

Freckenham Neighbourhood Plan

Parish Landscape Study:

Key Views assessment

September 2020



Contents:

1.0 Introduction	page:
Introduction to the purpose and scope of the study	3
2.0 Location map for viewpoints	5
3.0 Viewpoint photographs	6



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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of Key View studies

1. As part of the assessment of local character, and the value people attribute to local landscape, the understanding of which particular views local people particularly appreciate is useful.
2. This assessment seeks to provide a robust and objective evidence-base to inform and underpin a Neighbourhood Plan key view policy. As part of a detailed parish landscape assessment it will also inform the assessment of sites put forward for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan.
3. A 'key' view is one that would be generally recognised as having notable qualities or features, landmarks, or a particularly attractive composition that might cause people to pause and appreciate the scene. It is likely to feature in people's perceptions of what Freckenham looks like in their memories.
4. The purpose of identifying key views is to identify specific points from where views are obtained that notably contribute to character and sense of place, or local distinctiveness. By identifying such views they can be protected through Neighbourhood Plan policy so that their special contribution can be conserved in the future. By analysing what makes them special, and identifying how they contribute to sense of place, a framework for their protection can be justified. It will aid policy making, relating to expansion of the village, to take account of key views when considering the impact that new development might have in any given location. It can be used to help make a judgement about how a proposed development or change in land use will alter views and, consequently, whether this change is likely to be acceptable.

View criteria

5. There is not an accepted definition of what constitutes an important view, in any of the published and accepted landscape guidance. The selection of views is also a result of people's perceptions, so is somewhat subjective.
6. Important views are usually understood along the lines of a view that defines the special character and qualities of a settlement and contributes to its 'sense of place'. Such views could have a particularly notable or distinctive composition or scenic quality, that makes them stand out in the eyes (and memories) of local people and visitors. They might feature distinctive and/or historic buildings, local landmarks, or an appealing or historically intact arrangement of topography, natural features and built form that

together help give a settlement its identity, and perhaps come with particular recognised cultural associations.

7. Given that recognised indicators of value - such as statutory landscape designations, planning policy for landscape quality, designated green spaces, or visitor attractions drawing large numbers of people - are generally absent in Freckenham, the criteria focus is on 'local' value.
8. The following factors are relevant:
 - Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views - including complexity, appreciation of topography, depth of field, naturalness, and arrangement of natural and vegetative features.
 - Number of people likely to be experiencing it. The more people that experience a viewpoint, the higher the value attributed, i.e. a view identified by numerous people as important, might be considered more valued than one selected from an isolated point in the parish that few people frequent.
 - The way in which people are passing through a space - views enjoyed by pedestrians pausing on a footpath are likely to be valued over than views experienced by traffic speeding past along a main road.
 - Presence of a landmark feature, perhaps with skyline presence, aiding orientation in the landscape or along a route.
 - Where a view is closely related to the setting of a Heritage asset.
 - Other locally distinctive points of interest or cultural associations that particularly define the character of the area. Views that are indicative of a special 'sense of place' which reflect its intrinsic character and key characteristics.
9. The following final definition was agreed by the Neighbourhood Plan group:

A Key View is a publicly accessible viewpoint that reflects the most distinct and unique characteristics of the Neighbourhood Area. It is memorable and appreciated, and evokes positive emotions. It encompasses an important feature of the village's settlement history and the way its landscape has been shaped by those who have lived and worked in it, and by nature. It may be said to be worthy of being illustrated in a photo, postcard or painting and as such would best represent a special element of the village's identity .

1.0 Introduction continued:-

Selection process

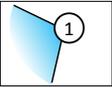
10. A selection of important views were put forward by the Neighbourhood Plan group in summer 2020. The team walked and drove around the parish and identified a number of stopping points where they considered a key view was experienced.
11. Initially around 20 views were selected. These were tested against the definition of what makes a key view and feedback and guidance was received from the project Landscape architect. These were reduced down to 6 Key Views which were all felt to meet the criteria. Those discarded were felt to be weak in light of the agreed definition, and perhaps lacked focus, a point of interest or variety, or sufficient qualities that combined to form a scenic view.
12. Details of the selected viewpoints and their mapped locations follow. The viewpoints are mapped at the point the photograph shown was taken, but in some of the viewpoints (1,2, 4 and 5) a number of similar sequential views would be experienced in reality, available in a sequence along a section of road or footpath.
13. A photograph of each of the existing views is presented to represent the current visual situation. These are photographs taken by a Canon 700D SLR with a 50mm fixed lens. The panoramic photos presented are made up from two or three consecutive images, with approx. a 50% overlap, stitched together in Adobe photoshop. They are presented for illustrative purposes and do not necessarily meet exactly with current Landscape Institute guidance for photography and photomontage.

Map 1: Key views - locations

- 1a and b. Chippenham Road
- 2. North of Mortimer Lane
- 3. Meadow north of Mildenhall Road
- 4. Bridleway to east
- 5. Elms Road approach
- 6. Church Lane



KEY

 Viewpoint location: blue fan represents direction and approximate field of view from mapped location.

 Landmark feature

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Viewpoint 1a and 1b

Views eastwards towards the church. The church is seen in a sequence of views along Chippenham Road.

Justification:

The aspects of value which make these views special are the sense of history from the unspoilt, small-scale traditional meadows, the sloping landform and willows which help convey an understanding of the river valley landscape, and the church on higher ground as a strong landmark in the centre. The gently undulating farm land in the foreground is in contrast to the flat landscape typical of the area.

The raised area of the Beacon Mound sits NE of the church, a historic remains of a motte and bailey and a locally very significant historic feature. This view is likely to have changed little over the centuries.

There are no detracting features.

Change management objectives:

- To protect views to the Church tower and conserve the undeveloped character of its setting.
- To maintain glimpses of the Church through vegetation management as needed.
- Continue to manage the land as grazing meadows either side of the Lee brook but seek to limit the visual intrusion that sometimes accompanies equestrianism - for example, from tape fencing or structures.



Viewpoint 2

View from the footpath leading north from Mortimer Lane

Justification:

The main aspects of value are the scenic rural character of the lower lying meadows along the Beck. This view suddenly opens out from the village edge, and this view is appreciated by a significant number of villagers - it is a valued footpath, used regularly by walkers, and by horse riders and cyclists. It provides a circular route (up Mortimer Lane, right on Beck Road and back into the village via Ferry Lane). It is a long reaching view along what is a shallow dish in the otherwise flat landscape, punctuated by willows along the water course.

A line of Breckland Scots Pines forms a distinctive skyline to the east.

Change management objectives:

- Maintain right of way
- Maintain the openness of the long view and conserve its unspoilt rural character.



Viewpoint 3

View into meadow from Mildenhall Road

Justification:

This is regarded by residents as an important view providing into a valued green space within the village envelope. It provides separation between the Conservation Area along North Street and the more modern residential area to the east. The meadow contains 10 mature specimen lime trees spaced out in meadowland, contained by a belt of enclosing trees. The trees are fine specimens and create the feel of a small pocket of remnant parkland. It has the feel of a historic landscape and has no detracting features.

Change management objectives:

- Explore any future opportunity for public access should it arise
- Continue to protect the trees (which are subject to TPOS) and their meadow setting. Management through traditional grazing by stock is ideal.
- Seek opportunities to add into Conservation Area in any future boundary reviews.



Viewpoint 4

View from bridleway south of Mildenhall Road towards the east

Justification:

A sequence of views into the Breckland landscape are experienced from this footpath to the east of the village. They are long reaching views towards the river valley of the Lark. They provide a typical Breckland scene with Scots Pines on the horizon and an uninterrupted vista across farmland, framed by established dense woodland to the east.

The view is highly valued by walkers and horse riders using the footpath which connects into Elms Road to the south providing a circular route.

Change management objectives:

- To maintain access to the Circular Walk
- To retain the open unspoilt character of the view.



Viewpoint 5

View from Church Lane towards St. Andrew's Church

Justification:

This is a historic village view situated within the Conservation Area. The church is suddenly revealed at the end of Church lane, where it sits in a small group with other built form within well vegetated curtilages. This view is perhaps the most significant in the village, much loved by residents and visitors to the church and properties along the lane. It provides an attractive tree lined route passing the Manor House to the left and the Beacon Mound to the right. The church sits on high ground and forms a strong skyline landmark.

Change management objectives:

- To preserve the unspoilt views to the church on the approach along Church Lane and ensure its dominant skyline position is maintained.



Viewpoint 6

View of approach to village along Elms Road

Justification:

The photo shown is representative of a sequence of views towards the church tower and village edge, on the way into Freckenham from the east along Elms Road.

The aspects of value which make this a key view are the strong landmark value of the church tower, helping with orientation, and the historic feel of the view. The arrangement of the farm buildings, Manor and church tower give a sense of an historic village nestled in trees. More modern additions along the roadside on Church Lane have had little impact on its historic feel.

Change management objectives:

- To preserve the unspoilt views to the church on the approach to the village and ensure its dominant skyline position is maintained.
- Any development within this view would need to provide an effective and characteristic mitigation strategy.
- The circular walk runs along the field side of the roadside verge. Year round access and good management of this path for pedestrians is important.

