Irchester, Knuston and Little Irchester Neighbourhood Plan
2011–2031

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Draft Screening Report – Heritage Update

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
April 2017
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Strategic Environmental Assessment Draft Screening Report – Heritage Update (‘Heritage Screening Report’) has been prepared by the Irchester, Knuston and Little Irchester Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (‘the Steering Group’) on behalf of Irchester Parish Council. It has been prepared in order to inform a determination under Paragraph 9 (1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) on whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required for the Irchester, Knuston and Little Irchester Neighbourhood Plan (‘the Neighbourhood Plan’).

1.2 This Heritage Screening Report provides an update to the initial Screening Report prepared by the Steering Group ahead of consultation with the consultation bodies\(^1\). Specifically, it has been prepared in response to the screening opinion issued by Historic England on 30\(^{th}\) March 2017 (see Appendix 1) which states:

For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question ‘Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?’ in respect of our area of concern, cultural heritage. We note the SEA screening statement considers that an SEA is not required.

We observe that the Plan proposes site allocations. Specifically, the current draft plan includes one housing allocation to the south of James Street which may impact upon the setting of heritage assets, including the Grade I Listed Church of St Katharine. This has not been subject to SA/SEA as part of the Local Plan process. As such there may be significant environmental effects upon the historic environment.

Therefore, we are of the view, at this time, that there may well be significant impacts on the historic environment and it is our view that a SEA is likely to be required. We understand that our views, together with the views of other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for SEA is made. I should be pleased if you could send a copy of the determination when this is issued.

We would like to stress that this is based on the current information provided in the screening request and the current draft Neighbourhood Plan. To avoid any doubt, this

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\(^1\) Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency.
1.3 Historic England’s response above states that they are of the view that there may well be significant impacts on the historic environment from the Neighbourhood Plan and that a SEA is likely to be required. However, this opinion is caveated with the statement that it is based on the current information available to them. In this context, the Steering Group have taken the time to produce this updated report in order to outline the breadth of work that has been undertaken regarding the historic environment of Irchester in the course of developing the Neighbourhood Plan. The aim of this work has been to assess all available options for development in the village, to identify those sites that are the least constrained by the historic environment, and to identify appropriate mitigation to ensure that the sites identified for development come forward in a way that mitigates any impacts on the historic environment.

1.4 Drawing on the extensive Neighbourhood Plan evidence base that has been prepared by professional heritage experts, this report concludes that the Neighbourhood Plan is highly unlikely to have a significant impact on the environment and that a SEA is therefore not required. In light of the additional detail contained in this report, we respectively request that Historic England review their screening opinion that an SEA is required for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Background

1.5 The Steering Group are preparing the Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of Irchester Parish Council in accordance with the provisions of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW), as the Local Planning Authority, designated the whole of the Parish of Irchester, covering the settlements of Irchester, Knuston and Little Irchester, as the Irchester Neighbourhood Area (see Figure 1) on 4 December 2012 for this purpose.

1.6 Irchester Parish Council published a Consultation Draft of the Neighbourhood Plan in September 2016 for consultation under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period from 2011 to 2031 in line with the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy plan period. It sets out specific policies and proposals for the use and development of land in the Plan Area over that plan period and is in general conformity with both national policies and strategic policies contained within the development plan for the Irchester Neighbourhood Plan Area.
Figure 1. Irchester Neighbourhood Plan Area

1.7 The Plan’s vision for the Parish of Irchester up to 2031 is that:

“The parish will remain an independent and distinctive rural community comprising the main village of Irchester and the hamlets of Knuston and Little Irchester.”

“The parish’s rich architectural and environmental heritage will be conserved and enhanced for the benefit of current villagers and for future generations.”

“We recognise the need for sustainable growth that will support the future of the community and its facilities.”

“Our open social structure and mixed community is sustained and reinforced with activities and facilities that enhance them, including the provision of affordable housing.”

“The adverse impact of road traffic on the community will be lessened. Transport and other links to neighbouring communities will be enhanced.”

“The overall aim is that residents will want to continue to live in the parish, and that others will wish they could.”
The Plan includes the following objectives:

- To meet the future housing needs of the parish.
- To conserve the special historic character of the village including the protection and enhancement of key heritage assets and important views.
- To protect and support the development of local facilities and services through S106 agreements.
- To promote improved transport facilities and connectivity through S106 agreements.

The Neighbourhood Plan includes 4 policies that will contribute towards the achievement of its objectives. Table 1 below briefly summarises these policies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>What does the policy provide for?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Settlement Boundary</td>
<td>Designating the settlement boundaries of Irchester and Little Irchester for the purpose of defining where open countryside and rural settlement policies apply (see maps at Appendix 2 and 3). The entire settlement of Knuston is designated as within the open countryside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td>The protection and enhancement of heritage assets, their settings and key views and vistas into and out of the settlement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Allocation of Land off Austin Close</td>
<td>Approximately 75 dwellings on a site subject to a range of criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Allocation of Land south of James Street</td>
<td>Approximately 75 dwellings on a site subject to a range of criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE PLANNING CONTEXT

As required by Government policy the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan. The Development Plan for Irchester currently comprises saved policies from the Borough of Wellingborough Local Plan (1999 plus alteration 2004)\(^2\) and the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS, July 2016)\(^3\).

Policy 29 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy identifies a housing requirement of 150 dwellings for the village of Irchester for the plan period (2011-2031) which has been adopted as the housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan. A Sustainability Appraisal (SEA)\(^4\) of the JCS has been undertaken which has informed this Screening Report.

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\(^3\) North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (Adopted July 2016)
\(^4\) Sustainability Appraisal of the Submission North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (June 2015) and Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Statement (July, 2016)
3.0 SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT – HERITAGE UPDATE

3.1 The Steering Group prepared a Sustainability Assessment to accompany their initial Screening Report which draws together the evidence base prepared on behalf of the Steering Group in developing the Neighbourhood Plan (e.g. reports on highways, heritage, archaeology, ecology, trees and landscape) and demonstrates that the site allocations chosen represent the most sustainable options for development in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

3.2 The findings of the Sustainability Assessment with regards to heritage are summarised and then expanded upon in this section which draws together the findings of relevant evidence base documents and provides a transparent and objective heritage assessment of the potential sites considered for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan. It describes the process used to identify possible sites for inclusion, together with the historic environment sustainability objectives that sites were assessed against and an assessment of the proposed allocations against these criteria. This section demonstrates that the sites chosen for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan represent the most sustainable options available for development in the Parish and are the least likely to impact on the historic environment if developed.

Evidence and Methodology

3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan has been developed over the last 5 years. It has been informed by several rounds of public consultation and the preparation of a detailed evidence base that has been used to inform the selection of site allocations to meet the housing requirement identified in the JCS. The relevant historic environment evidence base prepared in developing the Neighbourhood Plan that has informed this report comprises:

- Environmental Assessment Report (including archaeological assessment), ACD (March, 2014) (See Appendix 4)
- Historic Landscape Assessment (Updated Version), MOLA (March 2016) (See Appendix 5)

3.1 In order to meet the housing requirement identified in the JCS, potential development sites were identified through consultation with landowners/developers during 2013-14 and each site was subsequently assessed in the documents listed above. The location of the sites assessed are shown on the map at Figure 2 below. In the site identification process sites were assigned a unique code, but in some cases adjoining sites were subsequently joined together for assessment due to their close proximity. There are 7 sites in total, as follows (proposed site allocations are in bold):

- IR1: Parsons Hall Industrial Estate, High Street
• IR3, IR12 & IR16: Land off High Street/Chester Road
• IR4: Land to the west of Irchester, South of Gipsy Lane
• IR5 & IR15: Land South of Woodlands Road
• IR6 & IR9: Land off Station Road
• IR7: Land South of James Street
• IR11, IR13 & IR14: Land off Austin Close

3.2 In addition to the 7 sites above, that are all located adjoining the village of Irchester, one site each in Little Irchester and Knuston were originally identified. These sites are assessed in some of the evidence base reports, but are not included in the Sustainability Appraisal as no housing need was identified in these settlements in the Irchester Rural Housing Needs Assessment (January 2013) and the Steering Group therefore concluded that to allocate land for development in these settlements would not be sustainable. They are:

• A: Land off London Road, Little Irchester
• B: Knuston Home Farm
3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan Sustainability Assessment includes a matrix that was developed to enable the sustainability of sites to be compared. Sustainability objectives form the basis of the matrix which also includes more detailed decision making criteria to enable the constraints and positive attributes of each site to be compared. The relevant sustainability objectives that were used to assess the historic environment are included in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Historic Environment Sustainability Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA Topic</th>
<th>SA Objective</th>
<th>Decision Making Criteria</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>To protect areas of high archaeological potential.</td>
<td><strong>Impact on areas of high archaeological potential</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No adverse impact or minimal adverse impact which should be possible to mitigate</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant constraints identified, although development should be possible to mitigate</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant constraints identified – unlikely that the impact could be mitigated</td>
<td>XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Heritage</td>
<td>Protect and enhance sites, features, architectural and artistic interest and their settings.</td>
<td><strong>Impact on listed building and the conservation area</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provides an opportunity to protect/enhance such an asset</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No impact</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Constraints identified although it may be possible for some development with appropriate mitigation</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant constraints identified such that it is unlikely that the impact could be mitigated</td>
<td>XX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 The assessment uses a ‘traffic light’ system to indicate how well sites perform against the sustainability objectives. This system was used in preference to a numerical scoring system as the latter would imply that different indicators are directly comparable and that the scores can simply be added together to give a total which determines the best options. Decisions about which sites to include in a plan are, however, a matter of judgement and the traffic light system therefore identifies where potential conformity and conflicts arise and enables the reader to make an informed judgement. The assessment also helps to identify areas where further work would be required before a site could be brought forward for development and has been helpful in determining key principles for the development of each proposed allocation.

**Sustainability Assessment – Historic Environment Summary**

3.5 Table 3 below provides a summary of the assessment of the 7 sites contained in the Sustainability Assessment report against the historic environment sustainability objectives. It also indicates each site’s
availability for development. The results of the Sustainability Assessment show that of the available sites, 'IR11, IR13 & IR14' performs best in terms of heritage sustainability, 'IR4' performs next best and 'IR7' third best. 'IR7' was chosen as a proposed allocation for the Neighbourhood Plan ahead of 'IR4' as this site has poor vehicular access and is substantially separated from the main area of built form such that its development would negatively impact upon the form and character of the village.

Table 3. Site Assessment Summary Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability Objectives</th>
<th>IR1</th>
<th>IR3, IR12 &amp; IR16</th>
<th>IR4</th>
<th>IR5 &amp; IR15</th>
<th>IR6 &amp; IR9</th>
<th>IR7</th>
<th>IR11, IR13 &amp; IR14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on areas of archaeological interest</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on listed buildings and the conservation area</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6 The Sustainability Assessment includes the following assessment of the two proposed allocations.

Table 4. Sustainability Assessment Appraisal of Proposed Allocations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Sustainability Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site IR7 Land South of James Street</td>
<td>A probable trackway and pits have been noted on aerial photographs. It also lies immediately east of an area which has certain prehistoric and Roman sub-surface remains and therefore assessed to have potential itself. Further fieldwork would be required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The site is considered to be of low sensitivity to change. The setting of the principle asset will not be affected and the topography of the site means development could be designed in such a way to enhance publically accessible views towards principle asset.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site IR11, IR13 &amp; IR14 Land off Austin Close</td>
<td>No recorded sites or finds within or close to this plot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The site is located to the east of Irchester and un unused/grassland with no obvious grazing. The site is bound by housing to the west and to the east by the railway. The southern boundary is open to agricultural land.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With already existing infrastructure for the existing housing estate immediately to the west and north of the sites. This area is considered to have low sensitivity to change and the principle asset will not be affected. Development in this location, through removing necessity for development on more open sites would protect the principle asset.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sustainability Assessment – Further Detail on the Historic Environment
3.7 The assessment of each site in the Sustainability Assessment is based on the evidence base outlined above. This evidence base is not repeated in the Sustainability Assessment for the sake of efficiency, but in order to demonstrate the breadth of work that has been undertaken regarding the historic environment of Irchester it is felt necessary to provide a more detailed summary of this work in this Heritage Screening Report. Each of the key historic environment evidence reports are also contained as appendices for ease of reference.

3.8 As outlined above, the aim of producing the extensive historic environment evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan has been to assess all available options for development in the village, to identify those sites that have the least potential to cause significant impacts to the historic environment if developed, and to identify appropriate mitigation to ensure that sites are developed in a way that mitigates any impacts on the historic environment.

**Environmental Assessment Report (ACD, March 2014)**

3.9 The first piece of evidence produced with regards to the historic environment was the Environmental Assessment Report (March 2014) produced by ACD which includes a desk-based archaeological assessment of the potential development sites drawing on information obtained from the English Heritage (EH) archive, which was visited, its online National Heritage List for England (NHLE), aerial photographs held by EH, the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England Northamptonshire Inventory edition (1979), the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and historic maps viewed through the Old Maps website.

3.10 The findings of this report are as follows (N.B. IR11 & IR13 are considered separately from IR14, but have since been combined as one allocation):

- **IR7**: A probable trackway and pits have been noted on aerial photographs of this area. It also lies immediately east of an area (IR5/15) which has certain prehistoric and Roman sub-surface remains and is therefore assessed to have high potential itself. Any application would require supporting fieldwork results.

- **IR11 & IR13**: No recorded sites or finds of note in area which was formerly the town allotments and it can be considered to have low potential and that archaeology and heritage are a minimal constraint to its development.

- **IR14**: No recorded sites or finds within or close to this plot other than faint ridge and furrow. Although not an absolute constraint to development, these medieval remains are rare in the parish given later extraction and arable cultivation. The site can be considered to have low
potential for further remains, but that loss of an historic landscape feature would result from its development.

**Historic Landscape Assessment (Updated Version) (MOLA, March 2016)**

3.11 Following the initial work carried out by ACD in 2014, Historic England were contacted to advise upon requirements for further heritage assessment. Claire Searson, Historic Environment Planning Advisor for Historic England visited Irchester in February 2015 to look at all potential development sites and advise on requirements for detailed heritage assessment in the context of the Parish’s Grade I listed church. Following this advice, Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) were instructed to produce a Historic Landscape Assessment of the potential development sites. MOLA’s assessment was published in September 2015 and following comments from prospective developers it was republished with further clarity regarding the methodology employed in March 2016. Historic England’s Claire Searson reviewed this document and endorsed its findings in an email dated 28th January 2016 (see Appendix F of MOLA’s report for a full copy of this email):

> I have reviewed the document and consider it to be an appropriate and robust assessment of potential site allocations to be considered by the Neighbourhood Plan.

> I consider that this study is appropriate and will provide a useful piece of evidence base work to underpin the NP.

> We agree with the conclusions of the report in respect of where the most sensitive sites are. This is based on our previous dealings with some of the sites at planning application stage, as well as my own visit to Irchester with the Neighbourhood Plan group last year.

3.12 The proposed site allocations in the Neighbourhood Plan are identified in MOLA’s report as two of the least sensitive sites. A summary of the assessment of each site is included in Table 5 (again IR11 & IR13 are considered separately from IR14).

### Table 5. Assessment of Proposed Allocations Taken from Historic Landscape Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IR7</td>
<td>The development of site IR7 would have little impact on the historic character setting of the village, owing largely to an earlier wind farm development on the opposite side of the hill, which has already seriously eroded the historic setting of the church and settlement. Further to this, large industrial sheds to the east of the village, also visible from this plot have affected the views across the village and beyond. Views out of the village would not be</td>
<td>This site is considered to be of low sensitivity to change. The setting of the principal asset will not be affected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR11 + IR13</td>
<td>Sites IR11 + IR13 would be of low impact, with the natural topography of the land dipping down towards the cut of the railway line. As such any development within this site area is unlikely to interrupt the historic views of the village of Irchester. Cropmarks have been recorded within the site area and as such there may be a moderate potential for buried heritage assets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR14</td>
<td>Site IR14 would have a low impact upon the historical landscape of Irchester village, owing to the fact that it would be positioned next to the already existing 20th century housing estates to the east of Irchester. Local footpaths that follow across this land are within the topographical dip that leads down to the railway cuttings, meaning that views of Irchester and St Katharine’s are limited.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Proposed Mitigation

3.13 As identified above, there is little of archaeological interest on the proposed allocation sites, with the exception of an area of faint ridge and furrow in a ploughed arable field (IR14), and above ground the sites are considered to be of low sensitivity to change with MOLA’s Historical Landscape Assessment concluding that their development will not affect the setting of the principle heritage asset in the village (i.e. the Grade I listed St Katharine’s Church). It is therefore highly unlikely that the development of the proposed housing allocations will have a significant impact on the historical environment. However, just to be sure that any potential non-significant impacts are reduced and mitigated as far as possible, the Neighbourhood Plan includes a specific policy on heritage and specific criteria relating to heritage are also included in Policy 4: Land South of James Street. For ease of reference these policies are included below.

### Policy 2: Heritage Policy

Any development in the Neighbourhood Plan Area and the Parish of Irchester will:

1. Be designed to protect, preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets in the parish and their settings in particular:
   - Grade I Listed St Katharine’s Church
   - Scheduled Ancient Monument of the Roman Town of Irchester and preceding Iron Age Settlement at Chester Farm and its associated Grade II* and Grade II Listed Buildings
   - Grade II Listed Knuston Hall and its surrounding curtilage and landscape
• Grade II Listed Ditchford Bridge and attached Causeway
• Listed buildings that exist in the main High Street area of Irchester
• Archaeological remains and particularly those located in Station Road, Irchester

ii. Protect and where possible enhance key views and vistas into and out of the settlement. In particular the historic landscape views obtained from village gateways by road and footpaths into and from High Street (Chester Road), Station Road, Wollaston Road and Farndish Road in Irchester. Of these, views in the proximity of High Street (Chester Road) and Station Road are considered to be highly sensitive to change.

Policy 4: Land south of James Street

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates 3.98ha of land south of James Street, as shown on the Policies Map, for housing development of approximately 75 dwellings, public open space and a 0.3ha area reserved for a future community facility.

Development proposals for the land allocated for housing will be supported, provided they accord with the following principles (heritage principles only included):

i. The development shall be laid out in accordance with the zonal drawing provided at Figure 9, including the following provisions:
   • The site layout shall consider views and vistas towards the Grade I Listed St Katharine’s Church.

iii. The development will be designed to protect, enhance or better reveal the significance of heritage assets and their settings, most notably the Grade I Listed St Katharine’s Church.

Figure 3. Neighbourhood Plan Heritage Policies

Sustainability Appraisal Summary and Conclusion

3.14 This section has outlined the process by which potential site allocations were identified in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and how these sites were assessed against sustainability objectives to ensure the most sustainable locations were chosen for development. From a historical environment perspective, an extensive evidence base has been prepared by heritage experts ACD and MOLA which was used in the selection of site allocations. This evidence base, the findings of which have been endorsed by Historic England, clearly demonstrates that the two proposed site allocations are highly unlikely to result in significant impacts on the environment if developed for residential use. Furthermore, in order to ensure that any potential impacts are mitigated and that opportunities to enhance the historic environment are taken, the Neighbourhood Plan includes a specific policy on heritage and specific policy criteria regarding heritage in the draft policy allocation IR7 – Land South of James Street for development.
3.15 It is therefore concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan is highly unlikely to result in significant impacts on the historic environment and that any potential non-significant impacts will be successfully mitigated by the heritage protection policies in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

4.0 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) SCREENING – HERITAGE UPDATE

4.1 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) require the Plan to be accompanied by either:

i. an environmental report prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004(a); or

ii. where it has been determined under regulation 9(1) of those Regulations that the plan proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for the determination.

4.2 The Borough Council of Wellingborough has advised that it is the responsibility of Irchester Parish Council to prepare the environmental report or statement of reasons.

4.3 This Heritage Screening Report has been produced as an update to the Steering Group’s initial Screening Report that was prepared in order to inform a determination under Paragraph 9 (1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) on whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required for the Neighbourhood Plan. Paragraph 9 (2) of the Regulations requires the responsible authority (i.e. Irchester Parish Council), before making a determination under Paragraph (1), to:

(a) Take into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to the Regulations; and
(b) Consult the consultation bodies

4.4 The initial Screening Report was prepared ahead of consultation with the consultation bodies to demonstrate how the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to the Regulations had been taken into account. It presents a draft determination that an SEA is not required and states that this draft determination will be reviewed and if necessary amended and SEA prepared Once consultation responses have been received.

4.5 Consultation responses have now been received from the consultation bodies. Natural England and the
Environment Agency have confirmed that they agree with the Steering Group’s draft determination, but as explained in this report, Historic England have issued a response stating that they consider that a SEA is likely to be required.

In light of the additional information presented in this report and the evidenced conclusion reached above that the Neighbourhood Plan is highly unlikely to have a significant impact on the environment, this section again presents the Steering Group’s draft determination that an SEA is not required for the Neighbourhood Plan. We therefore respectively request that Historic England review their screening opinion that an SEA is required for the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Part 1 – Screening Process**

4.6 The process for determining whether or not SEA is required is called ‘screening’. The criteria include specific considerations regarding the characteristics, the effects and the area likely to be effected by the plan. Detailed guidance on the SEA process can be found in the Government publication ‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’ (‘The Practical Guide’) (ODPM 2005).
4.7 Figure 4 is reproduced from The Practical Guide and illustrates the process for screening the Plan to ascertain whether a SEA is required. An assessment of the characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan against this process is set out in Table 6.

Table 6. Screening Assessment Part 1 – Screening Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1: Is the Plan subject to</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Yes. The Neighbourhood Plan is prepared by Irchester Parish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Stage 2: Is the Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions?

Y/N Neighbourhood plans are not required by legislation. The Localism Act allows these to be undertaken on a voluntary basis. However, once made by the Borough Council the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area. Strictly speaking, based on this guidance, the Neighbourhood Plan is not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions and so would not require an SEA. However, this guidance was prepared prior to the creation of Neighbourhood Plans, and some Neighbourhood Plans have been found to require an SEA so it is reasonable to conclude that while the Neighbourhood Plan is not strictly required it is not justified to stop the screening exercise at this point.

**GO TO STAGE 3**

### Stage 3: Is the Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II (see Appendix 2) to the EIA Directive?

Y The Neighbourhood Plan is prepared for town and country planning and land use purposes. Once made, it will form part of the statutory framework (the Development Plan) for the determination of planning applications. It will also be used to manage development of the type referred to in Annex II of the Directive. The directive is transferred into UK law by the The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 and the The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2015. These latter regulations amend the former and include in Schedule 2 a threshold of more than 150 dwellings or 5 hectares, above which a development is required to be screened as to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required. The plan includes two site allocations totalling 150 dwellings, one of which is on a site of 5.14ha.

**GO TO STAGE 5**

### Stage 4: Will the Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?

N/A Stage 4 is bypassed as the Neighbourhood Plan produced a Yes with regards to Stage 3 and therefore moves to Stage 5. The requirements for Habitats Regulation screening are dealt with in section 4 of this report.

### Stage 5. Does the Plan determine the use of small areas at local

Y The Neighbourhood Plan will assist in the determination of planning applications for the use of small areas at a local level.
4.8 The process followed above demonstrates that the Neighbourhood Plan is only required to have a SEA if it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. This is in accordance with the advice contained in The Practical Guide which explains that while land use and spatial plans should normally be subject to SEA, plans and programmes which determine the use of small areas at a local level or which are minor modifications to existing plans only require SEA if they are judged likely to have ‘significant’ environmental effects.

Part 2 – Likelihood of Significant Environmental Effects

4.9 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (in Schedule 1) sets out specific criteria for determining the likely significance of the environmental effects of a plan. These are set out in Table 3 below together with a commentary on whether the Neighbourhood Plan would trigger the need for a full SEA.

Table 3. Screening Assessment Part 2 – Likelihood of Significant Environmental Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either</td>
<td>The Neighbourhood Plan sets out a spatial vision for the Neighbourhood Area and provides a framework for proposals for development in the Parish of Irchester. However, it must</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources

be in conformity with the strategic policies of the Joint Core Strategy for North Northamptonshire and the Borough of Wellingborough Local Plan. As noted above, the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the saved policies of the Local Plan and the strategic policies of the adopted JCS; most notably its requirement for 150 homes to be provided in Irchester over the plan period. The SEA prepared for the JCS identifies a number of positive (including a number of significant positive effects) and negative effects, but does not identify any likely significant negative effects resulting from its policies. We can therefore infer from this assessment that the Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have any significantly negative effects on the environment. Furthermore, as outlined in this report, from a heritage perspective the 2 proposed site allocations in the Neighbourhood Plan (which are the only projects or activities that the Neighbourhood Plan sets a framework for) are highly unlikely to have a significant impact on the Historic Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy</strong></th>
<th>The Neighbourhood Plan should not significantly influence other plans and programmes on its own.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development</strong></td>
<td>The plan promotes the development of 150 dwellings in Irchester which has been assessed as being able to sustainably accommodate this level of development in the Joint Core Strategy. The proposed allocations have been selected based on evidence prepared by relevant experts to ensure they are the most sustainable options for development (see Sustainability Assessment Report prepared as part of the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme</strong></td>
<td>It is considered that there are no significant environmental problems likely to arise from the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection)</strong></td>
<td>Not relevant – No impacts likely.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Screening Outcome – Draft Determination

4.10 As a result of the assessment in section 3, it is concluded that it is unlikely that there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the Neighbourhood Plan. There is therefore no requirement for a full SEA to be undertaken.

4.11 The conclusion above represents the draft determination of Irchester Parish Council. This Heritage Screening Report has been prepared ahead of re-consultation with Historic England, taking into account
the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to the Regulations. Once a consultation response has been received the draft determination will be reviewed and if necessary amended and a SEA prepared.
APPENDIX 1 – HISTORIC ENGLAND SEA CONSULTATION RESPONSE, 30TH MARCH 2017
30 March 2017

Dear Ms Daft

Request for screening for SEA - Irchester Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the above 07 March 2017.

For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question ‘Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?’ in respect of our area of concern, cultural heritage. We note the SEA screening statement considers that an SEA is not required.

We observe that the Plan proposes site allocations. Specifically, the current draft plan includes one housing allocation to the south of James Street which may impact upon the setting of heritage assets, including the Grade I Listed Church of St Katharine. This has not been subject to SA/SEA as part of the Local Plan process. As such there may be significant environmental effects upon the historic environment.

Therefore, we are of the view, at this time, that there may well be significant impacts on the historic environment and it is our view that a SEA is likely to be required. We understand that our views, together with the views of other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for SEA is made. I should be pleased if you could send a copy of the determination when this is issued.

We would like to stress that this is based on the current information provided in the screening request and the current draft Neighbourhood Plan. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on the SEA process, and subsequent draft Plan’s.
Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss any of these comments.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Emilie Carr (Mrs)
Historic Environment Planning Adviser
E-mail: Emilie.carr@HistoricEngland.org.uk
APPENDIX 2 – SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY MAP FOR IRCHESTER
APPENDIX 4 – ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REPORT, ACD (MARCH, 2014)
IRCHESTER
KNUSTON & LITTLE
IRCHESTER
NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLAN

ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT

Prepared by
ACD
Landscape Architects Ltd

| Written By: | SD |
| Checked By: | JPF |
| Date: | March 2014 |
| Document File Ref: | PRI19116ea |
| Revision: | CJune 2014 |
IRCHESTER, KNUSTON & LITTLE IRCHESTER NEighbourHOOD PLAN

This document provides a range of landscape, ecology and archaeology information regarding a variety of potential sites in the environs of Irchester. This will aid the allocation of potential sites in the Irchester area.

The assessment of archaeological interest/potential and other heritage issues has been provided following consultation with a number of pertinent sources, including both the English Heritage (EH) archive, which was visited, and its online National Heritage List for England (NHLE). Aerial photographs held by EH and also a range of secondary sources were consulted.

Particularly useful is the relevant gazetteer contained within the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England Northamptonshire Inventory edition (1979). The NHLE records all designated heritage assets within the parish including the scheduled Roman town to the north of the A45 and listed buildings within the village.

Another key source has been the information provided by the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) which holds data relating to findspots, previously identified sites and past investigations. Historic maps were also viewed through the Old Maps website.

The sites numbered in this document are referenced as per the “Rural Housing Allocation Methodology and Site Selection” prepared by Wellingborough Council in 2010. The two remaining sites are lettered A and B, and are not referenced in the Wellingborough Council document.
SITE A: LAND OFF LONDON ROAD, LITTLE IRCHESTER

LANDSCAPE - Land in agricultural use, low landscape sensitivity, open to wider views from the north and west, but from roads and commercial areas, some housing backing on to the site. Strip of tall ruderal vegetation on the boundary, otherwise low ecological value. Boundary trees only, ash to the south, hawthorn scrub to the east.

ECOLOGY – The site borders Irchester Country Park directly on the eastern boundary. Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI is approximately 700m north east but separated by a road network. Main area of the site is agricultural so of low ecological value, but tall ruderal and longer peripheral areas could have reptile potential. Mature boundary trees/hedgerows could provide foraging routes for commuting bats particularly to the south and along the Country Park border.

ARCHAEOLOGY – The line of a post-medieval road between London and Oakham may have passed through the site. It also lies on the edge of Little Irchester hamlet which is thought to have medieval origins. However, given past cultivation, the plot has low potential and heritage is not assessed as a likely constraint. Some evaluation fieldwork might be required ahead of an application.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.
SITE B: KNUSTON HOME FARM

LANDSCAPE – There is an area of rough pasture, to the east on high ground. The remainder of the site is light industrial with a large amount of hardstanding. There are no trees of any significance, and the northern hedge is of poor quality.

ECOLOGY – Main area of the site is light industrial. There is a small area of rough grassland to the east, which is well grazed so is likely to be of low ecological value.

ARCHAEOLOGY – The land use has caused much ground disturbance so the plot has low potential, and heritage is not assessed as a likely constraint.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than the poor boundary hedgerows and boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.
SITE IR1: PARSONS HALL INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, IRCHESTER

LANDSCAPE - Brownfield site in commercial use, low landscape sensitivity, no tree constraints, some bat potential, but very limited. Located to the east of the Nene Way, a national trail.

ECOLOGY – Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI Site is 1.1km north-west, separated by road networks. Site mostly hard landscape. Some buildings could have limited bat potential. Potential reptile habitat in south eastern area.

ARCHAEOLOGY – This area holds no previously recorded sites and although the area has low archaeological potential, any buildings may require retention or recording ahead of demolition.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.
SITE IR4: SOUTH OF GIPSY LANE, IRCHESTER

LANDSCAPE - Major landholding to the west of the village, in agricultural use, low landscape sensitivity, but elevated and therefore open to long views from the south and west, with no discernible site boundary.

ECOLOGY – Located just to the south of Irchester Country Park but separated by a road network. Irchester Old Lodge Pit SSSI just within eastern boundary. 1.2km east of Wollaston Meadows SSSI, separated by road. Mainly agricultural. Water bodies on, and close to, the site. Boundary trees and hedgerows could be of value for commuting bats.

ARCHAEOLOGY – This area was part of a large ironstone extraction concern and has been subject to quarrying and subsequent reinstatement. This will have removed any earlier remains and altered the landscape. It has no archaeological or heritage value.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.
SITES IR5 - LAND SOUTH OF WOODLANDS ROAD, IRCHESTER

IR15 - LAND WEST OF FARNDISH ROAD, IRCHESTER

**LANDSCAPE** – Major land parcel to the south of Irchester, in agricultural use, with good access, low landscape sensitivity, but open to wider views and with no physical site boundaries other than hedgerows. Existing housing rear gardens to the north, low ecological value other than species rich hedgerow, and no major trees. Located either side of a Public Right of Way (PRoW).

**ECOLOGY** – This site is 2km south of Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI Site and 2km east of Upper Nene Gravel Pits SSSI, and 550m east of Irchester Old Lodge Pit SSSI and 1.9km east of Wollaston Meadows. All Separated by roads. Species-rich boundary hedgerows could be used by foraging bats. Mainly agricultural.

**ARCHAEOLOGY** – This area has high archaeological potential for sub-surface remains of prehistoric or Roman date. A number of cropmarks have been plotted within the fields and more recent monitoring during pipeline trenching recorded finds of prehistoric and Roman date. Any proposal would need to be supported by archaeological evaluation fieldwork and, if permitted, by further archaeological investigation to accord with current policy.

**ARBORICULTURE** – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and a few boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.
SITE IR6: LAND NORTH OF STATION ROAD, IRCHESTER

LANDSCAPE - Included two images to include frontage wall, which is a feature of the site. Pastoral land, visually enclosed, but with medium sensitivity and open to wider views from the north-east. Part meadow, part rough grass, with reptile potential, it has more physical variation than any other site and more features. Bounded on three sides with existing development. A view of the spire of St. Katharine’s Church is available.

ECOLOGY – 1.5km south east of Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI Site, separated by road. Part of site is agricultural field with low value. Meadow habitat could be a constraint (calcareous grassland is a local BAP habitat) and also potential reptile habitat. Boundary hedgerows and trees could be features for commuting bats.

ARCHAEOLOGY – The Northamptonshire HER records likely above ground remains in the south eastern quarter of this site, and these should be preserved in situ. There may have been some damage from past quarrying or agriculture in the rest of the site and its development may be possible, but these areas still have medium to high
potential for other sub-surface remains and further evaluative fieldwork would be required to support an application.

A site visit confirmed that there are good views of the Grade II * listed church and that development of the higher parts of the site would be detrimental to the setting of the church and the historic core of the village, as demonstrated by new development to the east.

**ARBORICULTURE** – There are no tree constraints within this site other than the boundary hedgerows and western boundary ash trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.
SITE IR7: LAND OFF FARNDISH ROAD, IRCHESTER

LANDSCAPE - In agricultural use, with good access, low landscape sensitivity, but open to wider views and with no physical site boundaries other than hedgerows. Existing housing rear gardens to the north, low ecological value, other than species rich hedgerow, and no major trees.

ECOLOGY – 2km south of Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI Site, 1.3km east of Irchester Old Lodge Pit SSSI. Separated by road networks. Agricultural land with low ecological value. Only boundary features could be of value for foraging bats.

ARCHAEOLOGY – A probable trackway and pits have been noted on aerial photographs of this area. It also lies immediately east of an area (IR5/15) which has certain prehistoric and Roman sub-surface remains and is therefore assessed to have high potential itself. Any application would require supporting fieldwork results.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.
SITE IR9: LAND NORTH OF STATION ROAD, IRCHESTER

LANDSCAPE – In agricultural use and fully cultivated, hence low ecological value other than species poor hedgerows. Low landscape sensitivity, but open to wider views from the countryside and commercial areas of Wellingborough beyond. No trees, road to the south, railway to the north-east. Unconstrained. The steeple of St. Katharine’s Church can be seen as a vertical element in the view.

ECOLOGY – Located 1.1km east of Irchester Country Park, 1.9km away from Irchester Old Lodge Pit and 3km away from Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI. Separated by road networks. Parcel of agricultural land of low ecological value. Only boundary features possible for foraging bats.

ARCHAEOLOGY – No recorded sites or finds within or close to this plot and it can be considered to have low potential and that archaeology is a minimal constraint to its development. Some investigation may be required to support an application or as a condition though.

The site is on higher ground overlooking the Grade II* church and historic core of the settlement, albeit that surrounding development minimises any additional adverse effect on the church’s wider setting.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than a few boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.
SITES IR11 AND IR13: SOUTH OF STATION ROAD, IRCHESTER

LANDSCAPE – These adjacent sites are part agricultural, part woodland with farm enclosure, separated from the railway to the east by a parcel of open farmland, bounded by footpath and open field to the east, IR14 to the south and existing housing to the west. The only site with tree constraints, is a good quality copse of beech and ash with landscape value and bat potential.

ECOLOGY – Located 1.2km east of Irchester Country Park, 2km away from Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI. Separated by road networks. Woodland mosaic with connectivity to other areas. May provide potential for bats, badgers, dormice, reptiles.

ARCHAEOLOGY - No recorded sites or finds within or close to this plot which is well enclosed, and it can be considered to have low potential and that archaeology and heritage are a minimal constraint to its development.

ARBORICULTURE – The copse would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.
SITES IR3 & IR12: LAND BETWEEN BAKERS CRESCENT & CHESTER ROAD, IRCHESTER

LANDSCAPE – In agricultural use, large swathe of land to the north of the settlement, abutting the Country Park to the west and IR16 to the east. Visually enclosed by woodland in the Country Park and the settlement to the south, it has limited views from the east and is on high ground, although has low sensitivity. No tree constraints other than on the boundaries and low ecological value. A view of St. Katharine’s Church is available. The parcel sites are adjacent to Irchester Country Park.

ECOLOGY – IR12 borders Irchester Country Park on the western boundary and is 1km south of Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI. Separated by a road. Agricultural land with low ecological value, although boundary features could be used by commuting bats particularly bordering the Country Park and peripheral habitat could have reptile potential.

ARCHAEOLOGY – Cropmarks indicative of prehistoric or Roman features have been noted in the southern part of this area and finds suggest that there may have been activity of these and the Anglo-Saxon periods. Even where cropmarks have not been observed, high potential is assessed. However, there is also evidence for extraction which may have removed deposits. Any application would need to be supported by the results of archaeological fieldwork.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.
SITES IR11 AND IR13: LAND SOUTH OF STATION ROAD, IRCHESTER

LANDSCAPE - (land west of footpath) – Unused land, general tall ruderal vegetation, scrub and rough grass, with potential habitat value, although disturbed by dirt-tracking and informal play. Bounded by footpath and open field to the east, IR14 to the south and existing housing to the west. Visually well enclosed by vegetation on the footpath, but generally a degraded landscape with low sensitivity. Located adjacent to existing residential development.

ECOLOGY - 1.2km east of Irchester Country Park, 2km away from Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI. Separated by road networks. Mosaic habitat with potential for reptiles, badgers and bat foraging.

ARCHAEOLOGY - No recorded sites or finds of note in area which was formerly the town allotments and it can be considered to have low potential and that archaeology and heritage are a minimal constraint to its development.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and small trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.
SITE IR14: LAND SOUTH OF STATION ROAD, IRCHESTER

LANDSCAPE – Currently grassland, with no obvious grazing, the site is bounded by housing to the west, other consideration sites IR11/13 to the north and east and the railway beyond that to the east. The southern boundary is to open agricultural land with potential wider views, but the boundary is enclosed by a natural hedgerow, albeit thin and species-poor. The site has low landscape sensitivity and falls to the north, which gives it some visual enclosure. The site has low ecological value, other than on its boundaries, which will be used by bats for foraging and there are no in-site tree constraints. There is some evidence of a ridge-and-furrow field pattern. Located adjacent to existing residential development.

ECOLOGY - 1.2km east of Irchester Country Park. 2.1km away from Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI. Separated by road networks. Agricultural land with low ecological value other than potential bat foraging along boundary vegetation.

ARCHAEOLOGY - No recorded sites or finds within or close to this plot other than faint ridge and furrow. Although not an absolute constraint to development, these medieval remains are rare in the parish given later extraction and arable cultivation. The site can be considered to have low potential for further remains, but that loss of an historic landscape feature would result from its development.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and small trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.
SITE IR16: LAND OFF HIGH STREET, IRCHESTER

LANDSCAPE – Open land, currently in agricultural use, enclosed by the existing settlement to the south, the road, sporadic trees and some development to the east, but with no visual or physical enclosure to the north and west. It has low landscape sensitivity, but is important to the setting of the settlement and has a natural land-fall that is lower than the adjacent IR3/12 land parcels. View of St. Katharine’s Church spire.

ECOLOGY – 600m east of Irchester Country Park, 1km away from Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI, separated by road. Agricultural land with low ecological value apart from some limited boundary vegetation which could have potential for foraging bats.

ARCHAEOLOGY – This area has been subject to archaeological evaluation involving both geophysical survey and trial trenching. This has identified some prehistoric and later features, although these sub-surface remains could be dealt with through further investigation ahead of construction.

ARBORICULTURE – No tree constraints other than the individual boundary trees which are of little merit. These would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.
CONCLUSION

Subject to desk-top studies, the sites are generally unconstrained by ecology or trees, although IR11 and IR13 could be considered to be marginally constrained by both ecology and trees. Although of low landscape sensitivity, the sites generally have little visual or physical enclosure and are therefore open to wider landscape views.

IR1, 9 and 16 have been considered as potential housing sites and there is a case for settlement expansion on the eastern side of the existing settlement, despite some longer views from open countryside. There are other degrading built elements in the landscape to the east which would reduce the sensitivity of the receptors in the landscape. IR1 is a brownfield site and is a natural site for development consideration.

Land to the west of the settlement is on raised ground and open to views from the wider landscape, with no visual enclosure at all. What is currently a softened and informal edge to settlement would be rationalised and potentially made more intrusive.

Land to the north of settlement, despite some enclosure by landform and vegetation in the Country Park, is exposed to wider views from the north and east, although this is generally from a degraded landscape and further settlement in Wellingborough. The setting of the Country Park should also be considered, as development to its boundary could be considered to reduce its appeal.

Land to the south, although with little or no visual or physical enclosure, has low landscape sensitivity and limited visibility to sensitive receptors, to which the linear edge of settlement is very apparent already. Sensitive edge of development landscape treatment would be required to mitigate for this effectively. However, this area is known to contain a complex of sub-surface archaeological remains. Although these do not preclude development, other areas might be preferable.

In purely landscape terms, our recommendation would be for excluding options to the west and north of Irchester and a concentration on the sites available to the east and south of the existing settlement, particularly IR1,6,9,11,13 and 14 to the east and IR5,7 and 15 to the south.

However, as well as archaeological constraints to the south, site IR6 has both archaeological and heritage constraints and should be left undeveloped. IR14 contains ridge and furrow earthworks and its retention as open land is also preferable. The site previously considered on IR16, despite some merit in landform, has very poorly defined boundaries and could be considered to be an unnatural extension into agricultural land.
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

RAMSAR  RAMSAR Site is a wetland of international importance. The Ramsar Convention was signed in the city of Ramsar, Iran.

SPA  Special Protection Area

SSSI  Site of Special Scientific Interest

HER  Historic Environment Record

EH  English Heritage

NHLE  National Heritage List for England

BAP  Biodiversity Action Plan
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ECOLOGY * ARBORICULTURE * ARBORICULTURAL SITE MONITORING AND SUPERVISION LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT * LANDSCAPE DESIGN & PLANNING * LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT * LANDSCAPE AUDIT * PROJECT MANAGEMENT ** EXPERT WITNESS
APPENDIX 5 – HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT, MOLA (MARCH 2016)
Irchester, Knuston & Little Irchester Neighbourhood Plan Group

Historic Landscape Assessment

March 2016
<table>
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<th>Issue no.</th>
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<th>prepared by</th>
<th>reviewed by</th>
<th>approved by</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>21/09/2015</td>
<td>Charlotte Mecklenburgh (Archaeology)</td>
<td>Mark Strawbridge Lead Consultant Built Heritage</td>
<td>Mark Strawbridge Contract Manager</td>
<td>Fifth issue – client amendments</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>10/02/16</td>
<td>CM</td>
<td>MS</td>
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<td>11/03/2016</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>15/03/2016</td>
<td>CM (Senior Archaeologist)</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Client</td>
<td>Client amendments</td>
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Cover: View of the north of Irchester approaching from Chester Road (MOLA photo 31/07/2015)

Fig 1 Sites locations
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Fig 5 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map of 1958–59
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Fig 7 Extract from Fig 1 of the HCLA (2004) Northamptonshire Historic Character Types
Fig 8 Map showing proposed sites, historic character viewpoints and settings
Fig 9 Map of proposed sites and areas of high to low sensitivity

Note: site outlines may appear differently on some figures owing to distortions in historic maps. North is approximate on early maps.
Irchester is a civil parish and village in the county of Northamptonshire, in the Borough of Wellingborough. The settlements of Little Irchester and Knuston also lie within Irchester parish.

The historic area has been assessed in relation to current policy and advice, using industry standard methodology with specific reference to a range of proposed development sites around the three settlements.

In terms of historic landscape character, archaeological constraints and aspects of the built heritage of Irchester village, proposed development sites IR6, IR9, IR3, IR12 and IR16 are considered to be highly sensitive to change. These sites have been assessed as having both sensitive views (i.e. uninterrupted vistas synonymous with the development of the main settlement of Irchester), and archaeological and/or built heritage considerations that make sites individually an asset to the historical character of the village.

The church of St Katharine’s is listed Grade I, and is considered to be of VERY HIGH SIGNIFICANCE. It is the focal point of the village and as such it is considered that setting contributes greatly to the asset’s significance.

The proposed development sites of IR5 and IR15 have been assessed as having a low overall sensitivity for change, as their position topographically would be low lying and as such would not affect the views into or out of the centre of Irchester village. However, these sites do have some archaeological considerations, with the known presence of possible prehistoric or Roman subsurface remains. Subject to an agreed mitigation strategy it is unlikely archaeological constraints would affect overall site development potential.

Site A, B, IR1, IR4, IR7, IR11, IR13 and IR14 are considered to have the lowest overall sensitivity to change and would have a low impact on the historic character and setting associated with Irchester village. In terms of archaeology, built heritage and historic character setting these sites have little or no constraints and are either within the village envelope (IR1); outside of the village centre or; in a position of relatively low lying land, whereby historic views and settings would not be disturbed.
Introduction

MOLA is commissioned by The Irchester, Knuston & Little Irchester Neighbourhood Plan Group to produce a Historic Landscape Assessment of the village and general area, with specific reference to a range of proposed development sites around the settlement at Little Irchester and Knuston.

The area was visited and visual inspection undertaken on two occasions in May and July 2015 by Mark Strawbridge BA (Hons) PGDipLA PGDipTP MRTPi IHBC AIfA Lead consultant MOLA and Charlotte Mecklenburgh BA MA CPIA Senior Archaeologist MOLA.
The contents of this report assess the effect of the proposed development sites on the visual environment; the townscape; and heritage assets with particular reference to setting of St Katherine’s church and its contribution to the very high significance of the asset. The following sets out the methodology which draws upon the following:

- Historic England publications GPA Note No3 The Setting of Heritage Assets (2015) and Seeing the History in the View (2011) set the policy and advice framework for the consideration of the setting of heritage assets and landscapes.
- The industry standard advice on the assessment of landscape impact is the Landscape Institute’s 2013 publication Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3). This makes reference to historic landscapes and refers to the need for specialist input.
- GPA3 states that ‘The context of a heritage asset is a non-statutory term used to describe any relationship between it and other heritage assets, which are relevant to its significance, including cultural, intellectual, spatial or functional. They apply irrespective of distance, sometimes extending well beyond what might be considered an asset’s setting, and can include the relationship of one heritage asset to another.’ To identify and assess context, we also refer to advice in the assessment of historic landscapes is set out in the annexe to a Cadw report Guide to Good Practice….. Landscapes of Historic Interest (2nd Edition) which in turn refers to revised methodology for ‘Assessment of the Significance of the Impact of Development on Historic Landscape’ - (ASIDOHL2) (2007).
- The importance of setting is dependent on a wide range of physical elements within, as well as perceptual and associational attributes pertaining to, the heritage asset’s surroundings.
- Although many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset. Capacity may vary between designated assets of the same grade or of the same type or according to the nature of the change. It can also depend on the location of the asset: an elevated or overlooked location; a riverbank, coastal or island location; or a location within an extensive tract of flat land may increase the sensitivity of the setting.
- Sensitivity to change is a key component, therefore, of the consideration of historic landscape and of settings within it.

Our assessment looked at all of the above, focusing on:

- Cumulative change
- Change over time
- Appreciating setting and its contribution to significance
- Setting and Urban Design

GPA Note No3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2015)

GPA3 sets out 5 ‘steps’ in the consideration of setting:

**Step 1:** To identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected

**Step 2:** To assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s), i.e.:

a) the physical surroundings of the asset, including its relationship with other heritage assets;
b) the way the asset is appreciated; and

c) the asset’s associations and patterns of use.

The advice states that this is often, but not exclusively, done by reference to a ‘tick’ list comprising the following which may apply.

a) The asset’s physical surroundings

- Topography
- Other heritage assets (including buildings, structures, landscapes, areas or archaeological remains)
- Definition, scale and ‘grain’ of surrounding streetscape, landscape and spaces
- Formal design
- Historic materials and surfaces
- Land use
- Green space, trees and vegetation
- Openness, enclosure and boundaries
b) Experience of the asset

- Surrounding landscape or townscape character
- Views from, towards, through, across and including the asset
- Visual dominance, prominence or role as focal point
- Intentional intervisibility with other historic and natural features
- Noise, vibration and other pollutants or nuisances
- Tranquillity, remoteness, ‘wildness’
- Sense of enclosure, seclusion, intimacy or privacy
- Dynamism and activity
- Accessibility, permeability and patterns of movement
- Degree of interpretation or promotion to the public
- The rarity of comparable survivals of setting

Step 3 ‘To assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance’ brings in the requirement to assess ‘proposed development’.

In this case, the ‘development’ is not yet defined in detail with several areas around the settlement identified as potential sites for housing. The developers had not, at the time of the study, carried out Historic Landscape Assessments in relation to their specific proposals and it was by no means certain which if any of the sites were to be developed, and if so, what form, scale, size and design would prevail in any case. The sites are in effect in competition, and there is potentially a cumulative effect so the development potential overall was considered as a whole. A more strategic approach was therefore applied, hence referring to the county HLCA and ASIDOL, attempting to set out the areas around the settlement that would, in historic landscape terms, be sensitive to change rather than analysing that change in detail. We considered the context (as above), broad development areas and the considerations set out in the advice, i.e.:

Proximity to asset

- Extent
- Position in relation to landform
- Degree to which location will physically or visually isolate asset
- Position in relation to key views

The form and appearance of the development

- Prominence, dominance, or conspicuousness
- Competition with or distraction from the asset
- Dimensions, scale and massing
- Proportions
- Visual permeability (extent to which it can be seen through)
- Materials (texture, colour, reflectiveness, etc.)
- Architectural style or design
- Introduction of movement or activity
Other effects of the development

- Change to built surroundings and spaces
- Change to skyline
- Noise, odour, vibration, dust, etc.
- Lighting effects and 'light spill'
- Change to general character (e.g. suburbanising or industrialising)
- Changes to public access, use or amenity
- Changes to land use, land cover, tree cover
- Changes to archaeological context, soil chemistry, or hydrology
- Changes to communications/accessibility/permeability

Our study draws to a greater or lesser extent on all of the above, as appropriate.

The next stage identified, Step 4, is to explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm. This requires a detailed set of proposals and, we would suggest, is not part of the brief for this work, and as such would necessarily fall to the developer in each case to show how proposals might be mitigated. Similarly Step 5 'to make and document the decision and monitor outcomes' relates primarily to the developer and the Local Planning Authority.

It is not necessary therefore to follow the '5 steps' to the letter, but the content, spirit and intent of the relevant stages has been adhered to and the conclusions made are based on a sound understanding of the significance expressed or otherwise of its constituent assets and their settings.

ASIDOHL2

This practice has been developed to assess, amongst other factors, competing development sites in the context of existing Historic Landscape Characterisation. Albeit developed for use in Wales, the methodology is sound in itself, especially as there is a HLCA produced by the County Council (2004) and is particularly helpful in the definition of 'context' into which the assessment of heritage assets, settings and more local historic landscapes might fit. The Methodology similarly sets out stages, a summary of which follows:

STAGE 1 Compilation of an introduction of essential, contextual information.

STAGE 2 Description and quantification of the direct, physical impacts of development on the Historic Character Area(s) affected.

STAGE 3 Description and quantification of the indirect impacts of development on the Historic Character Area(s) affected.

STAGE 4 Evaluation of the relative importance of the Historic Character Area(s) (or part(s) thereof) directly and/or indirectly affected by development

STAGE 5 Assessment of the overall significance of impact of development.

Extracts from the technical annexe expanding the content of these stages are included as Appendix A. As we are assessing the landscape and the impact of development on it in a broader sense, this report concentrates on stages 1 – 3. A key element of the assessment is visual, although it is by no means the only one.

The Historic Environment and Site Allocation in Local Plans - Historic England Advice Note 3 (Historic England October 2015)

This document post-dates the initial work reported in this document. It states that ‘A positive strategy for the historic environment in Local Plans can ensure that site allocations avoid harming the significance of both designated and non-designated assets, including effects on their setting.’ (Page 1). Although preceding our work we consider that the staged process undertaken in our assessment accords and is broadly compatible with the spirit of that set out on page 5 of Historic England Advice Note 3.

Visual Assessment

In general terms, a visual assessment involves the measurement of environmental effects as experienced by people and, therefore, involves quantitative, qualitative and perceptual measurement. They are also assessed from a professional point of view and from a particular standpoint. Sensitivity to change is an important element in the consideration of historic landscapes and the settings of assets within them.

1 In terms of the latter points in the advice, permanence of the development and longer term consequences, it was felt that residential development is essentially permanent so the following were not considered (i.e. Anticipated lifetime/temporariness, Recurrence, Reversibility & Longer term or consequential effects of the development).
The principal role of a visual assessment is to demonstrate the effects of the proposed developments through visual means and to interpret them, as they effect environments, historic settings and people’s perceptions of them through the written word.

The method of assessment used, therefore, accepts that both objective and subjective judgements are made. An attempt is made to separate the subjective judgements from the objective; as such for the more subjective aspects to be of substance the author must have the necessary skills. Mark Strawbridge, principal author of this report, has developed those skills as a Chartered Town Planner and Landscape Architect, as well as being a founder member and past Vice Chair of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists. Mark is Lead Consultant for Built Heritage at MOLA.

The Process

A number of viewpoints around the settlements were investigated and representative selection made, showing a general spread of views which illustrate the historic character and landscape settings of Irchester village, Little Irchester and Knuston; and the relationships likely to arise between proposed development sites and their surroundings, listed buildings, conservation areas and important townscape vistas. The views were chosen by the author and archaeologist and co-author, Charlotte Mecklenburgh. Each of the views chosen was projected by a combination of site visit, photographic data and by incorporation into a computer model of the study area to ascertain their relationship with each of the proposed sites.

Contextual Data

In order to set the area into its full archaeological and historical context, information was collected on the known historic environment within a study area comprising an approximate radius of 2.5km from the centre of Irchester village, as held by the Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER is managed by Historic England and includes information from past investigations, local knowledge, find spots, and documentary and cartographic sources.

The study area was considered to be appropriate to characterise the historic environment of the wider site. Occasionally there may be reference to assets beyond this study area, where appropriate, e.g. where such assets are particularly significant and/or where they contribute to current understanding of the historic environment.

For the purposes of this report the documentary and cartographic sources, including results from any archaeological investigations in the proposed sites and study area around it were examined in order to determine the likely nature, extent and significance of any buried or above ground heritage assets that may be present within or around the areas of proposed development.

Listed Buildings

Irchester village contains a number of Grade II/II* listed buildings, most of which are in close proximity to the principal built asset, St Katharine’s church, a Grade I listed building. For the purposes of the report, St Katharine’s church has been marked on all maps, the other listed buildings within Irchester village appear in a gazetteer at the back of this report, and have been taken into consideration as part of a whole when referring to the historic character or landscape setting.

Areas of Special Interest

Irchester village, Little Irchester and Knuston do not lie within designated Archaeological Priority Areas or Conservation areas as defined by the Borough Council of Wellingborough.
3. Context

History of the settlement - chronological summary

Irchester historically, was spelt *Yrancester* in 973 AD and *Irencestre* in the 1086 Domesday Book. It is suggested that the name was formed from the Old English ‘Ira’ or ‘Yra’ with the suffix ‘ceaster’ denoting a Roman station. (The Roman town of Irchester is sited 1km to the north of Irchester village and a roadway is known to run north/south to the west of the middle of the settlement). An alternative place name suggestion is that of an Anglo-Saxon derivation *Iren Ceaestre* meaning ‘iron Fortress’.

In the 11th century the settlement was known as *Erncestre or Erchester*, before eventually becoming *Erchester* by the 12th century. Perhaps most noteworthy is the Ironstone and Iron ore quarries, which became a prominent feature of the landscape in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a resource which occurring in abundance in this area, may also have had an influence upon the name.

The church of St Katharine’s, the first part of which was built in the 12th century, is listed Grade I and is considered to be of VERY HIGH SIGNIFICANCE\(^2\) as a designated heritage asset. As such is the focal point of the settlement of Irchester village. Until the Victorian era the village consisted of only one street (now known as High Street) and it is along here that some of the oldest buildings in the village can be found, dating from the 13th century onwards. These include the Manor House and its adjoining Tithe Barn, a medieval open hall house (33-39 High Street) and the original Blacksmiths’ cottage and forge. (For Listed buildings in Irchester village, please see Gazetteer, Appendix B).

Development of the settlement

The Enclosure Map of 1769 shows the land apportionments allocated within the early village of Irchester with land to the north of the village marked out as ‘Glebe’ land (i.e. land given over to the church to support the parish priesthood), but it does not show the church or dwellings that had built up along the High Street.

The Tithe map of Irchester parish dating to 1845 (not reproduced), shows in more detail the early layout of the village\(^3\), with the majority of plots listed for use as ‘house and garden’, the Blacksmith’s cottage and forge can be seen on the tithe map at this time as well and the surrounding area is listed for use, in the most part, as agricultural land.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1887–89 (Fig 3) shows an altogether different picture of Irchester. By this time the village had grown into quite a substantial settlement with a concentration of dwellings along the High Street, and various side streets as well. At this time the smaller settlements of Little Irchester and Knuston can also be seen, but still only consist of a handful of buildings in each area. What is visible from the early Ordnance Survey map is the Midland Railway line passing from the east of Irchester, south-east to northwest, with a station just to the east of Irchester village (presumably where Station Road gets its name). There is also the Northampton and Peterborough line which runs through Little Irchester, north-west of Irchester village. At this time the land between Irchester village and Little Irchester was being quarried for Ironstone, and as such a small railway network can be seen running from three sites within the quarry pits, up to what is named on the relevant map as Wellingborough Station located at Little Irchester. (Not to be confused with present day Wellingborough Station).

By the time of the next Ordnance Survey map of 1927 (Fig 4) Irchester has spread a little more, although perhaps not quite as noticeably as Little Irchester, which is now a village in itself. The earlier quarry rail tracks have now gone, but to the immediate west of Little Irchester there is a new railway line called the ‘Mineral Railway’ which now services the stone pits. Irchester village has grown quite substantially and now has allotments and a recreation ground on the outskirts of the developed centre. Knuston at this time still remains relatively small in comparison and the surrounding land here more noticeably is used as woodland and parkland, relating to Knusto Hall.

The 1958-59 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 5) shows the effect the quarry pits have had on the surrounding landscape, with large quarry pits to the west of Irchester village. By the time of the production of this map however the quarry that used to have the ‘Mineral Railway’ attached to it is now disused and overgrown. The quarry to the immediate south of this however still appears to be in use at this time. The small Northampton to Peterborough branch line still passes through Little Irchester, and along the Wollaston Road can be seen a row of terraced houses, with gardens, which were built during the interwar years as ‘Homes fit for Heroes’; Farrish Road, Edward Road, Alfred Street and Gray Street were also areas that underwent development of this kind.

By the time of the 1989-93 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 6) both railway stations at Irchester and Little Irchester have gone, with little trace of the branch line running through Little Irchester remaining. The larger railway track running to the east of Irchester is still extant, but there is no longer a station serving Irchester village. Perhaps the most noticeable feature on the map is the size and scale of Irchester, which is no longer a village, but more of an established small town. There has been a marked increase in housing to the south of the centre of Irchester, with rows of houses leading all the way west, to Irchester Country Park (formerly the ironstone quarry). There has also been the development of the Higham Road bypass to the north of Irchester, and which passes through the now much larger settlement of Little Irchester. The 1989-93 Ordnance Survey map shows very clearly the network of footpaths that feature in the landscape around the perimeters of Irchester and lead to the Country Park, all the way to Little Irchester, and in the east, Knuston.

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\(^2\) Please see Appendix C for methodology for assessment of significance.

\(^3\) By its nature, the Tithe map shows only land to which Titthing was deemed to apply; any other details shown are not as reliable.

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4. Historic Landscape Characterisation

There have been several characterisations of the historical environment of Northamptonshire, the most relevant to setting this more detailed assessment in context is the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) carried out for and by Northamptonshire County Council (NCC et al) in 2004. This states:

*The historic character of the county has been variously described and summarised over the years. Antiquarian county histories and descriptions by such as Baker and the Victoria County History were largely based upon parish or other administrative units and “focused on the parish church and the manor house; a natural tendency arising out of their frequently clerical and genteel origins” (Steane 1974, 125). More recent surveys have taken a wider perspective presenting period based, economic and social views of the County’s history.*

The objective of the 2004 Landscape Assessment was to assess the county and divide it into a series of contiguous areas of similar historic character. This was undertaken, noting that *‘compared to natural features such as geology or topography, the historic character of an area is a less precise phenomenon’.* It was therefore decided that for the purposes of this historic model the most suitable result would be that which proved most useful for the task at hand. The assessment went on to say that:

*Historically, Northamptonshire is an ‘enclosed landscape’. The unhedged open fields, which covered the county in the medieval period, were subject to enclosure from at least the fifteenth century onwards and after the great periods of parliamentary enclosure in the 18th and 19th centuries the county saw a landscape of hedged fields and attendant road systems established. Unlike some other areas of the country, Northamptonshire has little surviving in the way of unenclosed land such as heath, common or uncultivated areas. Examination of the Historic Landscape Character (HLC) database showed approximately 75% of the county’s area covered by ‘enclosed land’. Settlements were next highest, covering approximately 7% of the area and woodland approximately 4%. Other HLC landscape types all formed less than 1% each of the area. As such the principal defining characteristic of the Northamptonshire landscape was considered to be its ‘fieldscapes’.*

Following the methodology, within the HLC model, the enclosed land was subdivided principally upon its form, degree of survival and date of origin. Consequently, it was decided to sort the fieldscapes based upon these criteria and the following Historic Landscape Character Types (HLCT) were identified:

**Non parliamentary enclosure**
1. Pre 19th Century non parliamentary enclosure
2. 19th Century non parliamentary enclosure
3. Fragmented non parliamentary enclosure
4. Parliamentary enclosure
5. 19th Century parliamentary enclosure
6. Fragmented parliamentary enclosure

**Modern fields**
7. Large modern fields
8. Reinstated mineral extraction
9. Flooded mineral extraction
10. Modern fields
11. Fragmented modern fields

**Woodland**
1. Woodland

Irchester falls within the ‘Large Modern Fields’ (LMF) category and is identified in the NCC study, under reference HLCT7(j) as *Nene Valley Side: Irchester – Wollaston.*

**Key Characteristics of the Large Modern Fields (LMF) category**

The key characteristics of this HLCT are:

- Clay geologies
- Large irregular fieldscapes
- Small settlements and scattered isolated farmsteads
- Few deserted medieval villages or ridge and furrow earthworks
- Few Conservation Areas
At this level it is noted that the majority of individual heritage assets are not identified.

**Influences of LMF on the development of the landscape**

The category suggests a process of extensive field boundary removal to create single, large fields. The process is linked to changes in post-war farming practices, increased mechanisation and the introduction of fiscal measures such as the Common Agricultural Policy.

The 1950s Ordnance Survey mapping generally shows a picture that was very similar to that of the late 19th Century, indicating that the majority of boundary changes occurred during the 1960s and 1970s.

The NCC study suggests that ‘although agricultural needs during the Second World War may have brought more fields and marginal land into arable cultivation the essential pattern of the landscape remained the same until the onset of more intensive farming. The origins of the field systems created by these measures are varied and including both non-parliamentary and parliamentary enclosed land. Because of these diverse backgrounds, the boundaries can vary in shape and form and the main defining criteria is simply the size: Many fields, according to the study, are over 10 hectares. Although large, they do not appear to be of the same order as the ‘prairie fields’ of the southeast of England.’

**Principal historic elements in LMF category**

**Fieldscapes**

The LMF character areas in general contain little or no ancient or replanted ancient woodland - a factor presumably linked to both the location and agricultural practice.

The process of agricultural intensification and mechanisation also saw a change in the patterns of agricultural buildings. Many of the farms and field barns which had been set up away from the villages as part of the parliamentary enclosure process and Victorian agricultural improvements became derelict or changed use in the latter half of the 20th Century as they became unsuitable for the larger machinery.

**Settlements**

Settlement within the areas generally comprises small or significantly shrunken villages. There is also a preponderance of nucleated linear settlements (of which Irchester is one), some of which show evidence of extensive re-planning or re-location in the 19th and 20th centuries. The causes of these correlations are unclear but are probably topographically determined. The changes to settlement patterns have occasionally left the earthwork remains of deserted or shrunken villages but often these have been removed as part of the modern agricultural improvements.

**Communication**

Modern trunk roads comprising the A14 and A45 cross the area. The other principal communication route is the Grand Union Canal, which passes through the Hemplow Hills character area.

**Ridge and Furrow**

Since the fields within the Character Areas are largely arable, they contain little surviving ridge and furrow cultivation. Coupled with this, the ‘grubbing out’ of hedges and other agricultural improvements was, in some locations, accompanied by the flattening of earthwork sites. However, ridge and furrow earthworks do survive in small areas of pasture immediately around some of the villages, such as at Elington. R&F is not rare in lowland Britain in general nor in the Midlands region in particular; the publication *Turning the Plough* (Hall 2001; Catchpole and Priest 2012) identifies a spread of good quality examples in the region and states that there has been a marked decline in the loss of R&F through agricultural processes since the late 1990s. The Irchester area does not feature in the 40 or so example/studies in this document. The document *Open Fields of Northamptonshire* (Hall, D 1995) identifies areas of R&F that make a contribution to the historic landscape at a more local level; again, no sites in the study area are included.

**Monuments**

There are relatively few upstanding earthwork monuments within the character areas but examples of deserted medieval villages occur at Mallows and West cotton (Nene Valley: Little Addington to Ringstead character area) and extensive manorial fishponds survive at Stoke Albany. The Roman small town at Irchester is located within the *Nene Valley: Irchester to Wollaston* character area.

The NCC study concludes that ‘……..it is perhaps the historic houses that dominate the areas with examples of 17th and 18th century buildings at Great Harrowden and Orlingbury and earlier architectural examples at Dingley Hall and Apethorpe’.
Nene Valley: Irchester to Wollaston Character Area (HLCT7(j) (see Fig 7)

Considering the relevant character sub-area in more detail, the NCC document states:

‘The area is located on the county border and overlooks the River Nene at the north. A deep tributary stream forms the boundary between Knuston and Irchester and flows into the Nene at the east of the area. The ground slopes gently down towards the river. At its highest point at the south, the ground is capped with Boulder Clay and Glacial sands and gravels but, as the ground slopes gently down towards the Nene, limestone and Lias Group silts and clays are exposed. Ironstone geologies in the area have generally been quarried away and the resulting reinstated ground forms part of the large modern fields that characterise the area.

The area was originally enclosed under Parliamentary Acts in the late 18th century. These original field patterns generally survived up into the late 20th century when boundary removal created the present pattern of large modern fields. Both Irchester and Wollaston have grown substantially in the 20th century, predominantly due to the rise in the shoe industry.

The A45 Nene Valley Way passes through the area and the London – Birmingham railway passes through the valley immediately to the east of Irchester. Otherwise, enclosure period roads form the main communication routes in the area but previously, Roman roads led to Irchester Roman town from both the south and the east.

The earthworks of the Roman town at Irchester survive within the area. Immediately adjacent to these are later earthworks associated with the deserted hamlet of Chester-on-the-Water. The hamlet appears to have become depopulated over a number of centuries and eventually became incorporated into the grounds of Chester House in the 18th century.

A larger hall survives at Knuston and, as at Irchester, within its 18th century grounds lay the remains of the township’s deserted medieval village but no significant ridge and furrow survives here or indeed elsewhere within the area.

Part of the area around Irchester Roman town was subject to ironstone quarrying and the remains of an extraction tramway still survive. The ground has subsequently been reinstated as both agricultural land and woodland plantation (now part of Irchester Country Park).
The proximate landscape around the 3 settlements, where not affected by quarrying and other industrialised development, fits the above description completely.
5. Archaeology in the Area

Prehistoric

There is fairly extensive evidence for prehistoric activity within the vicinity of Irchester, with sites of prehistoric settlements to be found to the immediate north of proposed sites IR12/IR3, north-west, south-west and south-east of the village. There have also been, recorded within the HER, a number of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age finds. There are listings within the HER for a round barrow, ditch, enclosure, ring ditch and trackway of possible prehistoric or Roman date as within the proposed sites to the south of Irchester IR5/IR15. These sites also contain findspots of an undated burnt stone pit as well as a number of prehistoric flints and hand axes. Iron Age activity is limited largely to the north of Irchester, immediately north of sites IR12/IR3 there is evidence of a possible Iron Age roundhouse.

Roman

To the north of Irchester village is the known Roman settlement of Irchester town, located 2km south of Wellingborough. The Roman road route Durobrivae (Water Newton) to Dungee Corner is projected to run north-south to the west of modern day Irchester village, approximately in line with the Wollaston Road. The extension of the road to the north continues up towards Kettering and beyond, to the south the road appears to follow the county boundary between Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire through to the Dungee Corner. The first stretch of road running due south from the old Roman town to where it aligns with the Wollaston Road is disused and most likely marked by hedgerows, where not destroyed by the ironstone workings (Margarv 1967, 188). The line of the road is projected to cross through proposed sites IR12/IR3 and can be seen on Fig 9. To the east of proposed development IR7 the HER records a possible Roman settlement and ditch system, with Roman subsurface remains also showing up in plots IR5/IR15. Irchester at this time acted as a local market, administrative focus and religious centre for one of the most affluent areas of the region and lay at a key nodal point in a wider communication network, with Irchester village falling onto the wider hinterland of the area (Taylor, 2000).

Saxon

There is little evidence for Saxon occupation in the area of the town (Roman Irchester), but a number of earlier discoveries suggest activity continued into the early 9th century. Little evidence has been found for continued occupation of Roman Irchester at the end of the Roman occupation except for a late or post-4th century timber structure built against the interior of the southern town defences. Aside from this, the HER records possible Saxon remains within the south centre of Irchester village 200m north of IR7. This evidence could point towards some degree of post Roman occupation of the area, but not enough to have significantly affected the development of the area in the early medieval period (Taylor, 2000).

Medieval

Medieval activity in the area is well documented with the Church of St Katharine’s, the first part of which was built in the 12th century, being the focal point. There is a record of two medieval manor houses within Irchester village, one next to the church, and another to the south of plot IR6. The HER records several scatters of medieval pottery remains throughout the village and around the peripheries, as well as extensive evidence for ridge and furrow cultivation in the western extent of proposed site IR12/IR3. Site IR6, located just to the east of the centre of Irchester village is recorded as having medieval closes and a concentration of medieval pottery within it, and immediately to the south aerial photographs have shown earthworks associated with the medieval village.

The visual character of the village environs

Development of the main settlement of Irchester has been predominantly to the south and south-west, firstly creating in the form of ‘ribbon development’ along primary routes in the earlier part of the C20th and then infilling in depth with cul-de-sac estate development during the mid- to later part. The areas to the north-west, north, north-east and east remain undeveloped and, with the exception of the removal of hedgerows and the intervention of the A45 improvements, are largely as they were in the C19th and before. This openness represents the rural context of the core of the traditional settlement.

Little Irchester is a much later settlement from which there is no visual or causal link with the main village. Knuston is a farmstead/hamlet, associated with Knuston Hall, which has been the subject of conversion and minor additional development in recent times. Both settlements are detached from Irchester proper and are not wholly relevant to the development of the main settlement. Due to the topography of the area, there is intervisibility between the original linear settlement and the Knuston group but not with Little Irchester.

The wider landscape has gone through phases of change, industrialisation and urbanisation. Much of the area to the west and south-west of the village was quarried for ironstone. The land has been reclaimed to agriculture in part and the Irchester Country Park. There is very limited intervisibility between the west side of the study area and the east.

A defining urban feature of the local landscape is the spire of the Church of St Katharine’s. This study in particular seeks to establish the setting of this Grade I listed historic asset and the relationship of it to the character of the historic landscape.

* https://ulasnews.wordpress.com/2014/11/10/evidence-of-medieval-iron-production-found-at-irchester-northamptonshire/ reviews archaeological investigation suggesting medieval iron ore production in the vicinity of Station Road.
6. Character and connections

There was little causal or visual ink between the Roman centre and the village; the church of course was built many centuries later in the Late Medieval period.

Little Irchester is largely a modern era construct. There is no causal or actual relationship of this to the principal asset. Knuston is similarly not considered to be within the broader setting of the historic settlement of Irchester or the church.

Knuston (or Knoston) is a homestead settlement, and is mentioned as far back as the Domesday Book, the settlement along with the post-medieval manor of Knuston Hall (the oldest incarnation being Hill House, dating to the 1600s) post-dates the church (VCH, Northants, Vol. iv, 21–27). It has however expanded organically over time. Views of the historic ‘core’ of the main village are available, however, from the higher land to the north and east of Knuston (i.e. from a footpath beside the water tower). The open, rural character of all of the area to the east of Irchester contributes to the setting of the settlement and the church from this viewpoint.

The wider surrounding landscape had been the subject of change through time but it is clearly ‘historic’ in that it has developed over a long period. Some change has been radical, some transitory and some ‘organic’.

Land around the settlement has remained open and undeveloped since the inception of the settlement; the removal of hedgerows appears to have taken place in the C20th; before that it was characterised by enclosed fields probably from the late C18th.

The southern and western edge of Irchester proper is greatly changed from its original relationship to the village; the removal of hedgerows appears to have taken place in the C20th; before that it was characterised by enclosed fields probably from the late C18th.

Directly from the south (Wollaston Road area) the landscape setting (i.e. backdrop) of the village and constitutes a suburban landscape at present. Views of the church spire are limited and almost all taken over a proximate swathe of C20th estate-type development.

The immediate area to the north and north-west of Irchester has remained much the same as it is now since the place was founded and as such contributes greatly to the context of the settlement and the setting and significance of the church. This part of the study area is, we suggest, vulnerable, in both visual and setting terms, to change.

Similarly more proximate views across from the east, e.g. off Station Road, are sensitive but some erosion has taken place in the 20th century, notable infill in the form of Biscay Close, a rather incongruous cul-de-sac, which replaced the former factory complex site opposite Parsons Road.

Views from within the historic core are not affected by peripheral development although views out are, to a greater or lesser extent. The very proximate setting of the church to the east is currently formed in part by mid-C20th development and the former farm group which is an ad hoc business park/industrial estate. To the west the proximate setting is the mature landscaping of the original churchyard, the new cemetery and small cultivated fields. The footpath network gives access to clear views of the asset across this area.

Viewpoints are shown on Fig 8.

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5 Minus a few hedgerows.
7. Assets Affected

The assets likely to be affected by development in the vicinity are:

**Church of St Katharine’s, Irchester**

St Katharine’s is described in the national register thus:

> Grade I listed church, dating to the late 12th century, with later 13th and 14th century additions. Constructed of regular coursed limestone with ironstone and ashlar dressings, the tower is banded limestone and ironstone ashlar, with lead roof. Aisled nave, chancel, south porch and west tower. South elevation chancel of three window range one with two light perpendicular window to far right and two three-light perpendicular windows with four centred heads and carved label stops. South door between windows has trefoil head and carved label stops.

Set against the 4 values (please refer to Appendix C), St Katherine’s rates highly.

**Other listed buildings** (see Gazetteer Appendix B)

It is not considered any of the 12 other listed buildings (comprising 16 properties) in the study area or their settings (all but one of which are within the main settlement), will be materially impacted upon by development, given the intimate and enclosed nature of the townscape and the limited inter-relationship with the rural surroundings.

**Non-designated assets**

None of the settlements host Conservation Areas, but Irchester has a developmental form which is characteristic; the original core of the settlement is readable and the direction of mostly C20th growth clearly evident.
8. Significance

Please see Appendix C for methodology for determining significance.

The significance of identified assets, with reference to the '4 Values' (HE 2008/2015), is as follows:

- **St Katharine’s Church – Grade I Listed**, the asset is of **Very High** significance.
  
  **Evidential value**: the age of the building and development through time; its rarity and state of preservation; supporting documentation; collective value and comparative potential are all suggest very high significance.

  **Aesthetic value**: St Katherine’s is clearly acknowledged as a beautiful and accomplished piece of architecture, set as it is in the midst of the historic core of the settlement and having been the focal point of the village for many centuries. The setting of the asset, both in terms of the, intimate, urban context and the wider landscape in which it and the village are placed is considered to contribute greatly to the significance of the asset.

  **Historical value**: The church has been at the centre of village and community life, as well as a focal point since its inception in the C12th.

  **Communal value**: The church has been at the centre of village and community life, as well as a focal point since its inception in the C12th. It has meaning as a heritage asset; it figures in the collective experience or memory; communal and is closely bound up with historical, particularly associative, and aesthetic educational, social or economic values of the community at large.

- **Other listed buildings – Mostly Grade II**, the assets are of **High** significance; setting contributes to the status of all assets, to a greater or lesser degree. It is the urban context which is most relevant in these instances.

- **Non-designated assets – the traditional character of the core settlement** is of **Low** significance. The setting of the village, in its rural hinterland, nevertheless contributes positively to its significance.

It should be noted that ‘setting’ does not have significance in its’ own right, but contributes to the significance of the asset(s) to which it refers. (NPPF2012/NPPG2014)

The significance of below ground assets would relate to individual sites to differing degrees. An assessment of this is not undertaken in this exercise.
9. Development Context

Relevant Planning Policy Basis

Please see Appendix D for relevant Legislation, Policy and Advice, which includes:

- The Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 as amended (The Act)
- Emerging Local Planning Policies
- The emerging Neighbourhood Plan
- The History in the View 2011 (Historic England)
- GPA Note No.3 The Setting of Heritage Assets 2015 (Historic England)
- The Historic Environment and Site Allocation in Local Plans - Historic England Advice Note 3 (Historic England October 2015)
- Supplementary advice (Local Authority)

The overall context for consideration of the setting of the principal asset is set out in The Act, Section 16 which requires LPAs, in the decision making process, to have 'special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest'.

Development Pressure

In the process of formulating development plans for the district, a number of development sites for housing have been proposed in and around the periphery of the village, at Little Irchester and to a lesser extent at Knuston. Sites are shown on Fig 1.
10. Direct physical impacts

With the exception of the potential impact by disturbance and removal of below-ground archaeology, there will be no physical impact on heritage assets per se, as below ground heritage assets may be ameliorated by a suitable mitigation strategy. Historical character settings and vistas however can only be protected by the appropriate direction of development change.

There will be an impact on the form of the settlement, the extent of which will depend on the selected location. Historically, development of the principal settlement has taken place towards the south and west of the original village, with Little Irchester and Knuston as ‘satellites’. In so far as it is important in terms of the character of the place, it is considered that development should ideally follow that broad precedent.
11. Indirect impacts

Indirect impacts are most likely to be on the character of the settlement, the setting of the church in its context and its significance.

Assessment of the study area by view

Given the proximate and relatively enclosed nature of the surrounding landscape, it was not thought necessary to undertake the full Zone of Visual Influence ZVI process (ref: GLVIA3) to ascertain potential viewpoints and then test them.

Middle-distance viewpoints are limited to elevated views from the east. Publicly accessible viewpoints, focussed on the church tower, were identified by observation, map-work and site visit. Selected principal view zones are shown on Fig 8, and are numbered accordingly with the viewpoints here. A selection of photographs have been taken for areas within the view zones (excluding view zones 8 & 9, for which there was found to be no inter-visibility between the given zone and the primary built asset), and while the view zones are located approximately with a star symbol, it is noted here that this represents a zone in which a number of views may have been noted, and as such does not mark the exact location of a photograph and associated view. Moreover, they are used as a guide to show the range of views taken within a given view zone (these views can be seen in Fig 8 in black hatching).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Views</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Commentary and sensitivity to change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chester Road, facing south towards village</td>
<td>Vistas from this point extend across plot IR16, and the eastern edge of IR12 and IR3. They take in uninterrupted views of St Katharine’s church and would be highly sensitive to change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Station Road facing north from the centre of the village to Knuston Lodge Farm</td>
<td>Views along this stretch of road span across proposed sites IR6 and IR9. The vista from Station Road directly north between the 2 turnings for Arkwright Road provides the most uninterrupted and complete views of St Katharine’s church. This marked set of views view is particularly sensitive to change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Views looking south-west from the public footpath at Knuston (behind water tower) towards Irchester village</td>
<td>Panoramic views over open land, the church in the centre in context. This view is particularly sensitive to change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Views from the public footpaths from the eastern edge of Irchester Country Park, east towards the rear of St Katharine’s church</td>
<td>Views within the country park are truncated. Emerging from the woodland and along the public footpath travelling generally in an easterly direction there is firstly a screened view of the church with undeveloped cultivated land in the foreground, then views taken in series along the footpath network. This is a traditionally open set of views and the whole view ‘zone’ in this part of the setting of the church is particularly sensitive to change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>View from Farndish Road adjacent to trackway to Irchester Grange cottages looking north.</td>
<td>The church punctuates the skyline from this viewpoint, with suburban development in the foreground. The setting of the church in this view has been affected by the wind farm development beyond. Development in the foreground would not have a material impact on this view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>View from entrance to footpath off Woodland Road looking north-east</td>
<td>There is a view of the church tower in the middle distance with suburban development in the foreground, from the road. Views taken in series whilst moving north east along the footpath path align with the church tower. If the route of the footpath is retained this view would be largely unaffected, framed by development either side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Proximate view of the church looking north</td>
<td>This is the immediate setting of the church, and includes the 2 listed Manor buildings as well as C19th and C20th development. Parsons Hall Industrial Estate (IR1) if redeveloped appropriately would have a positive impact on the setting of the church. There is some limited inter-visibility with the higher land around the Water Tower, over IR1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the historic landscape and the significance of any asset it is necessary to assess the potential impact of proposed development on the wider context and the effect on the setting of the principal asset. The development schemes are not in detail as yet and hence the focus on sensitivity to change. The proposed development sites as identified through the planning process have been assessed as follows, and can be seen on Fig 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Assessment (Heritage)</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site ref. No. Site A</td>
<td>Site ref. No. Site B</td>
<td>Site ref. No. IR1</td>
<td>Site ref. No. IR4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Address: Land off London Road, Little Irchester</td>
<td>Site Address: Knuston Home Farm</td>
<td>Site Address: Parsons Hall Industrial Estate, Irchester</td>
<td>Site Address: South of Gipsy Lane, Irchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Potential assets which may be affected:</strong> St Katharine’s Church (Grade I listed); setting of; ecology of area; buried heritage (archaeology)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B Factors:</strong> Setting; historic landscape; buried heritage assets; local ecology of area</td>
<td><strong>B Factors:</strong> Setting; historic landscape; buried heritage assets; local ecology of area</td>
<td><strong>B Factors:</strong> Setting; historic landscape; buried heritage assets; local ecology of area</td>
<td><strong>B Factors:</strong> Setting; historic landscape; buried heritage assets; local ecology of area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C Impact:</strong> Low impact considered with regards to views of Irchester village and St Katharine’s church, from site visit evidence – St Katharine’s church was not visible from this site (along Gipsy Lane, view across site to north-east). Low potential for archaeological remains/buried heritage assets. Ecological setting has low to moderate impacts - possibly some wild life and hedgerow concerns.</td>
<td><strong>C Impact:</strong> Impact on historic landscape setting considered to be low from site visit, mainly due to already existing buildings. Land to the north of the site with views towards Irchester is sensitive, but lies outside of the site area. Light industrial use of the land concludes that impact to local wildlife would be low. Low potential for buried heritage assets.</td>
<td><strong>C Impact:</strong> Site IR1 is a brownfield site in commercial use. A visit to the site shows that it is within a low-lying area and as such would not adversely impact upon the historic setting of St Katharine’s church, or interrupt views from Station Road, west across the valley towards the church. Low potential for buried heritage assets, although some standing building recording may be required. Ecologically low impact.</td>
<td><strong>C Impact:</strong> Site IR4 is considered to be of low impact with regards to the historic vistas concerning Irchester village. St Katharine’s church is not visible from this site. Due to the former land use being an ironstone quarry, buried heritage asset potential is low. Ecological impact would be low to moderate with some tree and hedgerow sensitivity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D Conclusions:</strong> Low sensitivity to change or development posing no further interruption to the historic landscape of Irchester village or setting of the principal asset.</td>
<td><strong>D Conclusions:</strong> This site is not considered to interrupt the historical setting of Irchester or St Katharine’s church, and has a low sensitivity to change. The setting of the principal asset will not be affected.</td>
<td><strong>D Conclusions:</strong> This site is considered to be a low sensitivity location for change/development. The setting of the principal asset will not be affected.</td>
<td><strong>D Conclusions:</strong> This site is considered to be of low impact with regards to the historic vistas concerning Irchester village. St Katharine’s church is not visible from this site. Due to the former land use being an ironstone quarry, buried heritage asset potential is low. Ecological impact would be low to moderate with some tree and hedgerow sensitivity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Conclusions:
Considered to be one of the lowest areas of sensitivity/location for change, with low impact on historic landscape/character setting of Irchester village. The setting of the principal asset will not be affected.

### Site Assessment (Heritage)
**Site ref. No. IR5 + IR15**
**Site Address:** Land south of Woodlands Road (IR 5) & Land West of Farnish Road (IR15), Irchester

#### A Potential assets which may be affected:
St Katharine’s Church (Grade I listed), setting of; ecology of area, buried heritage (archaeology)

#### B Factors:
Setting, historic landscape, buried heritage assets, local ecology of area

#### C Impact:
Sites IR5 + IR15 would have a low impact on the historical landscape and setting of Irchester village, and St Katharine’s church, owing to the fact that the topography of the land is fairly low lying and as such would not interrupt the views of the village to any greater extent than the already existing housing estates.

#### D Conclusions:
These two sites are considered to be in areas of low sensitivity for development. The setting of the principal asset will not be affected.

### Site Assessment (Heritage)
**Site ref. No. IR6**
**Site Address:** Land north of Station Road, Irchester

#### A Potential assets which may be affected:
St Katharine’s Church (Grade I listed), setting of; ecology of area, buried heritage (archaeology)

#### B Factors:
Setting, historic landscape, buried heritage assets, local ecology of area

#### C Impact:
The development of site IR6 would impose a high impact upon the historic landscape and character setting of Irchester village if developed. Sensitive views of St Katharine’s church along Station Road and west across the valley just before entering the village of Knuston would be interrupted.

#### D Conclusions:
IR 6 is considered to be a highly sensitive location. Development would impact on the setting of the principal asset and how it is perceived, therefore potentially harming its significance.

### Site Assessment (Heritage)
**Site ref. No. IR7**
**Site Address:** Land off Farnish Road, Irchester

#### A Potential assets which may be affected:
St Katharine’s Church (Grade I listed), setting of; ecology of area, buried heritage (archaeology)

#### B Factors:
Setting, historic landscape, buried heritage assets, local ecology of area

#### C Impact:
The development of site IR7 would have little impact on the historic character setting of the village, owing largely to an earlier wind farm development on the opposite side of the hill, which has already seriously eroded the historic setting of the church and settlement. Further to this, large industrial sheds to the east of the village, also visible from this plot have affected the views across the village and beyond. Views out of the village would not be affected by development here as the land is low lying, behind already existing 20th century housing estates.

#### D Conclusions:
This site is considered to be of low sensitivity to change. The setting of the principal asset will not be affected.

### Site Assessment (Heritage)
**Site ref. No. IR9**
**Site Address:** Land north of Station Road, Irchester

#### A Potential assets which may be affected:
St Katharine’s Church (Grade I listed), and setting of; ecology of area, buried heritage (archaeology)

#### B Factors:
Setting, historic landscape, buried heritage assets, local ecology of area

#### C Impact:
The impact of change here would be high, interrupting sensitive views of St Katharine’s church, blocking one of the few view points from which St Katharine’s church can be seen in entirety from the wider public realm.

#### D Conclusions:
This site is considered highly sensitive to the historical landscape and character and setting of Irchester village and St Katharine’s church. Development would impact on the setting of the principal asset and how it is perceived, therefore potentially harming its significance.
Site Assessment (Heritage)

Site ref. No. IR3
Site Address: Land between Bakers Crescent & Chester Road, Irchester

A Potential assets which may be affected: St Katharine’s Church (Grade I listed), setting of; ecology of area, buried heritage (archaeology)
B Factors: Setting, historic landscape, buried heritage assets, local ecology of area
C Impact: The location of site IR3 to the north of Irchester has limited views of the village, with only the spire of St Katharine’s church visible from a distance. Due to the topography, Irchester village is not particularly visible from the Higham Road to the north. However, the close proximity of public rights of way to and across the site renders view of the area sensitive to change; less so on the western extent, but more so at the eastern extremity. E.g. Development of the north-eastern area of the site that lies to the north of IR16 would interrupt a longstanding/historic view of St Katharine’s church looking west from Chester Road.
D Conclusions: Views over Site IR3 are highly sensitive to change. Development would impact on the setting of the principal asset and how it is perceived, therefore potentially harming its significance.

Site Assessment (Heritage)

Site ref. No. IR12
Site Address: Land between Bakers Crescent & Chester Road, Irchester

A Potential assets which may be affected: St Katharine’s Church (Grade I listed), setting of; ecology of area, buried heritage (archaeology)
B Factors: Setting, historic landscape, buried heritage assets, local ecology of area
C Impact: The location of site IR12 to the north of Irchester is within limited views of the village, with only the spire of St Katharine’s church visible from distance. Due to the topography, Irchester village is not particularly visible from the Higham Road to the north. However, the close proximity of public rights of way to and across these sites renders the area sensitive to change; less so on the western extent, but critically at the eastern extremity. E.g. Development of the north-eastern area of the site that lies to the north of IR16 would interrupt a longstanding historical view of St Katharine’s church looking west from Chester Road.
D Conclusions: Views including Site IR12 are highly sensitive to change. Development would impact on the setting of the principal asset and how it is perceived, therefore potentially harming its significance.

Site Assessment (Heritage)

Site ref. No. IR11 + IR13
Site Address: Land south of Station Road, Irchester

A Potential assets which may be affected: St Katharine’s Church (Grade I listed), setting of; ecology of area, buried heritage (archaeology)
B Factors:
C Impact: Sites IR11 + IR13 would be of low impact, with the natural topography of the land dipping down towards the cut of the railway line. As such any development within this site area is unlikely to interrupt the historic views of the village of Irchester. Cropmarks have been recorded within the site area and as such there may be a moderate potential for buried heritage assets.
D Conclusions: An area of low sensitivity to change. The setting of the principal asset will not be affected.

Site Assessment (Heritage)

Site ref. No. IR14
Site Address: Land south of Station Road, Irchester

A Potential assets which may be affected: St Katharine’s Church (Grade I listed), setting of; ecology of area, buried heritage (archaeology)
B Factors: Setting, historic landscape, buried heritage assets, local ecology of area
C Impact: Site IR14 would have a low impact upon the historical landscape of Irchester village, owing to the fact that it would be positioned next to the already existing 20th century housing estates to the east of Irchester. Local footpaths that follow across this land are within the topographical dip that leads down to the railway cuttings, meaning that views of Irchester and St Katharine’s are limited.
D Conclusions: With already existing infrastructure for the existing housing estate immediately to the west and north of the site, this area is considered to have low sensitivity to change. The setting of the principal asset will not be affected.
### Site Assessment (Heritage)

**Site ref. No. IR16**

**Site Address:** Land of High Street, Irchester

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**A** **Potential assets which may be affected:** St Katharine’s Church (Grade I listed), setting of; ecology of area, buried heritage (archaeology)

**B** **Factors:** Setting, historic landscape, buried heritage assets, local ecology of area

**C** **Impact:** Site IR16 is located within a highly sensitive area, and development within this site would impact on the historic landscape and setting of Irchester Village and St Katharine’s church. Views from Chester Road south across the fields providing an impressive vista of St Katharine’s church in its traditional context.

**D** **Conclusions:** Views encompassing Site IR16 are considered to be vulnerable to change owing to the long-standing historic views of St Katharine’s church. Development would impact on the setting of the principal asset and how it is perceived, therefore potentially harming its significance.

St Katharine’s Church is listed Grade 1 and as such is HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT on account of that status. It is the dominant urban form and ‘attractor’ in the in the local landscape; permanence/longevity of the appreciation of the asset from its surroundings is a component of its context and it is considered that this setting contributes to its significance.

Having established the assets likely to be affected and the context in which they are found, the impact setting, GPA3 suggests factors that might be considered in relation to development proposals – proximity, form, design and other factors. Taking these in turn:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facets to be considered include:</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proximity to asset</strong></td>
<td>Individually the proposed development sites might not be great; the cumulative extent could engulf the historic settlement.</td>
<td>Varies with cumulative extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extent</td>
<td>The potential sites to the north and west of the church are relatively close; to the south of the village sites are more distant and the outlying sites are some way off. The landform is such that the development closer to the church will be more apparent.</td>
<td>Varies with relative proximity; essentially, the closer the greater.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Position in relation to landform</td>
<td>Development immediately to the west of the church would risk isolating the asset in its mature context from view.</td>
<td>Currently the openness of view contributes to the positive appreciation perception of the historic asset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Degree to which location will physically or visually isolate asset</td>
<td>Key views are considered elsewhere in this report.</td>
<td>Key views from the north, west and east are sensitive to change: views from the south in general are less so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Position in relation to key views</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **The form and appearance of the development** | Assumingly the developments in general will be housing, of suburban/domestic scale, and not of unusual proportions, in the case of sites to the south, the effect will be ‘more of the same’. | Loss of traditional openness of appreciation and perception of the asset as the dominant element in the landscape. |
| • Prominence, dominance, or conspicuousness | Visual permeability will not be assured in sites to the west of the church group. | The significance of the principal asset will not be impacted upon by ‘more of the same’ |
| • Competition with or distraction from the asset | | There is open appreciation of the church in its mature proximate context from the public footpath network which will be truncated by |
| • Dimensions, scale and massing | | |
Other effects of the development
- Change to built surroundings and spaces
- Change to skyline
- Change to general character (e.g. suburbanising or industrialising)
- Changes to land use, land cover, tree cover
- Changes to archaeological context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change to built surroundings and spaces</td>
<td>There will be a change to the built and open surroundings in every case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change to skyline</td>
<td>Developments to the west of the church potentially would create 'new skylines' when viewed from the public footpath network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change to general character (e.g. suburbanising or industrialising)</td>
<td>Residential development in place of open farmland will affect change to the character of the area in general. To the north and west the change will be marked, from open farmland (which has been so since the enclosures and before) to suburban housing. This will be in terms of character, setting of the principal asset and actually – land use, vegetation etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes to land use, land cover, tree cover</td>
<td>Skylines are created by new ridgelines. Clearly this relates to the relative elevation of ridge and viewpoint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes to archaeological context</td>
<td>In general terms the landscape to the north, proximate east and west of the traditional core is open, as it has been for a great length of time. The settlement of Irchester has developed in a north to south/north west swathe to the south of the original settlement. The perception of the traditional settlement and the principal asset would be negatively affected by change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other aspects
- Anticipated lifetime/temporariness, Recurrence, Reversibility, Longer term or consequential effects of the development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated lifetime/temporariness, Recurrence, Reversibility, Longer term or consequential effects of the development</td>
<td>Not considered in depth at this stage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions to be drawn from this process are that the principal asset in its context is experienced in a relatively unchanged form from the north, east and west; the longevity and permanence of this perception contributes greatly to the appreciation of the listed church and as such, to its significance. The church is less reliably appreciated in the context of views over C20th development from the south.

The impact of potential change to the character and appearance of the traditional core of the settlement will be much greater on sites to the north, east and west of the church group than on sites to the south of the settlement.
13. Overall Conclusions

In considerations of historic landscape characterisation, archaeological constraints and aspects of the built heritage of Irchester village, IR6, IR9, IR3+IR12 and IR16 are, in the main considered to be highly sensitive to change, and least compatible with new development proposals. These sites have been assessed as having both sensitive views (i.e. uninterrupted vistas synonymous with the development of the main settlement of Irchester), and archaeological and/or built heritage considerations that make the particular plot an asset to the historical character of the village and contribute to the setting of designated and undesignated heritage assets.

The sites of IR5 and IR15 have been assessed as having a low overall sensitivity for change, as their position topographically would be low lying and as such would not affect the views into or out of the centre of Irchester village. However, these sites do have some archaeological considerations, with the known presence of possible prehistoric or Roman subsurface remains. Within sites IR15, IR5 and IR7 there is a water main running west-east along the northern section of the sites. This trench has been assessed by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (Hogan, 2012)\(^6\), and was found to return no archaeological features along off takes excavated along the trench route. However, due to required maintenance access to the pipeline there are development restrictions to the northern extents of these sites.

Site A, B, IR1, IR4, IR7, IR11, IR13 and IR14 are considered to have the lowest overall sensitivity to change and would have a low impact on the historic character and setting associated with Irchester village. In terms of archaeology, built heritage and historic character setting these sites have few or no archaeological constraints and are either outside of the village centre or in a position of low lying land, whereby historic views and settings would not be disturbed.

\(^6\) Local knowledge suggests finds associated with this archaeological investigation, however report records no archaeological deposits or features: http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?i=arch-822-1dissemination/pdf/cambridg3-127582_1.pdf
Glossary

**Alluvium**
Sediment laid down by a river. Can range from sands and gravels deposited by fast flowing water and clays that settle out of suspension during overbank flooding. Other deposits found on a valley floor are usually included in the term alluvium (e.g. peat).

**Archaeological Priority Area/Zone**
Areas of archaeological priority, significance, potential or other title, often designated by the local authority.

**Brickearth**
A fine-grained silt believed to have accumulated by a mixture of processes (e.g. wind, slope and freeze-thaw) mostly since the Last Glacial Maximum around 17,000BP.

**B.P.**
Before Present, conventionally taken to be 1950

**Bronze Age**
2,000–600 BC

**Building recording**
Recording of historic buildings (by a competent archaeological organisation) is undertaken to document buildings, or parts of buildings, which may be lost as a result of demolition, alteration or neglect, amongst other reasons. Four levels of recording are defined by Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) and Historic England. Level 1 (basic visual record); Level 2 (descriptive record), Level 3 (analytical record), and Level 4 (comprehensive analytical record)

**Built heritage**
Upstanding structure of historic interest.

**Colluvium**
A natural deposit accumulated through the action of rainwash or gravity at the base of a slope.

**Conservation area**
An area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Designation by the local authority often includes controls over the demolition of buildings; strengthened controls over minor development; and special provision for the protection of trees.

**Cropmarks**
Marks visible from the air in growing crops, caused by moisture variation due to subsurface features of possible archaeological origin (i.e. ditches or buried walls).

**Cut-and-cover [trench]**
Method of construction in which a trench is excavated down from existing ground level and which is subsequently covered over and/or backfilled.

**Cut feature**
Archaeological feature such as a pit, ditch or well, which has been cut into the then-existing ground surface.

**Devensian**
The most recent cold stage (glacial) of the Pleistocene. Spanning the period from c 70,000 years ago until the start of the Holocene (10,000 years ago). Climate fluctuated within the Devensian, as it did in other glacials and interglacials. It is associated with the demise of the Neanderthals and the expansion of modern humans.

**Early medieval**
AD 410–1066. Also referred to as the Saxon period.

**Evaluation (archaeological)**
A limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area.

**Excavation (archaeological)**
A programme of controlled, intrusive fieldwork with defined research objectives which examines, records and interprets archaeological remains, retrieves artefacts, ecofacts and other remains within a specified area. The records made and objects gathered are studied and the results published in detail appropriate to the project design.

**Findspot**
Chance find/antiquarian discovery of artefact. The artefact has no known context, is either residual or indicates an area of archaeological activity.

**Geotechnical**
Ground investigation, typically in the form of boreholes and/or trial/test pits, carried out for engineering purposes to determine the nature of the subsurface deposits.

**Head**
Weathered/soliflucted periglacial deposit (i.e. moved downslope through natural processes).

**Heritage asset**
A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued
components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic environment assessment</th>
<th>A written document whose purpose is to determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature of the historic environment resource/heritage assets within a specified area.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic Environment Record (HER)</td>
<td>Archaeological and built heritage database held and maintained by the County authority. Previously known as the Sites and Monuments Record.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holocene</td>
<td>The most recent epoch (part) of the Quaternary, covering the past 10,000 years during which time a warm interglacial climate has existed. Also referred to as the ‘Postglacial’ and (in Britain) as the ‘Flandrian’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Age</td>
<td>600 BC–AD 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later medieval</td>
<td>AD 1066 – 1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Glacial Maximum</td>
<td>Characterised by the expansion of the last ice sheet to affect the British Isles (around 18,000 years ago), which at its maximum extent covered over two-thirds of the present land area of the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally listed building</td>
<td>A structure of local architectural and/or historical interest. These are structures that are not included in the Secretary of State’s Listing but are considered by the local authority to have architectural and/or historical merit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed building</td>
<td>A structure of architectural and/or historical interest. These are included on the Secretary of State’s list, which affords statutory protection. These are subdivided into Grades I, II* and II (in descending importance).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made Ground</td>
<td>Artificial deposit. An archaeologist would differentiate between modern made ground, containing identifiably modern inclusion such as concrete (but not brick or tile), and undated made ground, which may potentially contain deposits of archaeological interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesolithic</td>
<td>12,000 – 4,000 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Record for the Historic Environment (NHRE)</td>
<td>National database of archaeological sites, finds and events as maintained by Historic England in Swindon. Generally not as comprehensive as the country HER.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neolithic</td>
<td>4,000 – 2,000 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordnance Datum (OD)</td>
<td>A vertical datum used by Ordnance Survey as the basis for deriving altitudes on maps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palaeo-environment</td>
<td>Related to past environments, i.e. during the prehistoric and later periods. Such remains can be of archaeological interest, and often consist of organic remains such as pollen and plant macro fossils which can be used to reconstruct the past environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palaeolithic</td>
<td>700,000 – 12,000 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paleo-channel</td>
<td>A former/ancient watercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peat</td>
<td>A build-up of organic material in waterlogged areas, producing marshes, fens, mires, blanket and raised bogs. Accumulation is due to inhibited decay in anaerobic conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleistocene</td>
<td>Geological period pre-dating the Holocene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-medieval</td>
<td>AD 1500–present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation by record</td>
<td>Archaeological mitigation strategy where archaeological remains are fully excavated and recorded archaeologically and the results published. For remains of lesser significance, preservation by record might comprise an archaeological watching brief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation in situ</td>
<td>Archaeological mitigation strategy where nationally important (whether Scheduled or not) archaeological remains are preserved in situ for future generations, typically through modifications to design proposals to avoid damage or destruction of such remains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Historic Parks and Gardens</td>
<td>A site may lie within or contain a registered historic park or garden. The register of these in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
England is compiled and maintained by Historic England.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residual</strong></td>
<td>When used to describe archaeological artefacts, this means not in situ, i.e. Found outside the context in which it was originally deposited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roman</strong></td>
<td>AD 43–410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scheduled Monument</strong></td>
<td>An ancient monument or archaeological deposits designated by the Secretary of State as a ‘Scheduled Ancient Monument’ and protected under the Ancient Monuments Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site</strong></td>
<td>The area of proposed development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site codes</strong></td>
<td>Unique identifying codes allocated to archaeological fieldwork sites, e.g. evaluation, excavation, or watching brief sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study area</strong></td>
<td>Defined area surrounding the proposed development in which archaeological data is collected and analysed in order to set the site into its archaeological and historical context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solifluction, Soliflucted</strong></td>
<td>Creeping of soil down a slope during periods of freeze and thaw in periglacial environments. Such material can seal and protect earlier landsurfaces and archaeological deposits which might otherwise not survive later erosion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stratigraphy</strong></td>
<td>A term used to define a sequence of visually distinct horizontal layers (strata), one above another, which form the material remains of past cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Truncate</strong></td>
<td>Partially or wholly remove. In archaeological terms remains may have been truncated by previous construction activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Watching brief</strong></td>
<td>An archaeological watching brief is ‘a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography


Other Sources include:

Historic Environment Record
Historic England
Internet – web-published sources
Northamptonshire Record Office

Cartographic sources

Irchester & Knuston Enclosure Award Map 1769+1773 (Northamptonshire Records Office)
Tithe Map of Irchester parish 1845 (Northamptonshire Records Office)

*Ordinance Survey maps*

Ordinance Survey 1st edition 25” map (1887–89),
Ordinance Survey 1:2500 scale map (1927), (1958–59), (1989-93)

*Engineering/Architects drawings*

ACD Ecology, Arboriculture, Landscape Architecture, Irchester Neighbourhood Plan (dwg. No. PRI19116, March 2014)
Appendix A - Stages in the ASIDOHL2 process

Stages in the ASIDOHL2 process

STAGE 1: Contextual information
The first stage of the ASIDOHL2 process is to gather essential, contextual information that should provide and form the introduction to the report. This information should include:

(a) A brief summary description of the development, with a map at the appropriate scale showing its location in relation to the historic landscape area on the Register.
(b) A statement about the context in which the ASIDOHL2 is being done, for example, as part of EIA, a feasibility study for development, as part of evidence to be presented at a Public Inquiry etc.
(c) If relevant, a brief summary of the planning history of the site (details of any previous permissions, appeals etc.).
(d) References to any related assessments, for example, an archaeological assessment or a previous landscape assessment etc.
(e) A summary of the national, regional and local planning policies in relation to historic landscapes in the development area (NPPF/NPPG advice, emerging Local Development Plans, etc.)
(f) In the relevant cases, an indication of the provisional status of any Historic Character Areas.
(g) An indication of the confidence levels of the data upon which the ASIDOHL2 is based and any resulting limits assigned to impact predictions, either because of techniques used or because of the limits of information available, timing or personnel used, inability to gain access to the land or data involved, and whether there are any contingent, or other, liabilities, issues of confidentiality, copyright relating to the data etc.
(h) A statement on the qualifications and experience of the person(s) responsible for undertaking the ASIDOHL2 and a full declaration of the nature of any contractor–client relationships.
(i) A description of the process used, work undertaken, the area over which impacts have been assessed, sources consulted, site visits etc., and an indication of the ASIDOHL2 stages undertaken.

Description(s) of the Historic Character Area(s) affected and any other relevant supporting information, maps, photographs etc. should normally be included as appendices to the ASIDOHL2 report.

STAGE 2 Assessment of direct, physical impact of development

The second stage of the ASIDOHL2 process and report should describe and, as far as possible, quantify the direct, physical impacts of the development on the Historic Character Area(s) affected using the following framework.

A map should be provided at the appropriate scale showing the precise location and extent of the development, including any preliminary site works or supporting infrastructure necessary, in relation to the Historic Character Area(s)
Wherever possible, the Primary Record Numbers (PRNs) assigned in the regional Historic Environment Records should be quoted.

Direct, physical impacts should be described and quantified in three ways, namely:

(a) In absolute terms
This should be expressed as a statement indicating the actual percentage or proportion of the surface area of the Historic Character Area that is directly affected, for example, ‘55% (or just over half) of the area of Historic Character Area X will be permanently lost or removed by development.’ In some cases, the percentage surface area affected could be greater than the physical extent of the development if, for example, a construction land-take greater in area than, or separate from, the development site is required for extensive preliminary site works, ancillary developments or supporting infrastructures.

(b) In relative terms
This should be expressed with statements indicating the percentages or proportions of the known resource (i.e. the key elements or characteristics identified by characterization) that will be permanently lost or removed by development, for example, ‘In Historic Character Area X, 25% (or a quarter) of, for example, the number of known archaeological sites; the extent of historic land use or pattern in area A; the length of linear feature B, and so on, will be permanently lost or removed by development’.

e.g. ASIDOHL2 STAGE 2: GRADES OF DIRECT PHYSICAL IMPACTS
75–100% permanently lost or removed Very Severe;
50–74% permanently lost or removed Severe;
30–49% permanently lost or removed Considerable;
15–29% permanently lost or removed Moderate;
5–14% permanently lost or removed Slight;
0–4% permanently lost or removed Very Slight.

As well as the intrinsic importance or value recorded in step (b), account should also be taken of the extrinsic importance of elements or characteristics within the landscape of the Historic Character Area. Extrinsic importance reflects the contribution the individual element
or characteristic makes to the value of the Historic Character Area as a whole. The Historic Character Area will have a value in excess of the combined values of the individual elements or characteristics that make it up, on the basis that 'the sum of the whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts'. Elements or characteristics need not necessarily be similar, and may even be quite diverse, but as part of a landscape, they will have a measure of extrinsic, as well as of intrinsic, importance.

**STAGE 3 Assessment of indirect impacts of development**

Clearly, a finite area of land will be directly and physically affected by a development, but a much greater area will be indirectly affected through the fragmentation of Historic Character Areas, visual intrusion and encroachment that could devalue the historic landscape area as a whole.

The importance of 'setting' is a well-established criterion in the assessment of the significance of impact of development on Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings, and the same criterion should be applied to Historic Character Areas and to historic landscape areas on the Register.

There is no statutory definition of setting, but it could be considered as having two principal dimensions. **Firstly**, there is the immediate or essential setting which, in the case of a building, would be the ancillary land used with it or the curtilage. **Secondly**, there is the wider setting that, in the case of a building, may or may not be legally attached to it, may or may not be used with it, and is often part of the built environment or part of the countryside.

Settings may not be as easily defined for field monuments, but it may be possible to make reasonable inferences based on archaeological, or historical, information. Setting should not be interpreted too narrowly, and for the purposes of this process, impacts on settings will be categorized as 'indirect' impacts.

The third part of the ASIDOH2 report should, therefore, describe and quantify as objectively as possible the indirect impacts of the development on all Historic Character Areas affected. Indirect impacts can be categorized as being mainly physical or visual in nature.

**Indirect (non-physical) visual impacts**

These can occur to elements as a result of one, or a combination, of the following factors:

(i) Visual impacts on elements from which a development can be seen (considered up to its maximum height). The impact might be on 'views to' or 'views from' these elements, and it should be assessed with reference to key historic viewpoints and essential settings. These should be considered in relation to a site's original character and function, as well as to the vantage points and visual experience of a visitor today.

Determining these aspects in relation to field monuments can be difficult, especially where the key historic viewpoints and essential settings recognized today may be different to those that were important to the original builders or inhabitants of a
site. However, it might be possible to make reasonable assumptions on the basis of what is known archaeologically, or historically, about how certain types of monuments originally functioned, or were regarded.

Key viewpoints should also include those that subsequently became adopted as such, for example, the historic, artistic, viewpoints of a site, or those that were deliberately created as features in historic parks and gardens.

(ii) Impact on the visual connections between related elements, by occlusion, obstruction, etc., for example, an essential line of sight between historically linked defensive sites will become blocked or impaired by an intervening development.

(iii) Conversely, the creation of inappropriate visual connections between elements not intended to be inter-visible originally, by the removal of intervening structures, barriers, shelters, screening or ground.

(iv) Visual impact of the development itself in relation to the existing historic character of the area considering:

* its form — the scale, number, density, massing, distribution etc., and if appropriate, the movement of its constituent features;

* its appearance — the size, shape, colour, fabric etc. of its constituent features.

This section is aimed at assessing to what extent the development constitutes a visual intrusion or encroachment, and to what extent that affects the area’s historic character.

**ASIDOH2 STAGE 4 & 5: SUMMARY OF THE OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON LANDSCAPE OF HISTORIC INTEREST ‘A’ VALUE OF HISTORIC CHARACTER AREA**
## Appendix B Gazetteer of known historic environment assets

The table below represents a gazetteer of selected listed buildings within Irchester village. The gazetteer should be read in consideration of the historic setting and character views of Irchester village. HER data was obtained to assess the locations and extent of the known historic environment sites and finds within a 2km radius study area, the information from which has been used within this report, though not reproduced in the gazetteer. HER data was accessed on 26/06/2015 and is the copyright of Historic England 2015. Historic Environment Record data was obtained in March 2015. The most publicly available up to date Historic England GIS Data can be obtained from http://www.historicengland.org.uk.

**Abbreviations**

HER – Historic Environment Record

### HEA No. | Description | Site code/ HER No.
--- | --- | ---
1 | **Church of St Katharine, Irchester**  
Grade I listed church, dating to the late 12th century, with later 13th and 14th century additions. Constructed of regular coursed limestone with ironstone and ashlar dressings, the tower is banded limestone and ironstone ashlar, with lead roof. Aisled nave, chancel, south porch and west tower. South elevation chancel of three window range one with two light perpendicular windows to far right and two three-light perpendicular windows with four centred heads and carved label stops. South door between windows has trefoil head and carved label stops. | DN05209 233473
2 | **Manor House, 77 High Street, Irchester**  
Grade II listed manor house, with 14th century origins, but mainly mid-18th century. Squared coursed limestone and ironstone to rear with rendered front façade and slate roof. Originally probably a hall house then double-depth plan. Two storeys with attic. Entrance front of three window range of sashes with glazing bars at first floor, tripartite sash to ground floor right and early 20th century square wooden bay and attached porch to left and centre. Central six panel door has moulded wood surround and arch fanlight with glazing bars. Three hipped roof dormers, ashlar gable parapets and ashlar stacks at ends. Right gable has tall 14th century blocked window opening and small blocked fire window to left. Rear has two large casements under wood lintels and two similar blocked openings. Interior not inspected but noted as having early 19th century staircase with stick balusters. | 1371728
3 | **Manor Farm Cottage, High Street, Irchester**  
Grade II listed late 17th, early 18th century house. Regular coursed limestone with ironstone dressings and slate roof. Originally two unit plan. Two storeys, with two window range of cross casements with glazing bars under wood lintels. Central six panel door with glazed top lights under wood lintel. Ashlar and brick stacks at ridge and end. Left gable has projecting plinth to first floor level with ashlar coping. Rear is similar. | 1040711
4 | **Barn (approximately 14m south west of Manor Farm Cottage), Irchester**  
Grade II listed tithe barn, now a barn and stables. Dated to early 16th Century, but altered in the 18th or 19th century. Regular coursed and squared coursed and banded limestone and ironstone with corrugated metal and pantile roof. Barn with central cart entrance to left and two stables with hay lofts over to the right. Cart entrance has wood lintel and is flanked by two stage ashlar buttresses, similar buttress to right. Remains of gable parapet to left and pantile roof to far right. Interior not inspected but noted as having some 18th century roof trusses. | 1040712
5 | **Lower Farm House, High Street, Irchester**  
Grade II listed farmhouse with date stone 1616, and mid-18th century alterations. Regular coursed and banded limestone and ironstone with slate roof. Originally T-shape plan. Two storeys, main front window of six window range of 20th century casements in original openings under wood lintels and gauged stone lintels with keyblocks. One bay to left has lower eaves and may have originally been a barn. Main house has ashlar gable parapets and kneelers and brick and stone stacks at ridge and end. Left gable has date stone. Rear similar with two 20th century entrances and projecting wing to right of centre. | 1040709
6 | **Blacksmiths Cottage, Irchester**  
Grade II listed house of late 18th century date. Regular coursed limestone with brick gable and 20th century plain tile roof. Originally a two unit plan with through passage. Two storeys, three window range of leaded casements, partly renewed, under wood lintels. Central door 20th century under wood lintel, has cellar door to right. Brick stacks at ends. | 1371727
7 | **34 High Street, Irchester**  
Grade II listed house, with date stone 1794. Squared coursed limestone with thatched roof. L-shape plan. Two storeys, entrance front of two window range of casements with glazing bars under wood lintels. Central six panel door has panelled reveals and reeded wood surround. Brick stacks at ends. Rear is similar with parlour extension. | 1040708
8 | **33, 35 & 37 High Street, Irchester**  
Grade II listed house, now two dwellings and two shops. Mid-16th and 18th century. Limestone and now rendered with thatched roof. Probably originally open hall with through passage, now single storey with attic. Five window range of casements with glazing bars and 20th century leaded lights under eyebrow dormers. No. 33/35 has a 20th century door to left and No. 37 has two 19th century and 20th century shop windows. Central through passage is now an open entry. Ashlar gable parapets and kneelers and brick stacks at ridge and end. Raised cruck roof structured. | 1040710
9 | **KG Lawrence, 22 High Street, Irchester**  
Grade II listed house, Mid-18th century. Regular coursed limestone, now painted with slate roof. Originally two unit plan, two storeys, three window range of casements, now boarded under wood lintels. Canted wood bay to left and central four panelled door. Brick stacks at ridge and end. Rear similar. | 1371725
10 | **19–25 High Street, Irchester**  
Four Grade II listed houses, from the early 18th century. Nos. 19 and 21 are squared coursed ironstone and No 23 and 25 are regular coursed limestone all with thatch roofs. One and two unit plans with two storeys. Together comprising a six window range of 19th century and 20th century casements with glazing bars under wood lintels, some with eyebrow dormers. Three 19th century and 20th century doors between windows, also under wood lintel. Brick stacks at ridge and end. Left gable of No 19 renewed in brick. The thatch to rear of No. 19 is 18th century. | 1371726
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEA No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Site code/HER No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11      | 1a London End, Irchester  
Grade II listed early 17th century house. Limestone, not rendered, with corrugated metal roof. Originally two unit plan, with single storey and attic. Two window range of plain casements with eyebrow dormers above. Brick stack at end. Interior has ceiling beams, an open fireplace with bressumer and original roof structure. Extension to right is 20th century. Said to have connections with the Pilgrim Fathers. | 1190882 |
| 12      | Home Farmhouse, Irchester Road, Knuston  
Grade II listed farmhouse from the late 17th century, of coursed limestone and ironstone with 20th century concrete tile roof. L-shape in plan, two storeys. Main front of four window range of casements with leaded lights that to first floor left of centre is original, all under wood lintels. 20th century doors to left and right of centre under wood lintels that to the left has a 20th century porch. Ashlar gable parapets and kneelers and brick stack at ridge. Rear is similar with some blocked openings. Interior not inspected but noted as having bread oven. | 1190845 |
Appendix C Methodology for Determining Significance

‘Significance’ lies in the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Archaeological interest includes an interest in carrying out an expert investigation at some point in the future into the evidence a heritage asset may hold of past human activity, and may apply to standing buildings or structures as well as buried remains. Known and potential heritage assets within the site and its vicinity have been identified from national and local designations, HER data and expert opinion. The determination of the significance of these assets is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against four values (EH 2008):

Evidential value: the potential of the physical remains to yield evidence of past human activity. This might take into account date; rarity; state of preservation; diversity/complexity; contribution to published priorities; supporting documentation; collective value and comparative potential.

Aesthetic value: this derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from the heritage asset, taking into account what other people have said or written;

Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through heritage asset to the present, such a connection often being illustrative or associative;

Communal value: this derives from the meanings of a heritage asset for the people who know about it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory; communal values are closely bound up with historical, particularly associative, and aesthetic values, along with and educational, social or economic values.

Table T2 gives examples of the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Table T2: Significance of heritage assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heritage asset description</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World heritage sites</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled monuments</td>
<td>(International/national)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade I and II* listed buildings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Heritage Grade I and II* registered parks and gardens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected Wrecks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage assets of national importance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Heritage Grade II registered parks and gardens</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation areas</td>
<td>(National/ regional/ county)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated historic battlefields</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade II listed buildings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial grounds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected heritage landscapes (e.g. ancient woodland or historic hedgerows)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage assets of regional or county importance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage asset description</td>
<td>Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage assets with a district value or interest for education or cultural appreciation</td>
<td>Medium (District)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally listed buildings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage assets with a local (i.e. parish) value or interest for education or cultural</td>
<td>Low (Local)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appreciation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic environment resource with no significant value or interest</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage assets that have a clear potential, but for which current knowledge is</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insufficient to allow significance to be determined</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Legislation and Policy

Relevant legislation to matters concerning the historic environment is primarily the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 as amended (The Act).

Section 16 (referring to listed buildings) require LPAs to have 'special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 (referring to Conservation Areas) requires LPAs to pay 'special attention' to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of the or appearance of buildings or other land in a Conservation Area.

Relevant Planning policy is encompassed in:

• Emerging Local Planning Policies, Core Strategy etc.
• The emerging Neighbourhood Plan

Advice is contained in:

• The History in the View (Historic England 2011)
• GPA Note No.3 The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England 2015)
• The Historic Environment and Site Allocation in Local Plans - Historic England Advice Note 3 (Historic England October 2015)
  (Also Local Authority Supplementary advice – SPD/SPG etc.)

The principal policy basis is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) & (NPPG)

The Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 (DCLG 2012) and supporting Planning Practice Guidance in 2014 (DCLG 2014). One of the 12 core principles that underpin both plan-making and decision-taking within the framework is to 'conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations' (DCLG 2012 para 17). It recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource (para 126), and requires the significance of heritage assets to be considered in the planning process, whether designated or not. The contribution of setting to asset significance needs to be taken into account (para 128). The NPPF encourages early engagement (i.e. pre-application) as this has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a planning application and can lead to better outcomes for the local community (para 188).

NPPF Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, is produced in full below:

Para 126. Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

• the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
• the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
• the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
• opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Para 127. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

Para 128. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
Para 129. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Para 130. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

Para 131. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Para 132. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Para 133. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Para 134. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Para 135. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Para 136. Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

Para 137. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

Para 138. Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

Para 139. Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

Para 140. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

Para 141. Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

National Advice

‘Seeing the History in View’ was published by English Heritage in 2011 and is still current for development control purposes (notwithstanding the publication of NPPF 2012 and NPPG 2014). This provides advice on the consideration of the visual aspects of the assessment of significance and impact on heritage assets. This document suggests, amongst other things, that it is not just principal views in an area which contribute to the establishment or understanding of character; a holistic approach is recommended.
EH publication ‘The Setting of Heritage Assets’ (2011) has been superseded by Historic England (HE) publication GPA3 ‘The Setting of Heritage Assets’ (March 2015). The documentation provides advice on the definition and appreciation of setting and how changes can affect the setting and therefore the significance of heritage assets. It should be noted that a ‘setting’ does not have significance in its own right.
Appendix E Photographs from selected viewpoints

View 1: Chester Road
View 2: Station Road
View 3: From the Water Tower
View 4: Rear of St Katharine’s
View 5: At the entrance to Irchester Grange
Farndish Road
View 6: From the B569
View 7: The immediate setting of the Church

Inter-visibility with the Water Tower

From the Cemetery/Church rear entrance path over the top of IR1
Other Elements

Meadow View

View East from within the Country Park (Stock photo, undated)

Existing entrance to IR1
Appendix F Historic England email dated 28th January 2016

Claire Searson, Historic Environment Planning Adviser Historic England considered this document and emailed the client’s agent, AR Planning on 28th January 2016 with the following script:

Many thanks for sending this through.

I have reviewed the document and consider it to be an appropriate and robust assessment of potential site allocations to be considered by the Neighbourhood Plan.

In respect of the methodology, we welcome reference and use of the GPA advice on setting. Historic England have recently published further guidance on the allocation of sites – clearly this was published after your assessment was undertaken and thus couldn’t be used at that time, however I thought it useful to flag with you. A copy can be accessed here:


Although your methodological approach is slightly different to the approach advocated in this document, I consider that this study is appropriate and will provide a useful piece of evidence base work to underpin the NP.

We agree with the conclusions of the report in respect of where the most sensitive sites are. This is based on our previous dealings with some of the sites at planning application stage, as well as my own visit to Irchester with the Neighbourhood Plan group last year.

Reference is made to the latest guidance on the allocation of sites ‘The Historic Environment and Site Allocation in Local Plans - Historic England Advice Note 3 (Historic England October 2015)’ in the Methodology section, page 1, above.
Fig 2 Irchester Enclosure Map 1769–1773
Fig 3  Ordnance Survey 1st Edition Map of 1887–1889
Fig 4  Ordnance Survey Revised Edition Map of 1927
Fig 5  Ordnance Survey Revised Edition Map of 1958–59
Fig 6  Ordnance Survey Revised Edition Map of 1989–93
Fig 8  Map showing proposed sites, historic character viewpoints and settings
Fig 9  Map of proposed sites and areas of high to low sensitivity