

Grange Farm

JDI: 59401

Proposed Use: Mixed Use

Mapping Reference: -

Allocation: New

Size (ha): 212

Figure: 1 and 2

Study Area:

A study area of 500 metres is considered suitable for assessing potential impacts to heritage within and surrounding the site.

Site Description

Greenfield site to the east of Babraham and north of Great and Little Abington, bounded by the A11 to the west, open agricultural fields to the east and north, and Cambridge Road to the south. There is a small farm complex in the central western part of the site. The site comprises multiple agricultural fields interspersed with areas of dense tree line and small woods. There is a farmstead in the central southern part of the site and a small industrial site in the northwest. The topography of the site rises from c.40 metres above Ordnance Datum in the northwest and south to c.70 metres above Ordnance Datum in the northeast. From this part of the site there are long range views, with views towards Great and Little Abington. In views from Cambridge Road looking north across the site, the topography forms a visual ridge with mature treelines forming key features that punctuate the skyline along the brow.

HIA Summary

Development of the site risks impacts on the Barrow Cemetery and Worstead Street Scheduled Monuments and the Worstead Lodge Grade II Listed Building to the north of the site. Development may also affect the rural setting of the Great and Little Abington Conservation Area and views to the north, and the Grade II Listed 8 Cambridge Road just south of the site. Mitigation is required to minimise or avoid these impacts. This includes managing development design to preserve the setting and character of the Worstead Street Scheduled Monument, the rural setting of Worstead Lodge, and the rural setting of the Barrow Cemetery Scheduled Monument. The setting of the non-designated Grange Farm building(s) will also require consideration. Additionally, development design should be managed to minimise urbanising effects on the Conservation Area and 8 Cambridge Road.

Archaeological mitigation will be required. While there is archaeological potential across the site, there is potential for archaeological remains that may contribute to the understanding or significance of the Barrow Cemetery and Worstead Scheduled Monuments. This should be considered when planning archaeological mitigation as part of a future planning application process.

Summary of Relevant Baseline and Value

Characteristics of Cambridge

Historic Cambridge

The sites are not within the Historic Core of Cambridge.

Strategic Viewpoints

The sites are not prominent features in any Viewpoints.

Historic Landmark Buildings

No landmark buildings are present in the vicinity of the site.

Connectivity

The site is not on any historic routes into the city as described in the Strategic Baseline¹.

However, the site is adjacent to Worstead Street, a Roman road and Scheduled Monument. This route is part of a wider network of Roman routes in and around Cambridge of varying levels of historical significance. Many of these routes are still in use as modern roads while some, such as Worstead Street, are in use as footpaths/bridleways. Others have been heavily truncated by modern development and are no longer legible as routes. Worstead Street is truncated by the A11 towards the northwest corner of the site.

Designated and significant non-designated heritage assets – Site:

Scheduled Monument

A late Neolithic-Bronze Age Barrow Cemetery is located within the site, on the centre of the western boundary. First recorded in 1950 as low earth mounds, barrows are visible as soil/cropmarks on aerial photographs. Four barrows survive and have been clearly identified in 2026 geophysical works undertaken in anticipation of development of the site. Cropmark and geophysical survey results show that three of the four barrows are positioned on a slightly staggered west-north-west to east-south-east alignment. The ring ditches measure approximately 33 metres, 29 metres, 28 metres, and 25 metres.

The cemetery is located on a west-facing slope of a dry valley overlooking the route of the Icknield Way, running north/south to the east of the site. The close spatial relationship of the barrow cemetery with the major prehistoric trackway is also demonstrated elsewhere, particularly the Bronze Age barrows 2.4km to the north-east (NHLE 1017326), which is part of a dispersed cemetery in Charterhouse Plantation.

Valuable archaeological deposits will be preserved on the buried ground surface beneath the slight mounds and in the fills of the ditches. These will provide rare information concerning the dating and construction of the monument and the sequence of mortuary practices at the site. The same deposits may also retain

¹ CBA (2021) Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Strategic Heritage Impact Assessment: Baseline.

environmental evidence illustrating the nature of the contemporary landscape in which the monument was set.

Approximately 755 metres to the north-east of the asset, geophysical survey recorded a further two ring ditches, interpreted as the remains of Bronze Age barrows (these are not included in the scheduling).

The site forms part of the rural context of the asset and appears in the foreground of views towards the Icknield Way which are limited due to intervening treescape.

Historic Environment Record

HER features include the scheduled Bronze Age barrows.

There is evidence of medieval to post-medieval agricultural activity; former medieval ridge and furrow and furlongs are present in the south of the site, along with the 19th century Grange Farm roughly at the centre of the site. This indicates that the site has been used for agricultural purposes since at least the medieval period. There are also several 19th century gravel and clay pits, and an undated trackway.

Designated and significant non-designated heritage assets – 500 metre Study Area:

Scheduled Monument

The Roman Road, Worstead Street (Via Devana), runs parallel to the northern boundary of the site, c.280-700m to the northeast. This route runs from Worts Causeway to the northeast of the site to Horseheath to the southwest; the Via Devana connected Colchester to Chester through Cambridge and was built for military purposes. The name Via Devana was coined in the 18th century.

While it is believed that the route has prehistoric origins, taking advantage of a natural ridgeway, archaeological evidence suggests that the road itself was built after the 1st century AD. There is also evidence of later Roman and medieval repair to the road surface. Beyond its military purposes, it has been interpreted as a route of local importance that connected Cambridge to other roads e.g. Icknield Way and the Great Chesterford Road. It is a persistent and defining feature in the local landscape, and a well-used recreational route.

An alternative name 'Wool Street' has been attributed to the route; a potential medieval name related to the cloth trade which demonstrates the longevity of the route as part of an active travel network.

This route is one of several parallel routes recorded around Cambridge, representing a connective network between Roman settlements and strategic sites. A number of these routes are still in use as active roads, and others, like Worstead Street are used as footpath/bridleways. The Roman road network has been heavily truncated by modern road development.

Today, travelling along Worstead Street is a largely rural experience. Even so, the route varies somewhat in character and views; towards Cambridge, the route is enclosed with dense foliage/treeline on both sides creating linear views along this relatively straight route. Travelling southeast, towards the site from Cambridge, the

density of the tree cover thins, allowing glimpsed views across the surrounding rural landscape. Closer to the site on the western side of the A11, the tree cover is significantly reduced permitting long range views across the landscape. On the stretch adjacent to the site, the route is partially enclosed; low hedges restrict continuous views, although there are frequent breaks in the foliage which provide sweeping views down into the currently rural, agricultural fields, some of which make up the site. Further along the route heading southeast, beyond the site, this partially enclosed character continues. Along the entire route, there are uninterrupted linear views along the route itself with few peripheral distractions.

Along the route, archaeological finds dating to the prehistoric, Roman, and medieval periods are common. To the north of the site and Worstead Street, remains of a possible Roman settlement have been identified outside the Study Area that may have been historically connected to the road. Additionally, undated and prehistoric ring ditches, barrows, enclosure and features have been identified to the north of the site. These remains could contribute to the significance and understanding of the Scheduled Monument.

The site forms part of the rural context of the asset, and contributes to rural views from the monument, although some views are limited by the treeline that runs along the northern boundary of the site. The rural setting of the monument is affected by the noise impact from the A11 road which truncates the route.

Conservation Area

The Great and Little Abington Conservation Area is located in the south of the study area, 140 metres south of the site beyond Cambridge Road. The Conservation Area is characterised by dispersed and non-linear roads set around large areas of open space. It is a fairly insular Conservation Area with internal open spaces and inward views, particularly in Great Abington. There are considerable wooded areas within the Conservation Area alongside the large open green spaces creating a highly rural and peaceful environment.

The Conservation Area contains 39 Listed Buildings, predominantly post medieval residences, contributing to an historic and characterful feel. To the north of the asset there is a small pocket of low density modern development which separates the Conservation Area from the site, however, there are views north/northeast towards the site from the high street when travelling uphill towards the A1307. To the south, the historic High Street continues with five Grade II Listed Buildings fronting onto it and modern development spreading eastwards. To the east, the Conservation Area abuts agricultural fields which provide the rural context for the asset; this eastern boundary of the Conservation Area is the only one that still retains strong agricultural/rural relationships. There is visibility into the eastern part of the site due to the raised topography.

The generally rural wider setting of the Conservation Area is altered by the presence of Granta Park (a Science Park employment site) to the northwest of the Conservation Area, and the A11 to the west.

The west of the site is separated from the Conservation Area by modern housing and dense treelines. As such, there is weak visibility between this part of the site and the Conservation Area. This part of the site offers a minor contribution to the wider rural approach to the Conservation Area and assets within but is separated by distance, the Cambridge Road as well as a far less visible link.

Listed Buildings

The Grade II* Listed Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin is located in Little Abington to the south of the site. Elements of the church date to the 11th century. The site does not contribute to the setting of the church.

The Grade II Listed post medieval Worsted Lodge is located 750 metres north of the northeastern corner of the site. The site currently forms part of wider rural views from the asset and contributes to the rural setting of the building which has been significantly eroded by the A11 road to the west.

The Grade II Listed 8 Cambridge Road is a 17th century cottage located on Cambridge Road. The gardens of the building abut the southern boundary of the site. The site forms the immediate rural backdrop to the asset and rural features in views northwards.

Further Grade II Listed Buildings are located within the study area. These include 16th-19th century buildings, mostly residential, within the Great and Little Abington Conservation Area. The site plays a minimal role the setting of these assets; it contributes to the wider rural setting of these Listed Buildings.

Historic Environment Record

To the north of the site, HER features include prehistoric features including palaeolithic to Iron Age ring ditches, findspots, barrows, and ditches, and Roman and undated features. These are in the vicinity of the Worstead Street and could relate to the Scheduled Monument.

Post medieval buildings are recorded south of the site in Great and Little Abington, and there is evidence of extractive pits surrounding the site.

Further undated ditches and features are recorded around the site.

In 2026, a geophysical survey was conducted, covering part of a previous iteration of the site boundary. This covered the fields that abut the northern boundary of the current site, and the area around the Barrow Cemetery Scheduled Monument within the site. This survey identified six circular and semi-circular anomalies characteristic of later prehistoric ring ditch or ditch and bank features, and a further, curvilinear likely representing an earlier ditch feature. Several other anomalies interpreted as archaeological were identified, as well as areas of historic mineral extraction.

Key Issues

The key issues for this site include the risk of impacts to the Worstead Street Scheduled Monument within the site. In particular, risks include:

- eroding the wider rural experience travelling along the route

- introducing urban/modern distractions in the linear views along the route
- urbanising the currently open rural views south from the route

There are also potential risks of impact to the Barrow Cemetery Scheduled Monument. Risks relate to associated buried archaeological remains, and the rural setting of the asset.

Additionally, there is high potential for archaeological remains that may contribute to the understanding and significance of the monuments to be present within the site.

Further issues include the risk of impacting the Worsted Lodge Listed Building to the north of the site, and the Conservation Area, and 8, Cambridge Road Listed Building to the south of the site.

Potential Impacts on Cambridge and its setting

Characteristics of Cambridge:

Considering the characteristics described in the Strategic Baseline, the site is far removed from Cambridge and does not feature in any Viewpoints, thus development at this site would pose **no risk** to Cambridge and its setting.

As described above, beyond these established characteristics, the site is close to Worstead Street, one a network of Roman roads in and around Cambridge. Development of the site adjacent to this route would pose a risk to the character of this route. Further details of this risk are described below.

Potential impacts on the significance of designated and significant non-designated heritage assets

Designated and significant non-designated heritage assets – Site:

Scheduled Monument

Development of the site would affect the character of the Barrow Cemetery Scheduled Monument, which is within the site. Development may affected buried archaeology associated with the monument, and would affect the rural setting of the asset.

Development of the site adjacent to the Worstead Street Scheduled Monument would affect the character of the asset. Development may affect the rural experience travelling along the route which would affect its character as part of a rural historic network of roads and paths into Cambridge. Additionally, development would somewhat urbanise the currently open, rural views south from the route into the site in breaks in the hedgerow. In summary, development of the northern part of the site near to the Scheduled Monument would result in **moderate risk** of impact to this asset. Development further south within the site away from the monument would reduce these effects.

Historic Environment Record

Removal of the existing Grange Farm would result in **high risk** of impact to this non-designated asset.

The site and surrounding area contains a range of known extant and excavated sites and several archaeological finds from the prehistoric to post medieval period, indicating potential for further archaeological remains within the site. The site is greenfield land, as such any remains on site could be well preserved, although there are some areas that have been historically used for aggregate extraction that will have affected subsurface archaeology.

The presence of prehistoric and Roman features to the north of the site could suggest the presence of further features of that period. As such, there is **high potential** for remains associated with the Worstead Street Roman Road, and any such remains could contribute to the understanding and significance of the Scheduled Monument. Additionally, there is **high potential** for remains associated with the Barrow Cemetery Scheduled Monument, and any such remains could contribute to the understanding and significance of the asset.

Across the rest of the site, there is **high potential** for significant archaeology on parts of the site that have not been subject to historic aggregate extraction.

Designated and significant non-designated heritage assets – in 500 metre Study Area:

Conservation Area

The site contributes to the rural setting of the Conservation Area to the east, and to the rural approach to the Conservation Area to the west. However, the overriding insular character of the Conservation Area and the more contained views will not be affected.

Development in the eastern part of the site where the ground rises significantly would be highly visible from the Conservation Area, urbanising currently rural views of the wider context. Development in this area would also further erode the sense of rurality of the Conservation Area that has already been diminished by other modern development to the north, south, and west.

The existing modern development to the north of the Conservation Area separates the western part of the site from the asset.

As such, development of the site would result in **high risk** of impact.

Listed Buildings

The site forms part of rural views from the Grade II Listed Worsted Lodge. This asset is heavily reliant on views to the west (including the site) for its rural setting due to the effect of the adjacent A11 road. Development of the site would result in **low risk** of impact on this asset.

The site forms part of the rural setting of the Grade II Listed Building 8 Cambridge Road. Development would result in **high risk** of impact on this asset.

Development of the site may affect the wider rural setting of the Grade II* Listed Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin. However, there are no views towards the site from the church due to intervening built form and tree cover and there is a strong

sense of separation from this asset to the site. Development of the site would result in **low risk** of impact on this asset.

The site plays little to no role in the immediate setting of the remaining Listed Buildings within the study area. However, the site may feature in glimpsed long-distance views from these assets, and it contributes to the wider rural setting of the Listed Buildings. As such, development of the site poses a **low risk** of impact.

Historic Environment Record

There is **no risk** of impacting known HER features in the Study Area.

Mitigation and opportunities for enhancement

Design based mitigation is required to limit potential impacts on the local and wider skyline, townscape character of Great and Little Abington, and setting of Listed Buildings. This should include measures from determining appropriate areas for development to managing building heights and mass and ensuring use of appropriate materials. Site is not considered appropriate for tall landmark buildings.

Recommendations related to the Worstead Street Scheduled Monument and Worsted Lodge Listed Building.

The treeline on the northern boundary of the site should be strengthened and extended to the east and eastern site boundary to provide some screening for development.

Northern development edges should be softened to minimise the urbanising effects of development behind the treeline. Development design should be managed to reduce building height and organise massing to further minimise urbanising effects.

This tree screening and design mitigation will also preserve the rural setting and views from the Worsted Lodge Listed Building.

Opportunities could be taken to improve understanding and legibility of Worstead Street Scheduled Monument and links to other Roman networks through interpretation and public art.

Recommendations related to the Barrow Cemetery Scheduled Monument

No development should occur within the Scheduled Monument boundary.

A landscape buffer around the monument should be implemented in order to preserve the immediate setting of the monument. This is a partially open landscape; the buffer should allow for appreciation of the barrows.

Opportunities could be taken to improve understanding and legibility of the Barrow Cemetery Scheduled Monument and links to other similar sites, and possible links to the Icknield Way through interpretation and public art.

Recommendations related to other designated and non-designated heritage assets

Mitigation should seek to reduce urbanising effects on the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings to the south of the site.

To preserve the surviving rural context of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings therein, a landscape buffer is recommended in the southeast of the site which is higher and more visible from the Conservation Area. This should maintain a rural, peaceful character, but need not be agricultural. This area could tolerate carefully landscaped and managed access to the site, as well as form part of the green space provision for the allocation. However, it must retain a rural feel.

The setting of 8, Cambridge Road should be conserved through use of a landscape buffer to avoid enveloping the asset with built form.

Retention of the existing Grange Farm and part of its rural context would avoid impact on this non-designated heritage asset, and be a positive place making opportunity.

Recommendations related to archaeology

Archaeological investigation will be required to identify the presence and significance of as yet unknown archaeological remains across the site. Geophysical survey across the parts of the site that have not previously been surveyed is likely to be appropriate to guide subsequent decisions about appropriate further archaeological investigation. It must be noted that there is potential for prehistoric remains within the site, which are not always identifiable on some types of geophysical survey; it is likely that further investigation will be required to determine the presence of archaeological features. The planning of archaeological works (including additional geophysical survey) should be included in a desk-based assessment for the site. Advice should be sought from the Cambridgeshire County Archaeological team.

Further mitigation could include avoidance and preservation in situ, further investigation, or recording depending on the significance of any remains found.

As discussed above, there is high potential for remains associated with the Scheduled Monuments to be present, this should be considered when planning archaeological works to inform a planning application process.

Recommendations related to general development design

The remaining part of the site, in the southwest, is considered more appropriate for development from an historic environment perspective. Development design should seek to soften edges of development close and avoid prominence in wider views in order to minimise impacts on heritage assets. This could involve managing building height, mass, and density, and careful use of landscaping. Use of topography should be considered to minimise the prominence of new buildings as well as identifying locations suitable for additional planting to soften the edges of built form.

Residual risk of harm

Through the local plan process this site is being tested as one potential option for a large-scale self-contained new settlement. Due to the proposed scale and density of development, following the application of suitable mitigation strategies, the risk of significant residual harm remains **high**.

