

**New Hall and
Boreham House,
Chelmsford**

An assessment of the setting of the
Grade I Listed Buildings and Grade II
Registered Parks and Gardens



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (NCAAP) sets out the Borough Council's preferred approach for managing development growth in North Chelmsford. The Plan will show the extent, structure, movement pattern and land use content of the proposed new neighbourhoods in the urban extensions.
- 1.2 The NCAAP is developed from an evidence base comprising a range of reports and other information which supports the proposed options for growth. This report forms part of this evidence base and was produced in the light of representations on the Preferred Options Document stage of the NCAAP.
- 1.3 Chelmsford Borough Council has a duty under section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 16 of the Act also requires authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of the building.
- 1.4 Beacon Planning Ltd. were, therefore, employed by the Borough Council to produce a comprehensive assessment of the setting of New Hall and Boreham House, both of which will be affected by the proposed developments outlined in the NCAAP. These grade I listed buildings are set within grounds which are both Registered grade II on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens.
- 1.5 Part of this work involved a review of the existing studies that that have been undertaken by various organisations previously. These include:
 - Greater Beaulieu Park: New Hall and its setting, prepared for Countryside Strategic Properties (November 2003) Ingram Consultancy Limited
 - Greater Beaulieu Park, Chelmsford: Historic Environment Baseline Assessment (July 2007) Countryside Properties
 - New Hall, Boreham, Essex: Its significance and setting (December 2006) The Paul Drury Partnership
 - New Hall School: Representations to Chelmsford Borough Council in respect of the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan. Final Issue (February 2009) LDA Design
 - New Hall School: Vision and Preliminary Masterplan for the New Hall Estate (May 2009) LDA Design
 - Statement of Common Ground between Chelmsford Borough Council and English Heritage (2007)
 - Inspector's report on the Core Strategy
 - English Heritage Representation on Chelmsford LDF NCAAP Preferred Options (22 June 2009)
 - Chelmsford LDF: Statement of Common Ground between English Heritage and Chelmsford Borough Council (20 September 2007) Ref: SCG/HD/CFD/07
 - NCAAP Topic Paper: Heritage and Landscape in NE Chelmsford (Chelmsford Borough Council)
 - Understanding the Setting of New Hall (Chelmsford Borough Council)

- 1.6 In addition to these reports, a variety of journals have provided background information, including:
- Statutory List of Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest (English Heritage)
 - English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens
 - Buildings of England: Essex (2000) Pevsner
 - RCHME: Central & SW Essex (1916)
 - Chapman and Andre Map 1777 (see Appendix 3)
 - C19 OS Maps (see Appendix 3)
 - Historic Environment Characterisation (Essex County Council)
 - Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates)

Definition of Setting

- 1.7 The definition of the setting of a Listed Building is quite vague as described in PPG 15 Paragraphs 2.16 and 2.17. Paragraph 2.16 specifically comments on the importance of grounds and gardens laid out to complement the function of a building and the contribution which a building can make to the townscape or countryside. Paragraph 2.17 suggests a wider interpretation of a building's setting and comments that 'in some cases, setting can only be defined by historical assessment of a building's surroundings'.
- 1.8 Draft PPS 15 defines setting as 'The area surrounding a heritage asset within which activity or development may affect the significance of that asset. The significance of an asset, or appreciation of that significance, may be enhanced or diminished by elements of the existing setting'. Draft Policy HE11 requires Local Authorities to 'treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that enhance the significance of the asset'. Where proposals do not do this, the impact of 'the loss of enhancement of the asset' must be weighed against the wider public benefit of the proposal.
- 1.9 English Heritage's *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance* (2008) considers 'setting' to relate 'to the surroundings in which a place is experienced, its local context, embracing present and past relationships to the adjacent landscape. Definition of the setting of a significant place will normally be guided by the extent to which material change within it could affect (enhance or diminish) the place's significance.'
- 1.10 In line with this guidance, the following sections will broadly discuss the significance of each building or group potentially affected by the NCAAP, consider its 'original' setting and then highlight the various historical changes to that setting. The following paragraphs will then discuss which features are considered to be important to the building's setting and which are considered to detract from it by looking at the visual impact of the building, considering the impact of new development, considering current and historical linkages to other buildings and features and identifying key vistas and views. This 'methodology' is adapted from English Heritage's guidance 'Wind Energy and the Historic Environment' (English Heritage: 2005) which is one of the few documents giving clear guidance on assessing the setting of historic sites.
- 1.11 Despite being a more recent document, CABE /English Heritage's guidance on tall buildings (July 2007) does not add anything else to our definition of setting, other than stressing the importance of views to and from historic buildings.

2.0 NEW HALL

Significance of the Building

- 2.1 Originally one of six manors of Boreham granted by King Harold to Waltham Abbey in 1062, New Hall was fortified by Thomas Boteler, Earl of Ormond in 1491. It descended through the female line to the Boleyn family who relinquished it to Henry VIII in 1517. Henry VIII highly regarded the palace and set about rebuilding it as a quadrangular palace called Beaulieu.
- 2.2 By the 1530s however, other more fashionable palaces including Hampton Court diverted the king's attention and New Hall fell from favour. Mary Tudor lived there in 1532-33. During her reign, the house passed to Sir Thomas Wharton, though when he was arrested for celebrating mass in the reign of Elizabeth I (perhaps the Hall's first link with Catholicism) his estates were surrendered. The house suffered gradual decline in the C17 and in 1713 it was sold to Benjamin Hoare who later removed fittings to his newly-built Boreham House. In 1738 John Olminus demolished all but the north wing and remodelled it into a 'gentleman's residence'. In 1798 it was bought by the Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre and despite their enforced vacation of the building during World War II (when the building suffered bomb damage) it remains in use as a school today with a number of C20 buildings immediately around its N, E and W sides.
- 2.3 Although only the N range of the original courtyard palace now survives (in a much altered form), it contains historic fabric from the C16 onwards. Pevsner states that the Hall is one of the foremost brick mansions of the C16 in Essex. The Introductory Note to English Heritage's Domestic Selection Guides makes it clear that Country Houses have a pre-eminent position within English Society and, therefore, most of them are listed, often at high grades (e.g. Grade I or II*).
- 2.4 Circular 1/2007 (which supersedes Section 6 of PPG 15) defines Grade I Listed Buildings as being of 'exceptional interest'. In terms of its 'architectural interest', the design, decoration and craftsmanship are all outstanding and the remains of the palace courtyard form are clearly significant survivals. As a formal royal palace and with well-documented associations with important historical figures and with English Catholicism, the building clearly has special historic interest. Justifiably, New Hall is a Grade I Listed Building.

The Original Setting of the Building

- 2.5 What could be considered to form the original setting of the building is difficult to define as clearly New Hall itself has evolved over the best part of a thousand years. It seems sensible, given the lack of any details prior to the C16, to consider the original setting to be that first established by Henry VIII and which evolved until 1738 when John Olminus substantially remodelled the house and gardens.
- 2.6 Very little is known about the building or its setting prior to 1522 when William Care was appointed keeper with power to engage labourers to work in the king's garden and orchard. Before that, it seems likely that the area to the north was part of a large common area of wood pasture. By 1530 however there were already references to the 'great garden of Beaulieu'. In a letter conveying the site to Thomas Ratcliffe in 1573, detail is given of the

empaled Great Park lying to the NE of the house and covering 512 acres, Little Park covering 344 acres, the 'great green before the Gate' covering 12 acres, a banqueting house and well-house to the west of the house.

- 2.7 The deer park, as depicted on Saxton's Map of Essex (1576) shows the park, which would have been enclosed by a 'pale' (essentially a fence on a high bank), comprising three overlapping circles and seemingly set back from the Chelmsford – Colchester Road. This parkland seemingly expanded and contracted throughout the C16 and early C17. However, on John Oliver's Map on 1696, the parkland had reached the main road.
- 2.8 The appearance of the grounds must have changed substantially in the C17 after the Duke of Buckingham had employed John Tradescant the elder to supervise the grounds and to travel abroad to find exotic species. By 1623 work was underway including the formation of the avenue, a tennis court, bowling green and the walled garden which had a double wall for growing fruit, etc. (although this may have been altered in the C18). The Duke was given 1000 oak trees by James I and a further 500 by Charles I and these were presumably used to create arbors and other avenues. Tradescant also introduced water features and seemingly a little river 'about sixteen feet broad'.
- 2.9 In 1656 John Evelyn noted in his diaries the existence of a wilderness garden and the fine southern approach which was planted with four rows of limes. He also makes note of a terrace and well-stocked deer park and ponds.
- 2.10 By 1699, it seems that much of Tradescant's work still survived though a wall was apparently built to enclose the garden to the north and west of the hall.
- 2.11 By 1701 however, the hall was ruinous and the grounds spoilt. The hall and gardens remained in this condition until after they were acquired by John Olminus in 1738.
- 2.12 Curiously, although John Oliver's map of 1696 shows the New Hall parkland stretching to the main road, the avenue, which must by then have existed, is not shown until Morant's Map of 1768. As the Historic Park and Garden register notes however, this feature has been a key element of the setting of New Hall for many centuries – the Register suggests since the early C16, though the majority of historical records suggest since the early C17.
- 2.13 Immediately around the house were formal gardens including water features and the whole was set within a substantial deer park. This was ultimately constrained by the old Roman Road to the south and seems to have been fairly tightly constrained to the west as that area was probably associated with Belsteads which was in existence in medieval times. To the north, the boundary seemingly extended about 1000m north of the hall (roughly as far north as the current Park Farm). To the east it included the extensive fish ponds which were to the east of the current Bull's Lodge group of buildings and broadly followed the line of Boreham Brook.

Modifications to the Gardens

- 2.14 When John Olminus acquired the property in 1737/8, the buildings of New Hall were largely in ruins with fittings either stripped and relocated to Boreham House or sold off. Olminus' immediate priority seems to have been the House. In addition to remodelling the north range of the Hall's courtyard, he demolished the buildings on the other three sides using the

bricks to construct new farm buildings to the east. The original gateway was also reused in the eastern range of the farm courtyard.

- 2.15 Drigue Biliers Olminus succeeded his father and throughout the 1760s Richard Woods was employed to remodel the gardens. A description of 1768 describes a 'noble sheet of water' behind the house, a greenhouse (which may have been within the walled garden) and stables, coach houses, etc. which were considered to be a benefit to the front elevation. A cedar plot, next to the walled garden, is also likely to date from this period and some alterations appear to have been made to the carriage sweep immediately before the south front.
- 2.16 In 1798, the house and a large part of the grounds were sold to the Regular Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre. The sale excluded land to the north of the pleasure gardens which were retained by the Olminus family and was subsequently used for agriculture and land either side of the avenue which was sold to Rev. W Walford and ultimately met a similar fate. Consequently the grounds of New Hall largely corresponded to those currently included within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.
- 2.17 The Canonesses filled in the lake / canal to the north of the house (though it survives as a depression in the ground) and chopped down Tradescant's avenue (though it had been replanted by 1805).
- 2.18 Between 1837 and 1844, the end of the avenue was dissected by the laying of the Great Eastern Railway. This left around 300m of avenue, together with the paired lodges fronting the old Roman Road separated from the rest of the avenue by a level crossing. The A12 was realigned in the 1970s and the lodges were demolished in the early 1990s. The area south of the railway line is now part of an industrial area although some of the former avenue trees remain in the forecourt of one of the buildings.
- 2.19 The current cemetery to the west of the wilderness was erected in 1844 and several of the walls around the estate date from this period. The cemetery was extended to the west in the later C20.
- 2.20 Throughout the C19, the convent adapted existing buildings to provide bedrooms and other accommodation including a three-storey extension off the west wing of 1870. After 1925, new buildings including a gymnasium and science laboratory, extensions, music room and bedrooms were constructed.
- 2.21 Bomb damage in 1943 necessitated the demolition of some of the farm buildings and the rebuilding of much of the west wing and west end of the main range. In 1963, alterations were made to the north elevation and a new courtyard was formed with a series of modern buildings erected including a sports hall north of the walled garden which now contains tennis courts.
- 2.22 In c.1970, a new access road to New Hall linking the south end of the avenue to White Hart Lane was constructed running parallel to the railway line.
- 2.23 The entry in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens records that, in 2000, the N and E boundaries are formed by farmland, whilst the S and W boundaries are formed by a modern housing development under construction. 14ha of the site is described as level ground with some small boundary plantations.

The Current Setting of New Hall

- 2.24 As we have seen, the current boundary of the Grade II Registered Historic Park / Garden largely corresponds to the land which was purchased by the Canonesses in 1798. Clearly, and despite the erection of a number of relatively modern buildings, this area is of great importance to the setting of New Hall. This section will, however, consider the importance of other surrounding land and features to the setting of the hall.

Visual Impact of the Building and Group

- 2.25 The main views of the building are from the south. From here, the hall stands on slightly elevated ground but even then, the horizontal nature of the built form means that the building is not especially prominent. Although the chimney stacks rise above the horizontal roofline, it is the tall poplars behind the building which are more visually prominent.
- 2.26 The building is visible from the raised railway line, though clearly this is a glimpse view, softened by the avenue and other trees and from a train travelling usually at a reasonable speed. The land on the north side of the railway line is agricultural land with no public footpaths. From here the main range and the lower red brick ranges to the east are clearly visible, though of course this view is available to only a very limited number of people.
- 2.27 The avenue of course provides the key views towards New Hall from the south. However, because the avenue is not entirely flat (a 'fault' noted by John Evelyn as early as 1656), the house is not apparent until close to the lodge when it dramatically encloses the vista and the pronounced rhythm of the bays becomes very clear (view 8, fig.1).
- 2.28 From the land at the south end of General's Lane, views of New Hall, even from the agricultural land tend to be more funnelled with the trees on the avenue and those on General's Lane and on the east side of the school coalescing and leaving fairly restricted views of the school buildings (view 10). The modern west range and west wing being the most visible elements in views at the western end of this land (view 11).
- 2.29 From General's Lane itself only occasional views of the school buildings are possible, although these views are well-filtered by the hedgerow trees lining General's Lane and those on the east side of the school. At the southern end of the Lane, at the elevated bridge over the A12 and railway line, a view of the west end of the main building together with the chimneys of the eastern ranges can be glimpsed above the tree tops (view 12).
- 2.30 New Hall is visible from along the eastern boundary of the modern Beaulieu Park (view 1) where the landscaped strip with connecting circulation route was clearly designed to enjoy views over the open land towards the house. The low nature of the house means that it generally sits below the tree canopy and the horizontal line of the roof and vertical bays are generally visible. The south parkland wall is also apparent in most views. The nature of the tree planting means that the Hall is seen framed between the mature 'wilderness' trees (and those in front of the buildings to the west of the original building) and the avenue trees. The hall generally becomes less visible the further north along the eastern boundary of Beaulieu Park one travels.
- 2.31 From the north of New Hall, even from within the area of playing fields immediately to the north, the views of the school buildings are very well screened by the presence of the tall

red brick garden wall and the quite densely planted maturing trees between the northernmost school buildings and this wall (view 13).

- 2.32 From the agricultural fields to the north of the playing fields, the original school buildings are equally well screened with further filtering due to the hedgerows and occasional tree along the regular field boundaries. The stable courtyard, and particularly the tall chimneystack, on the east side of the main Hall are the most visible elements of the historic group (view 14). The west end of the site is, however, much more open and the modern buildings of the school including sport pavilions and floodlit athletics tracks and pitches are exposed in most views from the north and west (views 15, 16 & 17).

Impact of Current Developments on the Building and Group



Photograph 1 – close up of view 10 (fig.1)

- 2.33 Within the last century as New Hall has developed as a school, a number of new buildings have been erected mostly to the north and west of the original building with remodelling and some new buildings to the east. In general, the buildings closest to the school tend to be more contextual in their design approach; those further away (many of which are sports buildings) tend to be of either more contemporary or utilitarian design.
- 2.34 The mass of buildings has therefore spread out considerably even from its late C19 appearance and inevitably given parts of the site a more 'built-up' quality than would have been apparent when the building was a country house.
- 2.35 The more recent buildings are generally very well screened from the south and east by the cedar trees and wilderness which means in distance views from these directions it is the original building, and to a lesser extent the east courtyard and west accommodation wing which are the most visible (photograph 1). From within parts of the immediate school campus (photograph 2) and in views from the north and west, the impact of the new buildings is greater and the impression is heightened by the presence of quite significant areas of car parking, hard surfaces sports pitches and courts and floodlit pitches. However, the open frontage to the original buildings remains a major element of the setting of New Hall and one which has remained unaltered since the C18 remodelling (photograph 3).

- 2.36 As we have seen, the impact of the parkland setting to the north was lost by the C18 when the land was turned over to agricultural use. Similarly, by the end of the C19, the land to the east and the fields beside the south avenue was also used for arable farming. In more recent years some of this land has been exploited for gravel extraction and in the Second World War was a US Air base. Although some vestigial parkland elements (e.g. small areas of park paling and the possible line of a 'ride' to the north) remain, the main contribution to the setting of New Hall is its openness with scattered buildings and hedgerows providing a rural atmosphere, although the line of pylons intrudes on this character.



Photograph 2 – view of modern sports buildings within walled garden in W of school site

- 2.37 The impact of the railway line bisecting the south avenue has already been described. Clearly when there was a level crossing over the line, there would have been a greater visual relationship with the severed part of the avenue. Today the line is raised on an embankment. This means that from the upper floors of New Hall, the railway line is visible but the severed part of the avenue isn't. Despite the elevated nature and the overhead electrification, the railway is not particularly visually intrusive, other than minor intrusion of the gantries, etc. which are generally seen against a treed background. The audible intrusiveness of the trains varies according to the wind direction.
- 2.38 The Boreham by-pass effectively totally severed the house from the isolated part of the avenue and its original lodges which were demolished in the early 1990s. Today the visual impact of the road is not major though the 'complementary' red roofed hotel building is quite visible from the windows in the New Hall Chapel as are some of the nearby industrial units. The impact is lessened by the presence of the Danbury Hills to the south against which they are seen.
- 2.39 To some extent the impact of the railway line and road have had a greater impact on the setting of New Hall by effectively relegating the 'grand' entrance to a side entrance. By entering from White Hart Lane, the initial impression is dominated by the presence of the embanked railway line to the south and Beaulieu Park to the north, rather than the feeling of approaching a grand house. It is only when turning through 90 degrees that one becomes aware of approaching a special place.

- 2.40 Without doubt the greatest impact on the present setting of New Hall has been through the erection of the Beaulieu Park development. This is very visible from the upper floors of New Hall, from the lawn in front of the original buildings and between the trees of the avenue. Because of the lack of any screening boundary treatment, the new housing is extremely visible from the extension to the Nun's Cemetery to the west of the Wilderness. The stark nature of the built edge formed by this development contrasts sharply with the rural openness of the surrounding fields and is therefore unduly prominent when viewed from the Hall and its grounds. The impact of this housing is undoubtedly greater because of the lack of any trees on the agricultural land to the west of the Avenue and because of the lack of any significant vegetation on the Beaulieu Park boundary.



Photograph 3 – view of S front of New Hall

- 2.41 It is proposed to create a new road to the east of New Hall which will run N-S to the east of Bull's Lodge. The potential impact of this road will depend on whether it is elevated, the form of lighting and any junctions to be created. The visual impact upon New Hall is likely to not be adverse as there are no key views eastwards from the house itself and the eastern boundary and greens have quite substantial tree cover both within and off the New Hall site. Nonetheless, the arable fields and the historic Bull's Lodge farm group to the east of the Hall contribute to the sense of openness which is an important part of the Hall's surviving rural setting, despite the visible presence of the quarry in the distance.

Links to Other Buildings and Features

- 2.42 Historically, New Hall has links with a number of buildings in its immediate vicinity, though as mentioned above its links with the original Chelmsford – Colchester Road have now been severed.
- 2.43 Old Lodge appears to have operated as a farm associated with the hall for a number of years (the oldest buildings on the site dating to the late C17). The visual link between the two is not particularly strong due to the enclosing walls around the school and the 'Wilderness' trees and it seems likely that the working farm was always visually screened from the main house – particularly as the C18 house had its own ranges of farm buildings around the east courtyard. Nonetheless, there is an important historical link which needs to be maintained and respected by maintaining an area of open land between the group and the Hall,

retaining the footpath link to the south of the garden wall, through the retention of the buildings and names and possibly by some on-site interpretation.

- 2.44 Bull's Lodge also may originally have had a link with the New Hall parkland though this seems to have been severed by the late C18 sale of the Hall. The building group is now separated from New Hall by General's Lane whilst the character of the lodge and barn has been diminished by the recent conversion of the barn and the erection of other buildings in the C20. Again the linkage between the historic buildings and New Hall can be maintained by the retention of the buildings and a wide green 'wedge' linking them to the hall and the open land to the south, retaining the footpath link and providing some interpretation, possibly on the footpath link which explains the original parkland of New Hall and how Bull's Lodge related to it.
- 2.45 Park Farm, or New Lodge Farm, which stands around 1km to the north of New Hall, may well, as its name would suggest, have been associated with the parkland. The buildings are an attractive group of traditional farm structures and should be retained. They are important as a possible historic survival of the outer reaches of the former parkland. Park Farm Cottage, to the NE of the Hall, is not of any particular historic interest and the retention of the name will ensure that the original linkage between the two is not lost.
- 2.46 Boreham House was built to the south of the New Hall Parkland. It is said that Sir Richard Hoare had purchased New Hall but grew tired of waiting for the occupier, the Duchess of Albemarle, to die so that he could move into the property. He therefore built Boreham House to the south of the Roman Road.
- 2.47 The two buildings clearly then have a historical linkage. However, after the Duchess died in 1734, Hoare was quick to sell New Hall and the two properties have been in separate ownership ever since. The two properties were only in the same ownership from 1713 until 1737, and there is nothing on Chapman and Andre's Map of 1777 to suggest that there was ever a physical linkage between the two properties. (The 1777 map shows a narrow chase leading north from the Colchester Road, just to the east of the Boreham House driveway, but this appears to have provided the farm access to Bull's Lodge and is now severed by the railway line and A12.)
- 2.48 It may have been possible to originally see New Hall from Boreham House and vice-versa, though once the Boreham House avenue had matured, assuming the presence of intervening hedgerow trees and the suggested ribbon development of buildings along the Roman Road, any views would have been glimpses rather than managed vistas.
- 2.49 What views might have existed would probably have been compromised further by the mid C19 when the railway was constructed. Once the railway was embanked and the Boreham by-pass with its elevated road junctions constructed, any visual links between the two properties were entirely severed. It is not considered either necessary or feasible to create a visual link between the two properties. Their original association is well documented.
- 2.50 Various small cottages and farm buildings exist in what would originally have been the New Hall Parkland. The vast majority of these date from the C19 and C20 and therefore post-date the purchase of New Hall by the Convent of the Holy Sepulchre when the grounds of New Hall largely assumed their current form. These buildings are therefore not considered to have any significant association with New Hall.

- 2.51 The possible exceptions to this are Mount Maskall, an C18 house to the NE of the Hall (at the end of General's Lane) and a barn, to the E of Bull's Lodge, reached via the Boreham Airfield quarry's private road off General's Lane. In both cases, these buildings are now so remote from New Hall and their past associations now long-forgotten that there would be little sense in attempting to create any form of visual link between the properties and New Hall. Indeed, the Barn today has a more direct link with Bull's Lodge which can be seen, across fields, from the Barn's position, and it is not clear whether Mount Maskall ever formed part of the New Hall estate.
- 2.52 Although the former deer park is no longer in existence, there are vestigial remains of parkland features including evidence of the former deer park pale (ref: Scott Wilson 2007) in the fields to the north of New Hall (see Appendix 2). These are important survivals of the Hall's former landscape setting and should all be retained with appropriate interpretation.

Key Views and Vistas

- 2.53 Without doubt, the main vista of New Hall is from the south looking along the formal Avenue. The summer tree cover and slight rise mean that the house is not visible from the extreme south end of the avenue but the formality gives a sense of grandeur which is heightened when the first glimpses of the house are gained. Once past the lodge, the avenue gives way to open lawns and the full drama of the south front can be appreciated. The vista is only slightly diminished by the access barrier by the lodge and the car parking immediately in front of the hall.
- 2.54 Looking south from the lawns in front of the Hall, the railway line is visible, as is the red roof of the hotel on the south side of the A12. From the first floor windows of the Chapel, some of the industrial buildings around the Cattle Market are also visible. The impact of these buildings (and the railway line) is reduced by the presence of the avenue trees, the smaller scale planting along the south garden the more distant sporadic planting on the field boundary and railway embankment, the backcloth of the Danbury Hills and of course by the distance involved. Had the hotel been roofed in slate or similar material, its appearance would be far less apparent.
- 2.55 The buildings on Beaulieu Park can be seen from the Chapel, though this is a glimpsed view through the trees to the south of the main car park and other mature trees around the cricket field. Where the houses are visible, they undoubtedly introduce a suburban character to the setting of New Hall. The mixture of materials, heights and styles of buildings gives the edge of the development a 'restless' appearance, through this impact could be significantly reduced by suitable planting along the boundaries. This should filter the views rather than form a blanket screen to the development.
- 2.56 The impact of Beaulieu Park is far greater particularly from the ha-ha looking south eastwards across the cricket pitch and from between the trees along the avenue. This development edge is rather hard when viewed across the open expanse of agricultural land that sits between the avenue and Beaulieu Park.
- 2.57 Nonetheless, despite the uncomfortable contrast between the open landscape and the urban edge of Beaulieu Park when viewed from the Hall, it is evident that the new housing has been laid out to take advantage of views across this field and towards the Hall. The main area of green open space within Beaulieu Park is laid out in a wedge-shape which opens out, funnelling views of the Hall. Although modern, this is clearly a planned view and should be

respected in any proposed landscaping around the edge of Beaulieu Park to soften its impact in views from the Hall.

Conclusions

- 2.58 The main visual impression of New Hall is gained from the south from where the building is approached from the avenue. Limited glimpse views of the Hall are gained from Generals Lane and the railway line, but the principal contemporary planned view is from the open space within the Beaulieu Park housing development to the SW of the Hall.
- 2.59 From the north and west, the modern, generally sports related, buildings and facilities of the school are exposed in these views, with the historic buildings mostly screened behind a dense line of trees. The C19 nuns' cemetery at the edge of The Wilderness is also inappropriately enclosed by a wire-mesh fence.
- 2.60 The north side of the school grounds is partially enclosed by a low hedgeline behind which runs a public footpath. The sports facilities are again those which are in the foreground of views from this direction and the sports fields are rather barren looking, but views out from the school grounds northwards are of open fields. These fields would have once formed part of the original deer park, and although scant evidence of this former landscape survives, the openness of the existing fields is important to the rural setting of the Hall. The only interruption to this is the line of pylons.
- 2.61 The importance of historic events and linkages to the current setting of New Hall is varied, with little evidence of these past connections remaining today. The construction of the railway and the A12 has effectively severed the Hall from the remainder of its tree avenue and remaining historic curtilage, both physically and visually, particularly since the Hall's avenue was realigned to connect to White Hart Lane. The subsequent development of the land to the south of the railway and A12 has significantly altered its character from the rural nature of the land to the north which encircles New Hall.

Recommendations

- 2.62 The views of the Hall from the south and east are those that need to be maintained and managed to ensure the prominence of the Hall is retained. Careful screening or enclosure of the more exposed west side of the school grounds would serve to provide a more appropriate boundary to the Registered Park and Garden and to the Nun's Cemetery.
- 2.63 The redirected leg of the avenue which connects the original line to White Hart Lane should be landscaped and planted to match the existing which would help to reinstate the formerly grand approach to the Hall. This would also have the benefit of helping to screen the southern end of Beaulieu Park and the railway line from the initial entrance to the Hall. Allied to this, selective planting along the eastern edge of Beaulieu Park would allow views of the development from the Hall to be filtered, whilst not substantially interfering with the open aspect which the houses on this edge of the development have been planned to enjoy. The managed vista of the Hall from the wedge-shaped open space in Beaulieu Park should be maintained.
- 2.64 It is suggested that any potential development to the north of New Hall should be restricted to allow some of the openness of the existing rural landscape (that is important to the

pastoral setting of the Hall) to be retained. Development to the west should be used to better enclose this edge of the school grounds, including the rather bleak nature of the sports fields. This should not be a hard edge, however, but rather a soft landscape buffer with the retention of some relationship between Old Lodge farm and the Hall.

- 2.65 In summary, there is scope for some development in the vicinity of New Hall, but this needs to be carefully managed and positioned to ensure that the Hall is not encircled by a hard suburban edge similar to that already in existence at Beaulieu Park. Careful landscaping should ensure that existing intrusive features are better screened and will help to integrate proposed development into the existing setting of the Hall. The key objective should be to retain the visual prominence of the Hall in views from the south and to maintain some sense of openness to the north.
- 2.66 Inevitably, the development of the currently open land around the Hall will impact upon its setting, but the following mitigation measures are suggested to limit the visual intrusion of new buildings:

Mitigation

- Extend the existing tree avenue along the redirected access route to White Hart Lane and provide a more appropriate gates / entrance feature
- Screen the visual and aural impact of the railway line by new planting along the northern boundary
- Filter the impact of Beaulieu Park with new planting / landscaping along the eastern boundary of the development
- Retain the existing openness of the land to the south (either side of the avenue), but plant with sporadic parkland trees/clumps of appropriate native species, or those with a historic precedent in the parkland or locality, e.g. oaks, walnut trees, elms
- Any new buildings on the edge of this new 'parkland' area should be of a modest scale and, of low-key materials and design and screened from the Hall with appropriate landscaping
- Retain footpath link / green lane linking Old Lodge and Bulls Lodge along the Garden wall of New Hall and ensure that the area between them is left open (undeveloped) so that the buildings are seen within a green corridor
- Extend this green corridor to include the Barn ENE of New Hall so that it is viewed, with Bulls Lodge, in an open setting, from the proposed eastern bypass
- Provide interpretation along this footpath setting out the connection between the buildings and the history of the buildings
- Improve the tree-screening around the Nun's Cemetery extension and enhance the boundary with a more appropriate form of enclosure
- From the north, there is an opportunity to better screen or enclose the exposed west side of the school, the modern buildings of which dominate the historic grouping which is nestled within trees at the eastern side
- The layout of any proposed development to the north and west of New Hall could be used to define the postulated boundary of the former deer park pales, through the expansion of the areas of coppicing, etc. which survive – these could form landscape features within the development and could be used as the basis of a 'green network' through the area
- The existing field boundaries should be retained and reflected in the layout of any proposed development, especially the long straight boundary which runs centrally northwards from the north garden wall of New Hall and which may be the line of a former 'ride' into the parkland.

3.0 BOREHAM HOUSE

Significance of the Building

- 3.1 Boreham House was built for Benjamin Hoare, the son of a wealthy Fleet Street banker. The original designs were apparently by James Gibb, but (despite the list description's accreditation to Edward Shepherd), were seemingly executed by Henry Flitcroft and were complete by c1728 (see Registered Park & Garden entry). Many of the finer features from New Hall were incorporated into the House; including fireplaces, doorcases and a staircase (the entrance hall and saloon of the House are, as a result, particularly grand).
- 3.2 John Johnson, added the wings to the House; these were modified in the early C19 (c.1812) by Thomas Hopper who added the grand carriage entrances to the left and right of the main Palladian front of the House. The Tuscan porte-cochere is also early C19.
- 3.3 The building is a fine small C18 country house in Palladian style with good C19 work. Pevsner states 'The original house is in its restrained exterior and luxurious interior decoration characteristic of the best Early Georgian of Essex.'
- 3.4 It has strong historical connections with C18 and C19 regional figures. The acquisition of the house and surrounding farmland by Henry Ford in 1930 to use as his national Institute of Agricultural Engineering give the building an association with a national / international figure. Clearly the building is worthy of its Grade I Listed status.

The Original Setting of the Building

- 3.5 The original setting of Boreham House is, for the purposes of this report, considered to be a combination of the original 'pleasure grounds' and the Richard Woods landscape plan of the 1770s. It is thus the landscape as it was in the C18, the century of the house's construction.
- 3.6 In 1789, a mortgage agreement describes 'that capital mansion house called Boreham House together with the park, pleasure grounds and other lands thereto...' as covering c 146 acres (60ha). The extensive park encompassed all of the gardens and pleasure grounds (see first edition OS), bordered by the Roman road.
- 3.7 The house was designed to be approached by twin carriage drives flanking a 250m long canal. These features still survive though each of the drives was originally lined with elm trees creating a four row avenue which was considered by Country Life in 1914 to be 'probably one of the best elm avenues in the country'. The trees were lost to Dutch elm disease in the 1960s and there is now a mix of flowering cherry trees, mixed shrub beds, roses and bedding set in grass on the canal sides.
- 3.8 Richard Hoare, the elder brother of Benjamin, commissioned Richard Woods in the early 1770s to layout pleasure grounds and create a small informal lake on the south side of the house. The central area of the sloping lawn to the rear of the House was deliberately kept free of trees and contoured by Woods to open up the view of the lake and the landscape beyond it. The edges of the lawn were scattered with trees and shrubs planted on small hillocks also formed by Woods. Along the SW side of the lawn Woods planted a pleasure-ground shrubbery.

- 3.9 To the SW of the House is a kitchen garden which is enclosed by C18 walls and probably formed part of the original garden layout. It was certainly in existence by 1777 when Chapman and Andre's map was published.
- 3.10 The gardens to the south and north of the house were separated by the house itself and by brick walls which extended beyond the Johnson designed wings, terminating in symmetrical square buildings possibly used as banqueting houses. The original canal avenue to the front of the house was not altered by the Richard Woods landscape works.

Modifications to the Gardens

- 3.11 There were three main periods of change in the layout of the House's gardens. The first of these occurred in the early years of the C19 when Sir John Tyrell acquired the property.
- 3.12 In 1812 Sir John Tyrell commissioned the carriage arches and associated service buildings beside the house (though the banqueting houses were retained). Sir John and his son (another John) also laid some of the surrounding farmland to pasture and ornamented it with tree planting. An ice-house was built in a field to the SW of canal though this was demolished in the late C19. The C19 gardens were not particularly extensive but were described as being laid with great taste.
- 3.13 In 1843 Sir John Tyssen Tyrell gave permission for the railway line to pass through the N part of the park as long as a private station was constructed. This is shown on the 1881 OS. The map also shows a cheese farm close to Boreham Road and paths, tracks and clusters and lines of trees within the park.
- 3.14 The 1924 OS shows a boathouse in the SW corner of the canal. This may have been one of the works carried out by Mrs Tufnell-Tyrell in the early C20 who also made a rock walk and wild garden, probably in the small area of dense woodland at the SW end of the lake which she also widened to its present size. The 1924 map also shows a path from the cheese farm (which had its own walled garden) to the stable range.
- 3.15 In 1930 Henry Ford bought the house and 1250ha of estate. He used the house and the surrounding 13ha to form his Institute of Agricultural Engineering and turned the parkland back to agricultural use. Ford also seemingly heavily planted the NE boundary during his occupation to shield views of the adjacent tractor depot from the house. Part of the south lawn was apparently used as a tennis court in the 1930s and had a formal rose garden to the west of it. Neither is evident today.
- 3.16 In the 1970s the Ford Company began selling much of the surrounding agricultural land. The construction of the Boreham by-pass in 1972 included a roundabout near the site of the former cheese farm and some loss of the NW corner of the parkland.
- 3.17 The Historic Park Register also notes the planting of various clumps and boundaries of trees. These include those on the SW side of the lawn and a conifer plantation at the NE end of the lake. The Register also notes that, in 2000, much of the land was uncultivated and used for storing machinery.

The Current Setting of Boreham House

- 3.18 The current boundary of the Grade II Registered Historic Park / Garden largely corresponds to the land which has formed the main garden area of Boreham House since its construction. Clearly, and despite the changes to the planting, this area is of great importance to the setting of the House. This section will, however, consider the importance of other surrounding land and features to the setting of the House.

Visual Impact of the Building and Group

- 3.19 The principal view of the House from the B1137 is uninterrupted with the avenue and canal framing views of the House which sits prominently against the skyline rather than nestled against views of the surrounding landscape. This is the only real vantage point from which the property is clearly visible from the public realm, as it was designed to be seen.
- 3.20 The dense tree and shrub planting around the property's boundaries effectively screens the House from other views. Much of the surrounding land is inaccessible to the public as it is in agricultural use, although a public footpath runs around the eastern boundary and to the south of the gardens. However, only informal glimpsed views of the property are possible through the vegetation. Views from the west are generally screened by the walled kitchen garden.

Impact of Current Developments on the Building and Group

- 3.21 Ford's tractor depot which was positioned immediately to the northeast of the house, against the eastern wing, is the most intrusive element in the immediate setting of the building. It has a very industrial character, although it is screened by poplars from the gardens and largely hidden behind brick boundary walls with stone ball finials from the front of the house.
- 3.22 A line of electricity pylons run just to the east of the SE corner of the House's gardens. These are not generally visible from ground level within the majority of the gardens, but once the lake at the south end is reached, there are several points from where the closest pylon is particularly noticeable. There is access to the top of the western single storey wing of the House and from here (and the upper floors of the House), the pylon is especially prominent, interrupting views beyond the boundary of the House towards the Danbury Hills.
- 3.23 From this vantage point, the vast Royal Mail depot on the other side of the A12 to the west is quite visible too. Glimpses of this large shed can be gained through the vegetation along the western boundary of the House. Perhaps the most intrusive development has, however, been the Boreham bypass and the railway line, which are audible from within the gardens, belying the impression of an apparent rural idyll.

Links to Other Buildings and Features

- 3.24 There is little evidence to suggest that Boreham House originally had any planned views designed into the House and landscape layout. The House was built in the first half of the C18, before the fashion for views from country houses became widespread (in the second half of the C18).

- 3.25 The landscaping scheme of the 1770s however, followed the prevailing fashion of that time and the position of the lake created by Richard Woods at the south end of the rear garden was designed to take advantage of views across what would have been the original parkland of the House. This view through has been obscured by later planting and the parkland no longer exists, having been returned to agriculture by Henry Ford in the 1930s. A line of electricity pylons also runs very close to the southern boundary of the House's gardens, marring any potential link with the surrounding landscape.



Photograph 4 – view of Boreham House rooftop from eastern front Garden wall of New Hall

- 3.26 Although there is clearly a historical link between Boreham House and New Hall, there does not appear to have been any visual link between the two and Boreham House was in all likelihood built with the intention of keeping the two properties separate. It seems unlikely that Hoare would have wanted to view a building (New Hall) that he clearly had no intention of living in, and in fact virtually ruined before selling it shortly after the completion of Boreham House. Most informal accidental views of the property are now completely obscured by the embanked railway line and elevated road junction that lie between the two properties, although a glimpse of the chimneys of Boreham House can be gained from the area to the SE of New Hall.

Key Views and Vistas

- 3.27 The principal and virtually only clear vista of the House is from the Colchester Road along the canal avenue, although the House can also be seen from the western branch of the A12. The vista along the avenue is the planned view of the house and is a very ceremonial setting, appropriate to the formal style of the house and its present use as a venue for functions such as weddings. The original 4-row lime avenue has unfortunately been lost, but the strong linear pattern of the landscaping is retained by the canal.
- 3.28 The view from the front of the House is also across the long formal canal avenue, now terminated by the soft landscaping to the car parking area of the Premier Travel Inn on the opposite side of the B1137. The principal view from the house, although not original, is that across the rear gardens from the balustraded steps in front of the central pedimented doorway in the rear southeast elevation. This would have originally focused on the lake at

the south end of the garden, beyond which the original parkland would have been visible. Today, this view is obscured by the later trees around the water.

Conclusions

- 3.29 The extent of the original landscaped grounds to the House is largely that Registered Grade II on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The grounds have, however, undergone several changes since they were originally laid out, particularly with the loss of the large deer park that originally encircled them.
- 3.30 The gardens of the house are relatively self-contained today because of the later planting that densely encloses the boundary. Viewed from the B1137, the house retains its original country house setting with agricultural land either side. Although no longer within the grounds of the House, the arable fields either side of the canal avenue are important to the House's setting as they give the avenue 'breathing space' and allow it to be fully appreciated once reached.
- 3.31 From within the rear garden, there is little to disturb the secluded nature of this area until the south end of the gardens is reached. Here, the nearby line of electricity pylons become visible, but the main disturbance is the noise of the traffic travelling along the A12.
- 3.32 To the west of the house is a scattering of industrial / agricultural buildings which lie in the approximate location of the former Cheese House. These buildings are screened from the house and gardens by a dense treeline, but they introduce a more industrial character into the otherwise open nature of the surrounding fields and links in to the large industrial units on the western side of the A12.

Recommendations

- 3.33 The arable fields either side of the canal avenue should be maintained as open spaces in order to preserve the original approach to the House.
- 3.34 Any potential modifications to the road network in the vicinity should seek to mitigate the potential for further noise pollution. The potential for burying electricity cables (or repositioning pylons) in the vicinity of the House could also be investigated, particularly if the view out from the south end of the gardens were to be reinstated.
- 3.35 Part of the former parkland of the House has already been encroached upon by previous junction alterations and whilst it would be unfortunate to lose more to the already intrusive road system, if this would enable the noise to be better managed, the western side of the former parkland would seem to provide the best option for any necessary works.
- 3.36 The potential for employment / industrial units to the SW of the House should be carefully considered because, despite the screening provided by the trees along this boundary of the gardens, glimpse views through are possible. The Royal Mail depot is already detrimental to views from the west wing of the House and the possibility of further large scale industrial units in the area, could have a more intrusive impact.

3.37 Although the proposed development in the immediate vicinity of Boreham House is limited, there are a few measures that could be taken to mitigate against its potential impact, whilst having positive benefits to the setting of the House. These are proposed as follows:

- Reinststate the lime avenue along the front canal
- Maintain / improve the dense boundary planting around the gardens, especially on the West side
- Reopen the view south across and beyond the lake
- Remove or re-site the pylon line to the south of the house, particularly that closest to the garden boundary

APPENDIX ONE



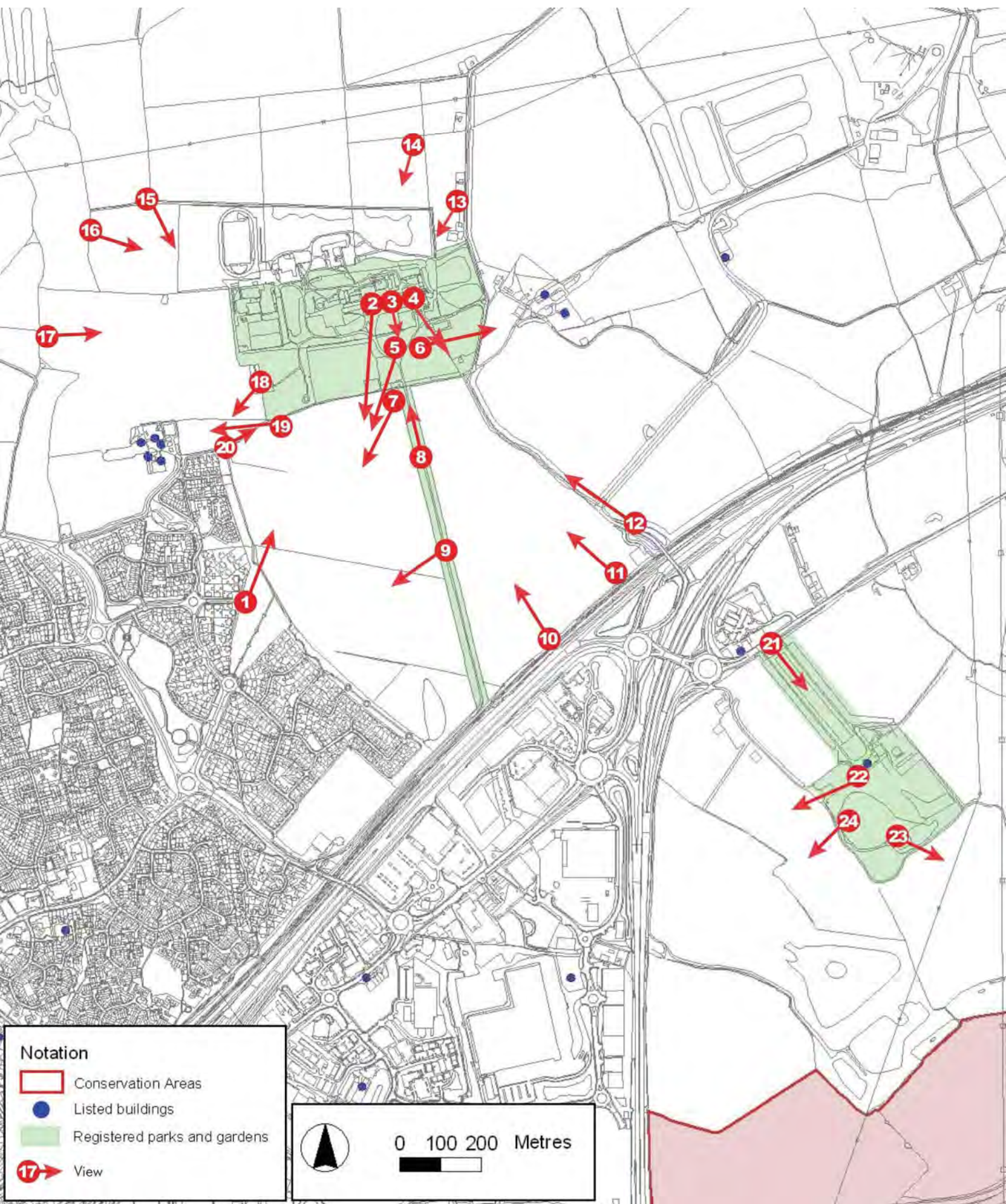


Fig.1



View 1



View 2



View 4



View 5



View 7



View 8



View 7



View 8



View 9



View 10



View 11



View 12



View 13



View 14



View 15



View 16



View 17



View 18



View 19



View 20



View 21



View 22



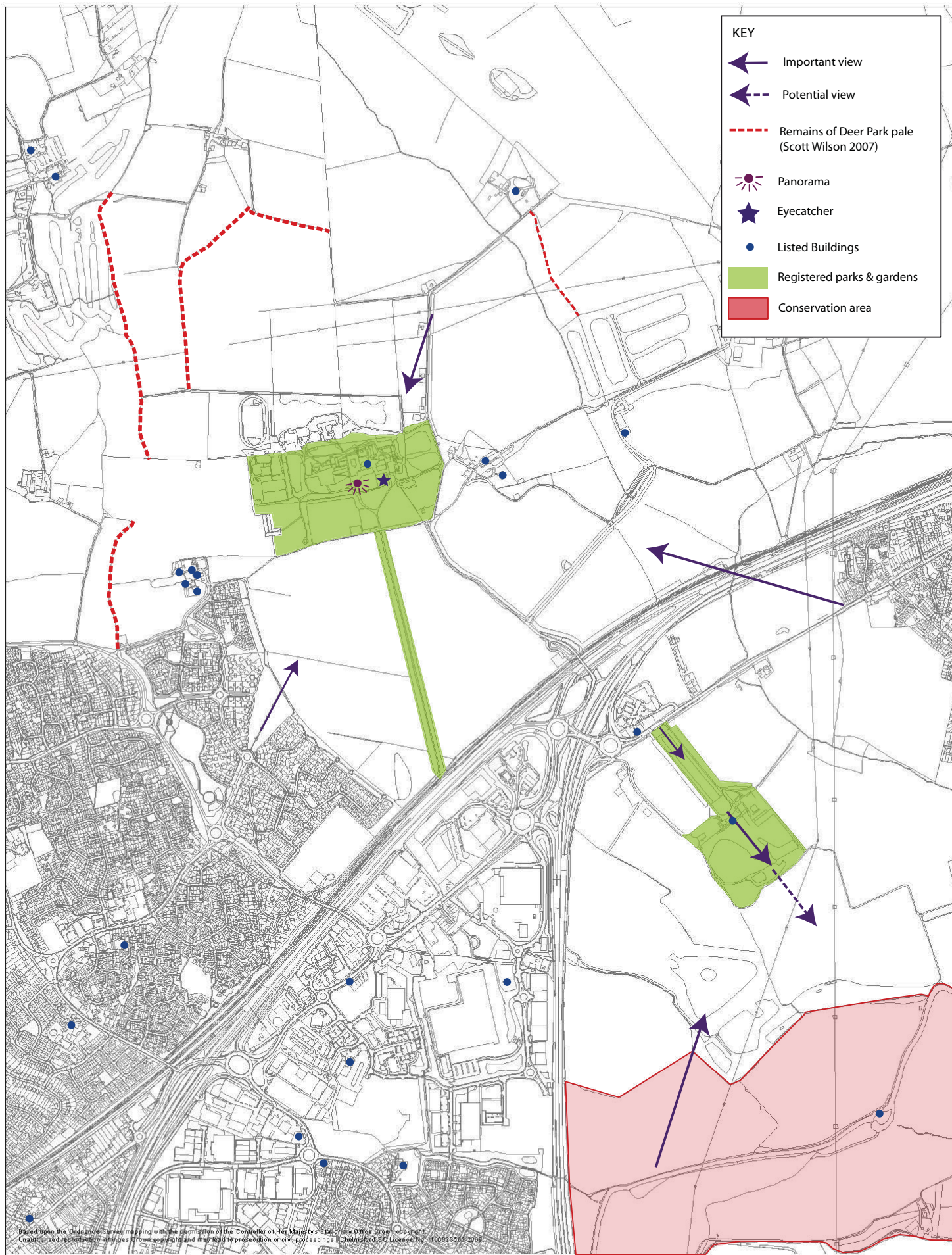
View 23



View 24

APPENDIX TWO





0 100 200 Metres

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APPENDIX THREE

