

Comparative assessment of Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan views

Purpose of this document

In his clarification note of March 2025, the examiner wrote:

“It would be helpful if the parish councils expanded on the way in which it assessed the identified views beyond the information set out on paragraph 8.17 of the Plan.

Several representation comments about the general nature of the views identified. Again, it would be helpful if the parish councils expanded on the way in which they selected the views.”

To address this, here we set out seven criteria relating to landscape and visual value against which each of the 29 views in the Stapleford and Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan (S&GS NP) are assessed. This comparative analysis highlights 10 views which are less significant in landscape and visual terms than others and hence which we propose to remove from the S&GS NP.

Views assessment criteria

Views have been scored against each of the following, with all 29 views then ranked according to their total score:

Criteria for assessing landscape value:

- a. there is a clearly defined feature within the view cone (e.g. a particular hill, other important landscape feature or settlement)
- b. the view gives clear context to the wider setting of the Plan area
- c. permanent loss of the view would represent a fundamental change to the landscape
- d. rarity of the view type within Stapleford and Great Shelford.

Criteria for defining visual value:

- e. appreciation of the view is the principal activity of being at the viewpoint (rather than, say, the view being incidental/unimportant to the experience, or being experienced only transiently while passing through the landscape)
- f. the positive contribution the view makes towards creating or enhancing a sense of place (equally, loss of the view would reduce or remove a sense of place)
- g. the view is part of an Important Countryside Frontage.

One further criterion has been applied: where the majority of a view's features lie outside the Plan area, this is sufficient reason to remove the view entirely from the NP.

The assessment reflects information in Map 7 (p90) and Appendix 7 (p165-175) of the submission version of the S&GS NP, and notes residents' opinions expressed in the Mid-Term Community Consultation (2023) (see Appendices 6 and 7 to the Consultation Statement).

Comparative views assessment

1. Presented in the order in which they appear in Appendix 7 of the S&GS NP:

View ID	Score against each assessment criterion (no/low = 1; medium = 2; high = 3)							Total score (max. 21)
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	
A	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	9
B	3	2	3	3	2	3	1	17
C	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	17
D	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	13
E	<i>Removed – most of view's features lie outside Plan area</i>							
F	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	9
G	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	9
H	2	1	2	1	1	2	3	12
I	1	1	3	1	1	2	3	12
J	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	14
K	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	14
L	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	11
M	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	15
N	2	2	3	2	1	2	1	13
O	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	19
P	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	14
Q	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	11
R	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	14
S	1	1	3	1	1	1	2	11
T	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	14
U	3	2	3	2	1	2	3	16
V	3	2	3	2	1	2	3	16
W	2	2	3	2	1	2	1	13
X	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	12
Y	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	15
Z	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	18
Aa	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	19
Bb	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	14
Cc	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	17

2. Presented in order of relative value, from highest to lowest:

View ID	Score against each assessment criterion (no/low = 1; medium = 2; high = 3)							Total score (max. 21)
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	
Aa	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	19
O	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	19
Z	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	18
B	3	2	3	3	2	3	1	17
C	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	17
Cc	3	1	3	3	3	3	1	17
U	3	2	3	2	1	2	3	16
V	3	2	3	2	1	2	3	16
M	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	15
Y	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	15
J	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	14
K	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	14
P	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	14
R	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	14
T	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	14
Bb	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	14
D	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	13
N	2	2	3	2	1	2	1	13
W	2	2	3	2	1	2	1	13
H	2	1	2	1	1	2	3	12
I	1	1	3	1	1	2	3	12
X	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	12
L	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	11
Q	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	11
S	1	1	3	1	1	2	2	11
A	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	9
F	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	9
G	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	9
E	<i>Removed – most of view's features lie outside Plan area</i>							

Key:

Highly important views: 15-21

Important views: 13-14

Lower priority views: <13

Findings

Reflecting the scores in the table above, views have been allocated to one of four categories. A full description of each view can be found in Appendix 7 of the S&GS NP; for the sake of brevity, they are described here only with reference to their vantage points.

CATEGORY 1: there are **10 highly important** views:

Aa (19) – Little Trees Hill, high point of Magog Down

O (19) – high point of new countryside park between Hinton Way and Haverhill Rd

Z (18) – near black barn on farm track beyond Stapleford Granary

B (17) – Jenny's Path, just north of the railway bridge

C (17) – Church St/Bridge St junction at Gt/Lt Shelford boundary

Cc (17) – Ely viewpoint at Wandlebury¹
U (16) – gap between 41 Gog Magog Way and homes at Chalk Hill
V (16) – Haverhill Rd, just outside Stapleford village boundary
M (15) – northern-most extension of Clay Pit off Granhams Rd
Y (15) – beginning of farm track behind Stapleford Granary

CATEGORY 2: there are **9 important** views:

J (14) – boundary of Gt Shelford Village Charity community garden and allotments
K (14) – DNA Path next to blue bridge over railway
P (14) – high point on Granhams Rd
R (14) – bottom of private road to Fox Hill on Hinton Way
T (14) – Stapleford cemetery
Bb (14) – junction of Haverhill Rd and A1307
D (13) – entrance to Rec at Gt Shelford
N (13) – high point on Granhams Rd at entrance to Nine Wells House
W (13) – views over R Granta meadows (including Clerk’s Piece) from London Rd

CATEGORY 3: there are **9 lower priority** views:

H (12) – just south of railway bridge on Cambridge Rd looking over De Freville Farm
I (12) – Trinity House farm land, Cambridge Rd
X (12) – entrance to car park behind Stapleford Granary
L (11) – near ‘Hillrise’, roughly the mid-point along Granhams Rd
Q (11) – Cherry Hinton Rd, nr junction with Wort’s Causeway
S (11) – gap between 27 and 31 Mingle Lane
A (9) – Jenny’s Path, at field boundary approaching M11 underpass
F (9) – allotments at Stonehill Rd
G (9) – W boundary of Gt Shelford PC cemetery

CATEGORY 4: **one view has been removed** on the basis that most of its features lie outside of the Plan area:

E – NW corner of Shelford Rugby Club

Recommendations

The landscape and visual value of views in Categories 1 and 2 mean that they are ‘highly important’ or ‘important’ to the Plan area and should be retained in Policy S&GS 13.

We propose to remove 10 views of lower landscape and visual value from Policy S&GS 13. These are listed in Categories 3 and 4 above.

¹ Although a notable feature of this view lies outside the Plan area (Ely Cathedral), we maintain that this view is highly important to Policy S&GS 13. The foreground of the view falls within the Plan area and overlooks the Gog Magog Hills; protection of the foreground is critical to preserving the 27km-distant view to Ely Cathedral; the viewpoint is a destination in and of itself; it is accessible via a PROW; Wandlebury is a highly significant heritage asset within the Plan area and a County Wildlife Site.