

FORDHAM

Neighbourhood Plan

The Building Blocks for the Future of Fordham

Fordham Important Views Study May 2018

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Fordham's rural setting is very important to the village character and identity. The open areas and countryside landscapes are often unique to Fordham and they add significant value to the walking routes around the village.
- 1.2. A number of views within the village are also greatly valued, because they act as landmarks giving a positive image of Fordham or because they help to frame elements that are important to Fordham's distinctiveness, heritage, or character.
- 1.3. The neighbourhood plan team identified a number of views that were felt to have particular importance for Fordham and, as well as offering support for the views identified by the neighbourhood plan team, a number of suggestions for additional valued views were suggested during the Initial Issues Consultation.
- 1.4. These views were all brought forward for assessment where the value of the views would be considered from a local context. This assessment would consider:
 - a) Features within the view;
 - b) Historic importance of the view;
 - c) Aesthetics of the view; and
 - d) Importance to village/countryside character.
- 1.5. This study provides recommendations for which views should be incorporated in the Fordham Neighbourhood Plan for protection against development that might adversely impact their value.

2. Assessment

2.1. This assessment covers 16 views identified in the early stages of research and consultation on the Fordham Neighbourhood Plan.

Description:	This view is from a Public Right of Way to the north of the village off Carter Street, towards Soham Water Tower.
<p>Assessment:</p> <p><u>Features within the view:</u> The view is a wide, open, rural view across arable farm land. The view is punctuated by vegetation, some agricultural buildings and low voltage electricity lines. Interest is particularly drawn to the water tower which dominates the skyline. Generally it offers 'big-sky' views for people using the public right of way.</p> <p><u>Historic importance of the view:</u> The water tower was built in 1922, but there are no other specific historic features within the view.</p> <p><u>Aesthetics of the view:</u> The presence of the water tower makes this one of the more interesting views in the area. It is an important landmark and it is of a distinctive art-deco style, typical for the period. Whilst there are some urbanising features in the view, it maintains a rural feel.</p> <p><u>Importance to village/countryside character:</u> The water tower is an important landmark in general for the area, although it is located just outside of Fordham Parish. Whilst it is visible from a number of points in the area, this view is particularly valued given the accessibility for the public and the absence of interruptions to the view.</p>	
<p>Recommendation: It is recommended that this view is protected in the neighbourhood plan.</p>	

Description: This view is the view to the west from Soham Road in the direction of the bypass.



Assessment:

Features within the view: The view is a wide, open, rural view across arable farm land. The view is punctuated by some vegetation and copses, some buildings and glimpses of the bypass. Generally it offers 'big-sky' views from Soham Road.

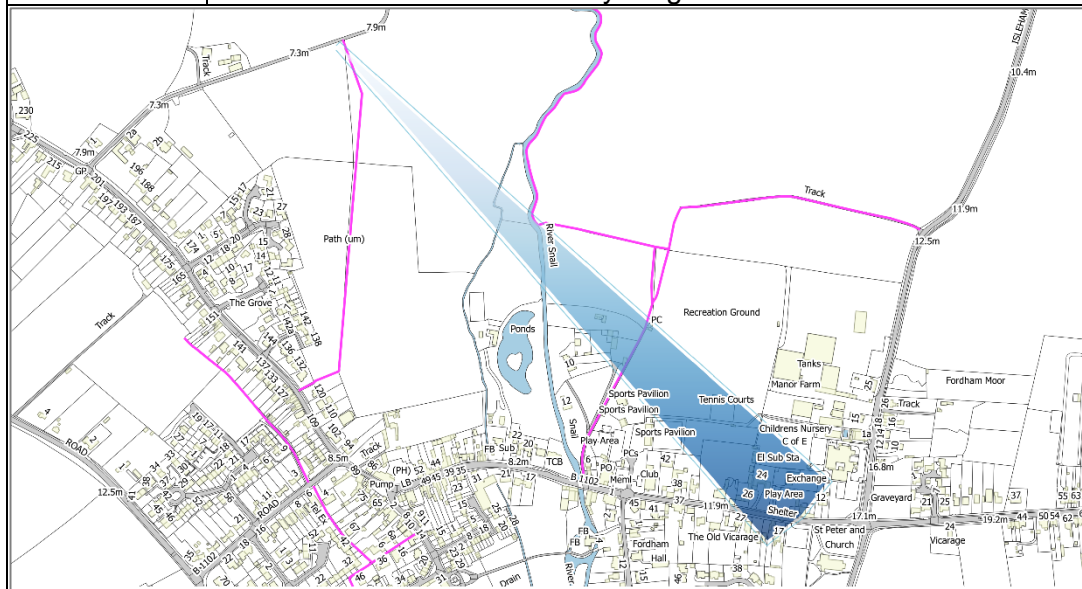
Historic importance of the view: There are no specific historic features in the view.

Aesthetics of the view: This view is very rural with very few urbanising features, however, there are very few defining features in general to make this view of particular importance over other views around the village.

Importance to village/countryside character: The rural look and feel of this view is important for the rural character at this part of the village.

Recommendation: It is not recommended that this view is taken forward for protection in the neighbourhood plan.

Description: This view is from a public right of way that runs between Moor Road and Carter Street, towards the village in a south-easterly direction towards the St Peter and Mary Magdalene Church.



Assessment:

Features within the view: The view is a wide, open, rural view across arable farm land with trees and other vegetation at the horizon with occasional buildings punctuating the view. Generally it offers 'big-sky' views from the public right of way. The view of St Peter and Mary Magdalene Church is of particular interest and importance from this countryside route.

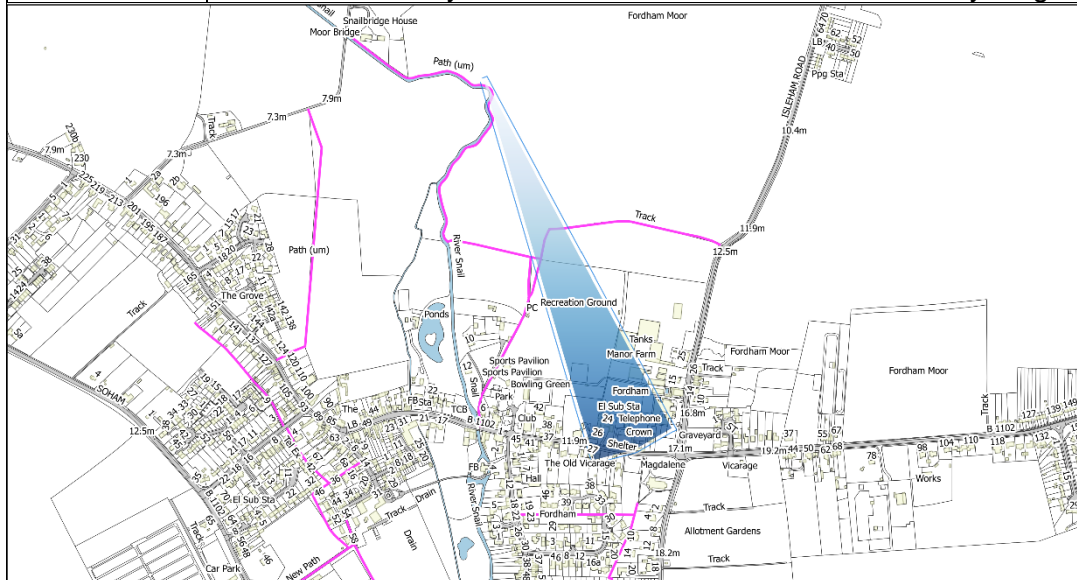
Historic importance of the view: This view is particularly important for the context of Fordham village within the agricultural surroundings as you can read some of its history from the church to more modern developments off Carter Street. It is also important given the prominence of the Grade I Listed Church in the view.

Aesthetics of the view: The rural look and feel of the view, with the fields and mature vegetation dominating it, is important to the leisure value of this public right of way. The interest offered by glimpses of buildings, and in particular the church, also add to its value.

Importance to village/countryside character: This view is important to the rural character of the village for a number of reasons: its position on a rural public right of way means that it is frequently enjoyed; a large part of the village is visible in part including some key landmarks; and the prevalence of vegetation and fields in the view help to frame the rural character.

Recommendation: This view is of particular importance for the historic and rural landscape context it offers. Its value is further heightened by the position on a well-used public right of way. **It is recommended that this view is protected in the neighbourhood plan.**

Description: This view is from a public right of way that runs along the River Snail between Moor Road and the recreation ground, towards the village in a south-easterly direction towards the St Peter and Mary Magdalene Church.



Assessment:

Features within the view: The view is a wide, open, rural view across arable farm land with trees and other vegetation at the horizon with occasional buildings punctuating the view. Generally it offers 'big-sky' views from the public right of way. The view of St Peter and Mary Magdalene Church is of particular interest and importance from this countryside route. The River Snail is another important feature within the view, both adding interest and making it unique to Fordham.

Historic importance of the view: This view is particularly important for the context of Fordham village within the agricultural surroundings as you can read some of its history from the church to more modern developments off Carter Street. It is also important given the prominence of the Grade I Listed Church in the view and the presence of the River Snail which is intrinsically linked to the development of the village.

Aesthetics of the view: The rural look and feel of the view, with the fields and mature vegetation dominating it, is important to the leisure value of this public right of way. The interest offered by glimpses of buildings, and in particular the church, also add to its value.

Importance to village/countryside character: This view is important to the rural character of the village for a number of reasons: its position on a rural public right of way means that it is frequently enjoyed; a large part of the village is visible in part including some key landmarks; and the prevalence of vegetation and fields in the view help to frame the rural character.

Recommendation: This view is of particular importance for the historic and rural landscape context it offers. Its value is further heightened by the position on a well-used public right of way. **It is recommended that this view is protected in the neighbourhood plan.**

Description: This view is to the north of the village along Isleham Road.



Assessment:

Features within the view: Isleham Road weaves through this largely-open rural view, providing much interest. There are also some street lights, electricity pylons and a small number of properties on Isleham Road which also add interest and slightly urbanise the view. There are distance views available with trees on the horizon and small pockets of trees nearer, and it offer's 'big-sky' views.

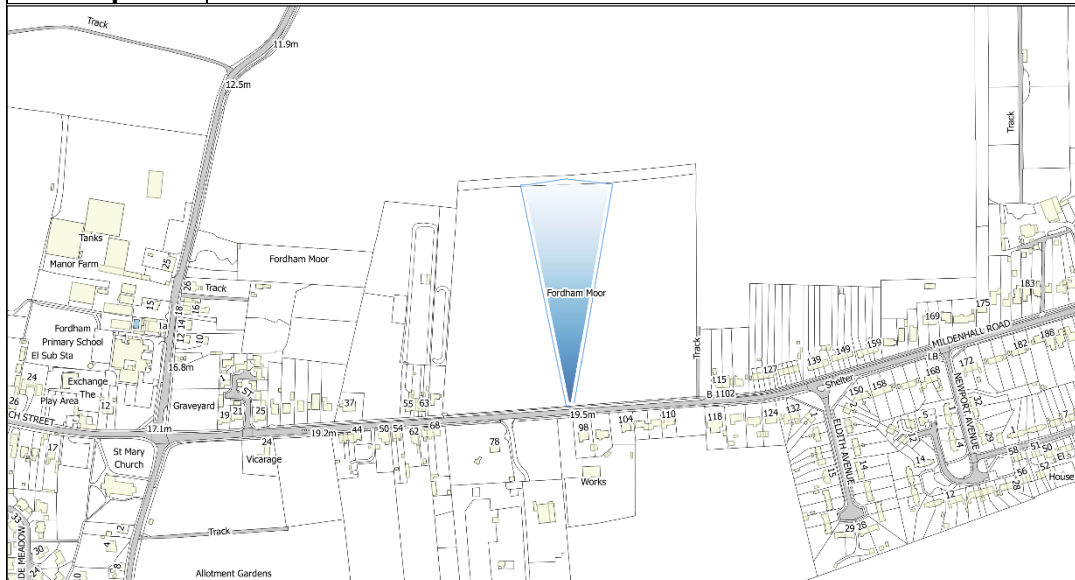
Historic importance of the view: There are no specific historic features in the view.

Aesthetics of the view: There are quite a few features in this view which make it of visual interest, separating it from other agricultural views around the village, however, it is also more urban than a number of other views.

Importance to village/countryside character: The rural look and feel of this view is important for the rural character at this part of the village. This view emphasises the rural character of the village and the separation with neighbouring settlements.

Recommendation: Whilst this view has more interest than others at the edge of the village, many features of interest are quite urbanising and are not of specific historical interest. **It is not recommended that this view is taken forward for protection in the neighbourhood plan.**

Description: This view is from Mildenhall Road to the north across a field situated between numbers 63 and 115 towards a tree belt.



Assessment:

Features within the view: This view is dominated by a picturesque row of trees at the end of a field. Whilst these trees are not uniform in terms of their size or planting gaps it is a valued landmark. Beyond the trees the fields drop away and rise again in the distance with the rising fields and hedgerows and other vegetation offering further depth to the view. The field in front of the row of trees is fairly featureless.

Historic importance of the view: There are no specific historic features in the view.

Aesthetics of the view: The view has much interest, both when glanced at and when looked at for a longer period. The low lying vegetation on either side of the row of trees frames it well.

Importance to village/countryside character: This view is in one of the last remaining gaps along Mildenhall Road between the main built area of the village and the eastern end, making it quite important for the rural character. However, planning permission has been granted on the site for residential development and, whilst the trees will be retained and some open space will be added at the northern end of the view, the view itself will be changing and will become urbanised.

Recommendation: Whilst this view is aesthetically valuable and the tree line provides a local landmark, the field has a recommendation to grant planning permission for residential development and as such this view is likely to change significantly. **It is not recommended that this view is taken forward for protection in the neighbourhood plan.**

Description: This view is to the north along Newmarket Road as you approach the village.



Assessment:

Features within the view: This view is channelled up Newmarket Road by mature vegetation on either side of the road. The road is quite straight in this location focussing attention in the distance. The road, road signs, properties to the west of the road and street lighting all have an urbanising effect on the view.

Historic importance of the view: Whilst this view includes the edge of the village on one of the main routes in there are no specific historic features in the view.

Aesthetics of the view: The straightness of the view with buildings at the end channelled on by tall vegetation does have interest and is visually attractive, however, the urbanising features reduce this and there are no specific landmarks in the view to elevate its value.

Importance to village/countryside character: This view includes the village edge so has some importance in establishing the rural-urban fringe, however, this is not a long-standing edge.

Recommendation: Whilst this view is of the current village edge and has some aesthetic value as well as local importance, it is not specifically unique to Fordham and it lacks the features to make it essential more important than other locations where you enter the village. **It is not recommended that this view is taken forward for protection in the neighbourhood plan.**

Description: This view is along Sharman's Road in an easterly direction towards numbers 92 and 94 Carter Street.



Assessment:

Features within the view: The focus of this view is Pelham House and Ashleydale, numbers 92 and 94 Carter Street, which are located at the eastern end of Sharman's Road. The attractive semi-detached Victorian houses are located at the end of the view which is channelled by properties on Sharman's Road and their boundary fences and vegetation. The symmetry of the buildings, which are clearly visible up close, are only hinted at from the view showing the historic route along Carter Street. The properties have distinctive detailing around windows and doors and tall chimneys, which all create interest. Neighbouring properties which are more modern also add interest, whilst allowing the Victorian properties to dominate the view.

Historic importance of the view: The view announces the arrival at the historic core of the village and the original main route through the village.

Aesthetics of the view: The main feature of the view (numbers 92 and 94 Carter Street) are aesthetically pleasing and are of visual and historic interest. They are framed by neighbouring properties and boundaries channelling the view to these properties and, to a lesser extent, the neighbouring properties.

Importance to village/countryside character: When approaching the village from this direction, this is the first hint of the history of the village. The gap between the properties on Carter Street suggest that it is a village location rather than an urban area.

Recommendation: Whilst this view has importance for the village and its context, the properties that are the focus of the view are what is most important about it. **It is not recommended that this view is taken forward for protection in the neighbourhood plan.**

Description: This view is west along Carter Street towards the Pound at the core of the village. It contains the Chequers Pub, the old fire station and pump and a number of Victoria properties.



Assessment:

Features within the view: There are a number of historic properties within this view, these are primarily Victorian buildings but the Chequers public house is a 17th century coaching inn with later additions. Some of the buildings are also listed. It also includes the old fire station and pump which have a particular local historical importance. The road in this view sweeps round to the right and contains a junction off to the left resulting in a wide highway with some modern signage and street furniture.

Historic importance of the view: The view not only contains a number of historic buildings, but it has also acted as a hub for the village over the years, being central to village life for centuries. The overall streetscene remains largely unchanged, readily recognisable in historic photographs.

Aesthetics of the view: This view is quite busy with a large number of buildings at different positions and orientations, but they are all of a similar low-scale and, in-combination, create a varied and interesting roofscape.

Importance to village/countryside character: The road itself is quite busy, but the built form at the Pound has the look and feel of a historic rural village, being of a fairly low density and simple and functional design. Its past and current role as the village hub also makes it of great local importance.

Recommendation: This view is unique and central to life in Fordham and is important for its historic connections. **It is recommended that this view is protected in the neighbourhood plan.**

Description: This view is to the north of the Bridge on Carter Street and Church Street towards 'Poets Cottage' and up the River Snail.



Assessment:

Features within the view: The view is a short view containing the River Snail and a number and variety of trees lining its banks. It also includes 'Poet's Cottage' and another cottage, and a track which follows the route of the River which draws the eye. Poet's Cottage is very distinctive with its re-tiled roof and painted render creating a romantic scene.

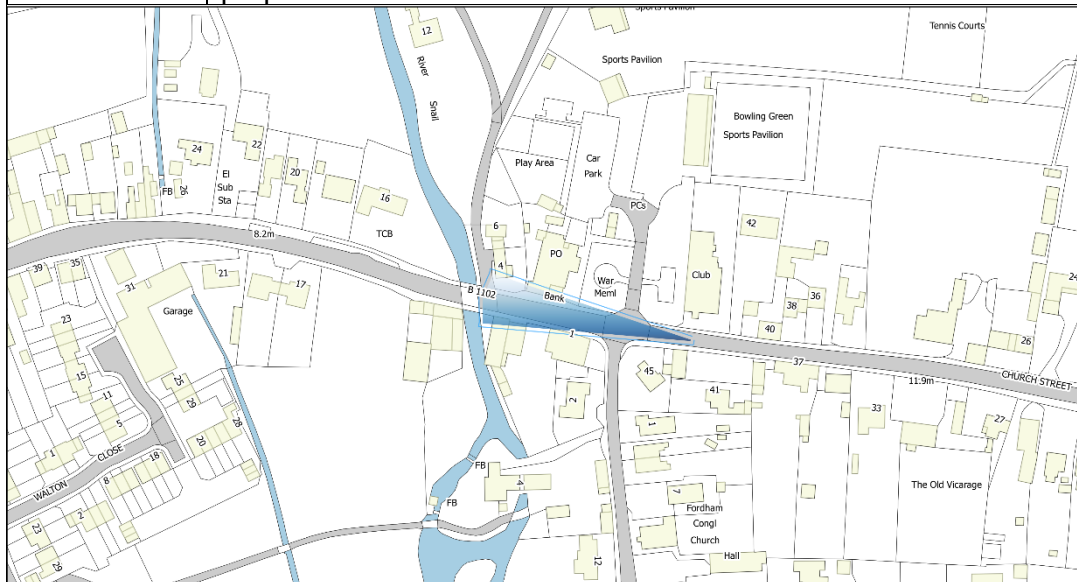
Historic importance of the view: The view contains the 18th century Grade II Listed Poets Cottage which has historic importance for Fordham as it was home of the poet James Reynolds Withers from the 1850s. It also contains the River Snail which is at the heart of the village's history.

Aesthetics of the view: The combination of the mature and varied collection of trees rising over the river and the curve of the track disappearing round a slow sweeping corner, lined with the quaint cottages result in a well-contained view which draws the eye through it.

Importance to village/countryside character: This semi-rural view connects the built and natural environment of Fordham, with strong links to its historic connections.

Recommendation: This view is a landmark for Fordham with connections to the surrounding rural areas, the river and to history, and it is visually very interesting and attractive. **It is recommended that this view is protected in the neighbourhood plan.**

Description: This view is to the west along Church Street incorporating the Victoria Hall and 1 Carter Street and a number of adjoining commercial properties.



Assessment:

Features within the view: This view is channelled along Church Street/Carter Street with the eye being drawn along the road to the canopy created by trees over the road and the light travelling under the canopy. The buildings flanking the street all create strong visual interest: on the south side, 1 Carter Street is a striking 16th century Grade II listed building with a sense of grandeur, and it is then followed by a number of historic barns/commercial buildings of a smaller scale which includes a small shop front and timber frame barns; and to the north is the memorial garden and the Victoria Hall, a decorative Victorian hall gifted to the community. A number of trees provide additional interest and a backdrop to this view.

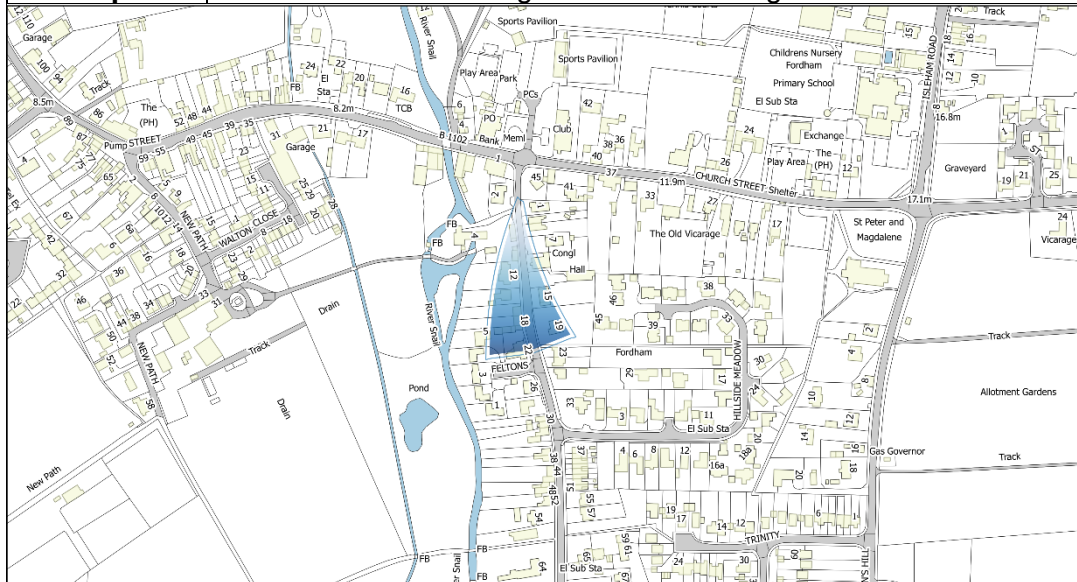
Historic importance of the view: This view is along part of the historic main street in the village and contains Grade II listed buildings and other buildings of local interest.

Aesthetics of the view: The view has much interest with the buildings and trees channelling the eye along the road into the distance where buildings further down Carter Street can be seen, but the buildings and the trees offer great interest, both in isolation and cumulatively.

Importance to village/countryside character: The mix of trees and buildings in this view provide a glimpse of the close relationship between the built and natural environment in Fordham.

Recommendation: This is a prominent view for many visitors to the village as well as residents. It contains a number of historic buildings of different ages and it includes much visual interest. **It is recommended that this view is protected in the neighbourhood plan.**

Description: This view is south along Mill Lane including the Methodist Church and a number of other historic buildings.



Assessment:

Features within the view: This view is flanked by the listed Methodist Church, a number of other listed buildings and other historic buildings. A number of trees add further interest to the view. Tall walls and buildings fronting directly onto the footpath create an enclosed feel.

Historic importance of the view: The view includes a number of historic buildings of both local and national importance and Mill Lane has had an important role in the history of Fordham.

Aesthetics of the view: The buildings channel the view down Mill Lane with a number of details from windows, chimneys, trees and a variety of traditional building materials adding visual interest.

Importance to village/countryside character: This view contains a variety of buildings of different ages of a low scale and at low density, typical for the village character. A number of the buildings are associated with the historic mills in the area.

Recommendation: This view is aesthetically pleasing and is historically important for Fordham. **It is recommended that this view is protected in the neighbourhood plan.**

Description: This view is north along Mill Lane of Brook House tucked behind substantial trees and vegetation and the boundary wall.



Assessment:

Features within the view: This view is dominated by trees, both those lining Mill Lane and the woodland lining the River Snail, all of which frames Brook House. The road and the adjacent walls sweep round to the right with Brook House sitting as the focus behind the wall.

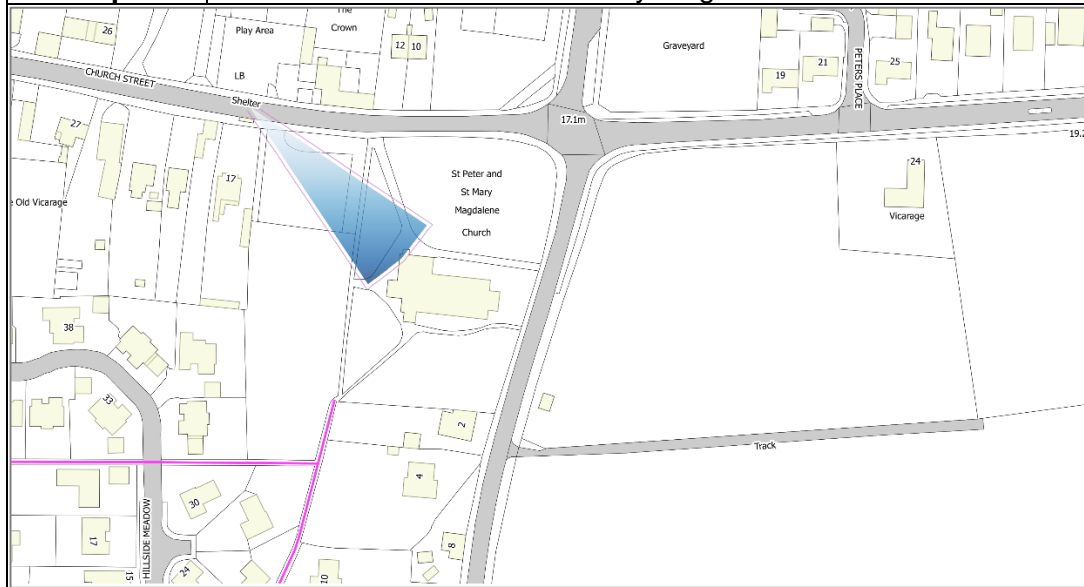
Historic importance of the view: Brook House is a Grade II listed building from the early 19th century.

Aesthetics of the view: This view is very striking with a large 19th century house with a backdrop of large trees and framed by the trees and wall. The flank of the house includes interesting brick details and fenestration.

Importance to village/countryside character: The prevalence of trees is very important in this location as the tree belt is a landmark feature in the village. Brook House, as a large 19th Century house, is characteristic of the wealth of the time in Fordham, possibly linked to one of the mills along Mill Lane.

Recommendation: This view is very striking and allows Brook House to be viewed with the woody backdrop from the tree belt. It is an important local landmark. **It is recommended that this view is protected in the neighbourhood plan.**

Description: This view is of St Peter and Mary Magdalene Church when viewed across its car park from the north west.



Assessment:

Features within the view: The view is dominated by the church and the graveyard trees. The car park, lampposts, road signage and bus stop all detract slightly from the historic view.

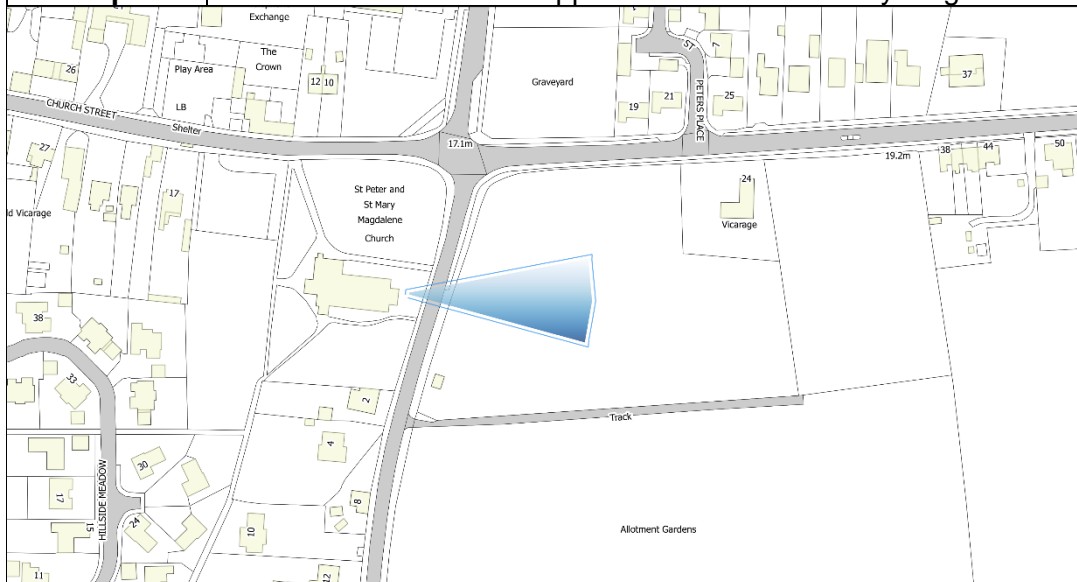
Historic importance of the view: The church is a Grade I listed building, dating back to as early as the 12th Century, with more recent additions.

Aesthetics of the view: This is one of the more dramatic views of the church, and one of the few where its tower is not concealed somewhat by the neighbouring trees. The church is revealed as one travels east along Church Street and views are maintained until it is again masked by the graveyard trees. When full, the car park is visually intrusive and detracts from the view somewhat.

Importance to village/countryside character: The church is very important to Fordham's character as a key landmark for the village. Churches are central to village life and, as such, it is intrinsically linked to its character.

Recommendation: Whilst all views of the church have value, and whilst this one is located at its vehicular entrance and is therefore of more importance than other views, this view is directly across church land and so is unlikely to change. **It is not recommended that this view is taken forward for protection in the neighbourhood plan.**

Description: This view is of the fields opposite St Peter and Mary Magdalene Church on the opposite side of Collins Hill.



Assessment:

Features within the view: This view is of a field opposite St Peter and Mary Magdalene Church. There is substantial foliage at the boundary of the field and so only glimpses are available. This field is marked by a substantial dip in levels with hedgerows, trees and some houses beyond limiting the distance of views.

Historic importance of the view: The field is opposite the Grade I listed church and conservation area, but it does not have specific affiliation with the church.

Aesthetics of the view: The glimpses of the view are striking with the change in level in the field, but there are no other features of particular importance within it.

Importance to village/countryside character: This marks the village edge and its undeveloped nature has some value for the serenity of the church and graveyard, although it is separated from the church by a fairly busy road.

Recommendation: Whilst this view has some value associated with the neighbouring church, much of the view is closed off and it is lacking in interest. The field is also proposed for allocation in the Local Plan. **It is not recommended that this view is taken forward for protection in the neighbourhood plan.**

Description: This view is of St Peter and Mary Magdalene Church when approached from the east along Mildenhall Road.



Assessment:

Features within the view: St Peter and Mary Magdalene church tower can be seen appearing over vegetation on the south side of Mildenhall Road. Many mature trees in and around the graveyard can also be seen. The view is somewhat limited by the high hedges to the south of the road and signage and lampposts add some modern influences.

Historic importance of the view: The church is a Grade I listed building, dating back to as early as the 12th Century, with more recent additions. With the exception of foliage growing and the addition of some signage, this view will have changed little in decades or even centuries.

Aesthetics of the view: The glimpses of the church tower gives a hint of what is to come and it announces arrival at Fordham. The mature trees also add depth to the view.

Importance to village/countryside character: The church is very important to Fordham's character as a key landmark for the village. Churches are central to village life and, as such, it is intrinsically linked to its character. The view is across a field and so emphasises the semi-rural character.

Recommendation: This view is important for the village and for the church. It announces arrival at Fordham and is a key landmark. **It is recommended that this view is protected in the neighbourhood plan.**

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. Of the 16 views assessed in this study, all of them have some value to the village with features of varying levels of interest and many have historic or character value.
- 3.2. Whilst there is some justification for protecting all views, it is only recommended that some of the views are protected because they are of greater value to the community. Sometimes this value is solely because of what is in the view, but often it also takes into account the enjoyment that can be obtained from these views due to their presence on a public right of way.
- 3.3. The views recommended for protection are:
- View of the water tower, northwest from the public right of way;
 - Views of St Peter and Mary Magdalene Church from the public rights of way north of the village;
 - View west along Carter Street to The Chequers and the Pound;
 - View north to Poet's Cottage including the River Snail from the bridge on Carter Street;
 - View west along Carter Street/Church Street to 1 Carter Street, Victoria Hall and neighbouring buildings;
 - View south along Mill Lane from outside number 2 Mill Lane;
 - View north on Mill Lane of Brook House; and
 - View of St Peter and Mary Magdalene Church south-west from Mildenhall Road.
- 3.4. These views can be seen on the plan below:

