D) JCA 88 BEDFORDSHIRE AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE CLAYLANDS

Gently undulating topography and plateau areas, divided by broad shallow valleys.

Predominantly an open and intensive arable landscape. Fields bounded by either open ditches or sparse closely trimmed hedges both containing variable number and quality of hedgerow trees.

Woodlands are scattered with the larger ancient woodland areas concentrated to the north and west of the area. Occasional parkland and orchards add interest to the area.

Villages are often located on the sides of small valleys, along spring lines or on the higher ground. A diversity of building materials.

Medieval earthworks including deserted villages the major feature of visible archaeology.

Near Elsworth - shallow valleys in the Clayland landscape

JCA 88 – Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands - General Landscape Principles

- Management and enhancement of existing woodlands and the creation of new woodlands where these will have a beneficial impact on vistas, landform and skyline, or to enhance the traditional field pattern. The continued management of existing ancient woodlands is important.

- Planting woodland blocks based on hedgerows and there is scope for the creation of new woodlands: smaller woods to river valleys and larger woods on
higher plateau areas, with scope to enhance linkage within traditional woodland areas.

- Planting woodland belts and corridors, preferably based on existing and traditional hedge lines and field patterns, particularly in very open areas where hedges have been removed.

- Restoration, conservation of existing hedgerows and planting of new hedgerows.

- Careful design and planting of village approaches and the expanding edges of existing urban areas and the new developments which are often hard and have little relationship with the landscape.

- The management of unimproved grasslands on settlement edges should include the retention of remaining ridge and furrow.

E) JCA 90 BEDFORDSHIRE GREENSAND RIDGE

The Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge forms a narrow elongated area running from Leighton Buzzard in the south west (the highest area) dropping gently to Gamlingay in the north east - a distance of approximately 40km. It is entirely surrounded by the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands. There is a distinct scarp slope to north-west and dip slope to south-east.

The north-west facing scarp slope has a high proportion of woodland (both deciduous and coniferous) and areas of heath and pasture, producing a distinctive wooded skyline. The dip slope features medium sized arable fields and wooded landscape. Here there has been some removal of hedges and hedgerow trees to create larger fields, but the area remains distinctive from the Claylands.

Much of the Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge is located on Cretaceous sands and sandstones, which have produced acidic, free draining soils, which are of poor fertility compared to the surrounding clay. This has had a marked influence on the vegetation which was more suitable for the establishment of hunting estates of heath and mixed woodland. These areas are distinctive and of high biodiversity value.

Due to the areas relative height there are panoramic views to north across claylands, with several large houses and estates utilising the scarp and dramatic change in levels, for example Waresly Park, Tetworth Hall and Woodbury Hall, all near Gamlingay.

To the south further historic parklands and estates, including Woburn, Haynes, Shuttleworth, Sandy Lodge and Southill, often with associated estate villages, give the impression of a well-tended landscape.