

Former Land Settlement Association, Great Abington, Cambridge

Character Assessment



March 2017

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1. Introduction

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

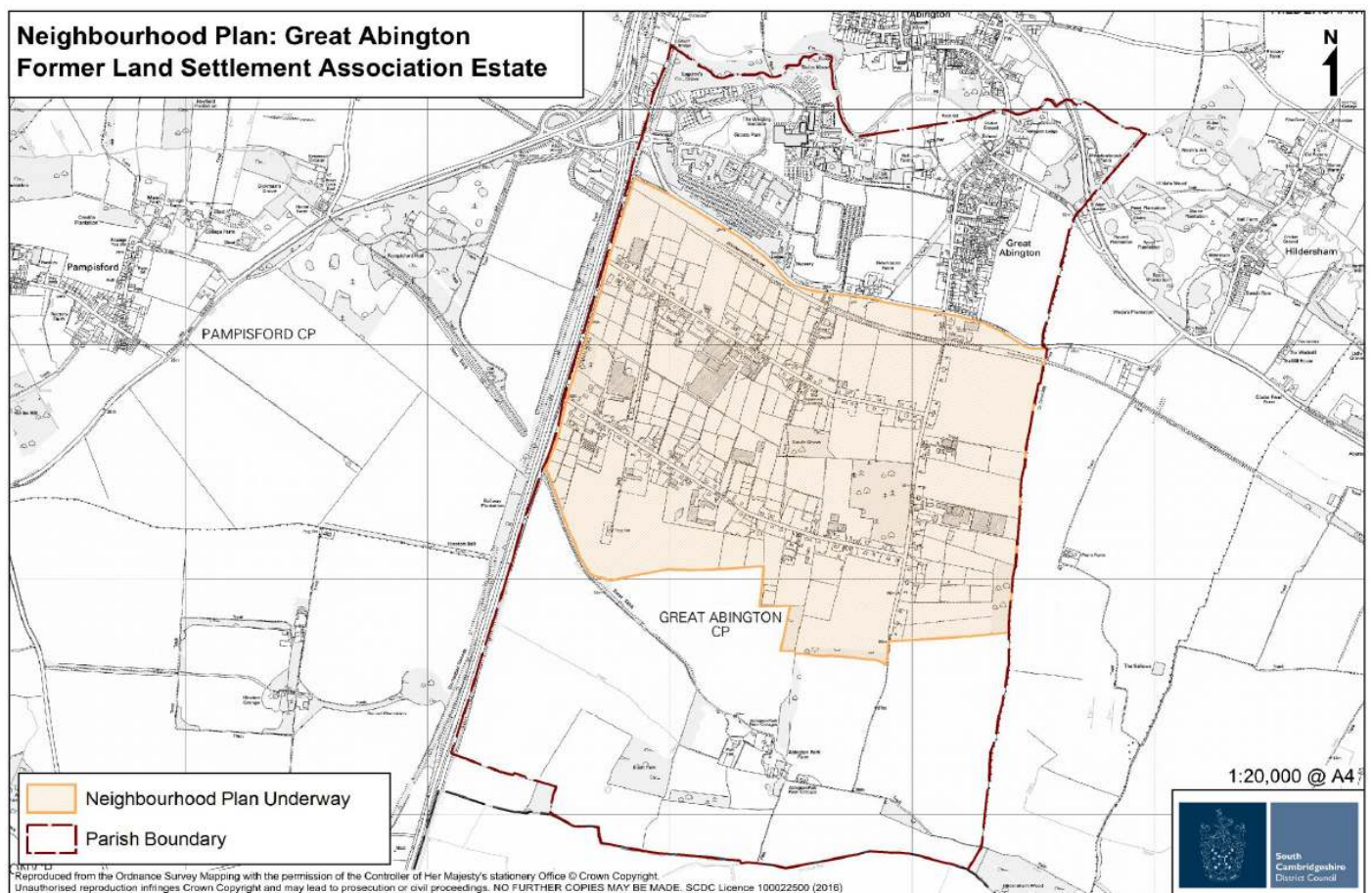
1.2 The character assessment has informed the direction of the Neighbourhood Plan. It should be used by developers/applicants and decision makers alike to ensure that any future proposals come forward which function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over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

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

2. Overview of the former LSA

2.1 The former LSA is situated on the edge of Great Abington village 8 miles south east of Cambridge.

Figure 1: Great Abington Neighbourhood Plan Area

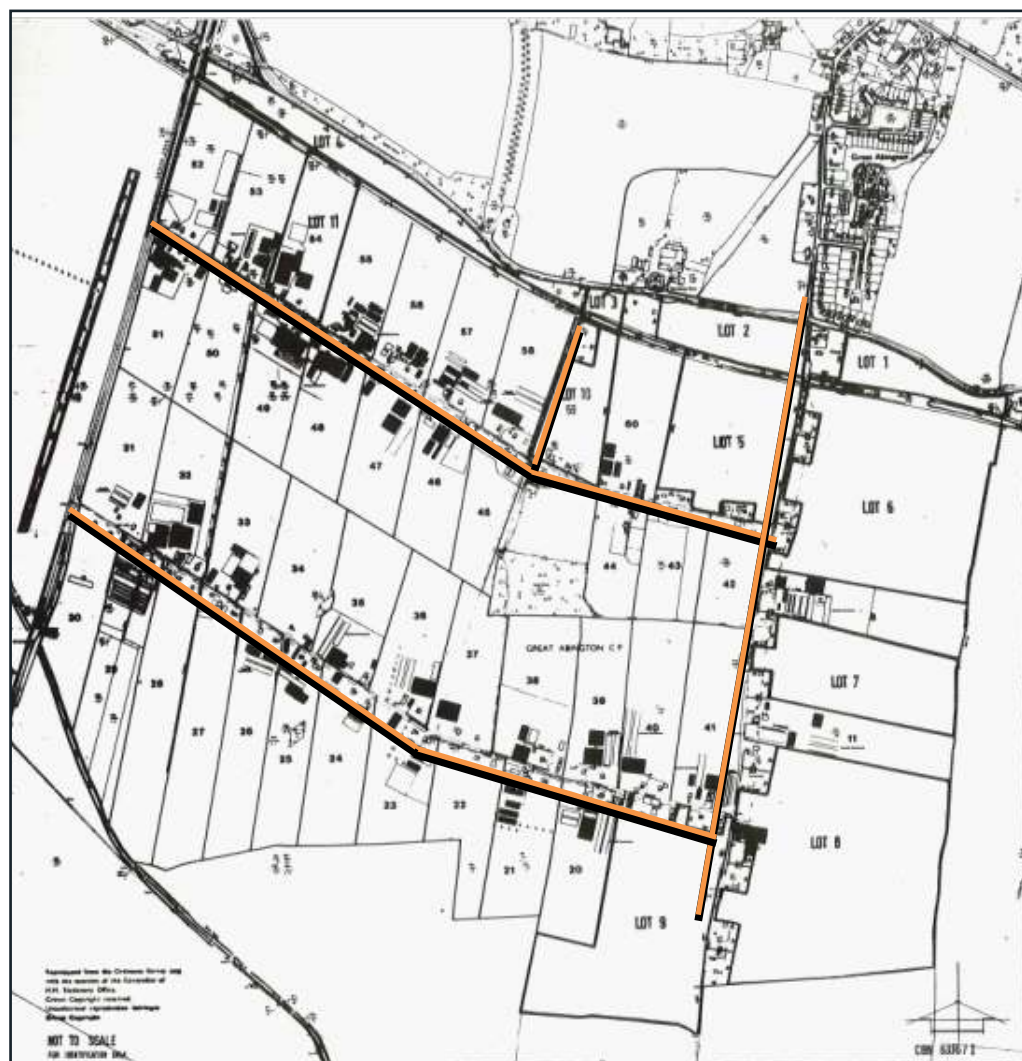


2.2 The area covers 688 acres of mainly arable land laid out on a regular grid pattern of roads. There are 62 original houses from 1983 many of which have been extended. There are also a number of new houses, some of which have planning permission. There are 6 horticultural businesses and a number of other businesses ranging from livery yards to garage workshops to home based workers.

Figure 2: Aerial view of the LSA showing the road layout.

Key

Roads



3. Historic Development

3.1 The LSA Estate at Great Abington was developed as part of a larger Countrywide Government scheme. The industrial depression following World War I resulted in high levels of unemployment in the industrial towns of north-east England and south Wales, where steelworks, shipbuilding and coal mining had previously provided employment for a high numbers of workers. Support for the unemployed workers and their families was provided nationally in various ways, including from charitable organisations such as the Society of Friends (Quakers) who provided allotments to families so that they could have fresh vegetables.

3.2 The Land Settlement Association (LSA) was created on 26 July 1934. The Minister of Agriculture announced that the LSA had been formed to “carry out an experimental scheme for the provision of small holdings for unemployed persons, with financial assistance from the Government” and that the objective of the LSA “shall be to carry on the business of providing and equipping land for cultivation by unemployed persons or persons in part time employment and providing training and maintenance for prospective holders”.

3.3 The land described in this document as the former Abington Land Settlement was originally part of Abington Hall Estate and known as New House Farm. It was purchased by the Land Settlement Association in 1936 to establish the Abington LSA Estate. The land amounted to 688 acres and it was divided in 62 holdings. The amount of land with each holding varied depending on who lived there.

3.4 Tenant holdings ranged in size from 6 to 11 acres. Farm workers houses had ½ acre. The remaining land was farmed by the LSA central company. Most of the holdings were situated on North Road, South Road and Chalky Road with a few along Pampisford Road.



Figure 3: LSA sites 1935 (Source Dearlove 2007)

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

3.6 They were all 2 up 2 down and they all had a piggery and small greenhouse within their curtilage and those for tenants also had extra land and could have extra buildings to support the agricultural/horticultural business e.g. packing sheds.

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

3.13 The number of hedges and trees in 1983 were limited as tenants had to gain permission to plant them and they were only allowed to create windshields for crops.

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

Figure 6: 34 South Road - 1986.



Figure 7: 22 South Road - 1983.



Figure 8: No. 8 Chalky Road circa 1983 showing 4 acres under glass.



Figure 9: No. 8 Chalky Road circa 1990 showing less glass.



Figure 9: No. 8 Chalky Road showing all glass removed.



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

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

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



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

4.0 Character of overall area

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



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



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

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

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

4.4 The remainder of the former LSA estate is characterised by glasshouses in various states of repair and use, and large areas of unused land as shown in figure 14.

4.5 Some of the disused buildings and glasshouses are almost entirely overgrown with brambles and other vegetation.

Figure 14: Buildings in poor repair and unused land.



Overview of Layout

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

- The roads are all single track concrete with passing places.
- All houses have a 3 feet verge between the road and any fence /hedge. This is part of the conditions of the Road Management.
- The layout of the holding is uniform.
- There is a specific space between the house and piggery. This was stipulated in by the then Ministry of Agriculture. All livestock had to be a minimum distance from a dwelling.
- The majority of piggeries were side on to the road, with the exception of those on North Road between Cutting Road and Chalky Road being set parallel to the road.
- In 1983 each plot was separated from the next by the headland of a field. It is this that has left a legacy of a gap (as described above) of approximately 30 to 40 metres between one residential curtilage to another and can still be seen in the majority of cases. There are some instances where this gap has been lost for example due to building of outbuildings in the gap.

Overview of Buildings and Details

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

Main Residential Properties

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

Figure 15: 59 North Road with gambrel roof.



Figure 16: North Road property with half hipped roof. Photo 2017.



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



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



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



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

The Piggeries

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

Figure 16: Piggery as originally built with work shed in front. Photo taken 2017.





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



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

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



Fig 24: A newly completed residential annex on the site of a piggery. Photo taken 2017.

5. Breakdown of character by road

5.1 Pampisford Road

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

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

5.1.4 The road has 3 holdings fronting onto it. No 1, 2 and 3.

- No 1 has already converted an old building to create an additional separate dwelling forming two residences on the original plot.
- No 2 has been extended
- No 3 has been extended and the house has been sold separately to the rest of the plot. The rest of the plot has been submitted for outline planning permission. The Parish council have recommended refusal.

Figure 24: The Pampisford Road (in green). Granta Park / TWI (in orange), disused railway (blue), Nos 1 – 3 (purple blocks).



5.2 Cutting Road

5.2.1 Cutting Road connects the middle of North Road to the Pampisford Road, through a cutting where the old railway line used to pass over. There aren't any holdings with frontages on this road as it was a later addition to the road infrastructure being built during the second World War.

5.2.2 The road surface is concrete with passing places

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

5.3 South Road

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

5.3.2 The houses on South Road are all detached. The holdings all have hedges fronting the road, these have to be three feet from the road to provide a kerb area for walkers to be able to get off the road.

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

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

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



Figure 25: South Road showing houses on both sides of the road and footpaths (orange) connecting South Road and North Road.



Figure 26: South Road looking west showing passing area.



Figure 27: South Road looking east showing hedging on both sides of the road and passing area.

5.4 Chalky Road

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

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

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

5.4.4 The houses on Chalky Road were all semi-detached, however 2 pairs of houses are now detached. Chalky Road only has houses on one side of the road as shown in Figure 26.

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

5.4.6 There is one market garden on the road, an electricians business and livery yard.

Figure 28: The view of Chalky Road and the Pampisford Road past North and South Road to the end of Chalky Road. Chalky Road is highlighted in blue. The regularity and spacing of the housing is clearly evident. The houses are semi detached or in pairs (shown in purple) The regularity of the housing and the spacing in between is highlighted by the red outline of each plot.



Figure 29: Chalky Road looking north.



Figure 30: Chalky Road looking towards the village.



Figure 31: Semi detached houses on Chalky Road - 2017.



Figure 32: No 17 and 18 Chalky Road - 1983.



5.5 North Road

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

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

5.5.3 There is one market garden and two nurseries on North Road along with one livery yard.

5.5.4 The houses on North Road have all been extended with the exception of 5, and 2 plots have already been subdivided.



Figure 33: North Road showing houses on each side of the road positioned opposite each other.





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BY DIRECTION OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

FOR SALE BY INFORMAL TENDER

34 SOUTH ROAD

GREAT ABINGTON

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

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



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

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

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

The accommodation comprises:-

ON THE GROUND FLOOR:-

Entrance Porch: with glazed front door leading to a small hall.

Sitting-room: 17'10" x 11'1". Open grate and tiled surround. Two radiators. Double glazing to windows. One double and one single socket outlet.

Dining-room: 13'0" x 11'0". Radiator. Double glazing to window. Double socket outlet. Room thermostat for central heating.

Kitchen: 11'0" x 6'6" with single stainless steel sink unit (H & C) with cupboards under and tiled surround. Low level storage units. Two double socket outlets. Redfire P55 oil fired boiler. Rear entrance from:-

Conservatory: 21'6" x 6'6" with door to garden and one single

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