

Newton Neighbourhood Plan
Appendix 3

Newton Character
Assessment



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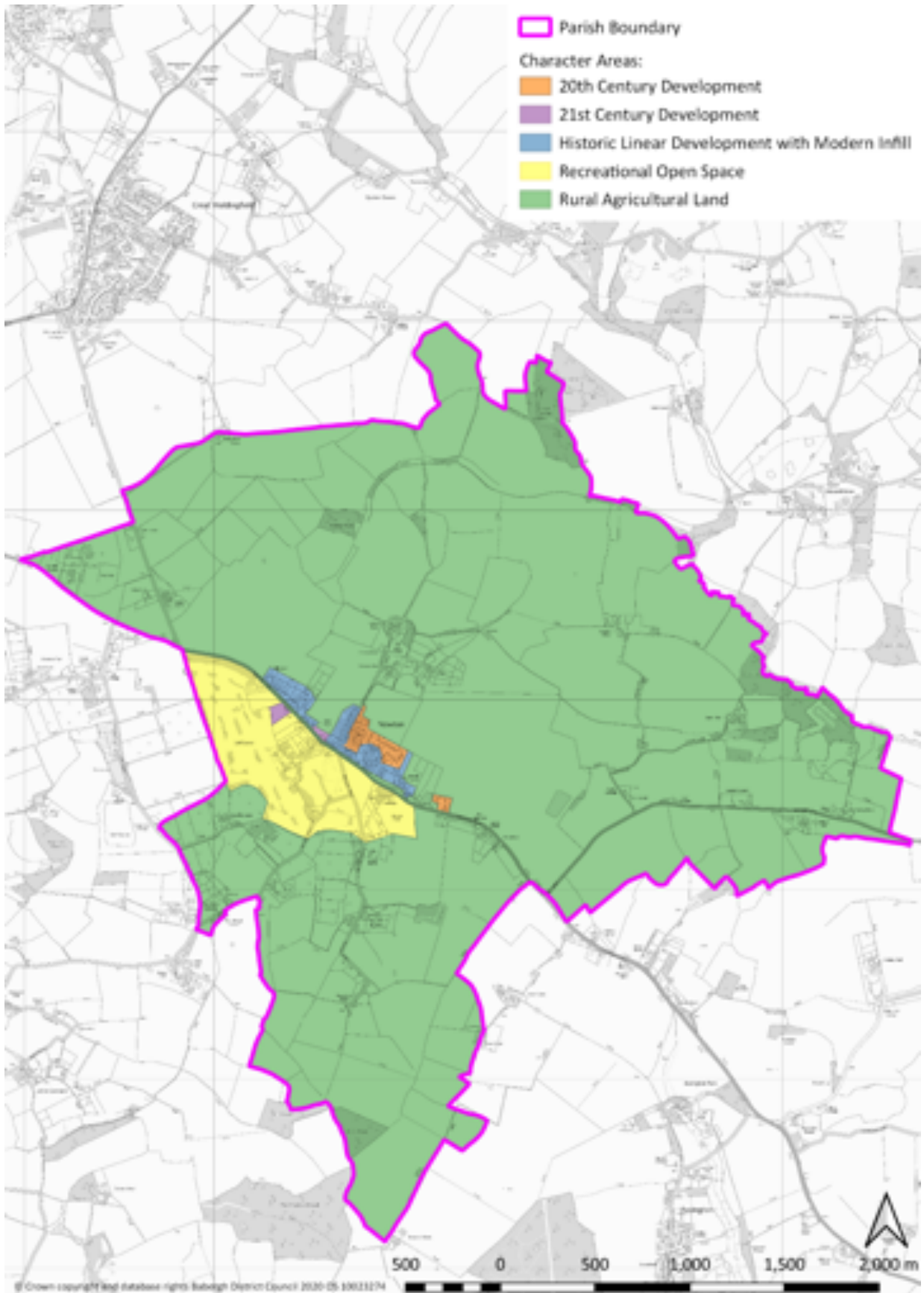
1.0 Introduction

Newton was a Saxon village which has been subject to progressive phases of development and growth. As such, individual areas of distinctive character can be found throughout the village. Generally, houses across this area were developed speculatively, thus some exhibit an overall uniformity, being designed by a single architect, whereas others were built and designed by individual homeowners, with varying levels of adaptation and artistic license.

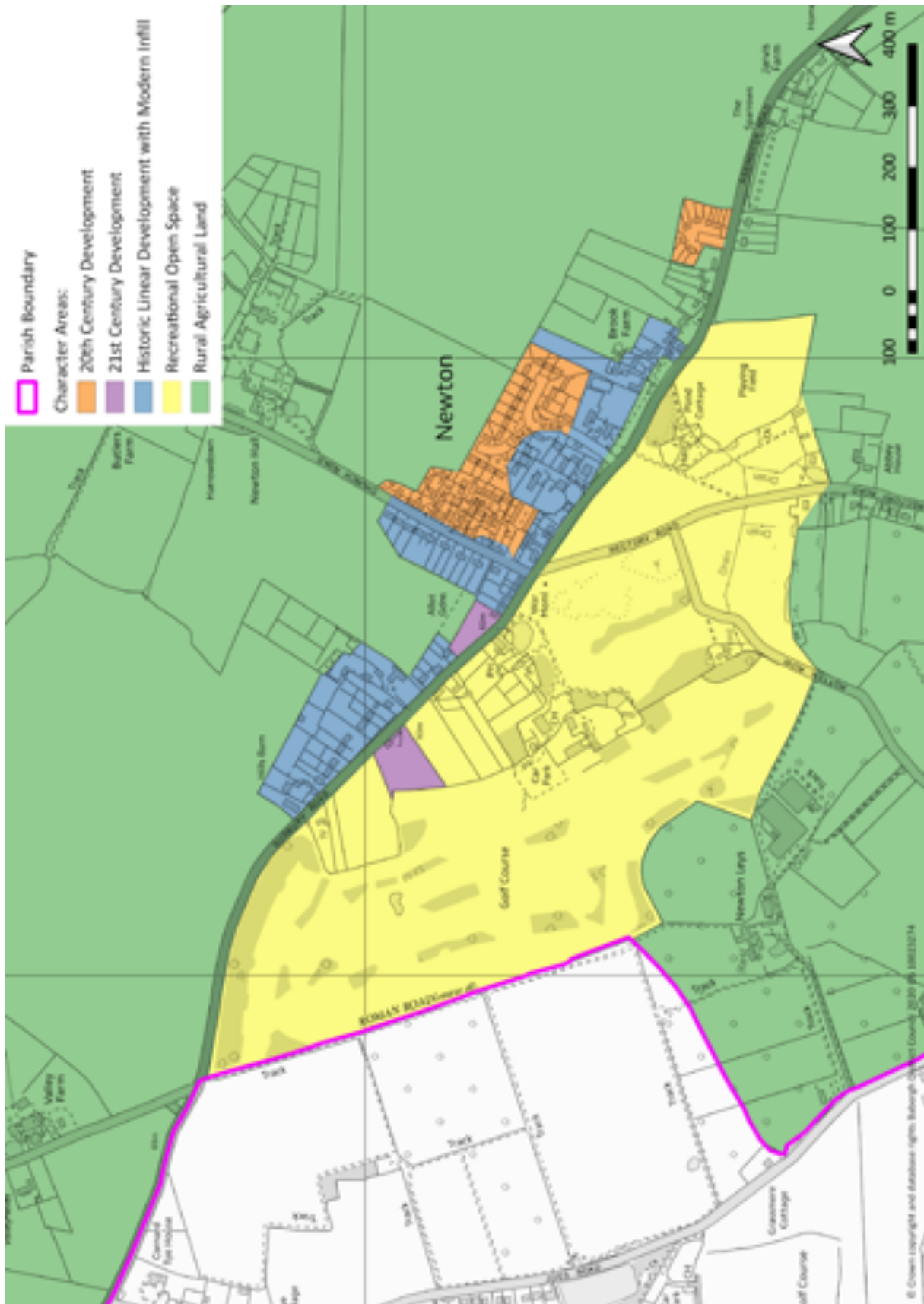
Following a visual survey (February 2020) five distinctive character areas (CAs) have been identified within Newton. Those identified are shown in Figure 1 and have been classified as follows:

- 1) Rural Agricultural Land (north and south of A134)
- 2) Recreational Open Space
- 3) Historic Linear Development, with modern infill
- 4) 20th Century Development
- 5) 21st Century Development

Note: There is an important distinction in the text of the Character Assessment between pictures titled 'view of significance' and all other pictures. Where the title of a picture makes reference in to a 'view of significance', this means it is a view considered worthy of protection in planning policy (and feeds through into policy in the Newton Neighbourhood Plan). All other pictures where the title does not make reference to a view are simply used to illustrate the points being made in the Character Assessment. Often these are referred to as 'vistas'.



Map 1: Character areas in Newton parish



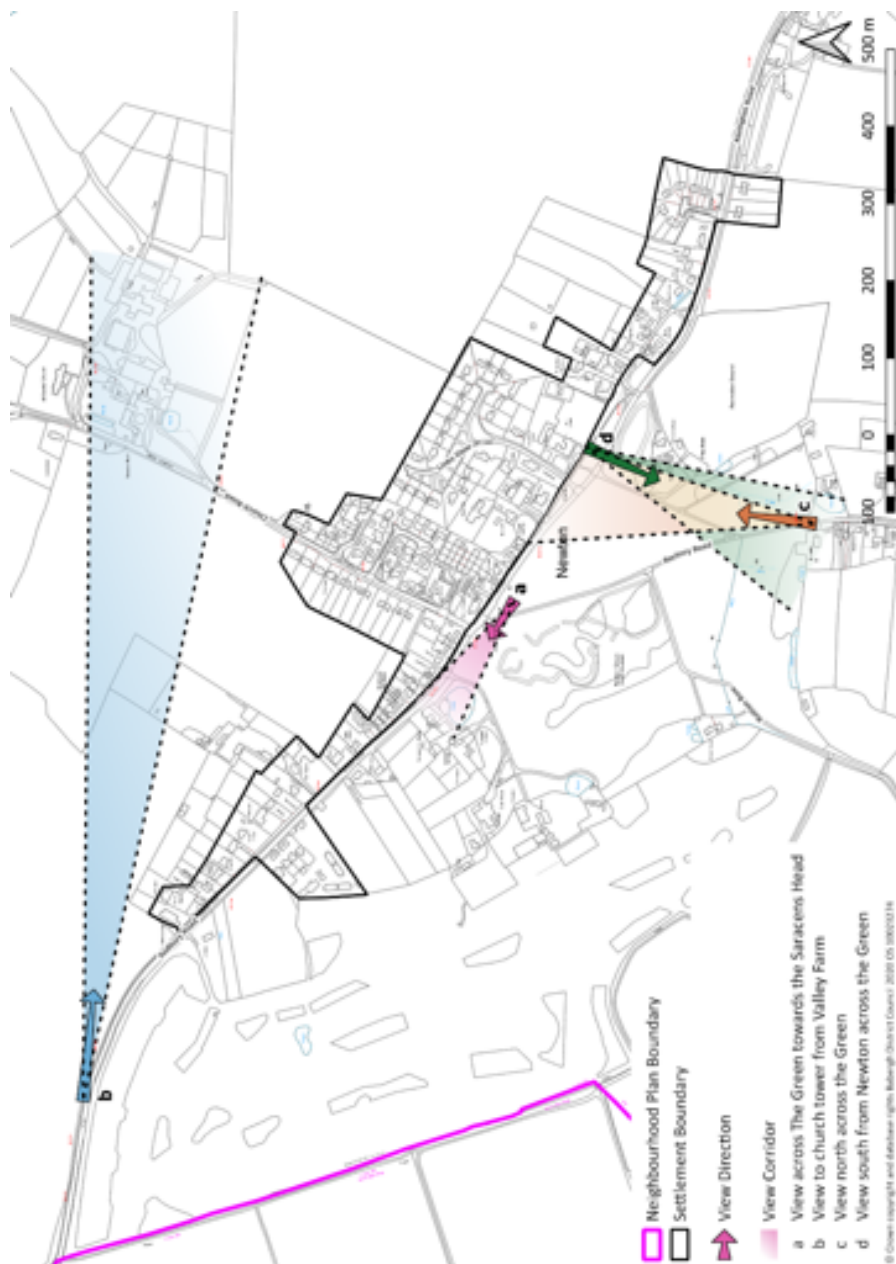
Map 1: Character areas - inset

2.0 Locally significant views

The Character Area Assessment has identified five views of significance which have fed through to policy in the Newton Neighbourhood Plan. For ease of reference, these are shown on Map 2:

- a. View across The Green towards the Saracens Head
- b. View to church tower from Rogers Farm
- c. View to church tower from Valley Farm
- d. View north across the Green
- e. View south from Newton across the Green

Each view is described in more detail in the relevant section of the Character Area Assessment.



3.0 Rural Agricultural Land (north of the A134) Character Area

Located to the north of the A134 this character area is typical of agricultural landscapes across Suffolk. The rolling, arable landscape exhibits a field pattern of ancient random enclosure. Scattered ancient woodland parcels interrupt open vistas across this landscape and contain a mix of oak, lime, cherry, hazel, hornbeam, ash and holly. More specifically, the topography within Newton Parish Boundary is basically flat particularly around its centre where the main village settlement is situated. To the east, towards the neighbouring villages of Edwardstone and Boxford, the land begins to rise a little but only to approximately 100 feet above sea level. To the west, towards Gouldings Farm and the Lord's Wood it rises to approximately 70 feet above sea level.

Although sparse, where development is present this predominantly comprises dispersed farmsteads of medieval origin. Farmstead buildings are of timber frame, houses are colour-washed and barns blackened with tar. Roofs are, in the majority, tiled. Where farmsteads occur they can be considered to positively contribute to this identified character area, reflecting the aforementioned inherent features. Both Butlers Farm (to the north of the village) and Rogers Farm (to the north east) are Grade II listed and comprise timber frame, plastered and colour-washed farmhouses. Additionally, buildings across both farmsteads exhibit characteristic features, comprising tiled barns blackened with tar.



Butlers Farm



Rogers Farm

Newton Hall is a notable feature within this character area, the appearance of which can be considered to contribute positively to the wider character of this area by way of construction, it is a timber framed, plastered house with a tiled hip roof. However, significant boundary planting limits the property's perceptibility in both immediate and long distance vistas.



Newton Hall

One notable structure within this character area – and the village as a whole – is All Saints Church. Of flint construction – with some Norman origin – it is a 14th century structure. Given the immediate topography, direct vistas to this church are not discernible from within Newton village and as you travel northwards along Church Road.



Vista northwards from Church Road

However, the open undulating character of the wider agricultural landscape allow for long distance views to the church tower. From Valley Farm to the west (**View 'b' of significance** in Maps 2 and 3) the tower forms a notable feature across uninterrupted views.



View 'b' of significance: view to church tower from Valley Farm



Map 3: View 'b' of significance - view to church tower from Valley Farm

Within this character area a number of detracting features prevail. Given farming intensification a number of modern, brick and metal barns used for storage etc, form large-scale interruptions across the landscape and within the vista, particularly those to the north and south of the church. Additionally, large brick and metal barns to the east of Newton Hall are visible beyond historic development and interrupt the verdant, undeveloped vista.



Storage barns to south of All Saints Church

Additionally, in southerly vistas to the village limited vegetation serves to screen both development and farming paraphernalia. As such, sheds, fencing and containers associated within both the allotments and equine practices detract from the overarching open, rolling, rural agricultural landscape. Further, 20th century infill development also forms a clear feature in southwards vistas. Here a clear building line, in conjunction with limited boundary vegetation, forms an identifiable end to the arable landscape.



Vista southwards to allotments from Church Road



Vista southwards to edge of Newton village development, from agricultural field

4.0 Rural Agricultural Landscape (south of the A134) Character Area

A highly verdant southern aspect has been an historic characteristic of Newton. Newton Green was located to the south of the A134, surrounded by irregular arable farmland. Up until the early 20th century (when the golf course was laid out – 1907) this area was reflective of that to the north with irregular ancient field enclosure only interrupted by dispersed dwellings and structures associated with farming practices. This is shown in **view 'c' of significance** in Maps 2 and 4).

Where development is present today this predominantly follows the route of the historic track of Rectory Road. Thus, residential properties range from 16th – 21st century in origin. Historic structures exhibit similarities in character and aesthetic. As such, these are predominantly timber-framed and plastered with thatch roofs. In general, they are also orientated to front the road.



Thatched cottage on Rectory Road

Where modern development has occurred this has been infill development which, in design terms, has been demonstrably of its time. Thus, off Rectory Road, later residential development exhibits some level of uniformity for example, semi-detached dwellings to the south of the Old Rectory are set back from the road beyond long front gardens. These structures front onto the road and are of brick construction, some are rendered.



View 'c' of significance: view north across the Green



Map 4: View 'c' of significance - view north across the Green



Residential development off Rectory Road

To the north of Rectory Road – south of Burchetts – development is once again set back from the road, predominantly beyond green front gardens. Again, residential dwellings generally front the road with gables perpendicular to this. Otherwise, development within this character area is modern, brick, single storey, associated with the practical functioning of the golf club.

Key features of the Rural Agricultural Landscape (north and south of A134) Character Area

Layout:

- Sparsely settled, predominantly dispersed farmsteads to the north
- Linear development, predominantly off Rectory Road to the south

Building Design:

- Timber frame residences are colour washed, barns are finished in blacken tar weatherboarding, to the north
- Residential properties are predominantly brick and/or rendered, roof structures vary depending on period of construction, to the south

Green Features:

- Ancient woodland parcels and hedgerows within an otherwise arable landscape

Views of significance:

- View from east (view 'b' of significance) towards All Saints Church tower.
- Views northwards across the Green (view 'c' of significance).

Landmarks / Landmark Buildings:

- All Saints Church
- Newton Hall

5.0 Recreational Open Space Character Area

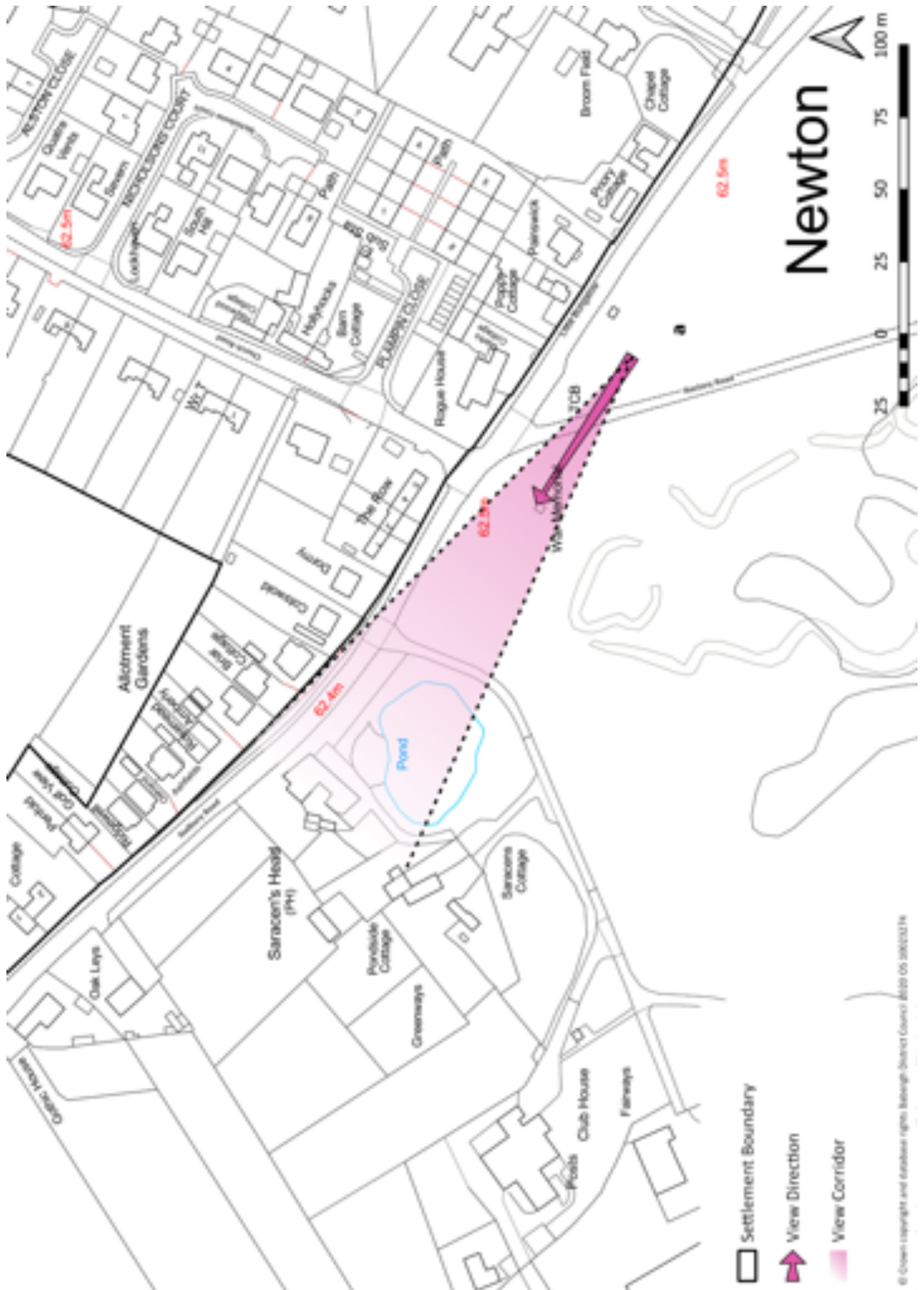
Located to the south of the A134, Newton Golf Course defines this character area. When travelling into the village a highly verdant character prevails. The managed grounds of the golf course are only interrupted by dispersed trees and access routes.

A significant building within this character area is the Saracens Head pub. Historically a public house and malthouse this structure is one of the largest in the village. Again of timber frame and render it forms a clear end to the golf course, particularly in views west across the Green (**View 'a' of significance** in Maps 2 and 5).

The golf course extends to the north-west, beyond the Saracens Head, although this is screened by both residential development – of varying ages – and orchard planting, a prominent land use south of the line between Hadleigh and Sudbury. There is a longer distance view in a southerly direction across the Green. This provides one of the widest and longest views of the Green, and perhaps best encapsulates the essence of Newton's character (**View 'd' of significance** in Maps 2 and 6).



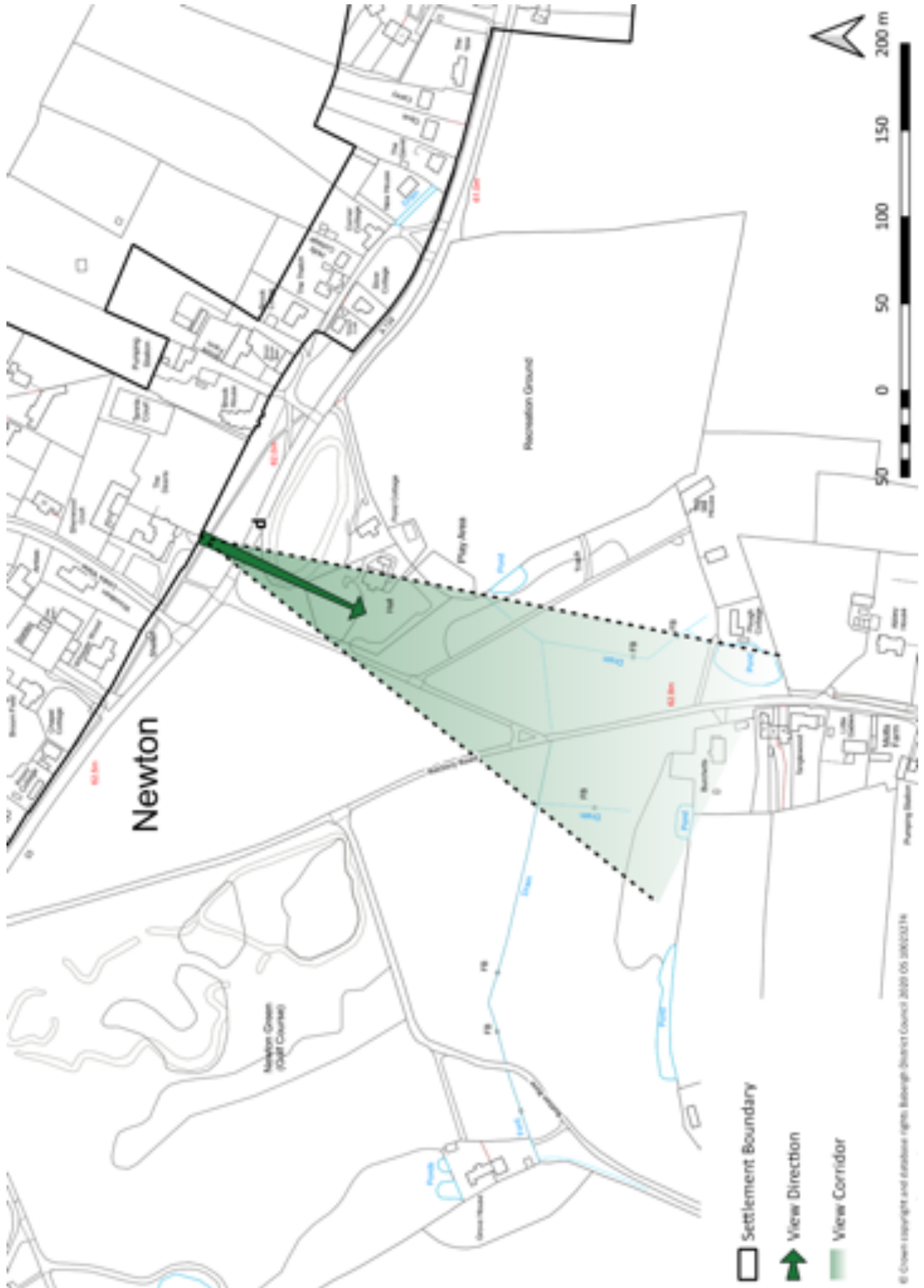
View 'a' of significance: view across The Green towards the Saracens Head



Map 5: View 'a' of significance - view across The Green towards the Saracens Head



View 'd' of significance: view south from Newton across The Green



Map 6: View 'd' of significance - view south from Newton across The Green



Saracens Head pub at end of longer vista, from public footpath adjacent to A134

Another historic building within this character area is the Village Hall, which was initially constructed as the Village School in 1835. Again this property comprises red brick with a tiled gable roof. This structure is set within a parking area and playing field. Whilst the parking area does not contribute to the highly verdant character of this area as a whole it is enclosed and visually screened by vegetation within the golf course. Additionally, vegetation flanking the A134 forms an effective, green backdrop in vistas to the village hall from the south, although the hall itself is screened, in part by paraphernalia associated with the play area, i.e. fencing / swings / climbing frame etc.



Play Area with Village Hall beyond

Key features of the Recreational Open Space Character Area

Layout:

- Managed grounds of Newton Golf Course

Building Design:

- Saracens Head timber frame and render
- Village Hall red brick
- Any other structures are modern / brick, associated with the golf course

Green Features:

- Dispersed trees within golf course
- Orchard planting to northern peripheries

Views of significance:

- View across The Green towards the Saracens Head (view 'a' of significance)
- View south from Newton across The Green (view 'd' of significance)

Landmarks / Landmark Buildings:

- Saracens Head
- Village Hall

6.0 Historic Linear Development with Modern Infill Character Area

Development within Newton historically grew up along the established route of the through road – A134. Here it is pertinent to note that across Suffolk there exists the frequent occurrence of small – to moderate-sized greens, frequently linear or triangular in shape. Many of the greens were enclosed in the 18th and 19th centuries and some have been infilled with housing.

Thus, when travelling into the village from the east – along the A134 – a number of historic buildings are set back from this main route beyond small greens (Little Green and Middle Green). At Little Green Crojans and Hatch, both Grade II listed, in conjunction with a number of later residential dwellings front onto the green. Vistas across this green to these structures are only interrupted by the Grade II listed Stow residential premises and neighbouring structure.



Little Green

Although constructed at different periods a uniformity in the vista is achieved through siting, scale, orientation and aesthetic. As such, gables are predominantly perpendicular to the green, roofs are tiled and buildings rendered. Stow differs from this with a Dutch gable fronting the A134 and Hatch exhibiting a thatch roof.

Fencing used to enclose individual gardens at Stow and its neighbouring building, in conjunction with discernible garden paraphernalia above, i.e. sheds form a detracting feature whereby historic associations with an open green are essentially lost.

A further green is found when travelling west. Known as Middle Green this area fronts an additional two dwellings. Grade II Brooks Farmhouse and Grade II The Deans introduce large-scale, individual residential development located within highly vegetated grounds. Brooks Farmhouse is a 16th-17th century timber-framed and plastered house, a narrow gabled 3

storey wing projects at the frontage. The timber frame of the structure is visible at both the east and west elevations.

Additionally, The Deans exhibits a similarly verdant front garden with the building itself being set back beyond both this and the green. It is a 16th century timber-framed house, which was re-fronted in red brick during the 18th century.

Here it is pertinent to note that Rogue House is located on the western extents of the A134. This property exhibits features that are synonymous with this character area, including red brick, tiled gable roof and a recessed orientation. However, dormers at both the host building and that to the rear are not a prevalent feature across other buildings within this area. Additionally, the front garden space is much less verdant, possibly owing to the historic presence of a petrol station and post office. This is now solely a residential property.

When continuing westwards along this road the predominant character is that of residential plots set back beyond the public footpath and enclosed by high hedgerows. However, the highly verdant nature of front gardens is reduced further west with spaces being enclosed by low brick walls, in some instances hedgerows and scrub are visible above these walls.



Enclosing walls on A134

Further west, residential development becomes less grand than that found at The Deans / Brooks Farmhouse, with a combination of individual and terraced cottages. Despite clear differences in periods of construction buildings are predominantly red brick or rendered and

front onto the vehicular route. Additionally, roofs are predominantly tiled gables and have dormer windows.



Cottages on A134

Historically, an open arable field separated Deans Farm (The Deans) from a Methodist chapel. This chapel is in existence today yet has been converted to residential use. Given an ecclesiastical origin, orientation varies from that found across the majority of this character area. As such, the gable fronts the A134 although the roof is tiled. The property is also rendered, whilst this is not characteristic of other historic buildings within this area – those being predominantly red brick – it is not considered out of character when viewed in conjunction with prevailing development along this route, whereby residential properties are set back from the main vehicular route beyond low brick walls.

Finally, Hills Farmhouse is located at the far north-west aspect of the village. This structure, in conjunction with associated barns signal the end of development within Newton. Hills Farm historically represented an isolated farmstead within an irregular field pattern. However, land to the east of this was infilled during the late 20th century.

Development here comprised residential dwellings, and although limited reference is found here to architectural forms apparent at the farmstead a clear appreciation of existing character can be seen to have been acknowledged. As such, properties are significantly set back from the vehicular route and enclosed by highly vegetated front gardens. Properties are between 1 ½ to 2 storeys and are either red brick or rendered.



Modern infill development on A134 east of Hills Farmhouse

Elsewhere within this character area residential development can be seen to have been constructed in a piecemeal manner, comprising infill residential development. This has been less successfully assimilated into immediate environs in certain areas, resulting in some detracting features. For example, a red brick dwelling that is demonstrably of its time cannot be considered to reference the historic roofscape whereby a 'shed roof' is in existence as opposed to gable ends perpendicular to the road.



'Shed roof' on A134

Additionally, residential development to the rear of Little Green varies from bungalows to 2 storeys. A wide variety of roofs are also found, ranging from simple gables to a Gambrel roof. Despite architectural difference however, all properties are set back beyond vegetated front gardens.

Finally, a handful of historic buildings exist along the eastern extents of Church Road and include the Grade II Post Office and Cottage, Hollyhocks, and Green View. Furthermore, Hall Cottages are located further north along this route although these are not nationally listed. The Post Office and Cottage, Hollyhocks and Green View front onto the road yet differ from historic premises elsewhere within this character area and village as a whole. Rooves alter from tiled to thatch and hipped to gambrel, additionally only minor front garden space delineates public and private space, limited boundary vegetation is present.

Hall Cottages mark the final instance of built form before entering a landscape characterised by open rolling arable land and dispersed farmsteads. Although these properties differ from the norm in orientation (gable fronting the road) they again exhibit features that contribute to the wider character and appearance of this area. Thus, an open gable, tiled roof and render is present, the property is also enclosed by a highly vegetated boundary which contributes positively to the verdant nature of the adjoining character area to the north.

Key Features of Historic Linear Development with Modern Infill CA

Layout:

- Residential development set back from historic greens or beyond private green space and low brick walls

Building Design:

- Red brick
- Tiled gable roofs
- Recessed orientation
- Dormers present at some properties

Green Features:

- Properties are set back beyond mature hedgerows, trees and shrub planting in most instances

Views of significance:

- None

Landmarks / Landmark Buildings:

- Brooks Farmhouse
- The Deans

7.0 20th Century Development Character Area

Throughout the 20th century Newton was subject to both infill development and small to medium scale residential estates. Architectural detailing and design clearly evidence the varying phases within which these were constructed.

At Church Road, three sets of semi-detached dwellings were constructed during the 1920's. Given construction at the same time a uniformity in the vista is established today. Again, these structures were set back from the road beyond vegetated front gardens. However, hipped roofs with dormer windows (two dormers per house) are visible above aforementioned vegetation. When considered in conjunction, these dwellings – and associated gaps between them – can be seen as an architectural set piece.



Church Road

By the 1970's a number of further dwellings had been constructed on the western aspect of Church Road. Again, these can be seen to have been constructed to the same architectural style, when considered in isolation. As such, four red brick bungalows are found, again set back beyond long front gardens. Whilst low hedgerows have been used to delineate space these properties are not enclosed at the frontage.



20th century bungalows off Church Road, from Nicholsons Court

To the east of Church Road, Nicholsons Court can be seen to be a 20th century residential development, enveloping the Grade II Post Office and Cottage, Hollyhocks, and Green View. Development here is thought to be of two phases – given differences in aesthetic. Properties off Church Road and either side of the entrance to Nicholsons Court consist of pale brick, 2 storey gable roof structures. However, further into this development properties comprise gambrel roof structures with dormer windows. All properties are set back beyond small front gardens, in most cases these are lawns, however hedgerows and trees are also evident.



Nicholsons Court



Nicholsons Court

Plampin Close is also located off Church Road. Development here can be considered a detracting feature when considered in conjunction with the characteristics of the historic properties fronting the A134. For example, 20th century single storey garages from a notable feature in vistas to the rear of historic properties. Additionally, bungalows here exhibit limited reference to historic built form, although they are set beyond green front gardens.



Garages off Plampin Close, in front of historic dwellings



Bungalows off Plampin Close

Additionally, Links View had been constructed by the 1970's. Located to the rear of historic properties off the A134, a uniformity in design is found across this estate with residential properties being constructed in pale brick and comprising 1½ to 2 storeys. Roofs are tiled with the properties once again set back beyond green front gardens.



Links View

Finally, Airey Close – first constructed in the post-war years – was redeveloped during the 1990's. Again, that these properties had been constructed at the same time, forming an isolated small estate, is evidenced across the overall aesthetic. Properties are of pale brick

with tiled gable roofs. There exists 5 pairs of semi-detached homes that range from 1 storey to 2 storeys. These homes are also set back beyond grassed front gardens.



Airey Close

Key Features of 20th Century Development CA

Layout:

- Predominantly small and medium scale residential estates focused along a singular vehicular access

Building Design:

- Uniformity in building materials across individual estates
- Predominantly brick, 2 storeys, and tiled roofs

Green Features:

- Residential properties are set back beyond green / highly vegetated front gardens

Views of significance:

- None

Landmarks / Landmark Buildings:

- The Old Post Office
- Pillbox at Airey Close

8.0 21st Century Development Character Area

During Newton's recent history two estate-scale developments have been constructed, effectively infilling remaining space fronting the A134.

First is residential development located opposite the Saracans Head pub. Here, a variety of house types and aesthetic were achieved. Two bungalows and a semi-detached, two-storey property were finished in red brick with grey tiles. A further three detached, two-storey properties were built. Whilst their orientation on the site differs, all three are rendered with red tile roofs. All dwellings are once again set back from the A134, however this space is predominantly defined by concrete private driveways.



Saracen's Head pub with modern (2018) development in background



21st century development on A134

A further residential estate is currently under construction, located in close proximity to Red House Farm. Again, this estate will provide a number of homes ranging from 1 to 2 storeys.

Those already constricted comprise varying orientations and materials, however two single storey garages at the developments entrance form features that are generally out of character. Particularly where built form is set back beyond vegetated front gardens.



Residential development under construction on A134

Key Features of 21st Century Development CA

Layout:

- Linear development set back from the vehicular route

Building Design:

- Brick and / or render, 2 storeys, tiled roof

Green Features:

- Limited however green front gardens / low hedgerows are present

Views of significance:

- None

Landmarks / Landmark Buildings:

- None