

- Cambridge District
- South Cambridgeshire District
- Historic Core
- ✳ Strategic View A  
360° panoramic view point
- < Strategic View  
Viewing Location
- Open Spaces
- Landmark Buildings
- ★ Key Historic Landmark
- ★ Other Historic Landmark
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- Topography (Metres above sea level)
- 10
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- 20
- 40
- 80+

- A - CASTLE HILL MOUND, SHIRE HALL
- B - COTON FOOTPATH OVER THE M11W
- C - COTON ROAD
- D - GRANTCHESTER ROAD
- E - LIMEKILN ROAD
- F - LITTLE TREES HILL, MAGOG DOWNS
- G - M11 BETWEEN JUNCTIONS 12 AND 13
- H - REDMEADOW HILL, BARTON
- I - SHELFORD ROAD BELOW LIMEPIT HILL
- J - WORTS' CAUSEWAY / SHELFORD ROAD
- K - LITTLE WILBRAHAM ROAD

**Figure 8: Strategic views, landmarks, open spaces and topography**

## Strategic Views

2.7.2 As a city, Cambridge is not generally recognised for its dramatic longer distance prospect-type views, in a way that the historic core of Durham, or parts of central London, or the waterfront of Liverpool are. There are however a number of views that do enable the appreciation of the form of the city, its restrained skyline and varied character. Many of these have previously been recognised in the Cambridge Local Plan (as Strategic Views). These views are shown on Figure 8 and they include:

- **Castle Hill Mound, Shire Hall** – key 360° view over the historic core from top of scheduled castle mound
- **Coton footpath over the M11** – slightly constrained view from east side of M11 where footpath breaks out of woodland cover, includes elements of the Cambridge Skyline
- **Coton Road** – view from roadside with Cambridge largely screened behind trees with some elements of skyline above
- **Grantchester Road** – open expansive view from roadside featuring southwestern edge of Cambridge with rural foreground
- **Limekiln Road** – view from top of park just off Limekiln Road, featuring suburban foreground with skyline beyond
- **Little Trees Hill, Magog Downs** – broad ranging and expansive view over the city, with Addenbrooke’s Hospital dominant. Serves as an example of the dynamic visual expansive gained from the elevated open access land
- **M11 between Junctions 12 and 13** – view from footpath by M11 with rural foreground and Cambridge Skyline beyond
- **Red Meadow Hill, Barton** – expansive view over Cambridge linking the historic core to the meadows and wider rural context
- **Shelford Road below Limepit Hill** - expansive roadside view over Cambridge, with former Teversham Hospital featuring strongly
- **Worts’ Causeway / Shelford Road** – static view on historic approach to city, provides broad overview of city
- **Little Wilbraham Road over A14** – long distance view over Cambridge and its rural environs. Limited visibility of landmarks but clearly demonstrates the largely rural treed sense of place that Cambridge has in longer views.

2.7.3 These Strategic Views are related to points of elevation within and around the city. They also consider key approaches to the city. There are limited views in the north looking south as the topography there is lower and there are fewer approaches from the north.



**Image 23: View towards Cambridge from Little Trees Hill, Magog Down (View Point F - Analysis of this view is included in Appendix A)**



**Image 24: View towards Cambridge from Red Meadow Hill (View Point H - Analysis of this view is included in Appendix A)**

## Local Views

2.7.4 In addition to the larger scale views identified above, there are also a number of other locations in the city that have been previously identified in the Cambridge Local Plan that offer more localised views and prospects which help structure the sense of place, these include

- Hills Road railway bridge looking towards the City Centre
- Coldham's Lane railway bridge
- Carter Cycle Bridge
- Mill Road railway bridge
- Elizabeth Way Bridge
- Long Road Bridge
- Grand Arcade car park
- Grafton East car park
- Queen Anne Terrace car park
- Park Street car park
- Castle Mound
- Church of St Mary the Great

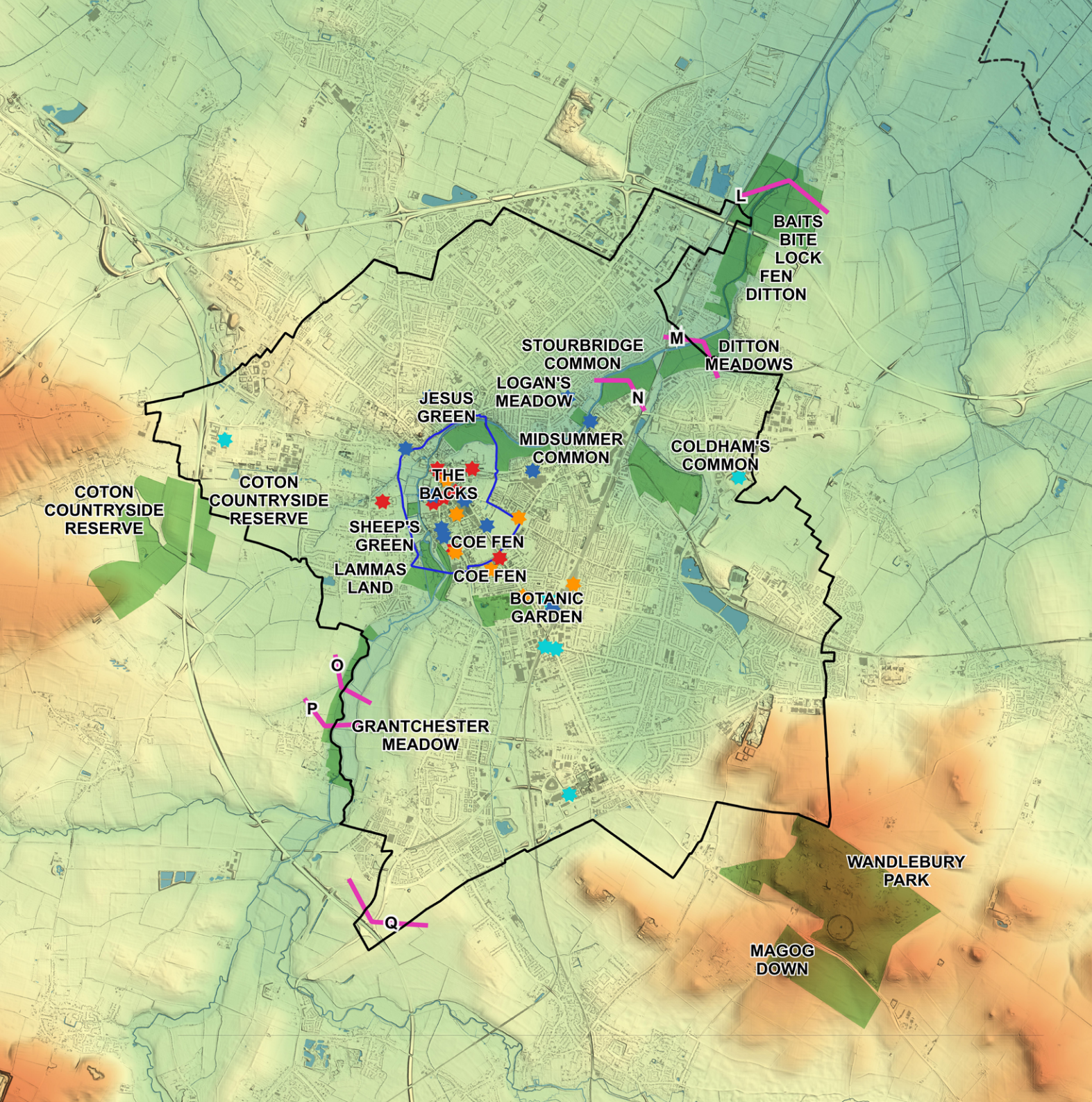


Image 25: View from Castle Mound

## Sensitivities to tall buildings

2.7.5 Given the limited number of strategic and local views from which the special character of Cambridge and its skyline can be appreciated, it is critical that the impact of proposed new tall buildings on the city's key views is tested and fully understood.

2.7.6 Appendix A provides an analysis of each strategic view identifying key features of sensitivity and interest which may affect decisions relating to development.



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- L - DITTON MEADOWS
- M - STOURBRIDGE COMMON
- N - GRANTCHESTER ROAD
- O - GRANTCHESTER MEADOWS
- P - GRANTCHESTER MEADOWS
- Q - M11/A1309 APPROACH

**Figure 9: Open spaces and dynamic views**

## 2.8 Dynamic experiences and open spaces

2.8.1 Fixed static views and panoramas from identified locations form only part of the visual experience of the city. There are a network of key open spaces running through the city that provide sequences of dynamic views linking people to the city, its skyline and its history.

2.8.2 Key amongst these is the River Cam corridor running from south to north through the city, this is an important network of connected spaces, a green wedge through the city, which provides a dynamic visual experience, often on a local scale (see Figure 9 & Figure 10). This dynamic experience is not continuous; green open spaces flanking the river are separated by built up areas e.g. the large residential area between Stourbridge Common and Midsummer Common. In this way the dynamic experience along the Cam differs from other dynamic experiences along city rivers e.g. the Thames path in London.

2.8.3 The corridor encompasses the following elements, Appendix A includes annotated photographs from

viewpoint locations along the corridor as representative samples of the types and character of views:

- **Rural areas around Milton and Baits Bite Lock** – providing a rural approach to Cambridge along the Cam and associated paths, with limited urban development visible above the treeline reflecting the strongly rural character of the area and the separation from Cambridge. The A14 is a notable feature both aurally and visual. View L in *Appendix A* offers a sample view from this area.
- **Rural land between Fen Ditton and the A14** – continuation of the rural approach, but with increasing sense of urban and suburban development. More limited access but a degree of dynamic visual experience.
- **Ditton Meadows** – largely open, accessible space fringed by suburban development and emerging larger-scale urban form to the west of the river that contrasts with and degrades its more rural / sub-urban character. Sequence of open views north and south along the

meadows, including important views of Fen Ditton in its rural context. Viewpoint M: Ditton Meadows in *Appendix A* offers a sample view from this area.

- **Stourbridge Common** - largely open, accessible space with numerous mature tree belts, fringed by suburban and urban development, marks the pinch-point into Cambridge along the Cam. Trees within the common break up outward views, but lower rise urban development is still a strong feature of the area's context. View N in *Appendix A* offers a sample view from this area.
- **Logan's Meadow** – small accessible green space, fringed by urban and commercial development and accessed by a distinctive bridge.
- **Midsummer Common** – open and accessible green space close to historic core, with predominately smaller-scale development visible.
- **Jesus Green** - open and accessible green space close to historic core, with predominately smaller-scale development visible, with some colleges on fringe



**Image 26: Engineering Department © Keith Edkins**



**Image 27: View towards Cambridge from Coton Road looking across Granchester Meadows.**



**Image 28: View towards Cambridge from Ditton Meadows**

- **The Backs** – open space providing one of the iconic college views to King’s College.
- **Coe Fen, Sheep’s Green and Lammas Land** – interconnected group of open spaces with significant tree cover offering glimpses and often significant built urban form.
- **Grantchester Meadows** – open rural land with accessible corridor alongside the Cam, providing views into the edge of Cambridge as well as towards Grantchester. Local tree screening limits views over Cambridge with some landmark elements appearing over trees. This lack of urban form is a characteristic feature of the open space. Viewpoint O: Grantchester Meadows and Viewpoint P in *Appendix A* offers a sample view from this area.

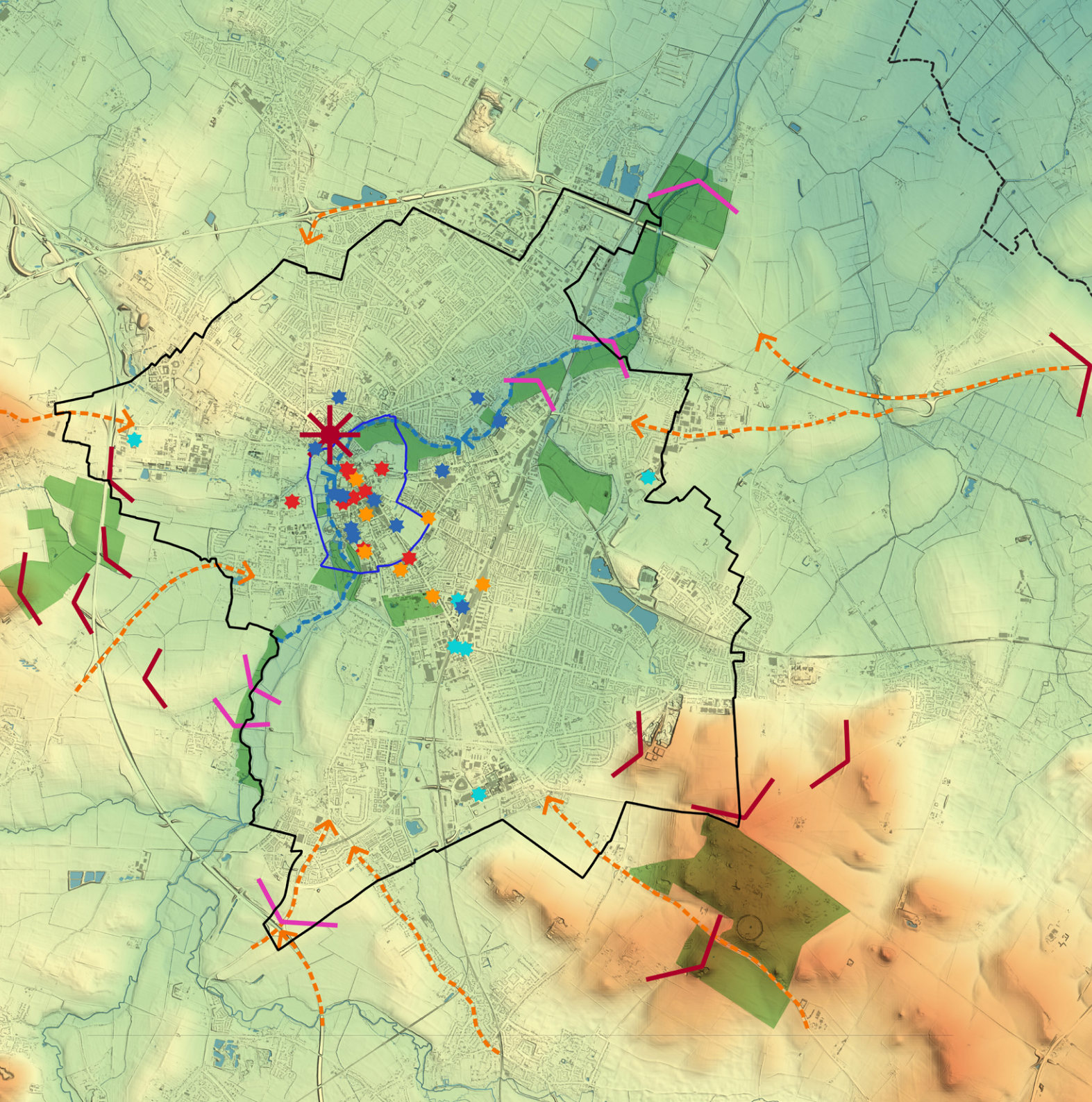
2.8.4 Other notable open spaces include:

- **Coldham’s Common** – large area of mainly pasture and amenity space, flanked by suburban and commercial development largely screened by trees.

- **Cambridge University Botanic Garden** – important historic landscape in central Cambridge. Generally well-screened and separated from the urban form but with increasing urban influenced around Hills Road. It must be noted that there is potential for experiences in this space to change due to the approved scheme at the Flying Pig site on Hills Road.
- **Magog Down** – open access reserve with extensive views over Cambridge, including Viewpoint F: Little Trees Hill, Magog Down.
- **Wandlebury Park** - elevated country park with long reaching views across Cambridge to the north over the Historic Core.
- **Coton Countryside Reserve** – extensive open area with network of paths offering elevated views over Cambridge from Red Meadow Hill, see View H above; and views from the rural hinterland of Cambridge (see View G above)

## Sensitivities to tall buildings

2.8.5 Above open spaces offer open views onto Cambridge’s townscape, key landmarks and landscape setting and significantly contribute to the distinctiveness, character and identity of the city. Naturally people move about in open spaces, and therefore there are generally no specific set views that can be tested. Where tall building proposals may affect views from within one of the open spaces, testing from various relevant representative viewpoints will need to be undertaken to understand the impact of a proposed tall building on the character, distinctiveness, sensitivity receptors within, uses of, and open space amenity of said space, specifically considering the extent, quality and meaning of change to the skyline and composition visible from within the space.



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**Figure 10: Key Approaches, Views and Viewpoints, Landmark Buildings, and Open Spaces**

## 2.9 Key approaches to city

2.9.1 Approaches to the city provide a variety of dynamic linear experiences and help structure the city's wider identity. Key approaches to Cambridge include:

- **River Cam east of city Centre**, through the centre, and west of city Centre – see Cam Corridor described above
- **Historical routes from the west** – the A1303 (Hardwick Road past Madingley) and A603 (Barton Road).
  - Both approaches provide dynamic linear experiences with some views over the city, in particular the more western parts of the city. The views are interrupted by roadside vegetation
- **Routes from the east to the south** – the A1307 (Linton Road), A1303 (Newmarket Road) and A1301 (Sawston Road).
  - The A1301 offers limited visual connection to the due to other development.
  - The A1303 approaches towards the Airport offers a relatively restricted



Image 29: View towards Cambridge from Little Wilbraham Road over A14

- visual experience due to the flat topography.
- The elevated and dynamic nature of the A1307 provides clear views over the city from the east (these are similar to View K above).
- A14 approach from east provides limited views of wider Cambridge, View K above offers an elevated example of these longer distance views.
- M11/A1309 approach past Trumpington features the emerging development at Trumpington as a key gateway element set within a wider treed rural landscape. (see View Q in Appendix A)
- **Historical routes northwest to north**
  - these routes offer limited visual connectivity with the city and its skyline due to the flat topography – there are however limited locations where clear views are available including the A14 Junction 33 with A10 and A1309 which offers views of largely contemporary development on the approach into Cambridge (see View Q in Appendix A)
- **Historical routes to the Historic Core**
  - Key approaches to the Historic Core include Castle Street/Magdelene Street, Victoria Avenue, Jesus Lane, King Street, Regent Street, Trumpington Street, Silver Street, Garret Hostel Lane, and Mill Road into Parkside.



St Mary the Great ©Andrew Dunn

## **Sensitivity to tall buildings**

2.9.2 Key approaches into the city are travelled regularly by locals and offer the first impression of the city to arriving visitors. The journey along an approach is an experience of fleeting images and dynamic views that together form a collective impression of this route, and by implication the city more widely.

2.9.3 The visual quality and the views offered of the city, its setting, open spaces and landmarks are important contributing factors to the city image and identity of the city. Outstanding elements, landmarks, distinctive urban or landscape features or compositions that make the experience distinctive or that evoke a sense of beauty or familiarity are especially important in this cognitive process.

2.9.4 Tall buildings can have a positive or negative (or both) impact on the experience and image of an approach route. They may detract from existing important features or characteristics (negative), or contribute to distinctiveness, enhance existing characteristics or add legibility and meaning (positive).

2.9.5 Where tall buildings may affect an approach route its impact should be studied from relevant viewpoints and proposals should demonstrate how they can make a positive contribution to the city image that corresponds to the wider identity of the city.