

EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

HOWDEN

HOWDEN 1:10000 DETAILED ASSESSMENT

Introduction

This report describes the landscape character of the setting of Howden and assesses the quality of the landscape and the sensitivity of landscape character to detrimental change as a result of development on the urban edge.

The purpose of this study is to identify the areas that have the capacity to accept change as a result of development without detriment to landscape character.

This assessment does not assess the character or quality of urban green space. However, the importance of links between the town and countryside is a consideration.

Landscape Setting

Howden is located within the Humberhead Levels Countryside Character Area and the East Riding of Yorkshire Landscape Character Assessment has identified two landscape character types that contribute to the landscape setting of the town. They are:

Landscape Character Type 5 –Open Farmland

Landscape Character Type 8 – M62 Corridor Farmland

Howden is a small Market Town that has historic importance. It was once an important ecclesiastical centre and the Minster is a beautiful building which can be seen on the skyline from the surrounding landscape. Following the dissolution of the Monasteries in 1540 the Chapter House and the Chancel fell into disuse, slowly turning to ruin. These are now part of the gardens within the restored town, set amidst the Georgian buildings and offer much to the character of Howden.

The town has developed in an adhoc fashion between a dismantled railway to the north and the A63 to the southeast boundary. This has resulted in a sprawling appearance to the layout of the town which has a large amount of open space within it that contributes to character. The northern boundary is well defined, following the line of the dismantled railway.

The landscape setting of Howden is dominated by low lying flat arable farmland. There is an area of marsh with mature hedgerows and trees found on the outskirts of the town to the west. The vegetation in this area helps to screen the urban edge. Field pattern in the area is a combination of regular and irregular fields that display some characteristics of early enclosure fields. Hedgerow field boundaries are in varying condition, many are fragmented and some are missing altogether. The rural setting of the town is important to its character and the impact of commercial and industrial development is limited but apparent, particularly at Howden Dyke and in places along the A63 to the south.

Description of Visual Envelope

The built edge of Howden is well screened from the west although the tower of the Minster can be seen above the trees from some distance. To the south of the town the urban edge is more visible as a result of reduced vegetation cover and built form that is more varied and includes small scale commercial buildings. However, the extent of views of the urban edge is restricted by the M62 to the south. There are extensive views of the southern edge of Howden from the M62 Bridge over the River Ouse to the southwest.

From the north views of the urban edge are reasonably well screened by vegetation along the dismantled railway line that marks the northern edge of the development limit for the town. However, there are intermittent views of the town on this approach and the Minster can be seen from places on the skyline.

To the northwest the industrial scale buildings on the A614 have extended the visual envelope of the town and impacted upon its setting.

Area 1 – South and West Howden; Groves Farm to the Dismantled Railway

The area is bordered to the south by flat open farmland around Groves Farm; to the east by the M62 and flat open farmland; to the north by flat open farmland around the dismantled railway; and to the west by residential, industrial and commercial properties along the A614(T). Photo plates A, B and C are views across this area.

1.1 Landscape Character

This area predominantly lies within landscape character area 8A, M62 Corridor Howden to Gilberdyke, with a small section to the south of the assessed area lying within landscape character area 5A, Howden to Bubwith Farmland.

The landform of this area is flat generally below 5m AOD. Fields are medium to large in size with very few hedgerows that are in poor condition, marking the field boundaries. The regular shaped fields are also defined by drainage ditches in places. There is very little woodland cover and few individual trees. This results in an open landscape that has extensive views towards the north, east and south. Screen planting adjacent to urban edge softens the impact of the town when viewed from the open landscape.

This area includes small areas of industrialisation and residential development along the eastern edge of the town south of the A614. These areas encroach on the rural landscape character and are generally less well screened than the residential urban edge. The M62 is a dominant structure to the south.

There are good views of Howden Minster which dominates the skyline and contributes to identity and sense of place.

1.2 Assessment of Quality

Based upon the above description the quality of this area is assessed to be ordinary. There are very few features of significant amenity, aesthetic or ecological value. The greatest asset is the views of Howden Minster which provides recognition and identity to the town.

A site of Nature Conservation importance, Policy EN 28 in the Boothferry Borough Local Plan, has been identified to the north of B1230 to the South of Flat Field Farm

The wooded urban edge integrates well with the surrounding rural landscape; however the poorly screened industrial buildings and the substantial impact of the M62 are detractors in this open rural character area.

1.3 Assessment of Sensitivity and Capacity

The assessed area has a high sensitivity to large scale developments, particularly industrial units that would impact upon the existing character of the screened residential urban edge. Large scale development in this area would also impact significantly upon the setting of Howden, impinging upon traditional field patterns and reducing the amount of open land between Howden and the M62. The fields between the urban edge and the M62 play an important role in the rural setting of the town despite their ordinary quality.

The industrial influence of the new development at Howdendyke, the existing units to the northeast of Howden together with the proposed development at Booth Fields has the potential to significantly impact upon the character and setting of this historic town if allowed to further encroach and spread. These large scale developments have the potential to obscure existing views of the Minster resulting in the loss of identity and association.

The area therefore has a very low capacity for large scale industrial and residential development as this would have a detrimental impact upon the character and setting of Howden.

There is limited capacity for small scale infill development of a predominantly residential nature that enhances and contributes to the urban edge of Howden and its integration with the surrounding countryside. Development should respect its surroundings and not have a detrimental effect on views, field pattern or rural setting.

Area 2 – Newfields to Station Road

This area is bordered to the southeast by the dismantled railway; to the south by Thorpe Road Industrial Estate and the dismantled railway; to the west by Station Road; and to the north by large open arable fields. Photo plate D is a view across this area.

2.1 Landscape Character

This area predominantly lies within landscape character area 5A – Howden to Bubwith Farmland, with a small section to the northeast of the assessed area lying within landscape character area 5B – West of Spalding Moor Farmland.

Landform is flat and generally below 5m AOD. Land use is arable farmland. There are few woodland blocks or individual trees and hedgerows tend to be poor quality and fragmented. Fields are large to very large. Trees and shrubs along the dismantled railway help to integrate the urban edge and partially restrict views of the large, uncharacteristic industrial units that dominate the gateway to Howden from the northeast.

Overall the area has a pleasant rural character with pockets of recreational space contrasting with the intensively farmed arable fields.

2.2 Assessment of Quality

From the description of this area above the quality is assessed to be good. There are few features of exceptional landscape value, however the tree lined drains and the heavily wooded dismantled railway line creates an attractive setting and gateway to Howden from the north and northeast.

Human influences such as the sports pitch and industrial units are generally well screened and as a result do not impact upon the rural character of the landscape that extends to the north. There is a large tower visible on the skyline above the Thorpe Road Industrial Estate which is a visual detractor.

2.3 Assessment of Sensitivity and Capacity

This area is assessed to be highly sensitive to development that would impact upon the rural qualities of the setting of Howden. Existing industrial development already impacts on the landscape character of the approach to the town from the northeast despite being reasonably well screened. The potential cumulative impact of further development in this area may have an adverse impact on the rural landscape setting of the town. This is particularly true of industrial scale development that would encroach upon existing vegetation and field pattern and would also detract from views of the wider landscape. Away from the immediate edge of the town the landscape is open with very little vegetation cover and new development would potentially increase the visual envelope.

The capacity for new development is low as this would encroach on the rural setting of the town to the north.

Area 3 – Northwest Howden; Station Road to Knedlington Road

The area is bordered to the south and east by the urban edge of Howden, Knedlington Road and Station Road; to the west and north by Howden Parks.

3.1 Landscape Character

This area lies within landscape character area 5A, Howden to Bubwith Farmland. Photo plates E and F are views in this area.

The assessed area is surrounded by flat, open, sparsely wooded agricultural land that is characteristic of the landscape character type 5, Open Farmland. However, the landscape west of the urban edge of Howden does include characteristics that are not typical of the character type that contribute to the setting of the town. The area to the west of Howden includes small areas of woodland, small scale grass fields and tall overgrown hedges. This results in a small scale, semi-enclosed landscape that contrasts with the large scale of the surrounding arable landscape. The smaller scale of the setting of some settlements within this character type is a result of the characteristics identified here and is a feature of the otherwise large scale arable landscape character type.

The area has nature conservation importance and includes locally designated sites and a Site of Special Scientific Interest which is to the west of the cemetery along Knedlington Road. The SSSI covers two areas west of Howden. Howden Cemetery is located on the edge of Howden to the south of this area.

This landscape provides a pleasant approach to Howden along Knedlington Road and also Selby Road from which there are views of Howden Minster.

3.2 Assessment of Quality

Based upon the description above the area is assessed to be of high landscape value. There are many features, including hedgerows, blocks of woodland and Howden Marsh that are of significant aesthetic and ecological value. This is an attractive landscape with intimate scale and secluded feeling without being remote. Drainage channels and Howden Marsh contribute to the diversity of the area. Development is well screened by existing vegetation and the only detractors are channelled views of the M62 Bridge and restricted views of industrial scale buildings adjacent to Boothfield Lodge. The Boothferry Borough Local Plan has an allocation for industrial development in the area of Booth Fields which would impact upon the nature of these views. This assessment area contrasts with the surrounding arable landscape.

3.3 Assessment of Sensitivity and Capacity

The area is assessed to have very high sensitivity to built development between Knedlington Road and Selby Road. Development in this area would impact upon the SSSI and SINC designations, existing trees and hedgerows that are characteristic, field pattern, the scale of the area and its role in providing the setting for the western edge of Howden.

The area has a particularly good aesthetic quality compared to the surrounding landscape and provides a harmonious transition between the rural landscape and the historic settlement. Any development would detrimentally affect this character and quality.

This area has a low capacity for development other than for features that encourage awareness, education and accessibility to these important areas.

The area to the north of Selby Road is assessed to have medium sensitivity to built development. This area has fewer landscape features that would be affected by development. However, the area is more open and new development would potentially extend the visual envelop of the town. However, there is some capacity in this area for suitable small scale development due to the screening properties of existing hedgerows and the opportunity to incorporate mitigation measures that would maintain and enhance the integration of the urban edge. For example, hedgerow planting with trees and the reintroduction of grassland to provide informal recreation and link with the grassland south of Selby Road would help integrate development with the rural character of the area. A large portion of this area is currently designated for residential development within the Boothferry Borough Local Plan.

Area 4 – Southwest Howden; Knedlington Road to A614

The area is bordered to the east by the urban edge of Howden; to the south by A614; to the west by Booth Ferry Road; and to the north by Knedlington Road.

4.1 Landscape Character

This area lies within landscape character area 5A, Howden to Bubwith Farmland.

The area is low lying and flat below 5m AOD. The fields are large and regular defined by fragmented hedgerows. Smaller regular fields are located adjacent to the built edge where existing vegetation screens the urban edge along Boothgate and Butterfield Road.

Intermittent industrial development has taken place along the A614. Large scale industrial units have an extensive visual envelope and serve to screen the potentially pleasant views of Howden when approached from the southwest. Currently their screening properties are limited due to the scattered random nature of development. There are clear views of the M62 and views of cranes in Goole docks in the distance to the south.

4.2 Assessment of Quality

Based upon the description above the quality of the area is assessed to be ordinary. There are few features that are of significant landscape importance or value. Existing vegetation along the edge of Howden helps to integrate residential development with the surrounding landscape. However, the scattered random industrial development is not so well screened and impacts upon the setting of this side of Howden. There are long views over the agricultural landscape.

The main detractor in the area is industrial buildings that are not in keeping with scale and style of development within Howden. They also restrict and screen pleasant views of Howden.

4.3 Assessment of Sensitivity and Capacity

The area to the south is allocated in the Boothferry Local Plan for employment. This area is detached from the residential urban edge to the north east. However industrial development here would impact on the setting of Howden and views of Howden Minster. Therefore the area is assessed to have high sensitivity to industrial development that would impact on views of Howden Minster, the rural character of the landscape setting and the integration of the residential urban edge with that setting. This is particularly true for the land adjacent to the urban edge. The area is also sensitive to development that would extend the industrial influence in to this rural area.

The cumulative impact of industrial development in this area particularly when considered with industrial development associated with Goole and Howden Dyke, is potentially substantial adverse in landscape terms. The scale of the impact would depend upon the scale and design of the developments in relation to each other.

Small scale residential development in this area would not have as large an impact as industrial development provided that respects existing pattern and character. This development would however impinge upon the rural characteristics of the surrounding landscape and would contribute towards urban sprawl.

Therefore this area has a low capacity in landscape terms, to development, especially that of an industrial scale and nature. Any development should reduce the impact of the existing industrial units and enhance the skyline without further restricting views of Howden Minster. Development should not encourage urban sprawl and should seek to maintain the open characteristics of the rural landscape.

Summary

The landscape setting of Howden is generally flat and featureless with limited vegetation except along the urban edge.

The M62 impacts upon the rural character of the setting of Howden to the south. This area is accessible from the M62 and existing road network and parts have been allocated for commercial use in the Boothferry Local Plan. However, despite its ordinary quality the area is important to the setting of the town and any future development should respect this.

The landscape setting west and north of Howden shares many of the characteristic of the setting to the south and east but is more varied as a result of greater woodland and tree cover, mature overgrown hedgerows and small scale grass fields amongst the larger scale arable landscape on the urban edge. As a result of this diversity the landscape setting to the north and west has been assessed to good and high quality respectively.

The areas surrounding Howden generally have high sensitivity to development, particularly for large scale industrial buildings that would significantly affect the character and setting of the town and also views of the Minster.

The main areas that have capacity for development are along the northern edge of Howden where existing vegetation would screen any small scale developments.

General Guidelines

Where development is required to meet strategic objectives or local demand it is important to consider the height, scale and form of the buildings and the integration of these buildings into the surrounding landscape context. This is particularly true for housing developments where the requirement to meet housing density targets can often overshadow the respect of a development to its surroundings, resulting in significant impact upon the existing character.

New buildings should reflect those in the locality and follow local building styles. Abrupt edges with little or no vegetation should be discouraged. Where existing vegetation occurs it should generally be retained and enhanced to create natural, 'softer' boundaries that integrate the development into the surrounding landscape.

Development should take account of, retain and enhance existing landscape features that contribute to character and quality such as hedgerows, trees, landmarks and views.

There is a need to consider the cumulative effects of industrial development in this and surrounding areas and the impact that this would have on the character and setting of Howden and the rural landscape in general. Proposals for significant industrial developments at Booth Field, Howdendyke and northwest Goole have the potential to contribute to the

close massing of large scale, poor quality, uncharacteristic development which would be of detriment to the area as a whole.

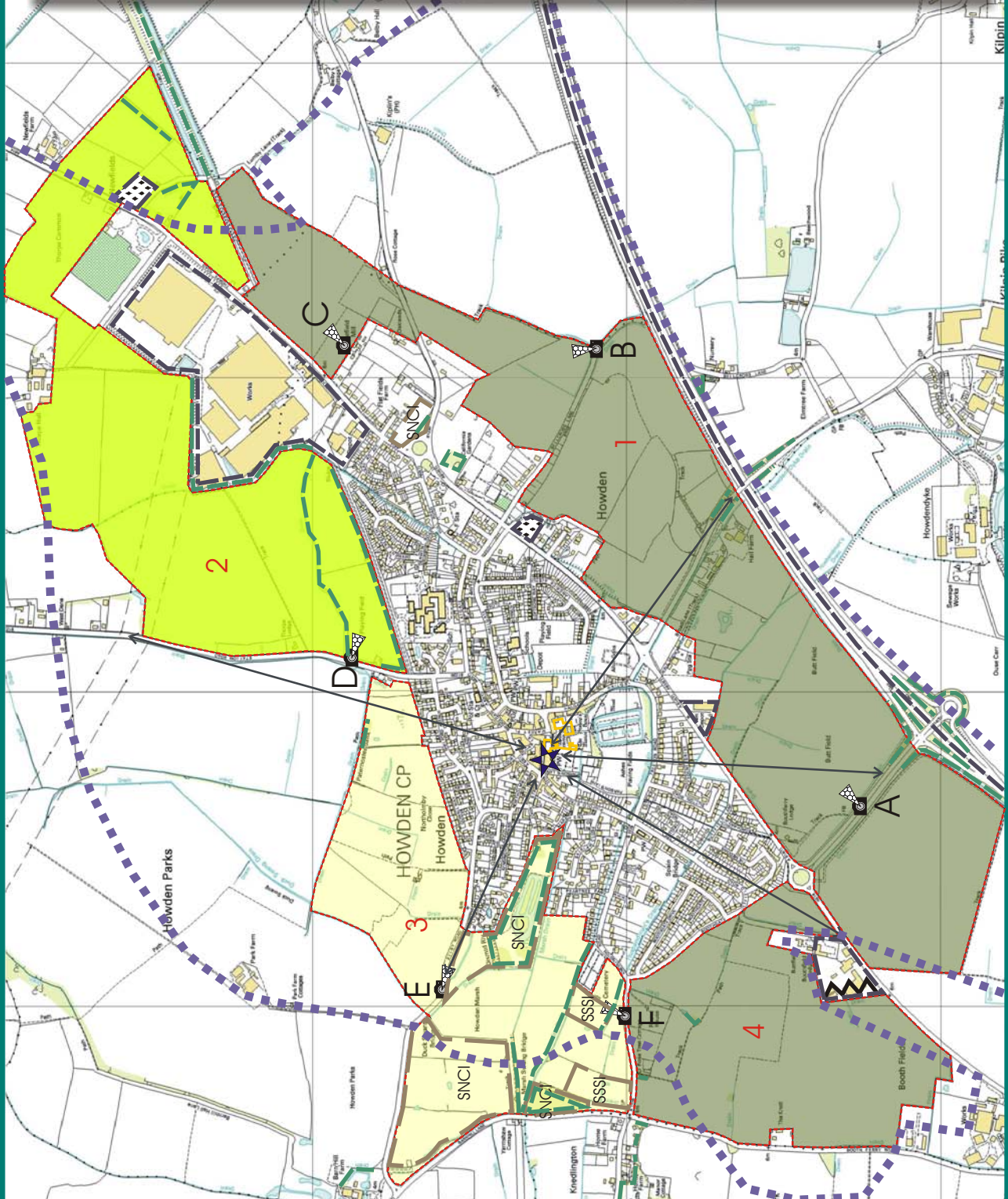
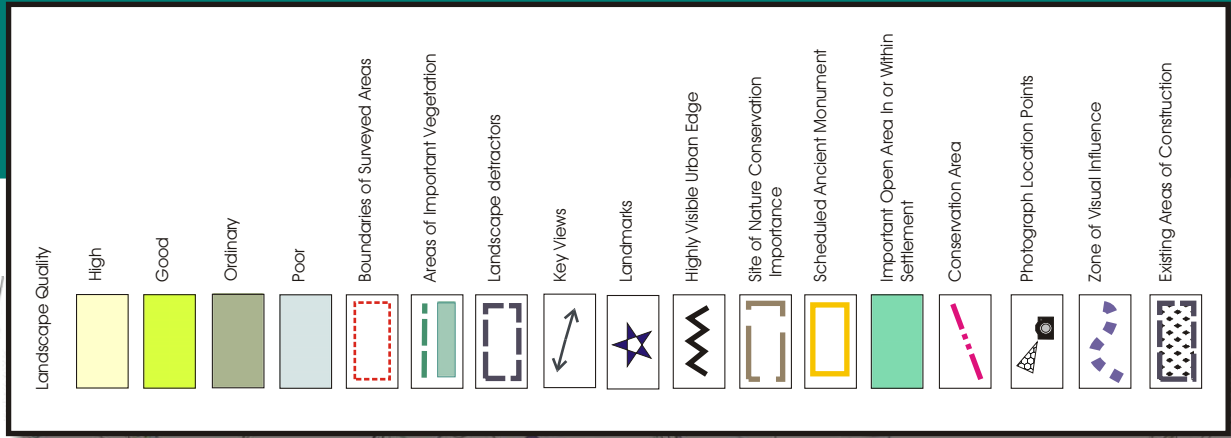
There are few distinctive landscape features that are recognisable as landmarks with exception of Howden Minster, which towers above the town and contributes to identity and recognition. Any views of this important feature should be maintained and enhanced in order to retain this strong sense of place.

The qualities of the surrounding landscape also play a significant part in the perception of Howden, particularly along the western and northern approaches to the town. The approaches from other directions are lower quality as a result of the impact of large scale developments and human influence; these approaches should be targeted as priority areas for any potential enhancement schemes to create a sense of arrival and to reflect the historic core of this attractive market town.

Views of the surrounding landscape are restricted from the urban edge due to screening vegetation. Generally any views that do occur are channelled over the flat landscape surrounding Howden. Where there are views of the landscape they are important to retain as they contribute to the character of the town.

The physical links between the town centre and the surrounding countryside are important to the character of the town and should be maintained and enhanced.

HOWDEN LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS



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Plate A: North view from M62 - A614(T) link road



Plate B: North view from Bellcross Lane



Plate C: Northeast view from Matfield Mill



Plate D: Southeast view from Station Road



Plate E: East view from Selby Road

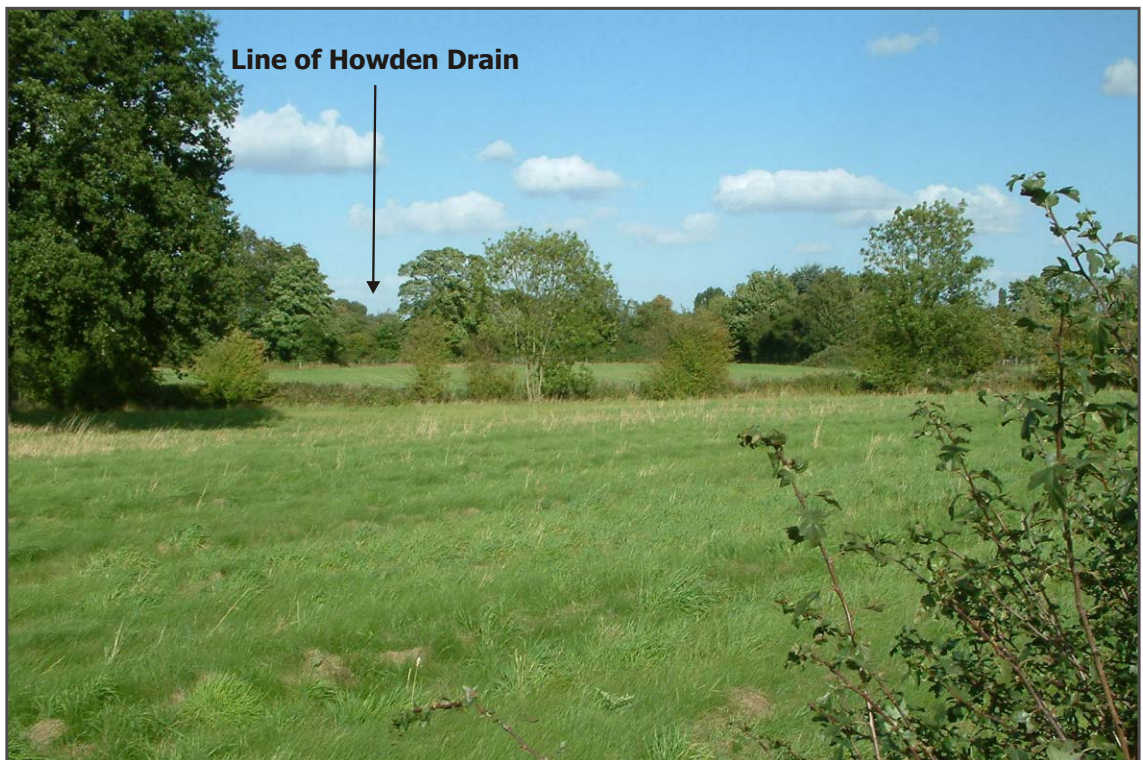


Plate F: Northeast view from Knedlington Road