

Shouldham Views Assessment 2025



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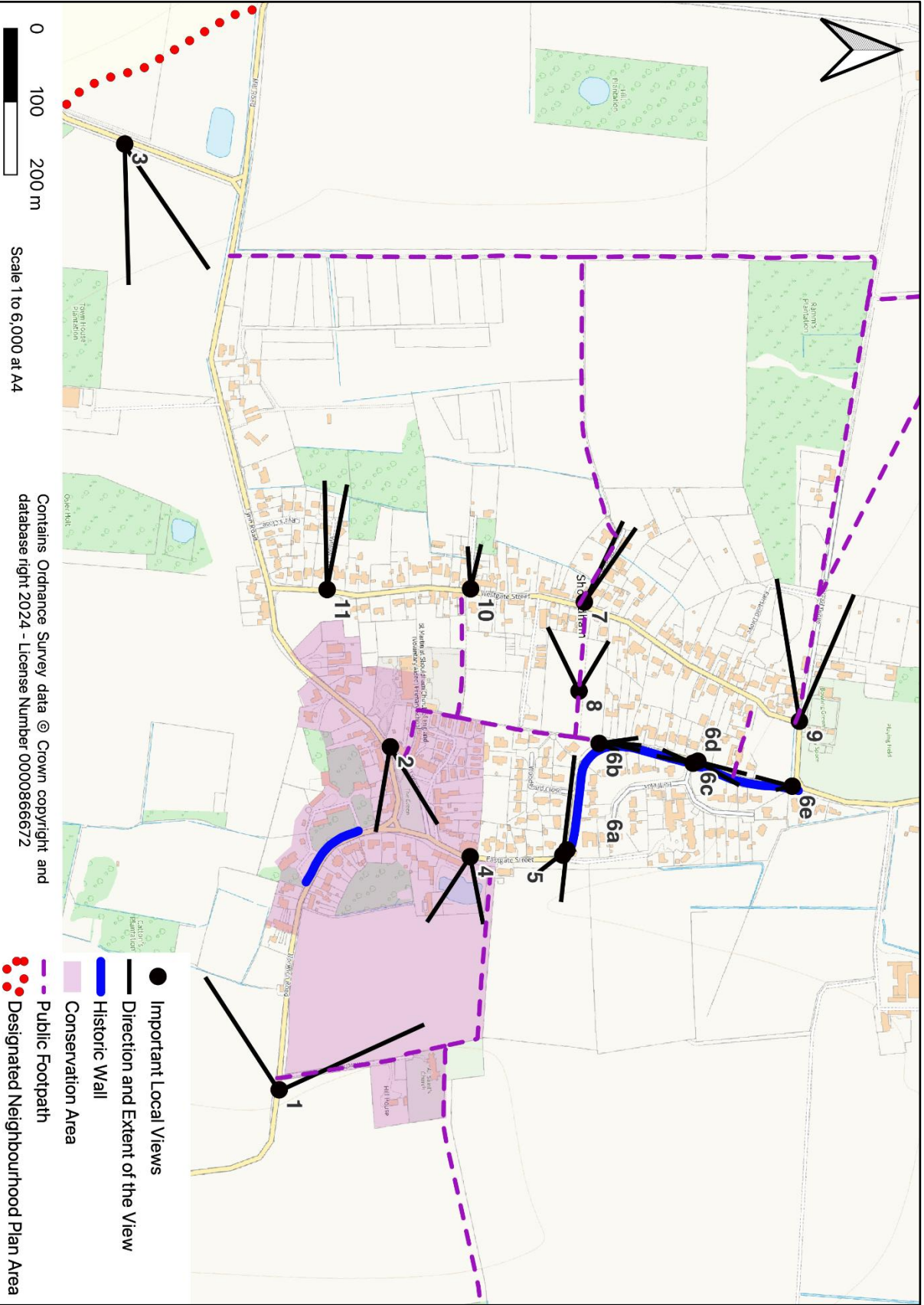
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INTRODUCTION

1. The West Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment¹ identifies that the Neighbourhood Development Plan area falls within the **Settled Farmland with Plantations** character area. This landscape forms the transition between the low-lying flat landscape of the Fens (open inland marshes, but now drained) and the more elevated, variable landform of The Brecks (heathland with plantations) and low chalk downs.
2. Key features of this character area relevant to Shouldham include:
 - Landmark features include churches, located on higher ground. There are however significant areas where there are no obvious landmarks or points of focus.
 - Due to the predominantly flat landform, vertical elements from a strong contrast to the horizontal plane.
 - With the exception of views across and into the Fens, wooded horizons define much of the skyline.
 - Medium to large field units interspersed by area of woodland and belts that offer some degree of enclosure and impart a medium scale to the landscape.
 - Topography gradually ascends inland and appears for the most part very flat but with localised areas of gently sloping land dropping away towards the Rivers Great Ouse and Nar.
 - Arable crop production is the predominant land use and is defined by a variety of field margins.
 - Field margins range from ditches and dykes, hawthorn hedges, scrubby margins, and lines of poplar to areas where there are no visible boundary divisions.
 - Scattered farm dwellings and small-scale settlements of low density are dispersed throughout this landscape, connected by rural roads.
 - The landscape is, for the most part, still and peaceful.
3. The management strategy for the area includes conserving the regular landscape pattern of the arable farmland, interspersed with plantations, scattered farm dwellings and small scattered settlements, and enhancing field margins and field boundaries. The relevant management objectives are to:
 - Seek to enhance the management, presentation, interpretation, and accessibility of the area for its historic value.
 - Seek to restore hedgerows, where gappy, to enhance existing landscape pattern and improve their function as wildlife corridors throughout the type.

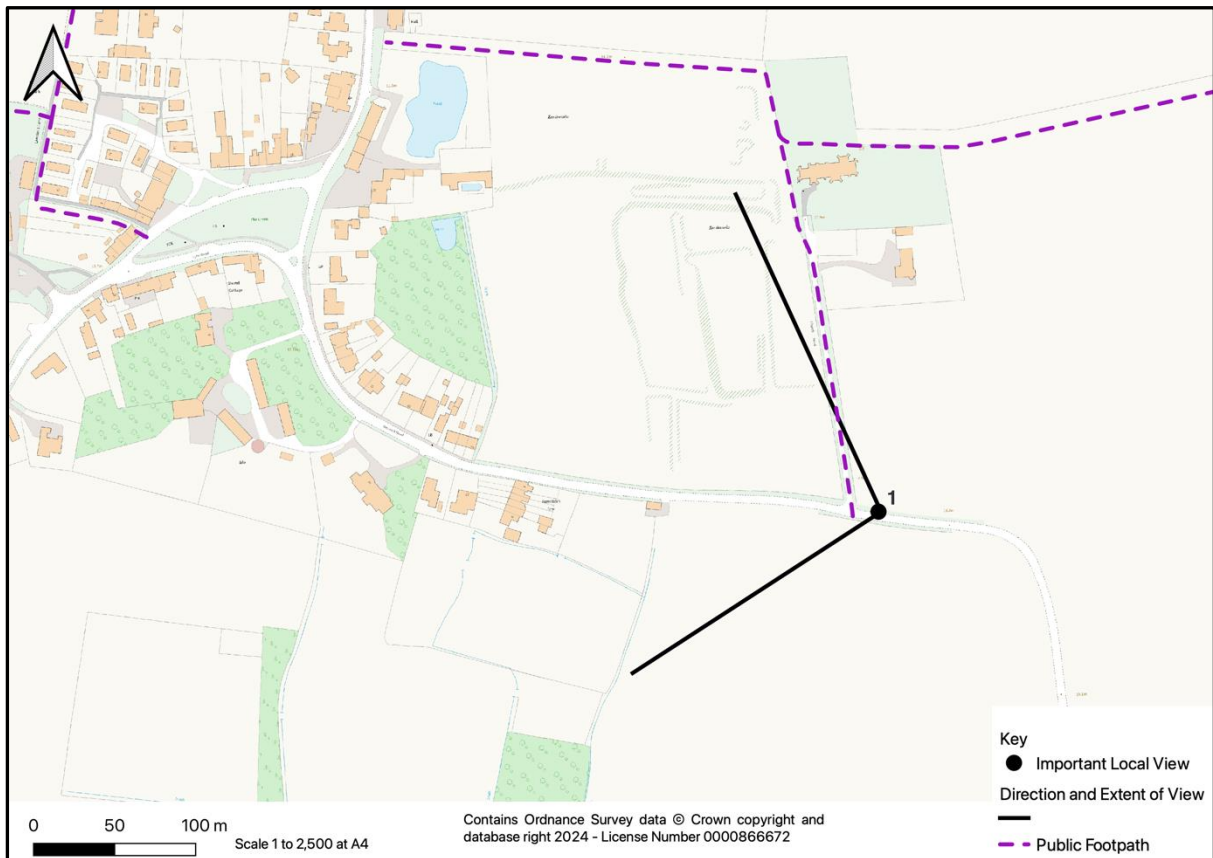
¹ KLWN Landscape Character Assessment, Final Report March 2007, Chris Blandford Associates

- Seek to establish arable field margins as potential nest sites for ground nesting birds and habitats for small mammals.
 - Seek to conserve the setting of historic houses (mature parkland) where they occur throughout the Landscape Character Type.
 - Seek to conserve, enhance, and link patches of wet woodland throughout the type.
 - Seek to conserve and enhance rows of poplars (at field boundaries) as striking landscape features which contribute to over landscape pattern and function as wildlife corridors.
4. The Shouldham Neighbourhood Plan proposes to afford protection to 11 special views. During 2023 the community were asked which views they felt were particularly special within the parish.
 5. This document provides the evidence to support these views being included within the neighbourhood plan. A set of criteria was used to identify such views:
 - a) Accessible from a public space;
 - b) A good reason for its inclusion within the Neighbourhood Plan which may relate to its recreational value, conservation interest, scenic quality, rarity or planning history; and
 - c) Have a specific reason for being important to the community.
 6. A map of the 11 views is below, followed by details in relation to each of them. The views have been separated into short and medium/long views for readers to understand the extent of the view. Whilst the arrows of the views should not be taken as an indicative length it gives the understanding that from each standpoint the view can be seen from either a short to long distance.
 7. In the next section is the views assessments and detail given for each view identified on the map below.



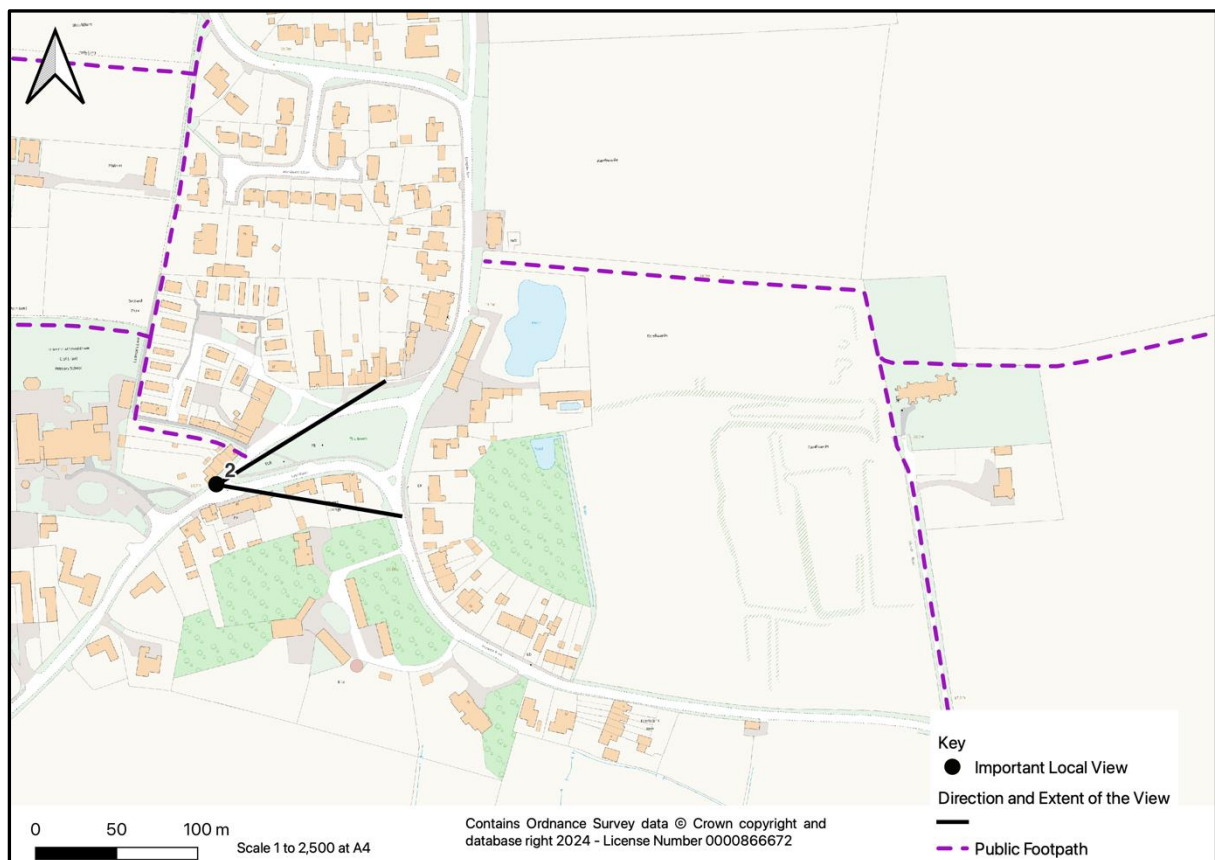
VIEWS ASSESSMENT

View 1: The village from Norwich Road



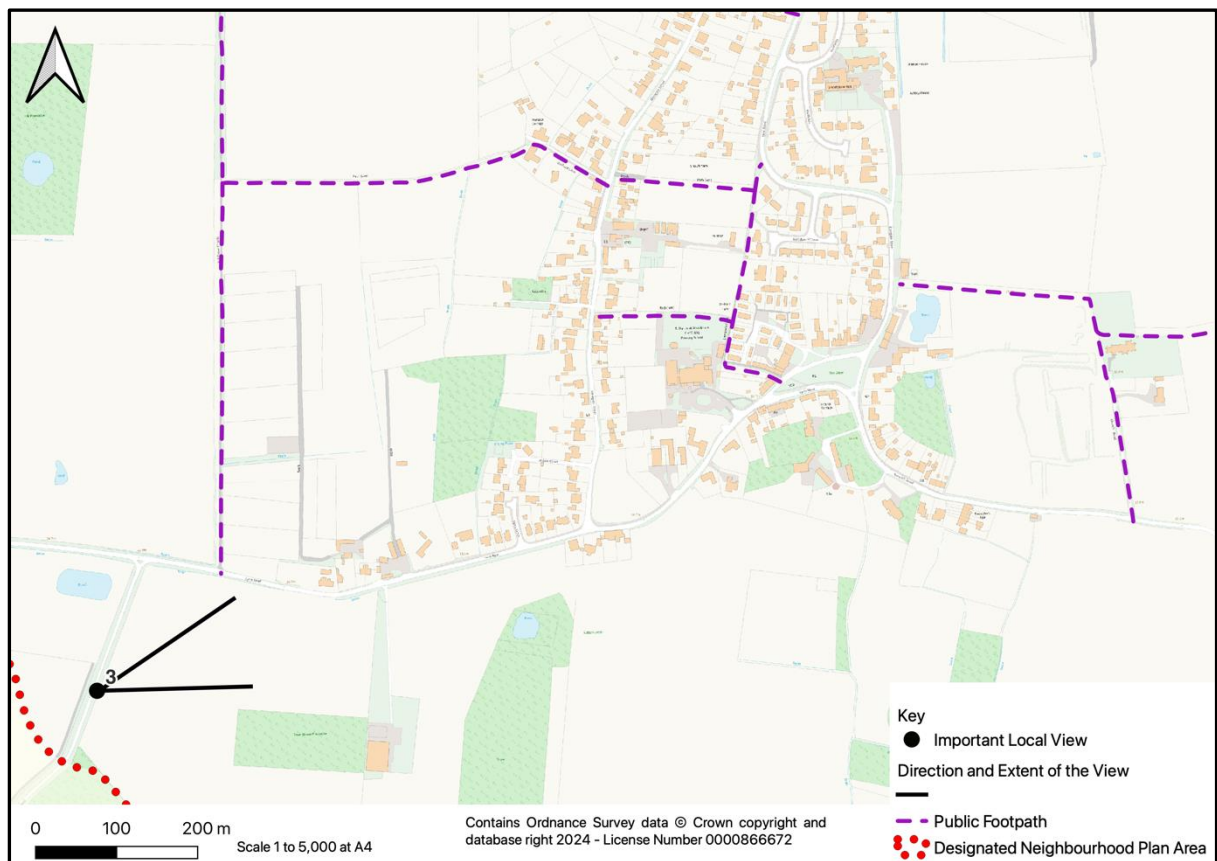
Specific location of the viewpoint	From the top of Church Road as you drive into the village along Norwich Road
Description of the view	View of the village as you approach along Norwich Road, looking down towards the settlement.
Is the view publicly accessible?	Yes
Value of the view locally (scenic quality, recreational value, historic value, rarity, conservation interest)	This is a fantastic overall view of the village, as noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal. The village in the view appears compact without being densely developed. The traditional distinction between settlement and open countryside remains clearly marked. Much of the area you can see from this higher vantage point falls within the conservation area. It takes in the historic core of the village, including the village green. The view includes the separation between the village and the Church, which has historic significance, as noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal. The view is particularly attractive as it contains many roofs made of traditional materials, such as pantiles. The view also includes mature trees that are within the village.
Relevant planning history	None

View 2: The village green with the Church in the distance



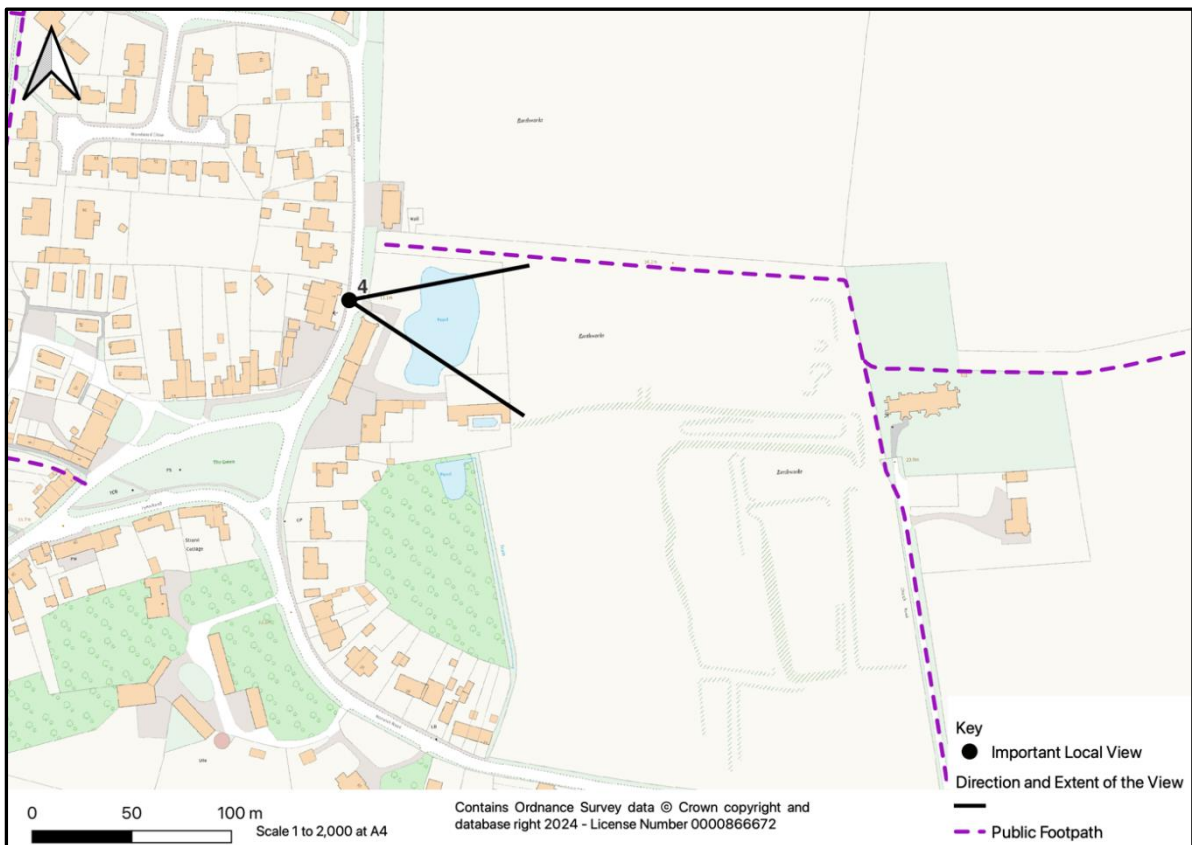
Specific location of the viewpoint	From just beyond the Village Green
Description of the view	Of the Village Green with the buildings surrounding it and the Church in the distance
Is the view publicly accessible?	Yes
Value of the view locally (scenic quality, recreational value, historic value, rarity, conservation interest)	View of the Grade I listed Church of All Saints and its setting. The Church dates back to the 14th Century and is set someway eastwards of the main village. The ground rises steeply up towards the Church, which according to the Conservation Area Appraisal affords it a magnificent setting. The view takes in the Church's dark carstone tower. This view also takes in the village green and historic development around it in the foreground. This is visually appealing, taking in a variety of building types, all constructed of local materials. One for the management objectives for the area (taken from the Landscape Character Assessment) is to enhance the management, presentation, interpretation, and accessibility of the area for its historic value. Preserving this view of the Church from the village is a good example of this. At night the Church is lit which provides a real feature to this view after dark.
Planning history	None

View 3: The approach to the village from the junction of Shouldham Road and Mill Road with the Church in the distance



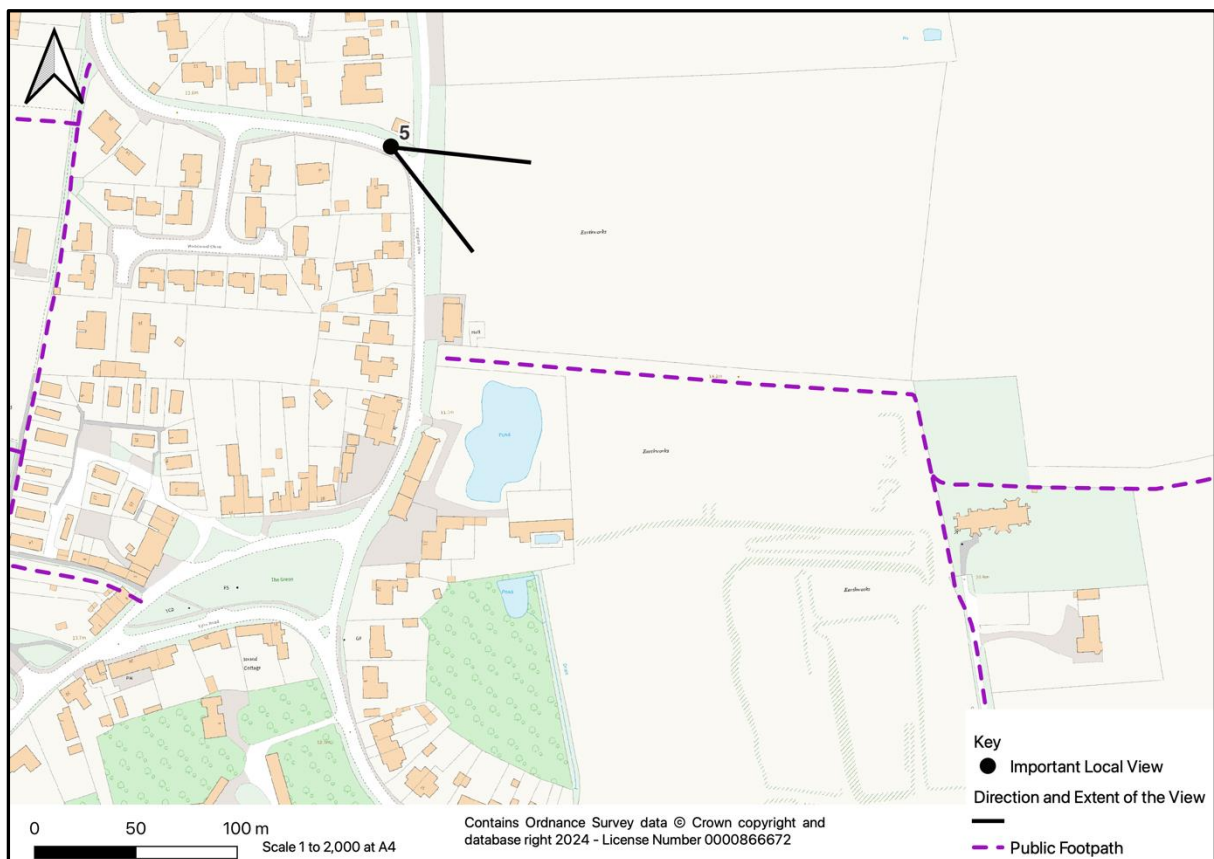
Specific location of the viewpoint	Junction of Shouldham Road and Mill Road
Description of the view	View eastwards across the parish towards the Church of All Saints, taking in the southern end of the village and the Church in the distance.
Is the view publicly accessible?	Yes
Value of the view locally (scenic quality, recreational value, historic value, rarity, conservation interest)	View of the village nestling within the valley. A good representation of how green the village is, with just a few homes visible. The Church is just seen in the distance as this rises on the other side of the valley above the village.
Relevant planning history	None

View 4: The Church from the path at the rear of the village hall



Specific location of the viewpoint	From Eastgate Street, just past the start of the public footpath to the Church there is a view of the Church from the village hall
Description of the view	View of the Church of All Saints which takes in the garden belonging to Colts Barn looking from the village hall
Is the view publicly accessible?	Yes
Value of the view locally (scenic quality, recreational value, historic value, rarity, conservation interest)	View of the Grade I listed Church of All Saints and its setting, the garden belonging to Colts Barn and the greenspace in front of the Church. Colts Hall Barn has an attractive hedged garden, with trees and a large pond. This is an interesting and pretty view up towards the Church. The entirety of this scene falls within the Conservation Area, and both Colts Hall and Colts Hall Barn are listed buildings. Slope of the schedule monuments leading up to the Church.
Planning history	None

View 5: The Church from Eastgate Street



Specific location of the viewpoint	From Eastgate Street just past the bend in the road on the approach to Victoria Hall drive
Description of the view	View of the Church of All Saints and its setting
Is the view publicly accessible?	Yes
Value of the view locally (scenic quality, recreational value, historic value, rarity, conservation interest)	View of the Grade I listed Church of All Saints and its setting on higher ground. The view clearly illustrates how close open countryside comes to the core of the village and the built-up area of Shouldham and the character of openness and greenery.
Planning history	None

View 6: The old wall along Eastgate Street and New Road

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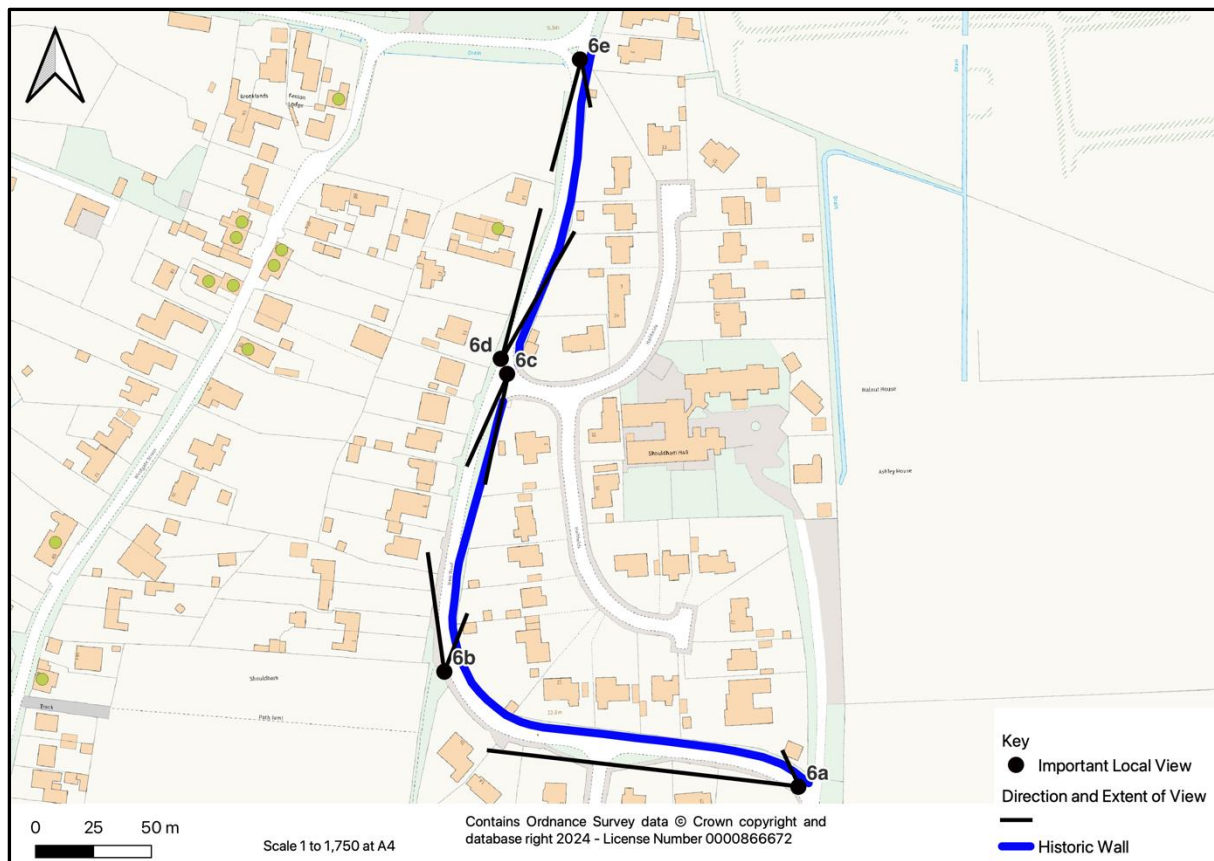


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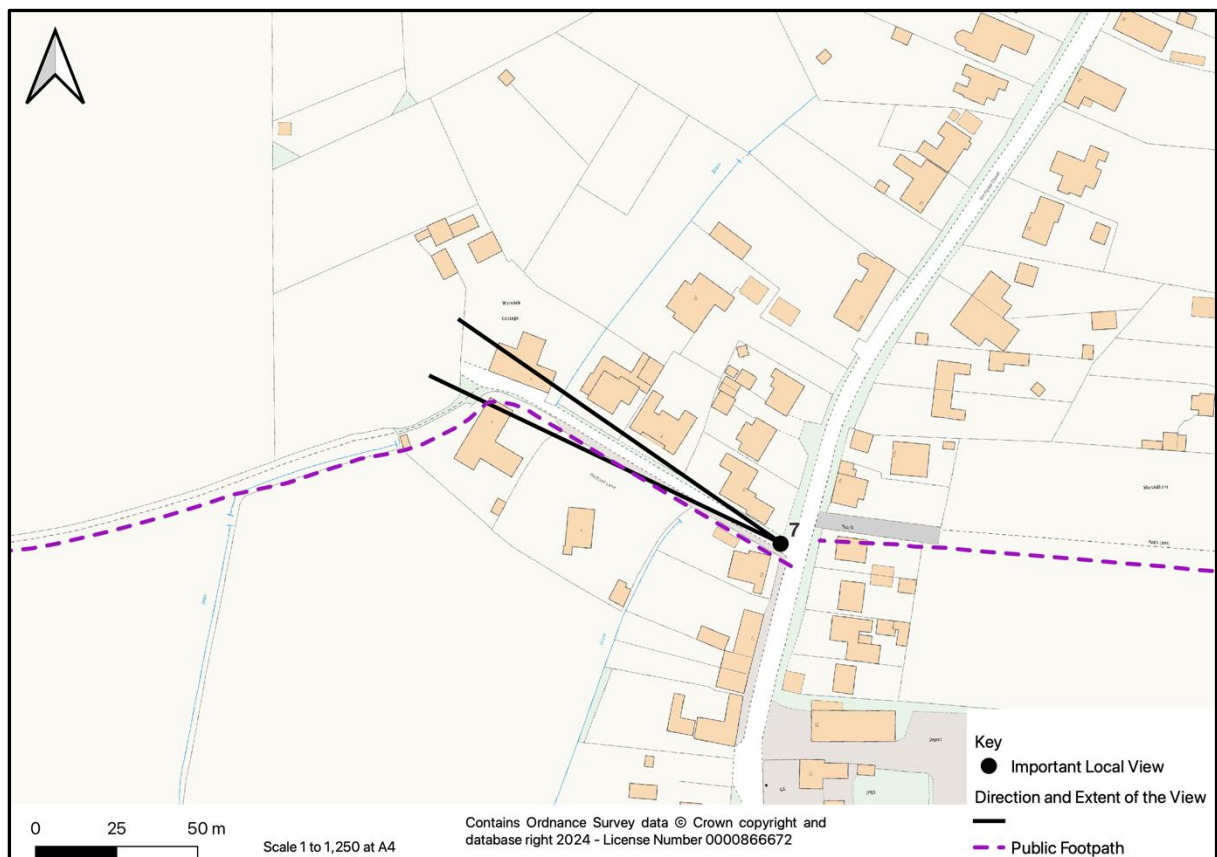
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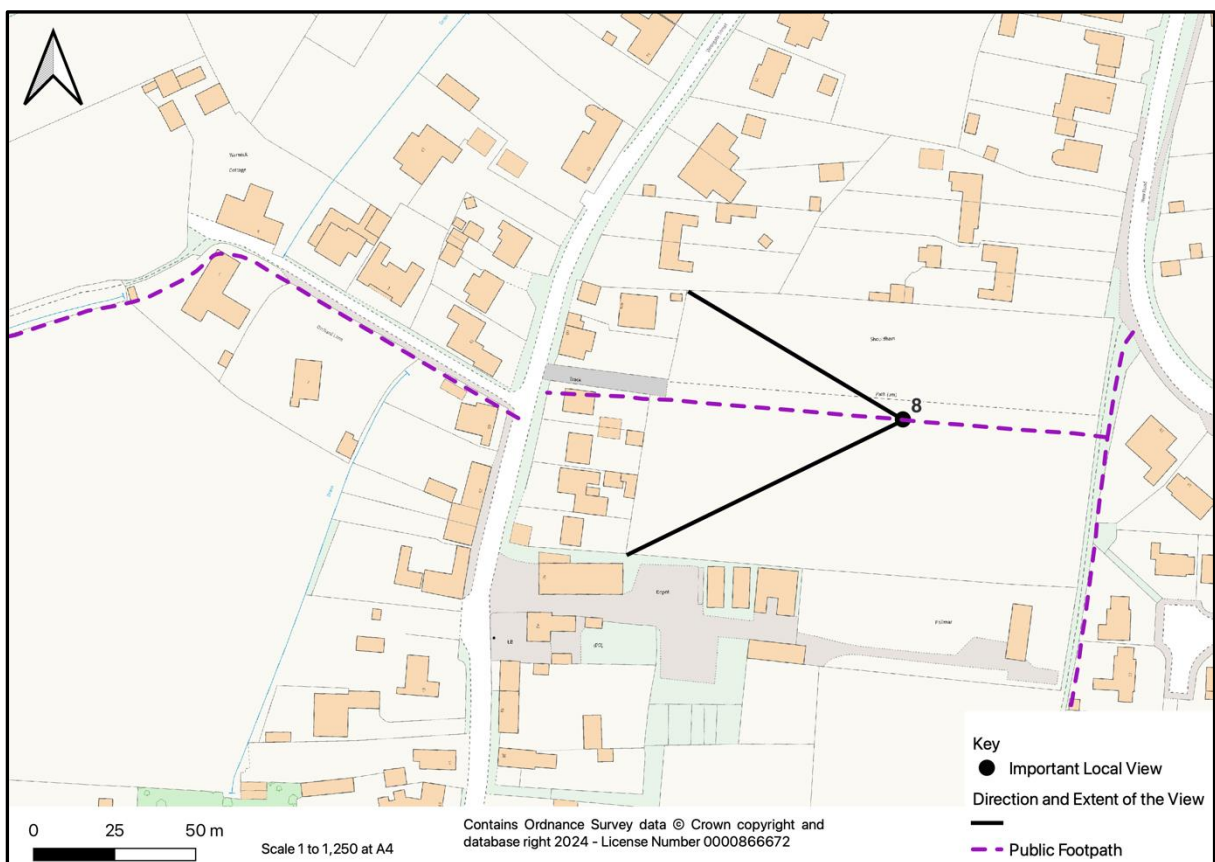
Specific location of the viewpoint	This is a dynamic view of the old wall along Eastgate Street and New Road
Description of the view	The view takes in the entirety of the old wall. The wall is 450m in length. It was built at different times and the materials it's made from vary in accordance with this.
Is the view publicly accessible?	Yes
Value of the view locally (scenic quality, recreational value, historic value, rarity, conservation interest)	This old wall forms the boundary to all the houses along the western side of Hallfields. The view does not fall within the Conservation Area, but the boundary wall includes traditional local materials, reflecting the character of the village. The view includes a number of mature trees, including a Horse Chestnut Tree with a TPO. In Spring/Summer/Autumn the trees make this view particularly pretty.
Relevant planning history	None

View 7: Along Orchard Lane into the countryside



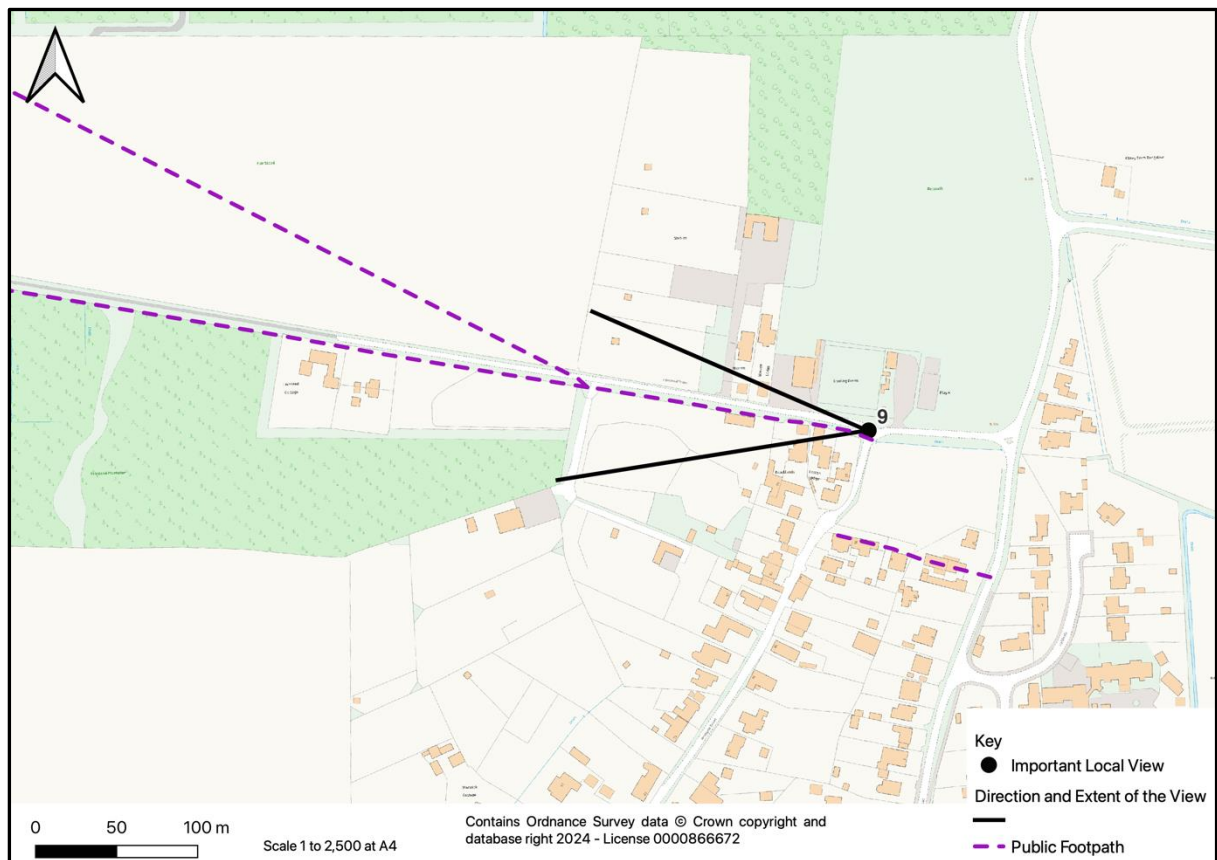
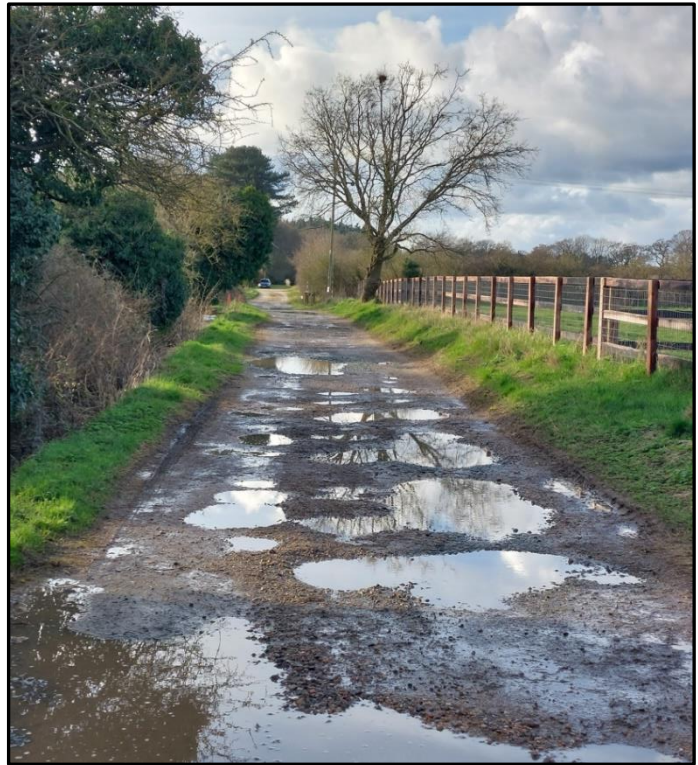
Specific location of the viewpoint	At the start of Orchard Lane, along Westgate Street
Description of the view	View along the relatively narrow Orchard Lane which is residential in nature, but opens up into wider countryside at the end.
Is the view publicly accessible?	Yes
Value of the view locally (scenic quality, recreational value, historic value, rarity, conservation interest)	Orchard Lane is a small cul-de-sac served off Westgate Street. This relatively narrow view down Orchard Lane affords you a glimpse of the open countryside from what is an otherwise built-up residential area. The view takes in a mix of residential development styles, including a newer chalet bungalow that is red cedar timber clad, on the corner of Westgate Street and Orchard Lane. The view into the distance includes a treed skyline, it is a rarity along Westgate Street. It is the view of the open landscape beyond the Orchard Lane that is important. There is also recreational value as there is a public footpath that runs along Orchard Lane and into the fields beyond.
Relevant planning history	Relatively recent replacement chalet bungalow in the foreground of this view.

View 8: The path running across the rhubarb field



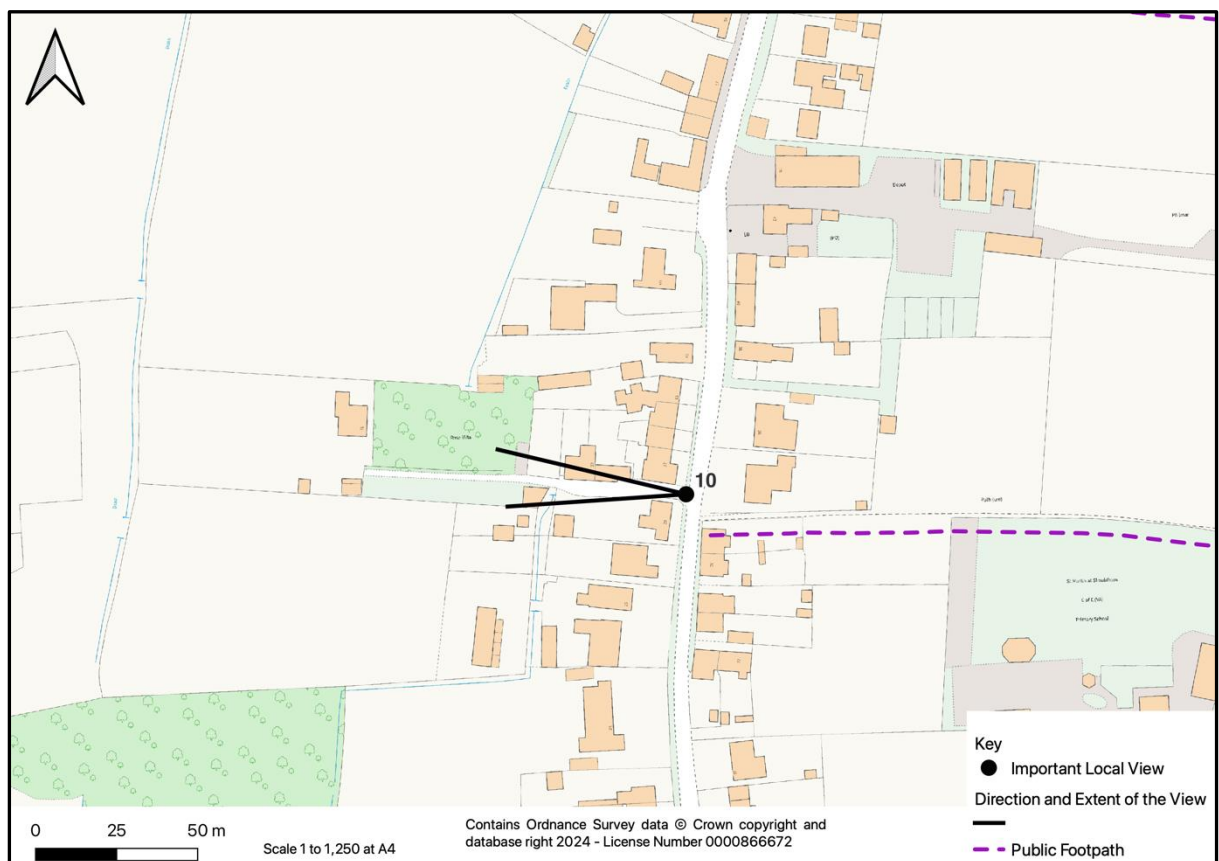
Specific location of the viewpoint	View of the Rhubarb Field as you walk through on the public footpath
Description of the view	View across the field which has historically been used for planting rhubarb, with housing on the perimeter just visible in the background.
Is the view publicly accessible?	Yes
Value of the view locally (scenic quality, recreational value, historic value, rarity, conservation interest)	This has historic value to the village as a field that was used to grow rhubarb, this stopped around 15 years ago. There is public access and great recreational value of the field to people of the village and is used daily by many.
Relevant planning history	A corner of the field, not shown in the view has received planning permission. This site was allocated in the Local Plan (G81.1), further details are available in the Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base.

View 9: Along Fairstead Drove towards The Sincks (part of the Warren)



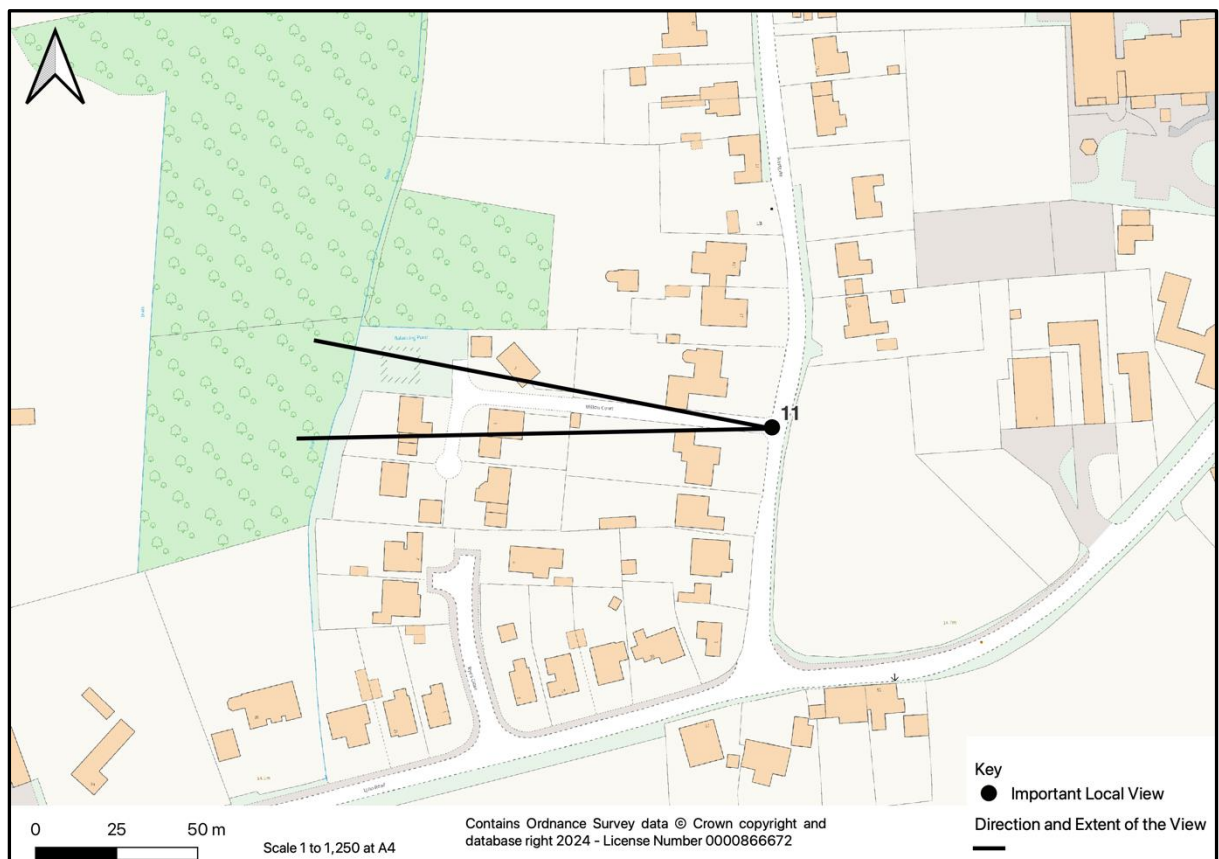
Specific location of the viewpoint	View towards the Sincks (part of the Warren) from along Fairstead Drove public path
Description of the view	The Warren is a large forested area in the north/east of the parish. The view is taken from the start of the public path
Is the view publicly accessible?	Yes
Value of the view locally (scenic quality, recreational value, historic value, rarity, conservation interest)	Recreational value as this is a common entrance into the Warren and used by many for recreational purposes. The Warren is on a greensand ridge between gault clay and chalk where the Brecks merges with the edge of the Fens and chalk uplands. It comprises a mixed forest of pine and other conifers and deciduous trees, mainly Birch. The Warren itself has historic value, with earthworks and ruined buildings that date back to WW2. It was used as a rabbit warren - designated areas where rabbits were bred, nurtured, protected and trapped for meat and their highly-prized fur, often on a commercial scale, from the 14th to the 19th century. Skins were taken to factories in Brandon and Thetford where the fur was treated and processed into felt for the hat trade or for export. Warrens could cover large areas, defined by perimeter banks and protected by warren lodges. Shouldham Warren was in existence by 1616. Between 1847 and 1890 there was extensive tree planting on the former warren. Today, rabbits play a vital role in conservation; their nibbling and burrowing activity creates the short sward and disturbed soil that makes it a very special place for biodiversity.
Relevant planning history	None.

View 10: Along a track from Westgate Street into the countryside



Specific location of the viewpoint	View along a track between number 29 and 37 Westgate Street
Description of the view	View along a relatively narrow track which is residential in nature, but opens up into wider countryside at the end, where there is a gate into open fields
Is the view publicly accessible?	Yes
Value of the view locally (scenic quality, recreational value, historic value, rarity, conservation interest)	The track is a small narrow lane off Westgate Street. This relatively narrow view affords you a glimpse of the open countryside from what is an otherwise built-up residential area. The view takes in a number of older properties with a gate at the end of the lane. It includes a view of the open landscape beyond the track with a distant skyline of trees.
Relevant planning history	None.

View 11: Along Willow Court driveway looking towards an adjacent wood



Specific location of the viewpoint	View from Westgate Street along the driveway to Willow Court
Description of the view	Another relatively narrow glimpse of the countryside from Westgate Street, along Willow Court driveway. You can see a wood at the end of the view, which starts on the edge of an attenuation pond that serves the adjacent housing.
Is the view publicly accessible?	Yes
Value of the view locally (scenic quality, recreational value, historic value, rarity, conservation interest)	The driveway is a small narrow lane off Westgate Street. This relatively narrow view affords a glimpse of the open countryside from what is an otherwise built-up residential area. It emphasises the closeness of the countryside to the main vehicular route that loops around the village and highlights that development in the village is often only one or two homes deep.
Relevant planning history	Willow Court is a relatively recent housing development.