

PL007

Chelmsford Local Plan
Evidence Base Document
Heritage Assessment
Technical Note
Hammonds Farm

March 2024

Our Planning Strategy 2022 to 2041

Chelmsford
Local Plan



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Work has started to review Local Plan that will provide the planning framework for the future growth and development of the City Council's area until 2041. The updated Local Plan will identify land for housing, schools, shops and employment as well as areas for protection, such as open space and sites important for wildlife.

1.2 As part of the Local Plan process options for development are being considered, mainly concentrated at urban areas and existing settlements, outside of the Metropolitan Green Belt. The selection of development areas will be informed by 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 has been produced to define the heritage significance of designated and non designated heritage assets whose setting may be affected by development proposals. The objective is to inform the consideration of development options to ensure heritage significance is considered in accordance with local and national policy. This will include defining land where development may or may not have a heritage impact and recommending mitigation measures where necessary or desirable. This report does not cover archaeological remains, which should be subject to further assessment.

1.3 This report will inform future development options, which will be subject to assessment of a whole range of other constraints and opportunities in terms of development site allocation and delivery.

1.4 This report provides a brief assessment of the setting of designated and non designated heritage assets within or in the vicinity of development sites under consideration for the preferred housing led sites at Hammonds Farm. Additional studies cover rural and urban housing sites, and employment sites.

1.5 The findings of this report are based on site assessment together with desk-based research to define heritage significance. A variety of sources have provided background information, including:

- Statutory List of Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest (Historic England)
- Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens
- Chelmsford Register of Buildings of Local Value
- Chelmsford Protected Lanes Study
- Buildings of England: Essex (2007) Bettley and Pevsner
- RCHME: Central & SW Essex (1916)
- C19 OS Maps
- Chapman and Andre Map 1777
- Historic Environment Characterisation (Essex County Council)
- Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates)
- Essex Record Office Documents
- Development site archaeological and heritage assessments
- Local history information

2.0 BACKGROUND

Designated and Non Designated Heritage Assets

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework defines Heritage Assets as: *A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).'*

2.2 Designated Heritage Assets are defined as: *A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.'* (NPPF, Annex 2)

2.3 The 'Setting of a heritage asset' is defined as *'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'* (NPPF, Annex 2)

2.4 'Significance' is defined as *'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'* (NPPF, Annex 2)

Policy Objectives

2.5 Chelmsford City 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.

2.6 National and international policy recognises the value and significance of cultural heritage, the public interest in the preservation of particular assets and sets out mechanisms to ensure that it is taken into account in planning decision-making. Sites and features of special interest are protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as amended, and within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2.7 National planning policy guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the online National Planning Practice Guidance, and the Good Practice Advice published by Historic England (GPA1 Local plan making, GPA2 Managing significance in decision-taking in the historic environment and GPA3 Setting). The NPPF sets 12 core planning principles for sustainable development, one of which is that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can contribute to the quality of life now and in the future. Heritage assets are irreplaceable and, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

2.8 The NPPF says that local planning authorities should take account of: the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

2.9 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. (NPPF, paragraph 200)

2.10 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.'

2.11 In line with this guidance, the following sections will broadly discuss the significance of each building or group of buildings potentially affected by the delivery of the preferred employment sites, considering the historic setting and then highlighting 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, historic associations and identifying key vistas and views. This methodology is adapted from Historic England's Guidance on the Setting of Heritage Assets (December 2017).

2.12 The detailed policies on development management concern the need to clearly define the significance of any potentially affected site or area and the principles to be considered in determining any proposal for change potentially affecting heritage assets. There is an overall requirement to gather sufficient information to ensure an adequate understanding of the significance of an asset before any decisions affecting its future are made. A key concept in the NPPF is proportionality; that the information required, efforts to preserve, and degree of public benefits necessary to offset any harm or loss of an asset should be based on an understanding of its significance.

2.13 The national guidance on the approach to the assessment of the contribution made by the setting of an asset to its significance, and of changes resulting from development is given in Good Practice Advice GPA3 Setting (2017) published by Historic England. Guidance is given on the range of factors and qualities that can define the contribution of adjoining land to the significance of any single asset or group of assets. The guidance aims for a consistent approach to the assessment of setting and the range of historic, visual and functional relationships of an asset to the surrounding land area. These include both physical attributes and perceptual values, depending on the nature of an asset and its past and present surroundings. Potentially significant views can be deliberately designed or incidental, or the result of later changes. A five step approach is proposed:

1. Identification of heritage assets which are likely to be affected by proposals.
2. Assessment of whether and what contribution the setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset.

3. Assessing the effects of proposed development on the setting of a heritage asset.
4. Maximising enhancement and reduction of harm on the setting of heritage assets.
5. The final decision about the acceptability of proposals.

2.14 In October 2015, Historic England published an advice note, Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans to offer support to those involved in the local plan site allocation process. A positive strategy for the historic environment in local plans can ensure that site allocations avoid harming the significance of heritage assets, including effects on their setting, while at the same time presenting possible opportunities for the historic environment. The guidance offers advice on the three key stages of the site allocation process: evidence gathering, site selection and site allocation policies.

2.15 The relevant local planning policy is provided by Chelmsford Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (Adopted May 2020). Strategic Policy S3 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, Policy DM13 Designated Heritage Assets, Policy DM14 Non-Designated Heritage Assets and Policy DM15 Archaeology.

2.16 While setting is largely a visual term (given that views are considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset), it (and, thus, the way in which an asset is experienced) can also be affected by other environmental factors including noise, vibration and odour. Further, setting may also incorporate perceptual and associational attributes pertaining to the asset's surroundings.

3.0 LAND AT HAMMONDS FARM ASSESSMENT OF DESIGNATED AND NON DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Location

3.1 Hammonds Farm is located 4.4km east of Chelmsford City Centre. The landholding extends to a large estate centred on the historic farm and other lands encompassing part of the parishes of Danbury, Sandon, Boreham and Little Baddow.

3.2 The allocation land (see figure 1) includes the land roughly enclosed by the A12 to the west, the A414 to the south, New Lodge Chase to the east and beyond Hurrells Lane to the north, there is also land to the west of Boreham adjacent the A12. The setting of designated heritage assets within 1km of the site have been considered, as well as within 3km for highly graded assets. Where there is the potential for impact, they are assessed within the report.

3.3 The underlying geology is London clay, with underlying deposits of silt, sand and gravel.

Historic Background

3.4 The Chelmer Valley provides rich archaeological evidence; the fertile land was home to hunter-gather communities in the Mesolithic period.

3.5 To the north of the valley, at Springfield Lyons, there was a Neolithic enclosed camp and Bronze age circus, which would have been a prominent landscape feature. Archaeological evidence suggests a community deeply involved in agriculture with advanced tools. This pattern of dispersed communities reliant on agriculture continued into the Roman period.

3.6 There is Roman brick re-used at St Mary's Church, Little Baddow and St Andrew, Sandon, evidence of the area's development as part of the agricultural setting to the Roman town of Caesaromagus at Moulsham.

3.7 Danbury, Little Baddow, Boreham and Sandon are mentioned in the Domesday Book. The fertile land at Hammonds Farm has served the areas agricultural land use for millennia. Many of the farmsteads are of probably Saxon or Norman origins, including Hammonds, Phillows and Little Baddow Hall. Many of the field boundaries are of ancient origins. Hammonds probably takes its name from John Hammond recorded in 1387. A deer or hare park was established at Danbury Park in the late thirteenth century.

3.8 Great Graces was built c.1540 as a grand brick mansion. It takes its names from the Le Gras family, Lords of the Manor in the thirteenth century.

3.9 The Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation was opened in 1797 providing an important trade route from Chelmsford to the sea lock at Heybridge. Its commercial use gradually declined when the railway reached Chelmsford in 1842. It is now used for recreation.

3.10 The landscape of isolated farms, cottages, woodlands, lanes and tracks largely remains unchanged from the nineteenth century (figures 2, 3a and 3b), although many field boundaries have been lost in the twentieth century. There was much rebuilding in the nineteenth century with the replacement of Hammonds Farmhouse, a new house at Riffhams, alteration of Phillows and St Cleres Hall.

3.11 The A12 bypass was constructed in the 1970s and is a visual and audible intrusion into the rural area.

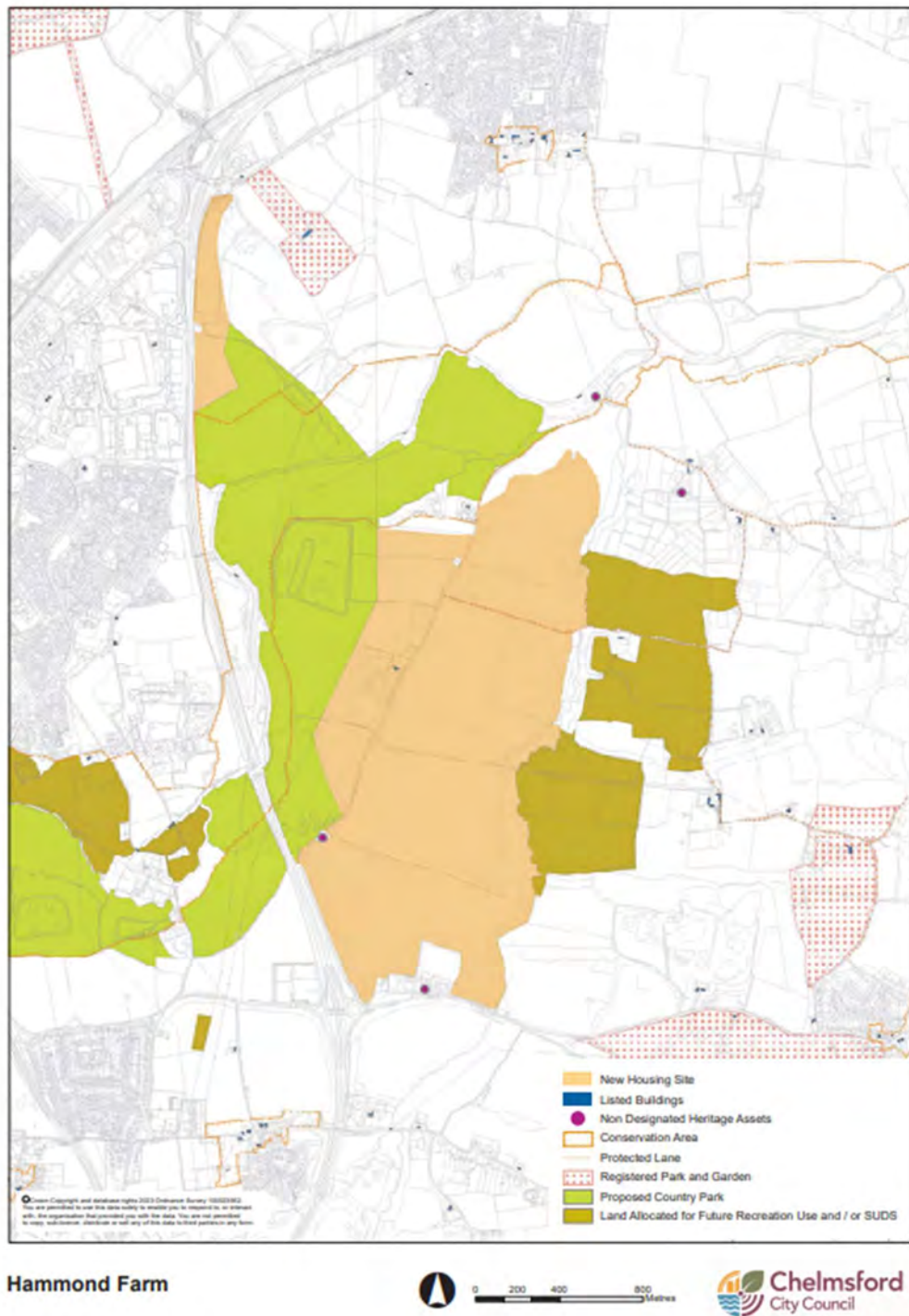


Figure 1, Proposed allocation site Hammonds Farm



Figure 2, Chapman and Andre Map, 1777



Figure 3a, 1st Edition OS Map, 1873/4, north of Hammonds Farm



Figure 3b, 1st Edition OS Map, 1873/4, south of Hammonds Farm

3.12 The following section gives accounts of designated and non designated built heritage assets and sets out how their setting contributes to its significance. This is based on the assumption of moderate density housing development of predominantly two and three storeys with public and private open space, community facilities and retention of landscape features.

3.13 This assessment is based on a number of unknown assumptions which seek to address probable impacts, but any future schemes would have to be fully assessed for their impact.

Area Assessments of Designated and Non Designated Heritage Assets

Maldon Road

3.14 Sandon Brook Place is a large late nineteenth century house now converted into flats. It was historically known as Potash Farm and one of the historic farm buildings remains to the north-east (now converted into a house). The front elevation has two gable wings to each side with bay windows and a central two storey gable projection, giving an imposing appearance. There is attractive brick detailing, including hood mouldings to the windows and a colonnade to the east elevation. It was used as a boarding school from the mid twentieth century until 1995.

3.15 The building should be considered as a non-designated heritage asset due to its architectural interest and community value as a local landmark and long-term function as a school.

3.16 The setting of the building which contributes to its significance is confined to the treed grounds to the frontage and its immediate surroundings. The agricultural land to the north makes no contribution to the significance of the building.

Main Road

St Cleres Hall

3.17 St Cleres Hall is located on the north side of Main Road, west of the main village settlement of Danbury. An aerial photo has been provided at figure 4. The manor of Danbury was centred on St Cleres Hall in the medieval period. The de Clare family are first mentioned in 1246. In 1282 William de Clare was given licence to empark (creating or enlarging a deer or hare park). The location of this park is unknown, but it could be the teardrop shaped site to the southwest (now bisected by the A414), or another site remote from the hall.

3.18 The present house dates from the mid nineteenth century and is a replacement of a sixteenth century building. It is a red brick building in a Tudor style, a common feature to Danbury village. The house is grade II listed, justifiably so as a mid-nineteenth century building of architectural interest.

3.19 The adjacent barn is also grade II listed, justifiably so as a seventeenth century vernacular building with group value with the hall. There is another traditional barn to the north and other modern outbuildings.

3.20 The grounds are well treed and include a recently planted avenue. The rural landscape to the east and west, and the relationship with Danbury Park to the south form part of the setting and contribute to its significance. The land to the immediate north contributes to the rural environment, beyond which the modern gravel extraction has decimated the landscape and makes little contribution to setting.

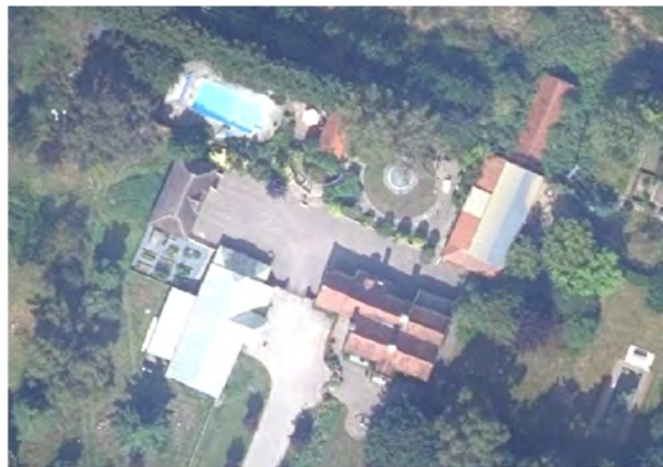


Figure 4, St Cleres Hall, Council's aerial photos 2018/19, Imagery © 2024 Bluesky International Ltd. & Getmapping.

Danbury Park

3.21 Danbury Park is a c.100-acre site bounded by the A414 to the north, Well Lane to the east, partly by Woodhill Lane to the south and farmland to the west. A deer or hare park is thought to have been founded in the late thirteenth century at Danbury. The present extent of the park largely remains from the sixteenth century, when Sir Walter Mildmay extended the boundaries and built a mansion.

3.22 The park is designated as a Registered Park and Garden on Historic England's inventory of special historic interest at grade II. The present house and Main Lodge, dating from the 1830s are also grade II listed.

3.23 The Ice House c.320m south of Danbury Palace (figure 5) is a scheduled monument. The park and its buildings are of considerable aesthetic and historic interest and are justifiably designated.

3.24 The present Danbury Palace has a designed view to the west on the axis of an avenue. The land at Hammonds Farm, beyond the A414, would be well screened and is peripheral to the key views. The eighteenth-century landscape design associated with the former house includes many planned views into the wider landscape, including towards key landmarks in the distance. These views are now partly lost due to extensive tree growth in the park. However, many of the key views remain, including those towards Chelmsford Cathedral and St Marys Church, Great Baddow. A designed view towards All Saints Church Springfield remains and crosses the study area at the southern part of the site, adjacent the A414. The fall in land means that this view is unlikely to be affected by domestic scale development on the land at Hammonds Farm.

3.25 The separation between the park and the potential development site means that there would be a limited impact on its setting. Some views from the west of the park would be affected, changing the wider landscaping setting from rural to urban. This change would amount to a low level of less than substantial harm.



Figure 5, Danbury Palace c.1880

St John the Baptist, Danbury

3.26 St Johns Church originates from the late twelfth century and is grade I listed and also a significant feature within the Danbury Conservation Area. The tower and spire date from the fifteenth century. The spire was repaired following a lightning strike in 1750 and restored in 1812-14 and at various stages through the nineteenth century.

3.27 The church occupies a prominent position on Danbury Hill, c.112m AOD, the third highest location in Essex. The spire upon the tower is a visible landmark for many miles around Danbury.

3.28 The proposed allocation sits in the foreground of long views of the spire from the northwest and there are also views from within the site.

3.29 There are views from most of Hammonds Road and the surrounding land. Some of the most significant views are from the west-northwest where the tower and spire are visible. Figure 6 shows views towards St John the Baptist Church and Great Graces. Given the size of the proposed allocation site, it forms a notable part of the extended setting to the church. The change from a rural to an urban setting and likely loss or impact upon views from a large area would impact on the significance of the church. Detailed analysis of views is required to inform future development proposals for site, which can then inform a mitigation strategy and the location, height and scale of buildings. Views from within the site could be framed within landscape corridors as a means of reinforcing legibility, local distinctness and reducing heritage harm. Subject to mitigation there is likely to be a low level of less than substantial harm to St Johns Church.



Figure 6, View from Hammonds Road to St John the Baptist Church (green) and Great Graces (orange)

Danbury Conservation Area

3.30 Danbury Conservation Area is located c.2.5km to the east-southeast of the proposed allocation site, concentrated on the historic ribbon development along Main Road and the significant open spaces around St John's church and the Common.

3.31 The hilltop location of the village means that there are significant views across the surrounding landscape, particularly to the north, northwest and south. The significant screening between the Conservation Area and the considerable distance means that there would be no impact on the immediate setting of the Conservation Area. However, some key views, including those from Elm Green would be impacted upon, where the rural setting would be eroded.

3.32 St Johns Church is an important feature within the Conservation Area and views of this would be affected, as discussed above. There is likely to be low level of less than substantial harm to the setting of the Conservation Area.

Woodhill Road

3.33 Sandon Village and a collection of isolated farmsteads and cottages lie along Woodhill Road to the south of the study area. This includes nine grade II listed buildings, the grade II* listed Church of St Andrew and the Old Rectory, together with Sandon Village Conservation Area centred on the village green.

3.34 The rural setting of this collection of designated heritage assets contributes to their significance, which includes the compact nature of the village and the land between the A414 and Woodhill Road. The A12 corridor and its densely planted embankment provide significant separation and screening of the site from the village.

3.35 There are glimpse views to the tower of St Andrews Church from the north, which should be retained in any development at the Hammonds Farm site, but otherwise the land to the north of the A414 makes no contribution to setting of the designated heritage assets at Sandon.

3.36 Bridge Farm, Sandon Lodge and Sandon Brook Bridge are each grade II listed. They are sufficient set away from the allocation site that there would be no impact upon their settings. They are discussed further in the Heritage Assessment for employment sites allocations.

Hurrells Lane

3.37 Water Hall is an exceptionally well preserved in-line hall house dating from c.1400. It is grade II listed but the completeness of its timber frame and plan form would justify listing at a higher grade.

3.38 It was historically known as Belmers. Hurrells Lane is an ancient route. The setting is rural and contributes to the significance of the building. Landscape character has been eroded by the loss of field boundaries and the creation of an agricultural reservoir.

3.39 The allocation does not propose development east of Sandon Brook, where the rural setting to Water Hall is important. To the west of Sandon Brook, the alignment and rural character of Hurrells Lane should be preserved and scale and roofscape carefully considered.

Hammonds Road

Rumbolds House

3.40 Rumbolds House is a timber framed farmhouse, associated with Rumbolds Farm to the northwest. A house in this position is depicted on the Chapman and Andre Map of 1777 which fits with the appearance of the present building, albeit altered and extended. The house is likely to be too altered to be included on the statutory list, but has some character as an eighteenth-century timber framed house and should be considered as a non-designated heritage asset.

3.41 The farm buildings to the northwest all date from the twentieth century and are of no interest. The A12 is an intrusive feature, both visually and audibly. The course of Hammonds Road was altered when the A12 bypass was constructed in the 1970s. The field boundaries have largely been removed in the second half of the twentieth century. The track which runs east-southeast from the house relates to an ancient field boundary and should be preserved. The design and layout of new housing adjacent to Rumbolds House would need to avoid being overly dominant, with a landscape buffer and use of traditional scale, forms and materials.

Hammonds Farm

3.42 Hammonds Farm comprises a farmhouse, traditional farm buildings and modern farm buildings. The farmhouse dates from c.1820 and is grade II listed, justifiably so as a fine Regency farmhouse. See figure 7.

3.43 A coach house to the west, barn to the south (both curtilage listed) and sweeping drive to the front of the house remain. Historically there was an orchard to the north of the house, now the garden.

3.44 Modern agricultural buildings to the south dominate the setting of the listed building and the wider landscape.

3.45 The A12, pylons and power lines, loss of field boundaries and the creation of a large agricultural reservoir impact on landscape character.

3.46 There is a largely flat landscape between Hammonds Road and Sandon Brook to the east, which allows extensive views towards the formal frontage of the farmhouse. The area along this section of Hammonds Road affords long distance views towards Great Graces and St Johns Church on Danbury Hill. Graces Walk, an avenue of seventeenth century origin aligned west from Great Graces, is a significant landscape feature.

3.47 The landscape west of Hammonds Road extends down to the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation, with meadows at the base of the valley and arable land on the valley sides. This landscape character is evident for much of the Navigation and is an essential feature to its setting, whilst also forming part of the rural setting to Hammonds Farm.

3.48 Development around Hammonds Farm will have a harmful impact on its setting, likely a moderate-high level of less than substantial harm. Adequate landscape setting should be retained to minimise the harm. It would be desirable to improve screening to the A12 and reverse modern landscape changes, including the reservoir and pylons. To the east of Hammonds Road, the historic Hurrells Lane and Graces Walk should be retained and a generous rural margin preserved. Key views of landmarks should be retained, including back towards Hammonds Farm and Phillows Farm.



Figure 7, Hammonds Farm, First Edition OS plan (surveyed 1873-4, published 1881)

Phillows Farm

3.49 Phillows farmhouse is of seventeenth century origins, with substantial rebuilding and encasing in red brick in the mid nineteenth century. It is grade II listed, justifiably so on account of its architectural and historic interest.

3.50 There are the remains of a moated enclosure and a double courtyard of nineteenth century outbuildings, now in commercial use.

3.51 The wider rural setting and the landscape character of isolated farmsteads form part of its significance. There has been some loss of field boundaries to the east and west, but the landscape framework remains.

3.52 There are a number of key views in the vicinity of Phillows Farm to landmarks in the distance, including Danbury Hill.

3.53 To the west, the rural landscape is significant to the setting the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation and the isolated farmsteads. To the south and east of Hammonds Road development should retain an open setting to Phillows Farm, retain Hurrells Lane, maintain key views and pay particular attention to the scale and form of development, edge treatment and landscape screening. There is still likely to be harmful impact amounting to a low to moderate level of less than substantial harm.

The Mill House

3.54 The Mill House is of nineteenth century origins and has some interest for its association with the mill site. The water mill burned down in 1893, but the mill pond and mill race remain.

3.55 The house lies within the Chelmer and Blackwater Conservation Area and is of sufficient interest to warrant being a non designated heritage asset of low value.

3.56 The most important part of its setting is the relationship with the navigation, mill pond and site of the mill. The wider landscape setting makes a minor contribution to its setting. The proposed allocation site is sufficiently distant that it would not affect its setting.

Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation

3.57 The Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation was formed in 1797 as a navigable waterway using the existing river network, to allow a trade route between Chelmsford and Heybridge. The Navigation is designated as a Conservation Area for its entire length, justifiably so for its special character and historic interest.

3.58 The Conservation Area boundary roughly follows the line of the valley floor. The water meadows and arable use of the valley sides give a rural character, essential to the significance of the Conservation Area.

3.59 There are a number of listed bridges and locks associated with the Navigation, including Cuton Lock, Stonham's Lock (figure 8) and Little Baddow Lock adjacent to the study area. Each date from c.1797 and are grade II listed. Their significance lies in construction and association with the Navigation.



Figure 8, Stonhams Lock

3.60 The General Headquarters defence Line was built in 1940 in advance of potential German invasion and used the line of the navigation as a natural defence supplemented with pillboxes and gun emplacements. Remnants of these defences remain at the base of the valley.

3.61 Development on the west side of Hammonds Road and the northern part of the allocation will have a considerable impact on the setting of the Conservation Area, radically altering the setting from rural to urban. This harm could be partly mitigated by careful treatment of the development edge; protecting key views from the base of the valley, providing landscape buffers, considered scale, form, rooflines, materials and landscaping. There is however, even with appropriate mitigation, still likely to be a harmful impact amounting to a moderate to high level of less than substantial harm. Enhancement of the Conservation Area itself, will be an important part of compensating this impact.

3.62 The proposed allocation includes a new active travel route linking the development with Boreham interchange and the new Railway Station at Beaulieu. This would include a new road across the valley and a bridge at the navigation crossing. This could have a considerable impact on the character of the Conservation Area, with the danger that it provides physical segregation and a significant impact on landscape character. It will be important that the design of this route and the river crossing minimises these impacts, with careful consideration of levels, design, lighting and landscaping. There could potentially be a considerable impact, less than substantial harm at the upper end of the spectrum. It would be for the design to minimise this harm and provide enhancement to offset the impact. It is essential the bridge provides sufficient clearance of the river for navigation of the river.

3.63 The new community will rely heavily on the navigation for recreation and connections to the city centre. This pressure could cause considerable management issues, with the need for metalled and illuminated cycle paths for instance. The rural character of the navigation should remain at the forefront of all interventions. There is also an opportunity to provide heritage interpretation and make better use of the navigation for recreation and possibly a river taxi to the Waterside.

Graces Lane

Great Graces

3.64 Great Graces is the remains of a large mid sixteenth century house. There is also a brew house, barn, outbuildings and historic boundary wall which date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Each of the buildings are grade II listed, justifiably so as a collection of buildings with historic and architectural interest.

3.65 The house was built c.1540. In hearth tax returns of 1672 it possessed 26 hearths, compared with 7 or 8 at Little Baddow Hall, Riffhams and Phillows Farm, showing its high status. Graces Walk is a seventeenth century avenue which extends west from Great Graces. This avenue is a significant landscape feature. See figure 9.



Figure 9, Graces Walk 1906

3.66 The rural setting and views to and from Great Graces are part of its setting and contribute to its significance. To the east of Sandon Brook, the rural setting would be retained by avoiding development. To the west of Sandon Brook there is scope to provide development with a low to moderate level of harm, if Graces Walk is preserved, its planting reinstated, generous landscape buffers maintained and its surface enhanced.

Riffhams

3.67 The Riffhams estate covers 20ha split by Graces Lane. The house is a fine Regency mansion built 1815-17, set within a parkland laid with advice from Humphry Repton in 1815. The house is grade II listed and the park is included at grade II on the Register of Parks and Gardens, justifiably so for their design interest.

3.68 The rural setting to the house and park, in a wooded, gently rolling landscape is significant to its setting. There are designed views across the valley to and from the house, but the dense ancient woodland to the west provides screening and separation from the land at Hammonds Farm. The fall in levels and separation, together the allocation restricting development to the west of the brook, means there would be no adverse impact on the setting of Riffhams and its registered park.

St Mary the Virgin Church, Little Baddow

3.69 St Marys Church has an eleventh century nave, fourteenth century aisle and west tower, fifteenth century chancel and early nineteenth century vestry. It was restored by the well known Victorian architect William White in 1858.

3.70 The buildings grade I listing reflects its ancient fabric and considerable architectural and historic interest.

3.71 The church is a significant landmark from the wider area, particularly in winter months. The rural setting makes a considerable contribution to its significance.

3.72 The northern part of the proposed allocation extends to c.400m southwest of the church. There is notable screening by the vegetation along the brook. However, there would still be a considerable impact on the setting, essentially changing from a rural to urban environment. In order to mitigate the impact of the development, built form in the far northern part of the allocation should be avoided, views to the church retained within landscape corridors, landscape buffers provided and the scale, design, layout and materials of the edge carefully considered. There is still likely to be a low to moderate level of less than substantial harm to the setting.

Little Baddow Hall

3.73 Little Baddow Hall dates from the fourteenth or fifteenth century and is grade II* listed. It forms part of a group with the listed church of St Mary.

3.74 The rural setting is an important feature of the context. The Hall is visible in key views from Hammonds Road and the surrounding area, with the most important views from the west and southwest.

3.75 Similar to St Marys Church, there will likely be harm to its setting and mitigation measures as above will be required.

Buildings south and southeast of St Marys Church, Little Baddow

3.76 There is a group of four grade II listed buildings to the southeast of St Marys Church, comprising The Manse, Little Baddow Reform Church, Yew Tree Cottage and to the east Cuckoos.

3.77 These buildings have a rural setting on a country lane. The proposed allocation site is well screened and sufficiently distant that there would be no harm to their settings.

3.78 New Hall Park Farm lies to the south of St Marys Church. It was previously a fruit farm. There is an eighteenth-century timber framed barn at the centre of the site. It has some heritage value as a vernacular farm building and should be considered as a non-designated heritage asset. It would still be experienced within its immediate rural setting and there would be no harm to its significance. The remainder of the buildings on the site are modern and of no heritage value.

Boreham Conservation Area and associated heritage assets

3.79 Boreham Church Road Conservation Area covers the historic core of the village, centred on the grade I listed Church of St Andrew. The Old Rectory is grade II* listed and there are a further six grade II listed buildings within the Conservation Area and three further grade II buildings to the eastern side of the village.

3.80 The village sits at the top of the valley side, with an expansive rural setting to the south. The village centre is enclosed by built form and vegetation, so there are limited views out to the south.

3.81 The Church of St Andrew is a visible landmark for many miles, with the tower an important feature. See figure 10. The church is c.1.5km from the northern edge of the proposed allocation site with notable screening along the navigation. There would likely be a minor impact on the setting of the church and the Conservation Area due to change to its wider setting from rural to urban. This harm could be mitigated by retention of key views and careful treatment of the development edges.



Figure 10, St Andrew Church, Boreham

Boreham House

3.82 Boreham House is an exceptionally fine county house built between 1727-28 and extended in the early nineteenth century. It is rare in the combination of contemporary (with later alterations) landscape and house. The house is grade I Listed and the landscape a grade II registered park and garden.

3.83 The canal to the north and its pleasure grounds to the south form the key parts of the immediate setting. The wider rural setting contributes to its significance, although the A12, Boreham interchange and development to the north and west have negatively impacted upon its setting.

3.84 The proposed allocation adjacent the A12 would further erode the rural setting of Boreham House and its Registered Park and Garden. The screening on the western side of the grounds, modern development and the intrusion of the A12 are factors in considering the setting. The scale of development, landscaping and lighting would be important issues. It is likely that the development would still amount to a moderate-high level of less than substantial harm.

3.85 The route and treatment of the active travel route will also be important to minimise the impact on its setting.

The Generals

3.86 The Generals is a former coaching inn of seventeenth century origins, grade II listed. It is now converted into offices.

3.87 Its relationship with Main Road is important, but its wider setting has been eroded by Boreham interchange, the A12 and development to its north. The proposed allocation site would have no impact on its setting.

Sheepcotes Farm

3.88 Sheepcotes Cottage lies to the west of the Boreham employment allocation. It has origins as a fifteenth century hall house. It is grade II listed, due to the high quality of its timber frame.

3.89 It is now consumed with a modern industrial estate and has no sense of its original rural setting. The proposed allocation is less than 200m away, but it is separated by the A12 and modern industrial estate, so there would be no harm to its setting.

Historic lanes

3.90 There are a number of historic lanes within the area; Hurrells Lane and Graces Walk within the site, and Church Lane, Chapel Lane, Graces Lane and New Lodge Chase within the wider area.

3.91 These lanes are all indicated on the Chapman and Andrea Map of 1777, but are likely to be of ancient origins. They are designated as protected lanes and should be considered non designated heritage assets.

3.92 Graces Walk originates from the seventeenth century and forms an important part of the setting to Great Graces. The proposals should reinstate the avenue planting and retain a generous landscape setting.

3.93 The other lanes should be retained and development or highway works designed to ensure their rural character and setting is maintained.

CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The land at Hammonds Farm has a diverse character and a range of designated and non designated heritage assets, which are of local and national importance. The landscape is the dominant feature, with the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation at the base of the valley, rising towards Danbury Hill.

4.2 There are isolated farmsteads at Hammonds Farm and Pillows Farm, the remains of a grand mansion at Great Graces, and Graces Walk, an impressive avenue. The area is crossed by many distinctive views to landmarks in the distance, including Boreham House and the parish churches at Sandon, Danbury, Boreham and Little Baddow.

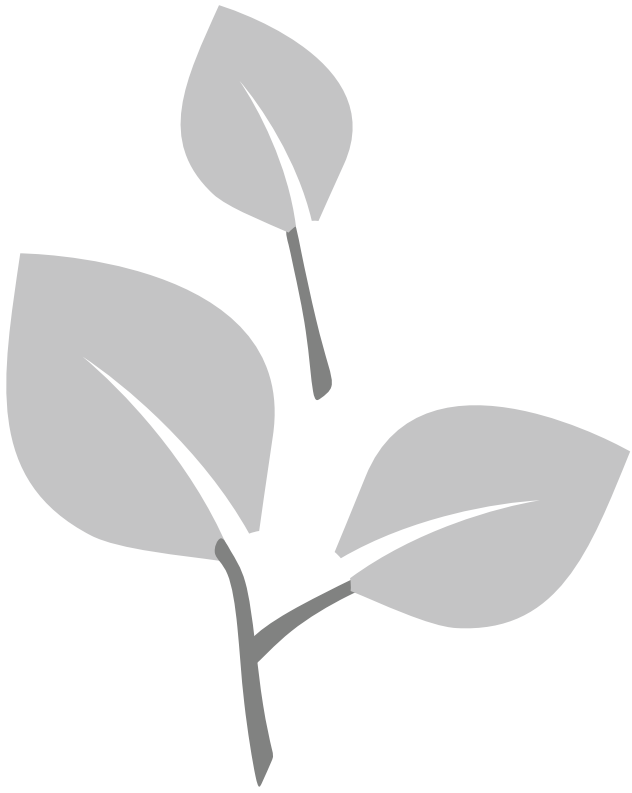
4.3 The rural character of the area has been eroded by modern agriculture, the loss of field boundaries, reservoirs, grain stores, pylons and intrusion of the A12. However, the landscape framework and rural character remains, including historic lanes and field boundaries, and woodlands to the east. Large scale development will change this character from rural to urban, but provides the opportunity to reverse or mitigate some of the modern interventions.

4.4 The plateau between Hammonds Road and Sandon Brook provides an opportunity for development where the impact on designated and non-designated heritage assets could be minimal or capable of being mitigated against. The setting of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation to the west of Hammonds Road is significant and should be protected, as should Graces Walk, Hurrells Lane and the setting to other listed buildings.

Principles for the land at Hammonds Farm

- Maintain a buffer to designated heritage and non-designated heritage assets to protect their setting where this is part of their significance. Areas of high sensitivity include the land west of Hammonds Road, to the north near to St Marys Church and the areas around the farmsteads.
- Retain field boundaries and work within the existing landscape framework.
- Protect the valley sides to the Navigation, west of Hammonds Road and east of Sandon Brook. Mitigate the impacts of the active travel route to Boreham interchange.
- Celebrate the areas heritage in new developments, for instance in place and road names, public art, heritage trails, community projects, design and links with adjacent heritage sites.
- Undertake archaeological evaluation at an early stage to inform site allocation and master planning.
- Provide improved visual and acoustic screening to the A12.
- Reinststate meadows to the west of Hammonds Road, consider removal of the agricultural reservoir and routing existing power lines below ground. Set back any development and provide landscape buffers.
- Provide enhancement of the navigation to offset unavoidable heritage impacts.
- Protect key views to landmarks, including those to Danbury, Boreham, Sandon and Little Baddow churches.
- Retain a sense of landscape setting to the historic farmsteads.
- Protect existing woodlands, trees and field boundaries, particularly east of Sandon Brook.
- Reinststate the avenue planting to Graces Walk, improve it surfacing and maintain a generous landscape setting.

- Protect the character and setting of the rural lanes.
- Provide significant screening of employment development within the setting of Boreham House. Carefully consider layout and scale, and minimise lighting pollution.
- Provide footpath links to the Navigation, together with landscape enhancements.
- Carefully consider layout, open space, scale, design, roofscape, landscaping and materials to avoid or minimise heritage impacts.



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