settlement houses on Pampisford Road, North Road and South Road were detached; those on Chalky Road were semi-detached.

3.6 They were all two-up two-down, they all had a piggery and small greenhouse within their curtilage and those for tenants also had extra land and could have extra buildings to support the agricultural/horticultural business e.g. packing sheds.

3.7 The holdings were originally agricultural in nature, however the land was poor and over time the holdings changed focus and became horticultural in nature with more greenhouses. The number of acres under glass increased over time as the horticultural nature of the Land Settlement became more intensive.

3.8 The Minister for Agriculture announced the end of the LSA scheme on 1 December 1982, and stated that the LSA would cease to be an organisation by December 1983.

3.9 By the time the LSA's Estate had ceased to trade, a number of the houses had been updated by the Government to include a single storey extension to the rear. This provided a separate bathroom and WC along with another room which was usually used as an extra bedroom or a dining room. Figure 4 shows 31 South Road from 1983 which is an example of this layout.

3.10 During 1983, the existing tenants were offered the opportunity to buy their holdings and those that were not purchased by their tenant were offered on the open market (see Appendix 1 for an example of a sale from Carter Jonas).

3.11 At this point in 1983 the character of the roads on the LSA was very similar to when the LSA was first constructed. North Road, South Road and Pampisford Road had detached houses on plots varying from half to eleven acres and Chalky Road had semi-detached houses with plots of the same variation. All plots had at least one piggery and one greenhouse



Figure 4: Example of a property with single storey rear extension in 1983



Figure 5: Single track road, junction of Chalky Road and South Road

3.12 As can be seen in the pictures, the roads were single track concrete with passing spaces to allow travel in both directions.

3.13 The number of hedges and trees in 1983 were limited as tenants had to gain permission to plant them and they were only allowed to create windshields for crops. In the three decades since the LSA was sold, the landowners have planted many thousands of trees and considerable hedging, mostly native species, so the land is now much less bare than it was in 1983.

3.14 Cultivation of the land on holdings has gradually decreased since the demise of the LSA in the 1980's.



Figure 6: 34 South Road, 1986



Figure 7: 2 South Road, 1983



Figure 8: 8 Chalky Road circa 1983 showing 4 acres under glass



Figure 9: 8 Chalky Road circa 1990 showing less glass



Figure 10: 8 Chalky Road showing all glass removed

3.15 As at January 2016, six smallholdings remained in commercial horticultural use. Other properties along North Road have become nurseries or landscaping suppliers. Many other properties are used for the keeping of horses and other animals.

3.16 The original predominantly horticultural character has therefore been replaced over time by what is now a semi-rural countryside with a large number of dwellings and associated outbuildings on the road frontages.



Figure 11: South Road with house on the right and outbuildings

3.17 Since 1983, the housing stock has been developed with extensions and in some cases complete rebuilds, however the regularity of the housing still remains.

4.0 Character of overall area

4.1 From the roads, the former LSA is characterised by the residential properties being well spaced out but largely hidden from the road within their curtilages behind hedge and tree belts. There are some notable exceptions where properties are not hidden from the road, for example at 55 North Road.



Figure 12: Properties on North Road showing the dwellings hidden within their curtilages and spaces in between, (originally field headlands), separate residential curtilages. (Source Google maps)



Figure 13: Properties on either side of North Road visible from road.

4.2 The residential dwellings, together with their piggeries and small greenhouses were all set within long rectangular plots with the growing land behind. The majority of the plots remain largely free from development as the dwellings are located along the road frontages and the piggeries, chicken sheds and other buildings are located to the side of the dwellings. All buildings are set back at an approximate distance of 15 metres from the front of the original house to the near edge of the road.

4.3 The openness of the area is primarily seen from within the smallholdings. It is also seen from the road in those places where there is no or a low tree/hedge belt in front of residential properties or in the gaps in between the residential properties.



Figure 14: Buildings in poor repair and unused land

Overview of layout

4.5 Across the NP area there is strong uniformity in the layout of roads and buildings:

- The roads are all single track concrete with passing places.
- The houses generally have a clear verge of about 1m width along the road frontage. This was originally a condition of sale when the land was sold by the Government.
- The layout of the holding is uniform.
- There is a specific space between the house and piggery. This was stipulated in by the then Ministry of Agriculture. All livestock had to be a minimum distance from a dwelling.
- The majority of piggeries were side on to the road, with the exception of those on North Road between Cutting Road and Chalky Road being set parallel to the road.
- In 1983, each plot was separated from the next by the headland of a field. It is this that has left a legacy of a gap (as described above) of approximately 30 to 40 metres between one residential curtilage to another and can still be seen in the majority of cases. There are some instances where this gap has been lost for example due to building of outbuildings in the gap.

Overview of buildings and details

4.6 Every plot included one residential property, a piggery and a greenhouse. Today nearly all the original houses still exist albeit many of them have been redeveloped into large modernised homes. Many of the piggery buildings also still exist although converted into garages or workshops. Some of the piggery sites have been redeveloped into residential properties. There is only one plot where there is no longer a building on the original piggery site.

Main residential properties

4.7 All housing in 1983 conformed to the same construction of brick to the end of the first storey with a gambrel roof or half hipped roof and wooden cladding on the first floor. Except for one they all had a flat roof single storey extension at the rear.



Figure 15: 59 North Road with gambrel roof



Figure 16: North Road with half hipped roof, 2017



Figure 17: Modernised extended property, sympathetic to original roof style and extended to the back therefore not extending frontage to road, 2017



Figure 18: Extended redeveloped South Road property. Roof is sympathetic to original half hipped roof and extended to back therefore restricting extent of frontage facing the road, 2017



Figure 19: Extended South Road property, keeping the brick on ground floor and wooden panelling on first floor. Half hipped roof style also retained.



Figure 20: Example of an extended semi-detached property, retaining the original style of the gambrel roof, 2017.

The piggeries

4.8 The piggery provided within each LSA plot comprised a timber shed for the pigs with passages on either side. There was also a work shed/feed room at one or both ends. The piggery had a gable roof and the work shed had a gambrel roof shape.

4.9 Seven dwellings have now been built on the sites of the former piggeries. These have largely been built as annexes to the main residential property within the plot. They are orientated in the same direction as the original site of the piggery and are subservient in size to the primary residential property.



Figure 21: Piggery as originally built with work shed in front, 2017



Figure 22: Piggery as originally built showing an in built passage at right side for clearing waste



Figure 23: Refurbished piggery on South Road into garage and work shed. Side passages still intact.



Figure 24: A newly completed residential annex on the site of a piggery, 2017

5. Breakdown of character by road

5.1 Pampisford Road

5.1.1 Pampisford Road is on the northern edge of the area and is the only adopted road. It provides access from the A505, A11, Newmarket Road past Granta Park to the village of Great Abington.

5.1.2 It continues past the village to link with the A1307 at the Hildersham crossroads. The road starts as a 50mph speed limit and then enters a 30mph limit, with traffic calming and offers access to North Road via Cutting Road and to Chalky Road via a footpath running from the top of the High Street over the old railway line.

5.1.3 The road has three holdings fronting onto it. Numbers 1, 2 and 3.

- Number 1 has already converted an old building to create an additional separate dwelling forming two residences on the original plot.
- Number 2 has been extended.
- Number 3 has been extended and the house has been sold separately to the rest of the plot. The rest of the plot has been given outline planning permission for eight dwellings (S/1433/16/OL).

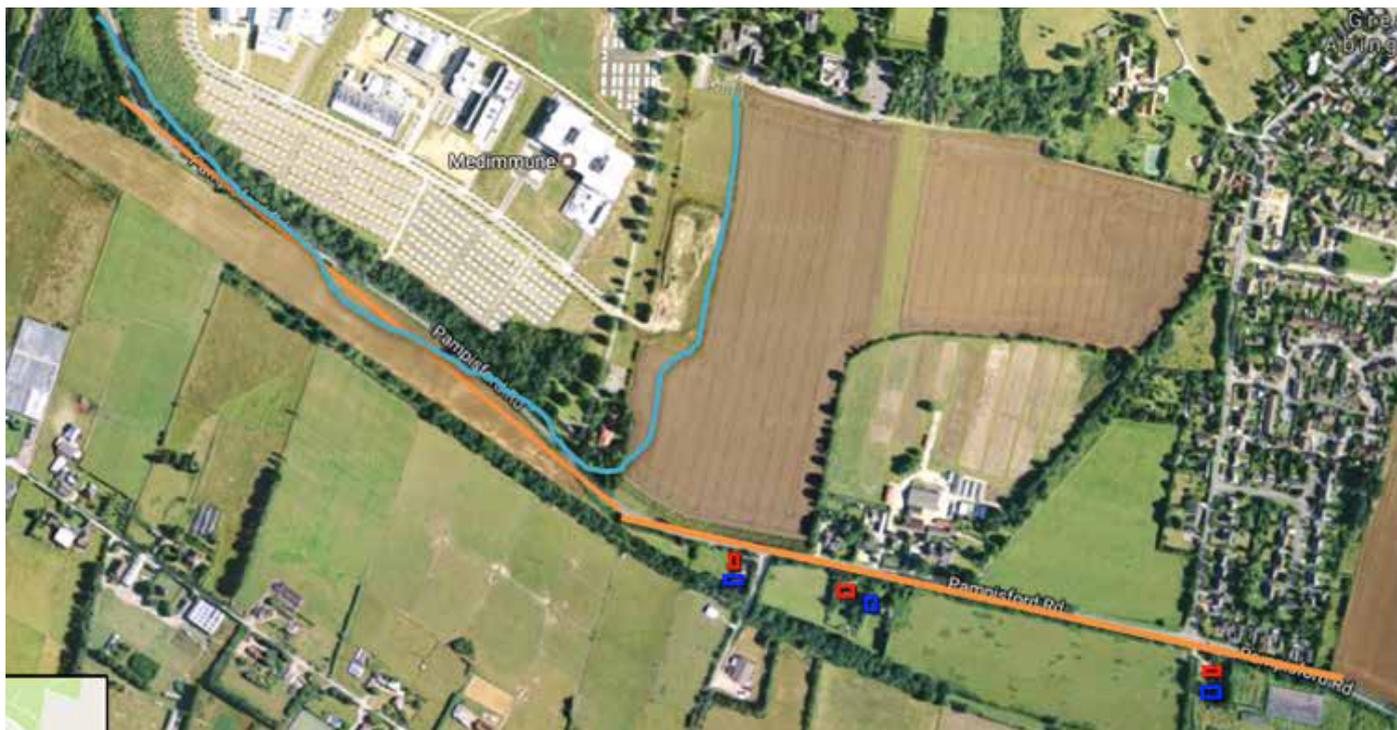


Figure 25: The Pampisford Road (in orange). Granta Park/TWI (in light blue), Numbers 1 to 3 in red, piggeries in blue (Source Google maps)

5.2 Cutting Road

5.2.1 Cutting Road connects the middle of North Road to the Pampisford Road, through a cutting where the old railway line used to pass over. There are no holdings with frontages on this road as it was a later addition to the road infrastructure being built during the Second World War.

5.2.2 The road surface is concrete with passing places.

5.2.3 When the LSA closed, the marketing company for the remaining growers, Cambridgeshire Salad Producers built their packing shed on Cutting Road and this is now a business which supplies staging equipment for events and concerts.

5.3 South Road

5.3.1 South Road runs from Newmarket Road to Chalky Road. It is a concrete road, 1 mile in length with a slight dog leg half way up and holdings opposite each other on both sides of the road.

5.3.2 The houses on South Road are all detached. The properties all have hedges fronting the road. These are generally set back from the road and provide space for pedestrians to step out of the path of traffic.

5.3.3 There are passing places at regular intervals to allow for the free flow of traffic.

5.3.4 All but three houses on South Road have been extended and two plots have been subdivided providing two additional independent dwellings. One original house has been replaced with a new build and another has been demolished in preparation for a new house to be constructed.

5.3.5 South Road has three operational market gardens, one mechanics business, one registered used car sales business and two livery yards.



Figure 26: South Road in orange showing houses in red blocks on both sides of the road with piggeries in blue blocks and footpaths (blue) connecting South Road and North Road (Source Google maps)



Figure 27: South Road looking west showing passing area



Figure 28: South Road looking east showing hedging on both sides of the road and passing area

5.4 Chalky Road

5.4.1 Chalky Road links South and North Road and extends past the junctions of both.

5.4.2 Figure 29 shows Chalky Road, with a continuous hedge along the road opposite the houses. The hedge continues until the T junctions with North and South Road. The hedge can then be seen, after the junction with South Road extending up Chalky Road towards where Chalky Road stops and becomes a footpath to Abington Park Farm.

5.4.3 Chalky Road continues past the junction with North Road to link the footpath to the village over the old railway line.

5.4.4 The houses on Chalky Road were all semi-detached, however two pairs of houses are now detached. Chalky Road only has houses on one side of the road as shown in Figure 29.

5.4.5 Chalky Road is also a concrete road with frequent passing places.

5.4.6 There is a substantial horticultural business (with most of the holding under glass or polytunnels, growing organic produce and providing significant employment) on the road, an electricians business and a livery yard.



Figure 29: The view of Chalky Road and the Pampisford Road past North and South Road to the end of Chalky Road. Chalky Road is highlighted in orange. The regularity and spacing of the housing is clearly evident. The houses are semi-detached or in pairs shown in red and the piggeries are shown in blue (Source Google maps)



Figure 30: Chalky Road looking north



Figure 31: Chalky Road looking towards the village



Figure 32: Semi-detached houses on Chalky Road, 2017



Figure 33: 17 and 18 Chalky Road, 1983

5.5 North Road

5.5.1 North Road runs from Chalky Road to Newmarket Road and is parallel to South Road. As on South Road, the houses are detached and opposite each other on both sides of the road.

5.5.2 The road is made of concrete and has frequent passing spaces.

5.5.3 There is a substantial horticultural business (with most of the holding under glass or polytunnels, growing produce and providing employment) and two nurseries on North Road along with one livery yard.

5.5.4 The houses on North Road have all been extended with the exception of 5, and two plots have already been subdivided.



Figure 34: North Road showing houses in red on each side of the road positioned opposite each other with piggeries in blue. The road is in orange and the footpaths to South Road in blue (Source Google maps)



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BY DIRECTION OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

FOR SALE BY INFORMAL TENDER

34 SOUTH ROAD

GREAT ABINGTON

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

together with arable land
amounting to 17.485 acres
or thereabouts (7.07 ha)
(Shaded on Plan)



A detached, two storey, mainly brick and tiled house, together with an old piggery and store and arable land. The house has recently been vacated and is in good decorative order.

The Holding is well situated in the middle of the former Land Settlement Association's Estate and is about ½ mile from the main A11 road. The property is about 1½ miles south-west of Great Abington and only 3 miles from the M11 at Stumps Cross. Cambridge is 6 miles, Saffron Walden 9 miles and Newmarket 13 miles.

The sale of this Holding presents the opportunity for a purchaser to acquire about 16 acres of good agricultural land and develop it as a horticultural/market garden unit, or other ancillary user.

The accommodation comprises:-

ON THE GROUND FLOOR:-

- Entrance Porch: with glazed front door leading to a small hall.
- Sitting-room: 17'10" x 11'1". Open grate and tiled surround. Two radiators. Double glazing to windows. One double and one single socket outlet.
- Dining-room: 13'0" x 11'0". Radiator. Double glazing to window. Double socket outlet. Room thermostat for central heating.
- Kitchen: 11'0" x 6'6" with single stainless steel sink unit (H & C) with cupboards under and tiled surround. Low level storage units. Two double socket outlets. Redfyre P55 oil fired boiler. Rear entrance from:-
- Conservatory: 21'6" x 6'6" with door to garden and one single

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