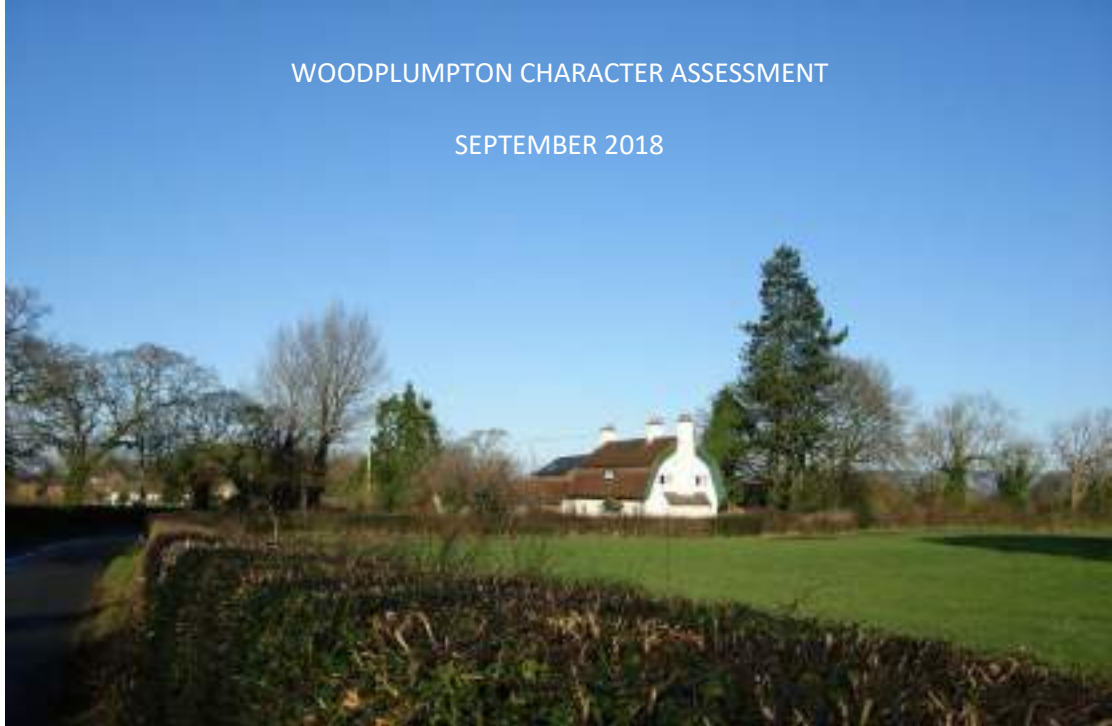


WOODPLUMPTON CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

SEPTEMBER 2018

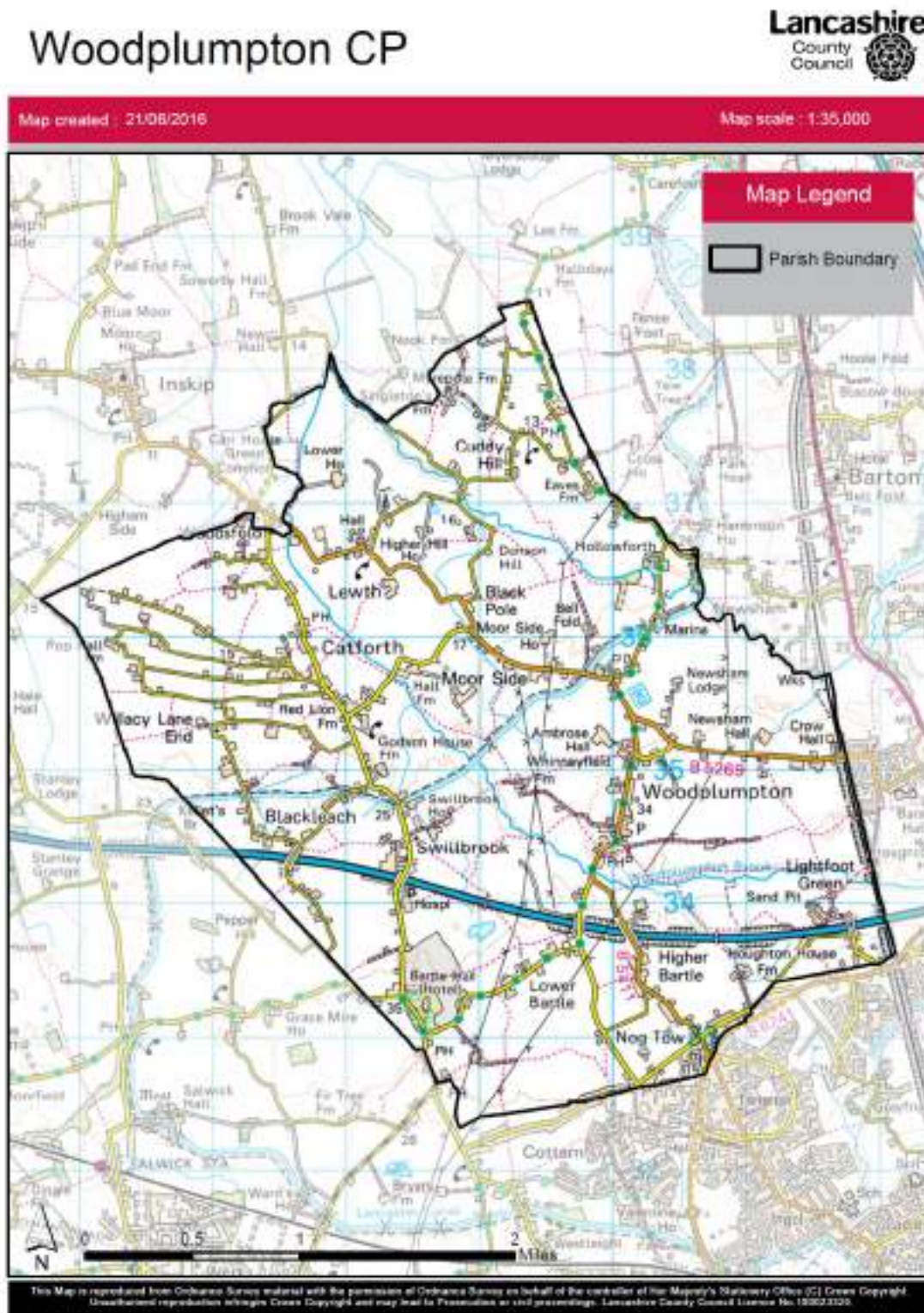


Produced by PlanSpace/Edward Taylor Planning and Design for Woodplumpton Parish Council. Special thanks to resident John Kenny for photographic contribution.

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1 INTRODUCTION.....	4
2 EXISTING PUBLISHED CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS.....	11
3 OVERALL ASSESSMENT.....	14
4 CHARACTER AREAS.....	36
4.1 WOODPLUMPTON.....	37
4.2 CATFORTH.....	42
4.3 EAVES.....	48
4.4 SUBURBAN FRINGE.....	52
5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	58
APPENDIX 1 POLICY CONTEXT.....	65
APPENDIX 2 LISTED BUILDINGS.....	71

1 INTRODUCTION

This character assessment covers the Woodplumpton Neighbourhood Plan Area which was designated by Preston Council on 8th September 2017 and is shown in the plan below.



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Purpose of Character Assessment

The purposes of this character assessment are

- 1) to enable the Woodplumpton Parish Council Neighbourhood Planning group to produce its neighbourhood plan by informing policies in particular regarding the effect of development on the character of the natural and built environment of the Parish.
- 2) enable decision makers and applicants for planning permission to better understand the character of Woodplumpton Parish when submitting or determining planning applications or appeals for proposals in the area
- 3) to inform other people whether residents, visitors, funders, project managers or investors who are interested in the area.

Stages of production including consultation

This assessment has been undertaken in a number of stages:

- 1 An initial “Emotional Mapping” session in which general impressions and local cultural associations within the area were discussed and noted .
- 2 A desk-based study, reviewing the material available on line from preston.gov.uk, lancashire.gov.uk, www.gov.uk and from Natural England in particular existing Landscape Character studies and the policy context
- 3 A series of field visits around the parish, recorded with photographs and notes
- 4 Analysis of aspects of the area
 - **Landscape and Topography**
 - **Biodiversity and Green and Natural Features**
 - **General Patterns of Built Form and Open Space**
 - **Main Uses and Mix of Uses**
 - **Views and Vistas and Enclosure**
 - **Movement & Legibility**
 - **Building Typologies**
 - **Building Details**
 - **Streetscape**
 - **Parking and Access**
 - **Bin Storage,**
 - **Lighting and Security**
 - **Gardens and Boundary Treatments, Public Private Interface**
- 5 Mapping the area and identifying character areas
- 6 Consideration of threats or implications of change on the built environment and surrounding landscape, and thereby the development of a series of recommendations to be used to inform the Neighbourhood Plan.

7 Additional professional advice offered by Edward Taylor Planning and Design/PlanSpace.

How to use this Assessment

When developing policies or making planning decisions for the Parish, this Assessment should be consulted in order to help gain an understanding of the existing character firstly by looking at the various categories for the Overall Assessment for the Parish in part 3 area and then by looking at the relevant character area(s) for the policy or proposal in part 4 and then by looking at the conclusions and recommendations in part 5 at the end.

Policy Context

This assessment is supported by national policy (i.e. National Planning Policy Framework, 2018) and local policy with both the strategic objectives and policy of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and the policies of the Preston Local Plan supporting the general aims of preserving and enhancing the character of the built and natural environment.

The Core Strategy Objectives support the assessment and these are:

- **SO15:** To foster 'place shaping' to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the built environment in Preston by encouraging high quality design of new buildings.
- **SO16:** To protect, conserve and enhance Preston's places of architectural and archaeological value and the distinctive character of its landscape.
- **SO17:** To maintain and improve the quality of Preston's built and natural environment assets so that it remains a place with 'room to breathe'.

The Core Strategy has a number of policies which support the production of a character assessment in particular:

Key Core Strategy Policies

- **Policy 17: Design of New Buildings requires the design of new buildings to take account of the character and appearance of the local area**

Another Core Strategy policy supporting the assessment given the importance of the environment to Woodplumpton is:

Policy 18: Green Infrastructure: Manage and improve environmental resources through a Green Infrastructure approach to:

(a) protect and enhance the natural environment where it already provides economic, social and environmental benefits;

(b) invest in and improve the natural environment, particularly;

i. the river valley networks including:

- the River Ribble at Penwortham and south to Lostock Hall and Bamber Bridge, to create a 'central park' area incorporating footpaths, cycleways and a Local Nature Reserve;
- Savick Brook upstream of Preston;
- the River Darwen between Roach Bridge and Walton-le-Dale; and
- the Yarrow and Cuerden Valley Parks.

ii. the canal networks including:

- the Lancaster Canal into Preston; and
- the Leeds and Liverpool Canal through Chorley and Adlington.

iii. where it contributes to the creation of green wedges and the utilisation of other green open spaces that can provide natural extensions into the countryside.

(c) secure mitigation and/or compensatory measures where development would lead to the loss of, or damage to, part of the Green Infrastructure network.

Most of the Parish is designated in the Local Plan as Open Countryside which is covered by Policy EN1 which strictly restricts development to that necessary for agriculture or forestry or similar rural economy uses, reuse of existing buildings or limited infill. Woodplumpton Brook and the Canal are designated as Wildlife Corridors which are covered by Policy EN 10 which aims to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and ecological network resources. There are small areas designated as Green Infrastructure which are protected by Policy EN2 which requires development to protect and enhance such identified areas of green infrastructure. There are also patches of Existing Woodland identified by the Local Plan in Woodplumpton and . These are identified by Policy EN1 as Green Infrastructure and thereby protected under Policy EN2.

Policy EN9 – Design of New Development requires all new development to be designed with regard to the following principles:

- **Movement and Legibility**
- **Space and Enclosure**
- **Mix of Uses and Tenures**
- **Adaptability and Resilience**
- **Resources and Efficiency**
- **Architecture and Townscape**

It also requires proposals to accord with principles set out in the Design SPD and relevant national guidance and policy on design and heritage and to make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the area.

Special mention needs to be made of the North West Preston Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document and the supporting Local Plan Policy MD2 which identifies land at North West Preston for residential led mixed use development of around 5,300 homes and associated local centres and infrastructure including a health centre an east west link from Preston Western Distributor Road to Lighfoot Lane, a secondary school, 2 primary schools and green infrastructure including play provision. The scale of the proposed development will have a very significant impact on the site and its setting and thereby the character of the Parish.

As can be seen from the plan below, the area covered by Policy MD2 lies predominantly within the Woodplumpton Parish area.

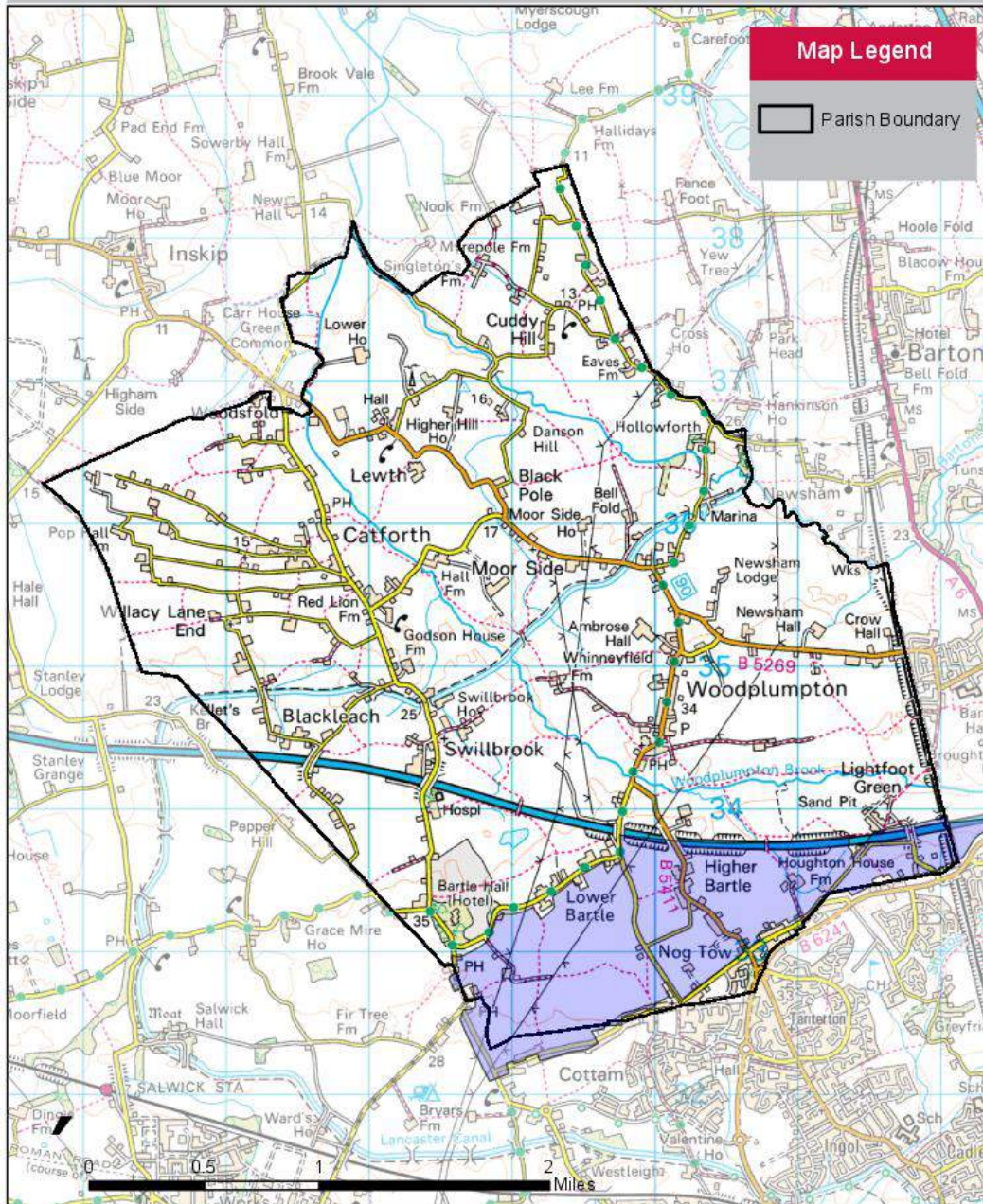
As the area is developed the character of this part of the Parish will be significantly affected, effectively extending the Cottam suburban area further into Woodplumpton. The threats and opportunities resulting from this proposal are dealt with in Part 5 below.

It is an aspiration of the Parish to ensure that facilities in the North West Preston Area can be accessed by other people in Woodplumpton Parish and this has implications for transport including the design and extent of highways and Public Rights of Way as well as public transport provision.

Woodplumpton CP

Map created : 21/06/2016

Map scale : 1:35,000



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It is also a concern that as far as possible, the new development complements the character of the area both the existing suburban area of Cottam of which it is effectively an extension and the predominantly rural area with which it will interface.

Policy MD2 supports the importance of character by requiring the development to be designed so as to create a “high quality townscape and an appropriate sense of enclosure including the delivery of a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces across individual sites and the area as a whole taking account, where appropriate, of the relationship with the East-West Link Road”.

For further information on policy context, see APPENDIX 1.

2 EXISTING PUBLISHED (LANDSCAPE) CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS/APPRAISALS

National Landscape Character Areas

Natural England produces a series of National Character Area Profiles which are designed to provide data for local decision making. Woodplumpton lies within the Lancashire and Amounderness Plain National Character Area which the associated Character Area Profile summarises as follows:

“The Lancashire and Amounderness Plain is an area of high-grade agricultural land, bounded by Morecambe Bay in the north and Liverpool in the south. The eastern boundary is contained by the Bowland Fringe. The plain is made up of a series of low-lying landscape types: in the east, undulating lowland farmland on the highly productive coastal plain, and in the west, the former mosslands and their remnant sites, and the coastal marshes and dunes.

The northern Fylde (or Amounderness) coastal plain contains the estuary and lower reaches of the River Wyre, as well as its tributaries, the rivers Calder and Brock. It is predominantly improved pasture, with isolated arable fields. It is an ordered landscape of medium-sized fields with field ponds, clipped hedgerows and drainage ditches. This is a medium- to large-scale landscape, where blocks of windsculpted mixed woodland punctuate the relatively flat to gently rolling plain.

South of the Ribble Estuary the plain has a different physiographical history to that to the north, and this is reflected in the land use of the area. It is predominantly highly productive arable land with large fields. Agricultural drainage systems, including steep-sided ditches with localised reedbeds and steep embankments, are a dominant feature, and are responsible for the area’s dramatic transformation from marshland to a rich and ordered landscape of rectilinear fields. This is mainly in area of open, high-quality farmland.

Large flocks of migratory wildfowl and wading birds take up residence on the coast during the winter months. These birds feed and roost not only on the mudflats and salt marshes of the estuaries, but also on the farmland along the coastal plain, using wet pastures, areas of open water, improved pasture and arable fields. These wintering flocks include internationally important numbers of Bewick’s swan, whooper swan, lapwing, wigeon and pink-footed goose, as well as nationally significant numbers of golden plover. The presence of these birds has led to large areas of the National Character Area (NCA) being designated as Ramsar sites and Special Protection Areas.

There is a concentration of urban areas along the Fylde coast, characterised by large Victorian and Edwardian residences and landmark features including the nationally famous pleasure beach and tower at Blackpool. Other notable large population centres within the NCA include Preston in the centre, and Ormskirk and Skelmersdale in the south. However, the plain remains largely rural in character, with isolated brick farmsteads, small villages and numerous large detached houses located along the network of country lanes. Views to the coast from the southern plain are highly influenced by urban fringe development in the Sefton Coast NCA at Formby, Ainsdale, Southport and other settlements, and by offshore hydrocarbon and wind energy installations.

The area offers many opportunities for informal recreation –particularly along the Fylde coast –and contains a number of country parks. The Ribble Link, Lancaster Canal, and Leeds and Liverpool Canal all cross the NCA and offer extensive recreational opportunities. There are several long-distance paths, the Lancashire Cycleway crosses the NCA both above and

below the Ribble Estuary, and there are also long stretches of cycle paths around the coast. Other activities include birdwatching at the many marsh sites.”

From this summary we can see that Woodplumpton lies within the highly productive Coastal Plain of the Lancashire and Amounderness Plain with an undulating lowland farmland in an ordered landscape “of medium-sized fields with field ponds, clipped hedgerows and drainage ditches”. It is described as “medium- to large-scale landscape, where blocks of windsculpted mixed woodland punctuate the relatively flat to gently rolling plain.” Woodplumpton Brook in the Parish is a tributary of the River Bock which in turn joins the river Wyre.

Borough/County level Character Assessments

The Lancashire Landscape Character Assessment was commissioned in 1999 by Lancashire County Council, Countryside Agency and various District Councils in Lancashire including Preston. It gives further detail and clarity about the landscape, for example, clearly locating Woodplumpton in the Coastal Plain.

The Assessment divides Lancashire into various Natural Areas with Woodplumpton falling into the area it refers to as “**Lancashire Plain & Valleys**”. The key Characteristic Habitats of this area are:

- arable field margins, ditches and boundary hedgerows
- lowland wet grasslands, including coastal and floodplain grazing marshes
- isolated fragments of species-rich neutral grasslands,
- fragments of lowland raised bogs
- small pockets of lowland heathland and acid grassland
- large numbers of small field ponds throughout the coastal plain

This is a fairly accurate summary of the key characteristics of the landscape character of Woodplumpton Parish with the main exception being that Woodplumpton is more pastoral than arable as the more focused description of the Fylde Character Area below confirms.

The Assessment further divides the county into Landscape Character Types and Landscape Character Areas with Woodplumpton Parish falling into The Fylde Character Area which is classed as a Coastal Plain Character Type which it describes as follows:

The Coastal Plain Character Type

“Generally below 50m, this landscape type is characterised by gently undulating or flat lowland farmland divided by ditches in West Lancashire and by low clipped hedges elsewhere. The Fylde landscape in particular is characterised by a high density of small marlpit field ponds. Many hedgerows have been removed to give very large fields, open road verges and long views. Although woodland cover is generally very low, these views are punctuated by small deciduous secondary woodlands, mostly in the form of shelter belts or estate plantations; they provide a backdrop to views. The history of the area as an arable landscape is reflected in the farm buildings, particularly the highly distinctive red brick barns with brickwork detailing. Settlement is relatively dense in this lowland landscape; clustered red brick farm buildings, hamlets, rural villages and historic towns are all present.

Older farm sites and red brick barns are often surrounded by recent development and the many converted barns now provide characterful homes. There is a dense infrastructure

network; meandering roads connect the farms and villages while major roads and motorways provide a fast route across the landscape, linking major towns.”

“The Fylde” Character Area is described as follows:

“The gently undulating farmland of the Fylde occurs between Blackpool to the west and Preston and the M6 corridor to the east. It has been formed of boulder clay deposits which lie on soft Triassic sandstones and mudstones and is naturally poorly drained. Field ponds are a particularly characteristic feature of this area and provide important wildlife habitats.

The predominant land use is dairy farming on improved pasture and lowland sheep farming with a small amount of arable on the freer draining soils. Red brick nineteenth century two storey farmsteads with slate roofs and red brick barns are dominant built features of this landscape character area; occasional windmills also reflect the historic importance of the area for corn milling. Other features of the area are the brine fields around Stalmine which have been reclaimed by ICI and form a rare and distinctive land use. Field size is large and field boundaries are low clipped hawthorn, although hedgerow loss is extensive.

Blocks of woodland are characteristic, frequently planted for shelter and/or shooting and views of the Bowland fells are frequent between the blocks. There are many man-made elements; electricity pylons, communication masts and road traffic are all highly visible in the flat landscape. In addition, views of Blackpool Tower, the Pleasure Beach rides and industry outside Blackpool are visible on a clear day.”

The above Character Assessments provide useful context and information about key elements and aspects of the Woodplumpton Landscape and reference is made to these assessments below.

3 ASSESSMENT

Overview of Area

Woodplumpton is a predominantly rural area with 2 main settlements: Woodplumpton and Catforth Villages as well as a number of smaller settlements and clusters of buildings in the rural area and a rapidly growing suburban area south of the motorway.

1 Landscape and Topography

The majority of the area is comprised of gently undulating fields used mostly for pastoral farming which are surrounded by clipped hedges. These are interspersed with farm buildings including 2 storey farmsteads and small clusters or strips of housing, and occasionally other buildings such as churches and a school. The area is criss-crossed with country roads, some single track, and footpaths as well as the Lancaster Canal and small rivers, tributaries and drainage ditches.



The landscape has been mainly influenced by 3 broad phases of human activity. Firstly it developed as and remains an agricultural area, with the naturally poorly drained land drained by ditches with high quality improved pastoral and lowland sheep farming with some arable farming where the soil is freer draining. Secondly, while not an industrial area, it has been influenced by industrialisation, primarily by the presence of the Lancaster canal and by the development of housing associated with this phase and the construction of the railway which runs along the eastern edge of the Parish. Finally, since WWII, the rise in suburbanisation and a more car oriented lifestyle has led to the building of the Motorway and in more recent years, a small portion of the Parish has been developed for suburban

housing as Cottam has expanded, a process set to continue with the development of North West Preston. Other modern man-made features include electricity pylons, tarmacked roads and communication masts.

The area is naturally poorly drained due to the heavy clay deposits in the soil. There are a number of water courses in the Parish including Woodplumpton Brook, a tributary of the River Brock which runs through the Parish and many small streams and rivulets as well as many drainage ditches running between fields and along the edges of roads. The area has many small ponds particularly in those areas which are not as well drained and they are an important habitat for wildlife.

2 Biodiversity and Green and Natural Features



Biodiversity in Woodplumpton is supported by a network of habitats and green corridors. Important elements of this are the many field ponds that are found in the area as well as the dense network of brooks streams and ditches, the Canal and the trees and plants that are found with them. There are a number of existing areas of woodland identified in the area by the Preston Local Plan. According to the Lancashire Landscape Character Assessment, 1999 blocks of woodland were often planted for shelter and/or shooting in the Fylde plain although it is unclear as to whether this is the case in Woodplumpton. Hedges, mainly of hawthorn but occasionally birch, that surround fields can be important habitats in their own right as well as providing links between other habitats. According to the Lancashire Wildlife trust, 130 UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994) priority species are associated with them and:

“Hedgerows can also prevent soil erosion, capture pollutants such as fertilisers and pesticides running off fields, store carbon to help combat climate change, and provide homes for predators of many pest species. They also provide vital links across the countryside for wildlife, helping it to move about freely and keeping populations healthy.”
(source: <http://www.lancswt.org.uk/wildlife/habitats/hedgerows>)

These green corridors can also provide visual and physical links between the built up area and the surrounding fields and green space which adds to the visual link provided by the many glimpsed views and wider vistas of the surrounding countryside which are found everywhere in the rural settlements.

According to the National Character Area Profile above, migratory wildfowl and wading birds use the wet pastures, open water and arable and pastoral fields although the Parish does not contain any Ramsar Sites.

3 General Patterns Of Built Form

Buildings in the predominantly rural area of Woodplumpton tend to be found in small clusters spaced out along the sides of the country roads in the Parish, sometimes forming ribbon development.



Woodplumpton and Catforth are the 2 main examples of such settlements. While they lack any clear centre, they do have some nodes of activity including some key buildings with a community use. They are small residential areas in a rural setting and retain a rural character through a combination of views of the rural setting glimpsed through the low density and their small scale buildings.

The rural character of the settlements is further enhanced by the fact that houses generally back onto fields rather than other houses with only a few exceptions around junctions and that houses are not always oriented facing the road but are often oriented at slightly skewed angles or even right angles which is a feature more associated with rural areas.



As well as the small settlements large detached houses and isolated brick farmsteads are found throughout the rural area.



Where large detached houses have been built closer together and nearer to other settlements they can detract from the rural character.



To the South of the Parish lies Cottam which is a suburban development, a small part of which lies within Woodplumpton Parish itself. Within this area houses are arranged backing onto one another in perimeter blocks occasionally interspersed with short culs-de-sac. This gives this area its characteristic suburban feel.



Green spaces in Woodplumpton are tidy, well maintained and semi-formal with play facilities although perhaps lacking in benches and drainage can be a problem.



Plumpton field has special protection as a Queen Elizabeth II field. This means that the land can only be used for the use that has been stated for it in the deed and that any proposed sale, lease or charging of the land needs the consent of Fields in Trust prior to its arrangement.

4 Main uses and Mix of uses

Woodplumpton is very much a rural area comprising mainly of fields dedicated to pastoral and some arable farming. It has, however, a significant residential element with typical ancillary uses such as pubs and schools both in the predominantly rural parts of the Parish and in the suburban part in Cottam which is set to expand into the North West Preston Area. In addition there is some tourism and leisure around the canal and country lanes including fishing, boating and walking which contribute to the character of the area. There are also some business units at Bartle Court.



5 Views and Vistas and Enclosure

The predominantly rural area of Woodplumpton is generally very open with broad views and vistas across fields. The feeling of enclosure is still fairly low in the main settlements due to the road being 2 lanes wide, the low boundary treatments and the houses being set back from the road behind front gardens.

As documented in the Lancashire Landscape Assessment above, many hedgerows have been removed giving large fields, open road verges and long views punctuated by small deciduous secondary woodlands mostly in the form of shelter belts for sheep and which provide a backdrop to views.



Only in a few places in the rural area does the enclosure increase such as where the roads narrow to a single track, where there are higher boundary treatments such as higher hedges or trees or where there are clusters of buildings.



In the suburban area enclosure is higher and there are fewer more closed views.



6 Movement & Legibility

In Woodplumpton, there is a relatively clear movement hierarchy with the M55 being the main link between Woodplumpton and other areas of Lancashire and beyond via the M6.

This is followed in the rural area by 3 main country roads:

(i) Woodplumpton Road which runs through the east of the Parish from Higher Bartle to the Canal where it becomes Moorside Lane before then turning into Lewth Lane as far as Eaves where it becomes Preston Road; going south it becomes Tabley Lane.

(ii) Catforth Road which runs through the West of the Parish from the canal at Swillbrook House as far as Eaves where it meets Lewth Lane and Preston Road, going south it turns into Rosemary Lane at Swillbrook House.

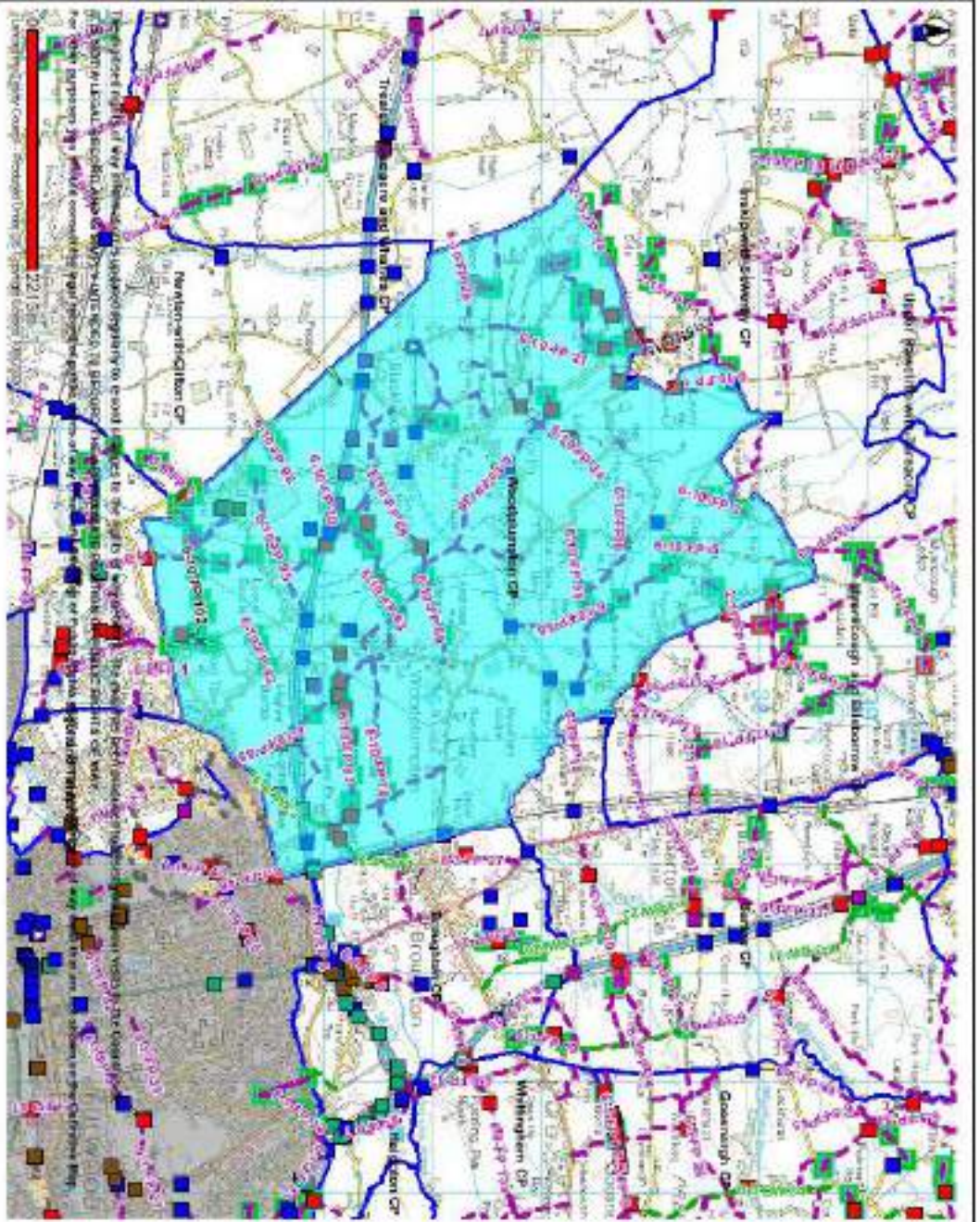
and

(iii) Newsham Hall Lane

Then there are some lesser country lanes with a more local distribution role in the South of the Parish such as Lightfoot Lane, Sandy Lane, Bartle Lane and Hoyles Lane. The rest of rural Woodplumpton is accessed by smaller narrow country lanes, often just single track and sometimes dead ends leading to homes and fields which are accessed off one of these 3 main roads.

In and around the suburban area of Cottam, Tom Benson Way provides a vehicular link to the M5. After that, the main road through the area is Lightfoot Lane which links to Tom Benson Way. Smaller roads then come off Lightfoot Lane to access the housing in this suburban area.

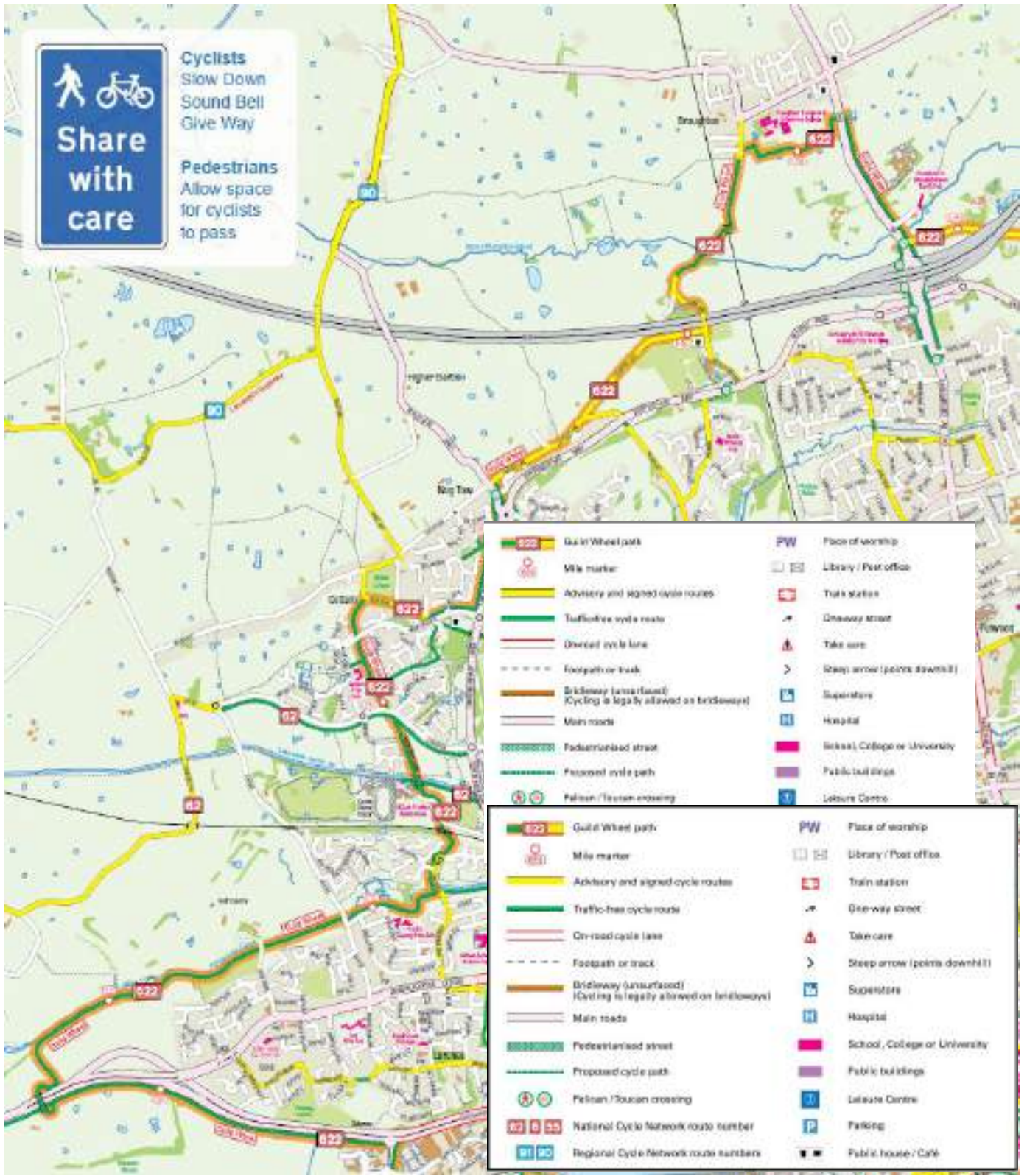
Finally, there are the footpaths and cycle paths including alongside the canal. There are a large number of Public Rights of Way including the canal-side path which criss-cross the Parish forming a network linking both rural and suburban parts and linking in to the wider networks: the Guild Wheel cycle path and Lancashire Cycle Networks. The canal itself is used for boat trips, for example to Lancaster.



Woodplumpton Public Rights of Way

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Centre of map: 340784 435458

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Selected Features | Canal Appraisal for Ordnance Map |
| Bridges And Structures | Maintenance Other |
| Vehicle Single | Temporary |
| Non Vehicle | Closure |
| Bridge | Other Public Rights Of Way |
| Arms or Culvert | PROW |
| Retaining Wall | FUTURE |
| Other Structures | No Legal |
| Rights/Ways | Limitation |
| Restriction | Legal Limitation |
| Public Rights Of Way | Parishes |
| Footpath | Civil Parish |
| Bridleway | Non Civil Parish |
| Shared Open To All | |
| Rights | |
| Application for Public Path Order | |
| Statutory Gwy | |
| Current Application for Distribution Map | |



Legibility is the ability of an area to be understood by people so that they know where they are and can find their way around. Clear visual cues as to where you are such as edges, nodes, landmarks, distinct areas and 'paths' (which includes roads, footpaths etc.) enable legibility. Views and gateways can also help.

The Rural part of Woodplumpton is not particularly legible due to the uniformity of the landscape. There are, however, some differences observable in various parts of the Parish which are outlined in the Character Areas chapter below.

There are a few structures which due to their combination of size, location, uniqueness and prominence stand out from the other buildings in the area and in some cases can be regarded as landmarks:



Newsham Hall



Dutch Barn House, Rosemary Lane



Methodist Church



Brown's newsagent, Hoyles Lane Sandy Lane



Haydock Lodge, Hoyles Lane



The Plough at Eaves

War
Memorial



St Anne's Church



Wheatsheaf Pub, Woodplumpton



St Andrews and Blessed George Haydock Church



St Roberts RC Church, Benson Lane



Running Pump pub, Catforth Road



Thatched House, Catforth



Blackleach Lane

Of these some such as Newsham Hall and the Dutch Barn House can be seen from a distance whereas the others are only visible from nearby.

The Motorway and Canal can help with orientation although are often not visible until very close by due to screening around the motorway. The Motorway traffic can often be heard quite a long way away from where it can be seen.

7 Building Typologies

Housing Typologies

There is a variety of housing typologies in Woodplumpton including bungalows, detached, semi-detached, terraced, town-houses, and flats.



In the suburban area of Cottam in the very south of the Parish 2-storey semi-detached and detached properties predominate with occasional bungalows.





Housing in the newly developing areas in North West Preston also tends to be semi detached and detached.



Uses that are ancillary to residential are usually found in buildings which tend to relate in terms of scale, materials and other design features such as gables to the vernacular residential and rural buildings in the area such as this farm shop ad club.



There are also 3 large halls in Woodplumpton:

Bartle Hall, which is now a hotel, Hollowforth Hall and Newsham Hall which are all set back from the road in their own grounds.



Bartle Hall



Hollowforth Hall



Newsham Hall

Rural Buildings

Woodplumpton is still an important agricultural area with many working farms and this is reflected in the modern farm buildings that can be found. Due to the history of farming in the area there are also many more traditional farm buildings which sometimes sit next to their more modern counterparts while some have also been converted into housing or other uses that serve the local population one building that is a garage, joinery and lawnmower business and another converted barn that is a nursery.



As stated above in the National Character Area profile:

“The history of the area as an arable landscape is reflected in the farm buildings, particularly the highly distinctive red brick barns with brickwork detailing. Settlement is relatively dense in this lowland landscape; clustered red brick farm buildings, hamlets, rural villages and historic towns are all present.

Older farm sites and red brick barns are often surrounded by recent development and the many converted barns now provide characterful homes.

However, the plain remains largely rural in character, with isolated brick farmsteads, small villages and numerous large detached houses located along the network of country lanes

The Lancashire Character Assessment adds that

“Red brick nineteenth century two storey farmsteads with slate roofs and red brick barns are dominant built features of this landscape character area;”

8 Building Design: Scale, Detail and Materials

Scale and detail

There are certain characteristic elements of housing that are common amongst the various housing types. With the exception of the 3 large halls in the Parish, Bartle Hall, Hollowforth Hall (See appendix 2) and Newsham Hall which are set back from the road in landscaped grounds, buildings in the Parish have traditionally been small and modest and unpretentious in design. Houses are generally simple with very few notable details other than those added by householders such as might be found on porches although there are some that have timber detailing.



While occasional large detached houses along country lanes are characteristic of the area, some more recent development has seen larger detached houses grouped closely to settlements which is uncharacteristic of the area and which is eroding the rural character. This seems particularly unnecessary given the significant developments in Cottam and issues with affordability. Modest scale has been the most important characteristic of traditional houses through the ages in the Parish with houses only 2 storeys in height or sometimes just one.

Other typical characteristics include gable ends.



Less common but not untypical are gable fronts but tend to be on larger or more recent houses. Hipped roofs are quite rare.



Given Woodplumpton's location outside the main urban conurbation it is unsurprising that modern houses have garages which are not unwelcome as they provide off street parking which is not only desirable to the owners but also reduces parking on the country roads which can significantly harm the character of a rural area as well as causing problems for traffic including working farm vehicles. Given the fact that the area contains many farm buildings of various sizes, sometimes converted, which often are arranged in small clusters, the existence of a garage next to a house is not usually detrimental to the character of the area, however, it is generally better the more subservient the garage is to the main building both in terms of size and location.

There is a variety of window types with older buildings tending to have more vertically oriented windows while more modern, approximately 20th Century onwards, tend to have more horizontally oriented windows.

While doors and doorways vary in materials and design and no one style can be said to be typical they are almost all simple and unpretentious not being marked or celebrated in any particularly elaborate way and this is typical of the overall approach to design in the area.



Materials

Most houses and other buildings found in Woodplumpton are made of brick of various shades of red and terracotta while some are finished in render. Some are built from stone such as St Anne's Church and its surrounding walls. Interestingly there is a group of buildings either side of the canal where Catforth Road turns into Rosemary Lane including Swillbrook House which appear to be made of the same type of stone.

Various colours of roof tiles are visible.



9 Streetscape

Building and Roof Lines

Generally, due to the piecemeal nature of development in the rural part of the Parish buildings do not share either consistent building lines or roof lines with their neighbours and often are isolated anyway so have no immediate neighbours.



There are occasional consistent roof lines across a number of adjacent buildings both in the suburban Cottam and also in the 20th century development in Woodplumpton Village such as along Woodplumpton Road. In both the suburban and rural areas there are examples of buildings respecting a common building line i.e. where the building meets the ground but this is by no means the rule and is more common in the suburban area.



Houses in Cottam with consistent roof lines and building lines



Houses along Woodplumpton Road with consistent building and roof lines

Rhythms

Due to the dispersed nature of much of the development in the rural area, there are usually no rhythms established between repeating elements such as windows of adjacent buildings. In fact, in spite of some exceptions such as where there is ribbon development, the lack of such rhythms or repeating elements is a key characteristic as it reflects the piecemeal way in which the area has developed over many years as well as the variety of ways that buildings are oriented to the road.



10 Parking

Off street parking is common in Woodplumpton. There seem to be no unallocated parking areas or parking courts. Off street parking, in the form of driveways and garages, is well provided for in both the rural and suburban parts of the Parish whether in houses, farms or other buildings such as pubs and there is relatively little on-street parking. The rural parts in particular are quite car dependant. The new North West Preston development promises to deliver services to the area which could reduce car dependency if access is properly planned.



11 Bin Storage

Bin storage appears to be well accommodated as most houses are either detached or semi-detached so have access to rear areas. Other arrangements are necessary for terraces.

12 Lighting and Security

Main roads tend to be well lit while many of the smaller roads are not lit by street lights which does make them less secure. While this pattern is typical of the area, there would unlikely be any harm to the character if lighting improvements were made for example on some of the streets and lanes where safety was considered a priority.

13 Gardens and Boundary Treatments, Public Private Interface

Low hedges are very typical of the rural part of Woodplumpton Parish around fields and often are also found around gardens.



The public/private interface is generally clear throughout the Parish. Most houses in Cottam have a front garden, also in the rural areas although it is not uncommon especially around Catforth to find buildings fronting straight onto the back of pavement or with very small front gardens.



Front gardens in the Kingsley Road Estate vary in size and boundary treatment with mostly low or in some cases no boundary treatments. This would seem appropriate in areas of higher density as, where there is little space for front gardens, boundary treatments would reduce garden space further and in a higher density areas there is less need for boundary treatments to create a sense of enclosure. Variations in boundary treatment could be used to help define and distinguish various areas in new development.

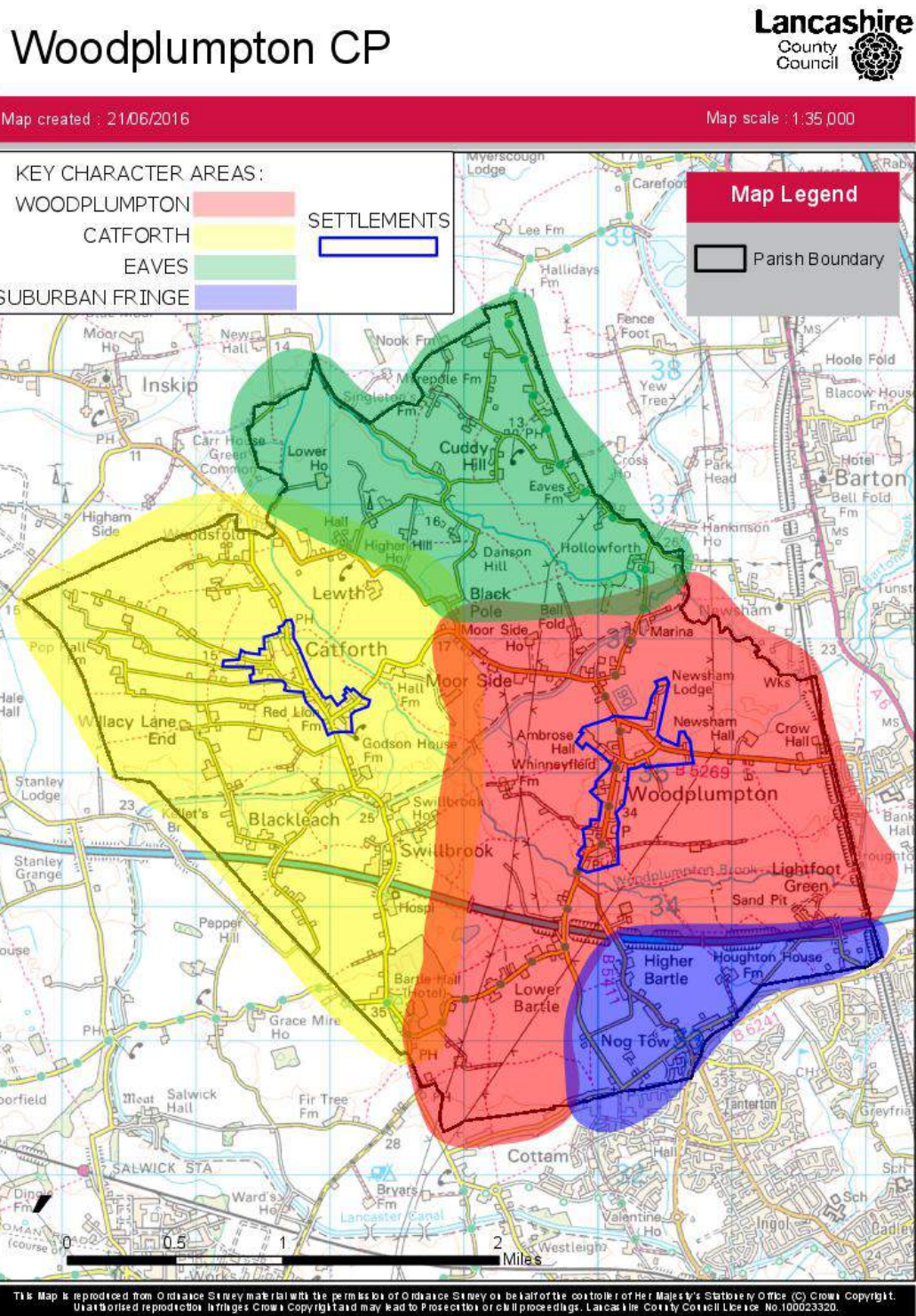


Most houses in the rural areas also have front gardens although it is not uncommon especially around Catforth to find buildings fronting straight onto the back of pavement or with very small front gardens. In the rural area boundary treatments vary also but they are usually hedges or walls.

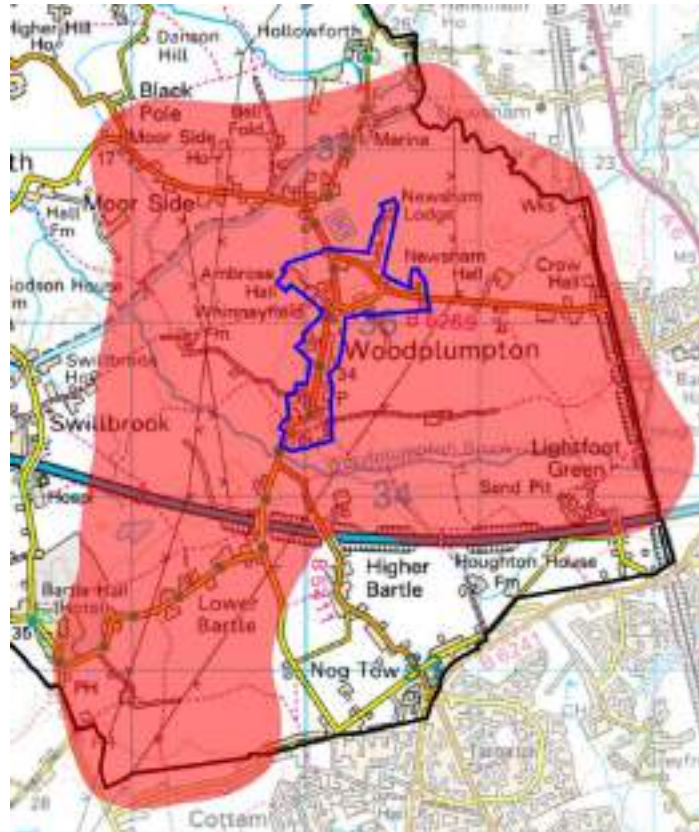


4 CHARACTER AREAS

While there are many elements of character which are fairly similar for the whole Parish, there are some general differences observable in different areas and 4 character areas have been identified to better articulate these differences. There are no clear boundaries between these character areas and they tend to flow into one another and for this reason the boundaries between them are fuzzy and overlap.



4.1 Woodplumpton Village Character Area



General Overview of Character

This Character Area is based around Woodplumpton Village, one of the 2 main settlements in the Parish, located along either side of a single main road with development petering out as the road continues both northwards and southwards across the Motorway into Lower Bartle.

- **Landscape and Topography**

The landscape of this area is largely rural consisting mostly of undulating fields surrounded by small hedgerows interspersed with occasional farm buildings and tree cover and housing.

- **Biodiversity and Green and Natural Features**

Habitats for wildlife are provided by trees, hedgerows, ponds, Woodplumpton Brook and the canal. The canal, brook and hedges provide important green corridors for wildlife.

- **General Patterns of Built Form and Open Space**

There is no clear centre to Woodplumpton Village despite the existence of key buildings like the Weatsheaf pub, St Anne's Church and St Anne's school which are not sufficiently close to one another to form a coherent group especially given the road along which traffic can be quite fast going through the village, being as it is on a through-route despite some traffic calming which could be upgraded.

The area surrounding Newsham Hall Lane including Newsham Hall is undeveloped with farms and views across the fields.



The area includes the Bradley Sand Quarry - to the north of which are fields to Woodplumpton Village which include Toplands Farm which runs clay pigeon shoots including skeet and ball trap. This part of the parish is bordered by the Railway to the East.

Woodplumpton and Catforth are quite similar to one another in that they contain settlements based mainly along a single road but without a clear centre, despite having some key buildings such as church halls and pubs and are intimately linked with the surrounding fields. The main difference is that the Woodplumpton settlement is more tightly defined than Catforth. This difference may be in part at least due to a combination of constraints in Woodplumpton Village including poorer drainage, Woodplumpton Brook to the south and west as well as the sand pit to the south.

- **Main Uses and Mix of Uses**

The main uses are as for the whole Parish: residential and agricultural including a dairy and with some ancillary uses including a pub with Post Office, church and small school and a mortuary along Woodplumpton Road. Along Newsham Hall Lane, one property has been converted to the base for a nursery and Planning Permission granted for a coffee shop.





- **Views and Vistas and Enclosure**

As in the wider rural part of the Parish, views are generally very open and there is little enclosure except along parts of Woodplumpton Road but even here where there are only a few places where there are buildings on both sides of the road and a few culs-de-sac off Woodplumpton Road including The Orchard, Plumpton Field and Whittle Green.

- **Movement & Legibility**

Travelling northwards from Cottam across the bridge over the M55 (which marks the northernmost boundary of all the proposed new development in North West Preston) we arrive at the leafy gateway to Woodplumpton Village.

There are only a few short roads which come off Woodplumpton Road, compared with the number that are accessed off Catforth Road and this may be due to the area being less well drained making roads harder to build.

The other main road in the area is Newsham Hall Lane. As well as Newsham Hall, Newsham Hall Lane has older detached and semi-detached properties in a linear development with extensive back gardens.

The canal is an important feature located to the north of the area and this has the Marina as well as being an important part of the local footpath network.





- **Building Typologies and Details**

Most housing is fairly typical of that in the rural area but there is some more formally arranged suburban style housing both along Woodplumpton Road and in the small Council-built estate along Plumpton Field which has some of the few terraces in the Parish and is typical of early - mid twentieth century Council built housing in Lancashire having as it does relatively simple design, gable ends and alleys in the middle of the terrace providing access to the rear for the central houses in the terrace.

- **Streetscape**

Most development is piece-meal and consistent roof lines across adjacent buildings are rare. Similarly regular rhythms of repeated features such as windows, doors and chimneys are only established intermittently. The exceptions to both of the above are found in the 20th century development in Woodplumpton Village such as along Woodplumpton Road and The Orchard.

- **Parking and Access**

As in the Parish as a whole, there is very little on-street parking and off street parking is generally adequately provided for in the curtilage of houses and other buildings.

- **Bin Storage**

Generally bin storage is not a problem in the area as most houses are detached or semi detached so have access which can enable bins to be stored to the rear. Even the terraced housing has alleys in the middle of the terrace providing access to the rear for the central houses in the terrace. This last feature could be copied elsewhere to help with bin storage if terraces are considered for housing estates.



Central alley giving access to rear gardens

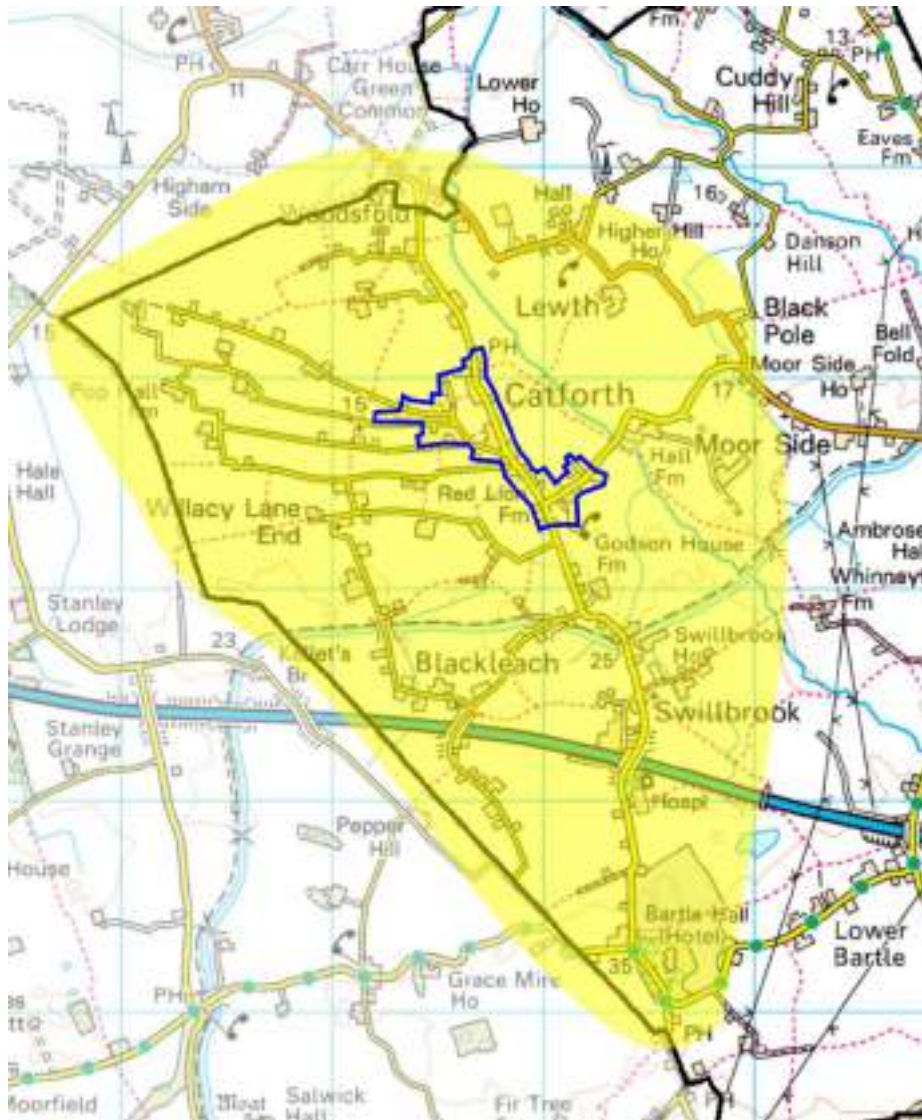
- **Lighting and Security**

Main roads tend to be well lit while many of the smaller roads are not lit by street lights which does make them less secure.

- **Gardens and Boundary Treatments, Public Private Interface**

Most houses in the area have front gardens and only very rarely do buildings front straight onto the back of pavement. Boundary treatments vary but are usually hedges or walls. The public private interface is clear.

4.2 Catforth Character Area



- **General Overall Character**

Catforth character Area is based around Catforth Village which is one of the 2 main settlements in the Parish. It is similar to Woodplumpton character area in that it is largely rural but there are some difference for example in terms of patterns of built form, building type and detail, uses, enclosure and gardens.

- **Landscape and Topography**

The landscape of this area is largely rural consisting mostly of undulating fields surrounded by small hedgerows interspersed with occasional farm buildings and tree cover and housing.

- **Biodiversity and Green and Natural Features**

As around Woodplumpton Village, habitats for wildlife are provided by trees, hedgerows, ponds, Woodplumpton Brook and the canal but around Catforth drainage ditches are much more significant. The canal, brook, ditches and hedges provide important green corridors for wildlife.



- **General Patterns of Built Form and Open Space**

Development in this character area is based mainly along Catforth Road with development generally petering out as the road continues northwards and southwards over the motorway. This main road is surrounded by a denser network of narrow lanes which are interspersed with small clusters of buildings than Woodplumpton and is less clearly defined.

Even more than Woodplumpton, Catforth Village lacks a defined centre despite having some key buildings such as the pub and the Village Hall due to their being separated from one another.

There do not appear to be any public parks or gardens in the area although there is a small landscaped area on the corner of School Lane and Catforth Road and the Crown Lane Methodist Church is set in some grounds.



- **Main Uses and Mix of Uses**

The main uses are as for the whole Parish: residential and agricultural with some ancillary uses including a pub, church and small school and Billingtons Craft Units and Roots Café.



- **Views and Vistas and Enclosure**

As in the wider rural part of the Parish, views are generally very open and there is little enclosure.



Exceptions are along parts of the narrower roads where boundary treatments are occasionally high on both sides.



- **Movement & Legibility**

The main road through this character area runs from Lower Bartle up through Willbrook, over the canal and into and through Catforth. The canal is a feature in the landscape that aids orientation but its tow-path also an important part of the local footpath network but it suffers from waterlogging which is a serious issue making its use impractical for many.



The motorway is a significant element in the landscape and helps orientation but it cannot be accessed from this character area.



There are many side roads coming off the main Catforth Road, much more than the equivalent road in Woodplumpton and creating a denser network of roads. In the North West of Catforth there are a series of parallel narrow tracks such as Mill Lane and Moss Lane which are a key characteristic of this area. This may be based on historic field patterns and drainage patterns hint that this may be the case. The West of Catforth is one of the best drained areas in the Parish, being served by many man made ditches and this may also help explain why there is a greater density of roads in this area as adequate drainage is needed for road construction.



● Building Typologies and Details

Buildings tend to be more traditional than in Woodplumpton with fewer post war semi-detached houses and more converted farm buildings and isolated detached houses.



- **Streetscape**

Most development is piecemeal and consistent roof lines across adjacent buildings are rare. Similarly regular rhythms of repeated features such as windows, doors and chimneys are only established intermittently.

- **Parking and Access**

On street parking is rare with most buildings having off-street parking associated with them.

- **Bin Storage**

Generally bin storage is not a problem in the area as most houses are detached or semi detached so have access which can enable bins to be stored to the rear.

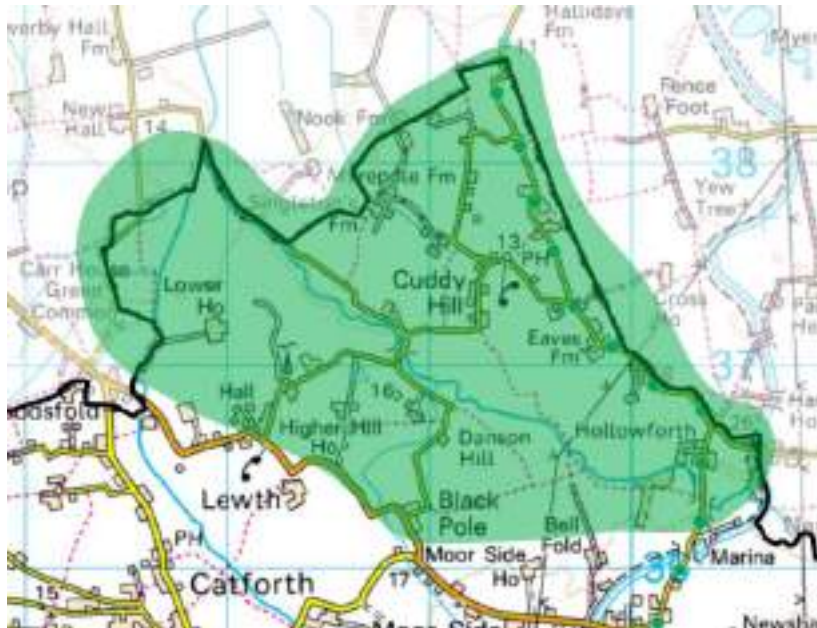
- **Lighting and Security**

As for the area as a whole, main roads tend to be well lit while many of the smaller roads are not lit by street lights particularly those around the narrow Benson Lane, Miller Lane and Moss Lane which does make these narrow lanes less secure. While this pattern is typical of the area, there would unlikely be any harm to the character if lighting improvements were made for example on some of the streets and lanes where safety was considered a priority.

- **Gardens and Boundary Treatments, Public Private Interface**

Houses are less set back from the road than in Woodplumpton Village and in fact fewer houses have front gardens and they tend to be much smaller than elsewhere.

4.3 Eaves



General Character

Eaves lies to the North of the Parish which is the most sparsely populated area of the Parish with few notable man-made features. There are a few houses and farm buildings and a pub but other than that there is no actual settlement to speak of

- **Landscape and Topography**

but is more densely criss-crossed with brooks and with fewer drainage channels than elsewhere which would explain why the area floods regularly. Roads are also narrow and particularly winding.

- **Biodiversity and Green and Natural Features**

As elsewhere, habitats for wildlife are provided by trees, hedgerows, ditches, ponds and brooks but around Eaves these are much more significant. The brooks, ditches and hedges provide important green corridors for wildlife connecting habitats.

- **General Patterns of Built Form and Open Space**

This is the least developed part of the Parish. Most buildings are either fairly isolated or at most in small clusters.



Open space consists almost entirely of the fields with no public open space in the area.

- **Main Uses and Mix of Uses**

The main uses are as for the whole Parish: residential and agricultural but with less residential than elsewhere and the only ancillary residential uses being a pub and a farm shop.



- **Views and Vistas and Enclosure**

Views in the area are open with fields surrounded by low hedges and low enclosure everywhere.



- **Movement & Legibility**

The area is accessed along narrow winding roads, often with ditches along side them with occasional small bridges to cross the many brooks and ditches that criss-cross the area with few features in the landscape make legibility very poor.



The few landmarks that exist are not particularly visible from any distance such as the farm shop and the pub (above) and the occasional large house.



- **Building Typologies and Details**

The few buildings in the area are typical of the rural area as a whole being mainly 2 stories, gable ended brick buildings but with occasional front gables.

- **Streetscape**

None of the roads could be regarded as streets as such as development tends to be too sparse and their main feature is the way they wind through the area around the brooks. There are not enough buildings in order to be able to establish either common roof lines, building lines or rhythms of repeated elements.

- **Parking and Access**

What few buildings there are seem to be sufficiently served by off-street parking that on-street parking is not an issue.

- **Bin Storage**

What few buildings there are seem to be detached or semi-detached sufficiently served by off-street parking that on-street parking is not an issue.

- **Lighting and Security**

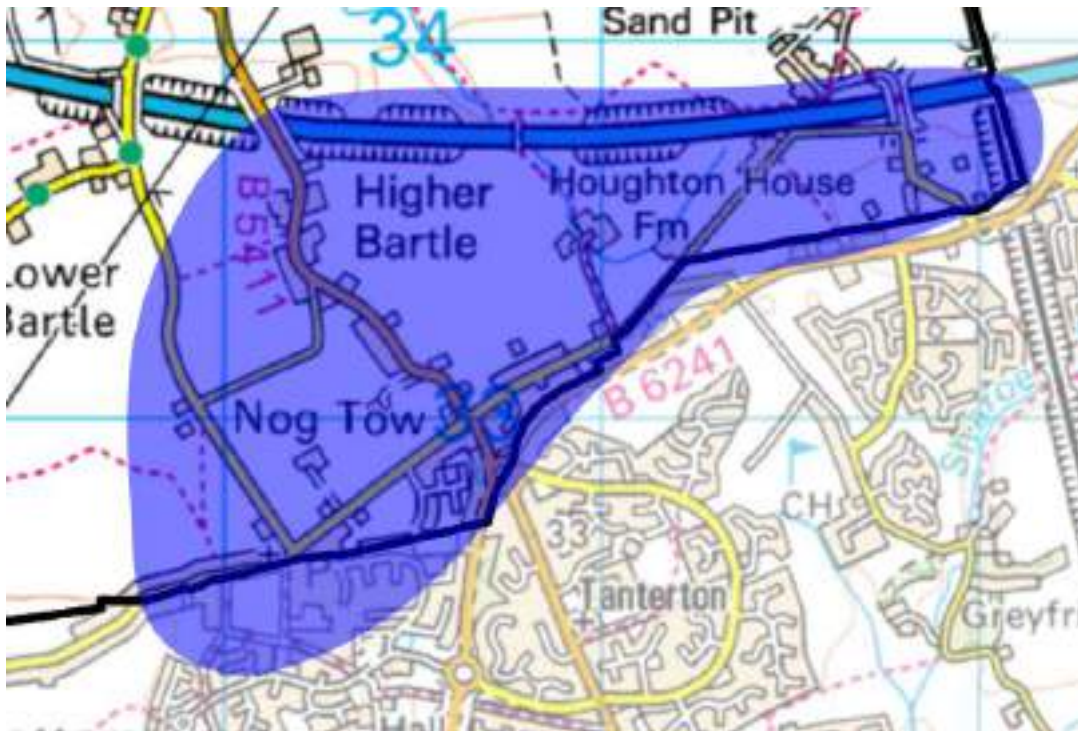
There is little in the way of lighting in the area and it is very isolated.

- **Gardens and Boundary Treatments, Public Private Interface**

Some of the few houses in the area are set back from the road in gardens while others open out onto the back of pavement.



4.4 Suburban Fringe



General Character

This increasingly suburbanised Character Area effectively covers the northernmost part of Cottam which spills over into Woodplumpton Parish and this gives this part of the area a distinctly suburban character with the immediately adjacent areas having views of this area as well as being affected by new development as part of the North West Preston Area development site including new junctions.

- **Landscape and Topography**

The undulating fields with their low hedges typical of the rural area here give way to built form the further towards Cottam you go and in time the whole of the area South of the Motorway is planned to follow suit.

- **Biodiversity and Green and Natural Features**

There are hedges and ditches and ponds in those areas that are still rural and these provide habitats for wildlife as does the extensive landscaping by the edge of the motorway. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems are being incorporated into new development in the area which can provide similar habitats and green corridors and the park in the existing suburban area already has features that serve this function.



- **General Patterns of Built Form and Open Space**

Suburban development in the area around Kingsley Road is characterised by being informally laid out into perimeter blocks with occasional culs-de-sac. New development is happening including new junctions being added along and off Lightfoot Lane and the pattern would appear to be on the lines of existing suburban development. Some new culs-de-sac have been added.

Green space is incorporated into the suburban area and is also informal in layout. There is a landscaped park in the Kingsley Road estate which also acts as a pedestrian and cycle route which links the area to the rest of Cottam.



A pond, small play area (with slide and baby swings) and litter bin have been provided by the developer but all have been neglected.

In the remaining rural part, there is a mixture of fields, ribbon development of older semis and detached housing set back from the road and occasional isolated buildings. There is open space in the form of the bowling club green and the rugby club pitches and archery field.



- **Main Uses and Mix of Uses**

The area is mainly residential with some ancillary uses notably Preston Grasshoppers which has pitches and facilities for rugby, archery and golf driving range as well as a shop, post office and nurseries. The Club house can be hired for meetings and social events. Club wishes to expand and offer other leisure facilities in association with the Guild Wheel cycling route which passes near to the site. Planning permission has been granted for a 74 bed care home on part of Grasshoppers car park.

There is still a substantial rural element but this is rapidly being replaced by the planned housing of North West Preston such as at Brookfield farm where at the time the field visit development was starting.



Within this rural area are found some other uses such as Landorn Kennels and some industrial units.



- **Views and Vistas and Enclosure**

In the remaining rural areas there are open views and low enclosure.



Some of the views in the rural area show new development such as here where a new Wimpey development can be seen in the background.



The suburban areas have relatively high enclosure and fewer, more closed off views. Given the proximity of houses to one another means there is less need for boundary treatments to create a sense of enclosure.



- **Movement & Legibility**

The area is accessed by a combination of a link road to the Motorway which acts as a major distributor, country lanes which act as more local distributors and suburban streets providing access to houses. New development will put demands on this network and the new East - West link road will emerge between Landorn kennels and the industrial units located to the west of Tabley Lane to meet this need. The park on the Kingsley Road estate acts as a cycle and pedestrian route. Tag Lane which includes pedestrian crossing points is part of the Guild Wheel which is an important of the wider cyle and walking network and Bartle Lane forms part of the Lancashire Cycle network.

Legibility in the area is relatively poor once inside the suburban area with only a few localble landmarks within the area including St Andrew's Roman Catholic Church, Cottam Post Office at the junction of Hoyles Lane and Sandy Lane and Haydock Lodge. The Guild Merchant pub lies just outside Woodplumpton in Ingol Parish but serves the Parish and is visible from it thereby acting as a local landmark.



- **Building Typologies and Details**

The suburban area is characterised by modern detached and semi-detached houses and occasional bungalows arranged into perimeter blocks but often with relatively informal layouts with houses varying significantly in design and a variety of boundary treatments. The developing area is generally following this pattern but also including larger executive properties such as one scheme of 100 4-5 bed properties.



- **Streetscape**

Streetscape varies in the suburban area with strong building and roof lines and rhythms established by regularly repeating elements in some more formal areas while in less formal suburban areas and the remaining rural areas housing often does not face squarely onto the road but is arranged at angles meaning that there is not always a clear building line and consistent roof lines similarly are not established.

- **Parking and Access**

Houses in the longer established suburban areas seem to have sufficient off-street parking in order to avoid significant on-street parking as do most uses although on-street parking is common around Ashbridge Nursery which affects the character of the area.

- **Bin Storage**

Semi-detached and detached houses have access to rear of properties so that bins can be easily stored out of sight.

- **Lighting and Security**

The suburbanised areas are well lit and overlooked making them fairly secure.

- **Gardens and Boundary Treatments, Public Private Interface**

Front gardens in the area vary in size. Boundary treatments are mostly low or non-existent which seems appropriate given the relatively little space for front gardens in the area where boundary treatments would reduce garden space further.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This character assessment should be a useful basis for guiding development of any new housing or other uses within Woodplumpton whether within the existing settlements, the North West Preston Area or the wider rural area. Taking various aspects of the character in turn it is possible to draw a variety of conclusions and make various recommendations. It should be noted however that these recommendations need to be combined with sound urban design principles and in the case of larger or more sensitive proposals such as those expected within the North West Preston sites, design principles should be set out in a comprehensive urban design strategy with clear objectives, design principles, land use and movement framework and design guidance. In the case of North West Preston these are already set out within the relevant SPD and must be adhered to as set out in the North West Preston Masterplan SPD March 2017 and associated policies in the Preston Local Plan and Central Lancashire Core Strategy and any successor documents.

1 Landscape

Loss of hedgerow has been extensive according to the Lancashire Landscape Character Assessment 1999. Protection and enhancement of hedgerows is recommended and can be supported by policy.

Landscaping may be useful to ensure development does not adversely impact on the rural character of the Parish which extends into the settlements and appropriate landscaping strategies can help mitigate the effects of development.

On the North West Preston sites, a green setting for the housing would reflect the greenery of existing estates in Cottam and the rural and canal side setting while providing important recreational opportunities. Some green space would be required by Preston's policies and there is an opportunity to link any such space with the countryside beyond visually and perhaps physically including through the use of green infrastructure and routes including cycle paths, footpaths and bridleways also and this should be an aspiration. Green spaces can form part of a wider biodiversity network and should be planned as such.

There may be an opportunity for any new green space to have further uses other than informal play such as performance, education, sports facilities etc. depending on the needs and wishes of the community and this should be considered carefully at planning application stage.

On Local Plan sites, landscaping (combined with the arrangement of houses) should be used to break up edges in order to keep the gradual change and look of the current urban fringe. Woodplumpton offers the possibility of great views and vistas of the surrounding countryside and this should be considered in design.

Potentially negative impact of development on the character of rural areas can be minimised by:

- limiting houses to 2 storeys or even just 1 in some cases, limiting the size of clusters of development including preventing clusters of development from linking up to form larger ones
- setting development back from the edge of the road where appropriate and
- providing off street parking to prevent the visual intrusion of on-street parking.

2 Biodiversity

Natural flora and fauna can be protected and encouraged by protecting and enhancing their habitats including hedges, ditches, ponds, woodlands, wild areas and the canal. These elements should be seen as forming part of a connected system and opportunities to enhance it should be taken.

Re-wilding projects have enhanced the biodiversity of waterways in the Ribble Valley and could be explored for parts of the canal.

3 General Patterns of Built Form And Open Space

Block Structure

On North West Preston Local Plan sites, a perimeter block structure would appear both sensible and in character with the surrounding area of Cottam which has houses that face outwards. This is more desirable as any views of the development from elsewhere would be of the fronts of houses rather than their rears. In addition, where houses face outwards they tend to back onto one another which makes the rear of the properties more secure.

Elsewhere, due to Local Plan Policy EN1 – Development in the Open Countryside which limits development to “that needed for purposes of agriculture or forestry or other uses appropriate to a rural area including uses which help to diversify the rural economy; the re-use or re-habitation of existing buildings; and infilling within groups of buildings in smaller rural settlements,” it is likely that new development will be arranged on a more ad-hoc basis as is found in the smaller rural settlements.

Open Space

The provision of open space can perform a recreational and biodiversity function. Appropriate siting and design of open space can enhance its ability to perform these functions as well as forming part of wider walking and cycling networks and, along with other landscaping form part of a landscaping strategy to mitigate loss of views due to development and this should be explored in applications. The Kingsley Road green space, although not all in Woodplumpton, is perhaps an area in need of improvement working together with neighbouring Lea and Cottam Parish and new boundary signs saying ‘Welcome to Woodplumpton’ to be erected to help create a sense of place.



4 Views and Vistas and Enclosure

Woodplumpton’s characteristic open views should be protected by ensuring any development has minimal impact through policies on height, scale and landscaping especially regarding larger development on Local Plan sites on the urban fringe.

Boundary treatments for new development in the rural areas should reflect those in the immediate surrounding area which are normally clipped hedges.

There is generally high enclosure on existing housing estates such as Cottam and The Orchard and Plumpton Road and the townscape benefits as a result.



The impact of enclosure on character should not be underestimated and can be affected by the orientation of buildings as well as the proper use of boundary treatments and trees.

The appropriate level of enclosure for development given that of the surrounding character should be an important consideration in policy formulation and decision making.

5 Movement & Legibility

On the Local Plan sites, ideally there should be more than one way in and out for vehicles on any new development with perhaps extra access for pedestrians/cyclists, unless it can be shown that a rat-run would be likely to result.

Opportunities for improvement to Woodplumpton's network of public footpaths and bridleways and the Canal tow path should be explored. Enhancements to the canal tow path and to links to it would make walking and cycling toward neighbouring areas such as Broughton easier.

Links to public transport, schools and shops both in Woodplumpton and beyond should be enhanced where possible in particular between the small settlements and the emerging facilities in North West Preston. Consideration should be given to whether existing footpaths could be enhanced or better maintained including considering whether they could be upgraded for cycling. The canal-side path can be difficult for walkers and cyclists to navigate due to waterlogging which will be a deterrent to its use and this will have a knock on effect to the use of other adjoining paths in the network.



Better drainage of this path would improve it and the path could be enhanced in other ways without detracting from the rural setting.

Development on sites allocated in the Local Plan ought to link in with the existing walking and cycling networks and potential future links should be identified and the overall network enhanced by incorporating walking and cycling within the developments themselves. This could be a policy requirement.

While culs-de-sac limit movement which can cause problems with lack of natural surveillance where they are long and isolated, that does not appear to be the case in Woodplumpton and the use of culs-de-sac in some areas such as Whittle Gardens enable development in what would otherwise be difficult areas to access and are generally short with good visibility.

The main sites allocated in the Local Plan would appear to be large enough to be able to accommodate a block structure that avoided the need for culs-de-sac. At the time of writing this assessment, the smaller site was being developed.

Legibility

While any new development should reflect the surrounding area it should, in the case of larger proposals such as in North West Preston also be instantly recognisable as a distinct area in its own right. This can be done through use of materials such as colour of brick, detailing of houses including porches, windows, doors, rainwater goods etc. enclosure, density, building and roof lines and landmarks either new or existing. Ideally, you should know which part of Woodplumpton you are in. Clear gateways and views of other parts of Woodplumpton can also help.

6 Main uses and Mix of uses

In the primarily rural areas the main agricultural use should predominate with residential and ancillary uses fitting in around it either in the existing settlements or by being loosely interspersed along the country roads as is the current pattern.

In the North West Preston area a mix of uses is planned and this should be delivered so that there are complementary uses to the new housing which will serve new and existing residents in the Parish and adjacent areas. This is covered by the North West Preston SPD and policy MD2 of the Preston Local Plan.

7 Building Typologies

New development in the North West Preston area can reflect the existing Cottam houses but towards the north of the area, especially on the fringes, housing should reflect what is found in the rest of the Parish.

8 Building Details

Materials and details

New houses should be finished with materials similar to those used locally i.e. brick or render although use of stone could be appropriate in some circumstances.

In any new development, a variety of brick colours and detailing such as occasional use of patterned brick work and roofing materials could be used to help define and distinguish various areas while reflecting existing development in the rest of the Parish which is generally simple.

Height/Scale

In the rural part of the Parish smaller housing is more appropriate in character to the scale of development that already exists and is less likely to erode the open character of the area. Some recent larger housing close to the settlements of Catforth and Woodplumpton Village has started to erode this important aspect of the character of the area and policy should seek to avoid this sort of development.

Windows and Doors

Windows are predominantly casement but some sash windows are found in some of the 19th century buildings which are scattered around the Parish. There is not a great variety of doors which are generally understated. Variations in windows and doors can be used to define and distinguish areas within new development while also reflecting nearby development.

9 Streetscape

Rhythms

There are some strong rhythms created by the spacing of houses, windows and doors in some of the suburban estates due to the standard nature of housing but less so in the rural areas. Strong rhythms can create a sense of unity in an area which may be appropriate on a new housing estate and new development could use this to help define and distinguish areas.

Building and roof lines

These vary throughout the area. Strong consistent building and roof lines in a streetscape usually require a consistency in buildings heights, buildings to face square on to the street and to be of a similar distance from the pavement, a reasonably straight road and for buildings to be of a similar height which often only applies where a number of buildings are built together as part of a development. Strong building and roof lines are not common in the rural area due to the piecemeal nature of development as well as sometimes large gaps between buildings and curved road. Exceptions include the Orchard in Woodplumpton Village. In the suburban area there similarly few strong consistent building and lines due to the curving of the road and the variety of houses styles and heights and variations in the orientation of buildings to the road.

New development can make use of building and roof lines or lack of them to help define and distinguish various areas.

10 Parking

Off street parking is common in Woodplumpton including driveways and garages. There seem to be no unallocated parking areas or parking courts. In many areas of UK, parking courts are not well used and residents prefer to park on adjacent roads and the courts can be focuses of anti-social behaviour. Parking courts require circulation space which arguably

could be better used for housing with parking either reduced, on street or directly in front of housing and should therefore be avoided. However, in some tight or unusually shaped sites they can be an effective way of enabling flats to have secure parking where other solutions don't appear possible.

Garages nowadays, are often not used for the purposes of storing vehicles and tend to be used for other purposes with cars stored on driveways. Their inclusion would not be essential for meeting parking demands as long as other off-street parking were available. Nor would they be essential from a character point of view as there are plenty of houses in Woodplumpton that do not have garages. Saying that, the inclusion of garages in new housing would not hame the character of the area.

11 Bin Storage

Requirements for waste disposal and recycling have changed since much of the housing in Woodplumpton was built but doesn't appear to be a problem as most housing has adequate storage to the side or rear. New housing should also accommodate bin storage ideally with dedicated bin storage areas to the rear or sides of buildings. Pairs of semi detached houses have alleys running between them and adjacent pairs to rear gardens and these could be a feature of new housing. Terrace housing can have alleys in the centre to allow access to the rear.

12 Lighting and Security

Lighting

Woodplumpton does not vary significantly in terms of lamp post design other than higher lamp posts on busier roads. This assessment would not suggest anything very different in terms of lamp post design but modern lamps providing better visibility and reduced energy costs would seem obvious choices.

Security

Good quality street lighting helps security and the feeling of security. "Natural surveillance" is important for security which refers to when people can see what is happening so that there are fewer opportunities for people to hide and undertake criminal activity or anti-social behaviour. This is enabled by the fact that most houses in the suburban area appear to back onto other houses and face onto the street and by good circulation of people and both of these should be encouraged where possible.

13 Gardens and boundary treatments, Public Private Interface

The public/private interface is very clear within Woodplumpton. Most houses are set back from the road and have some space in front of them in the form of a front garden with a boundary treatment of some sort, clipped hedges being common.

In a high density area there would be less need for boundary treatments to create a sense of enclosure. On new proposals, in a higher density arrangement it may seem appropriate to go for smaller or even no boundary treatments. Variations in boundary treatment could be used to help define and distinguish various areas.

APPENDIX 1 POLICY CONTEXT

National Policy - NPPF, Localism Act

Under the Localism Act, local communities can develop Neighbourhood Plans which include land use planning policies to affect the location and nature of development in their areas. Neighbourhood Plan policies and their determination can be informed by Landscape Character Assessments which identifies the elements which make up the character of the area.

This landscape character assessment will be used to inform the Woodplumpton Neighbourhood Plan and form part of the evidence base for the Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework 2018

Neighbourhood Plans are required to conform with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as well as the strategic policies of the Local Plan. The NPPF creates a policy framework for neighbourhood plans to plan positively for design, environment and landscape.

NPPF puts sustainable development at the heart of the UK Planning system and sets out the 3 overlapping economic, social and environmental objectives. The social objective for the planning system includes a requirement “to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities”, including “by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being;”. The Environmental Objective for the planning system is “to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment;”

It then states that Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

Para 15 states that “The planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings.”

Para 29 states that “Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan.”

In Para 30, the NPPF regards policies in Neighbourhood plans as part of the Development Plan unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.

As such Neighbourhood Plans have a clear place in the planning system including in relation to character and design and their relevance to achieving the objectives of the planning system.

The importance of character in rural area is emphasised:

“83. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”

With regard to Rights of Way, para 98 states that “Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.”

Chapter 12 clarifies policy on design including the role of neighbourhood plans and emphasises the importance of design and character to places.

“124. The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

125. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics. **Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development.**”

“127. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁶; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience. “

The importance of the natural and local environment and their relationship to climate is stated:

“170. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”

Regarding heritage assets:

“Para 185. requires plans to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, which should take into account “opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.”

Local Policy - Local Plan Character and Landscape policies

The Local plan Core Strategy Objectives and Policies for Preston are set out in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has the following objectives and policies which support and provide context for the Character Assessment:

Core Strategy Objectives

- **SO15:** To foster 'place shaping' to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the built environment in Preston by encouraging high quality design of new buildings.
- **SO16:** To protect, conserve and enhance Preston's places of architectural and archaeological value and the distinctive character of its landscape.
- **SO17:** To maintain and improve the quality of Preston's built and natural environment assets so that it remains a place with 'room to breathe'.

Key Core Strategy Policies

- **Policy 16:** Heritage Assets
- **Policy 17:** Design of New Buildings
- **Policy 18:** Green Infrastructure
- **Policy 19:** Areas of Separation and Major Open Space
- **Policy 20:** Countryside Management and Access
- **Policy 21:** Landscape Character Areas
- **Policy 22:** Biodiversity and Geodiversity

In addition, Preston Local Plan 2012 -2026 has the following policies which support and provide context for the general aim of Character Assessment to protect and enhance the character of the built and natural environment and landscape of the Parish:

AD1(a)	Development within (or in close proximity to) the Existing Residential Area
AD1(b)	Small scale development within Existing Villages (including the development of brownfield sites)
EN1	Development in the Open Countryside
EN2	Protection and Enhancement of Green Infrastructure
EN7	Land Quality
EN8	Development and Heritage Assets
EN9	Design of New Development
EN10	Biodiversity and Nature Conservation
EN11	Species Protection
GB1	Green Belt NEW POLICY

In addition **Policy MD2 – North West Preston** has important implications for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy MD2 – North West Preston

Land is identified on the Policies Map at the North West Preston Strategic Location for a residential-led mixed-use development comprising the erection of approximately 5,300 dwellings and associated local centres together with the infrastructure to facilitate the creation of a sustainable community.

Community uses should be located in association with the local centres with one to include a health centre.

Proposals should provide or financially support the provision of the following key infrastructure:

- An East-West Link Road providing a connection from the Preston Western Distributor Road in the west to Lightfoot Lane in the east
- A comprehensive package of on and off site transport measures to mitigate the development's impact on roads and encourage sustainable modes of transport
- One 1.5 form entry primary school and one 2 form entry primary school
- One secondary school
- Green infrastructure and neighbourhood play areas, and a comprehensive package of on-site open space in accordance with standards.

Development will be allowed in advance of the completion of the entirety of the Preston Western Distributor Road and the East-West Link Road provided that development does not result in any severe impacts upon the existing highway.

It should be demonstrated in any planning applications that the proposal would not prejudice the delivery of adjoining land and would support an integrated and coordinated approach to the development of the North West Preston Strategic Location.

Such proposals should:

- promote connectivity, ease of movement and legibility both within the individual development site and across the area as a whole; homes should have easy access to local services by a range of sustainable transport choices;
- provide a range of house types and supporting community uses; the density of development and mix of uses should reflect the location of the site within the context of the wider area;
- be designed in order to create a high quality townscape and an appropriate sense of enclosure including the delivery of a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces across individual

sites and the area as a whole taking account, where appropriate, of the relationship with the East-West Link Road;

- provide high quality public and private spaces which should contribute to the delivery of a new green infrastructure network across the area;
- support the creation, and ensure the sensitive integration, of car parking and servicing areas within the development and ensure that such areas do not have a negative impact in terms of appearance or function of adjacent sites.

APPENDIX 2 LISTED BUILDINGS

1 BELL FOLD BRIDGE LANCASTER CANAL BRIDGE NUMBER 35
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BELL FOLD BRIDGE, PLUMPTON LANE,• LANCASTER CANAL BRIDGE NUMBER 35, PLUMPTON LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
2 CHURCH OF ST ANNE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II*
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CHURCH OF ST ANNE, PLUMPTON LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
3 SUNDIAL CIRCA 20 METRES SOUTH OF WEST END OF CHURCH OF ST ANNE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SUNDIAL CIRCA 20 METRES SOUTH OF WEST END OF CHURCH OF ST ANNE, PLUMPTON LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
4 MOUNTING BLOCK CIRCA 5 METRES SOUTH OF LYCHGATE TO CHURCH OF ST ANNE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MOUNTING BLOCK CIRCA 5 METRES SOUTH OF LYCHGATE TO CHURCH OF ST ANNE, PLUMPTON LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
5 CHURCH HOUSE FARMHOUSE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CHURCH HOUSE FARMHOUSE, PLUMPTON LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston,

Lancashire
6 SOUTH VIEW
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOUTH VIEW, PLUMPTON LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
7 WEARDEN HOUSE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WEARDEN HOUSE, ROOTS LANE, BARTLE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
8 ANDERTON HOUSE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANDERTON HOUSE, BLACKLEACH LANE, BARTLE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
9 EAVES COTTAGE FARMHOUSE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAVES COTTAGE FARMHOUSE, CUDDY HILL, EAVES, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
10 MOON'S FARMHOUSE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOON'S FARMHOUSE, HOLLOWFORTH LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire

11 BARN CIRCA 30 METRES EAST OF MOONS FARMHOUSE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BARN CIRCA 30 METRES EAST OF MOONS FARMHOUSE, HOLLOWFORTH LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
12 LANCASTER CANAL BRIDGE NUMBER 34 WHINNYFIELD BRIDGE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHINNYFIELD BRIDGE, • LANCASTER CANAL BRIDGE NUMBER 34, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
13 BARN CIRCA 15 METRES SOUTH OF CATFORTH HALL FARMHOUSE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BARN CIRCA 15 METRES SOUTH OF CATFORTH HALL FARMHOUSE, SCHOOL LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
14 ADAMSONS FARMHOUSE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADAMSONS FARMHOUSE, CUDDY HILL, EAVES, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
15 LANCASTER CANAL BRIDGE: MOON'S BRIDGE (NUMBER 36)
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOON'S BRIDGE, LANCASTER CANAL, HOLLOWFORTH LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire

16 STOCKS CIRCA 5 METRES SOUTH OF LYCHGATE TO CHURCH OF ST ANNE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STOCKS CIRCA 5 METRES SOUTH OF LYCHGATE TO CHURCH OF ST ANNE, PLUMPTON LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
17 GATEWAY AT SOUTH SIDE OF CHURCHYARD OF CHURCH OF ST ANNE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GATEWAY AT SOUTH SIDE OF CHURCHYARD OF CHURCH OF ST ANNE, PLUMPTON LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
18 CUCKSTOOL FARMHOUSE
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CUCKSTOOL FARMHOUSE, PLUMPTON LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
19 HOLLOWFORTH HALL
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOLLOWFORTH HALL, HOLLOWFORTH LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire
20 AMBROSE HALL
Heritage Category: Listing
Grade: II
Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMBROSE HALL, PLUMPTON LANE, Woodplumpton, Preston, Lancashire

Woodplumpton CP

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