

**PL006**

Chelmsford Local Plan  
Evidence Base Document  
Heritage Assessments  
Technical Note  
Rural Sites

March 2024

*Our Planning Strategy 2022 to 2041*

**Chelmsford**  
Local Plan



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Work has started to review the 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 sites at Bicknacre, East Hanningfield and Ford End. Additional studies cover urban housing sites, Hammonds Farm 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). Policy S3 on protecting the historic environment, Policy DM13 designated heritage asset, 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 NORTH OF ABBEY FIELDS EAST HANNINGFIELD

#### Location

3.1 East Hanningfield Lies c.8.0km southeast of Chelmsford City Centre. The proposed site is located on the northwest side of the village, accessed via Abbey Fields. See figure 2 at the end of this section.

#### Historic Background

3.2 East Hanningfield is recorded in the Domesday Book as a small settlement, the name translating to 'open country of the people of Hana'. It developed as a rural village, with the original Saxon church located next to the manorial hall, remote from the village. The church burned down in 1883, with the new All Saints Church building in the centre of the village. The village expanded in the nineteenth century, founded on the local rural economy. The modern village is based around The Tye, a long narrow green, with areas of modern housing to the north and southwest.

3.3 Abbey Fields was built in the late 1970s, when the rectory was sold off and its lands developed with 13 detached houses and a new rectory. The land appears to have historically been agricultural land, partly within the grounds of the rectory and its associated glebe lands in the nineteenth century. See figure 1.



*Figure 1, First Edition OS Maps, surveyed 1873/4, published 1881.*

#### Assessment of Designated and Non Designated Built Heritage Assets

3.4 The allocation site is not yet defined, but will be up to 1 hectare in area and provide 15 houses.

3.5 The historic core of East Hanningfield, running the length of The Tye, is designated as a Conservation Area and includes a number of listed buildings.

3.6 The Conservation Area extends to the Old Rectory, including the main building and its grounds, but excluding its garaging and parking area. There are no significant views to the Conservation Area from the allocation site, or vice versa.

3.7 The rural setting of the village core is not readily apparent to its northern end, where there is modern development on all sides. There is therefore no likely impact on the setting of the Conservation Area.

3.8 To the northern end of The Tye, Vita Bella (the former Three Horse Shoes Public House) and All Saints Church are all grade II listed. Their primary setting relates to their immediate surrounds and The Tye, including views along the green. The allocation site makes no contribution to their settings.

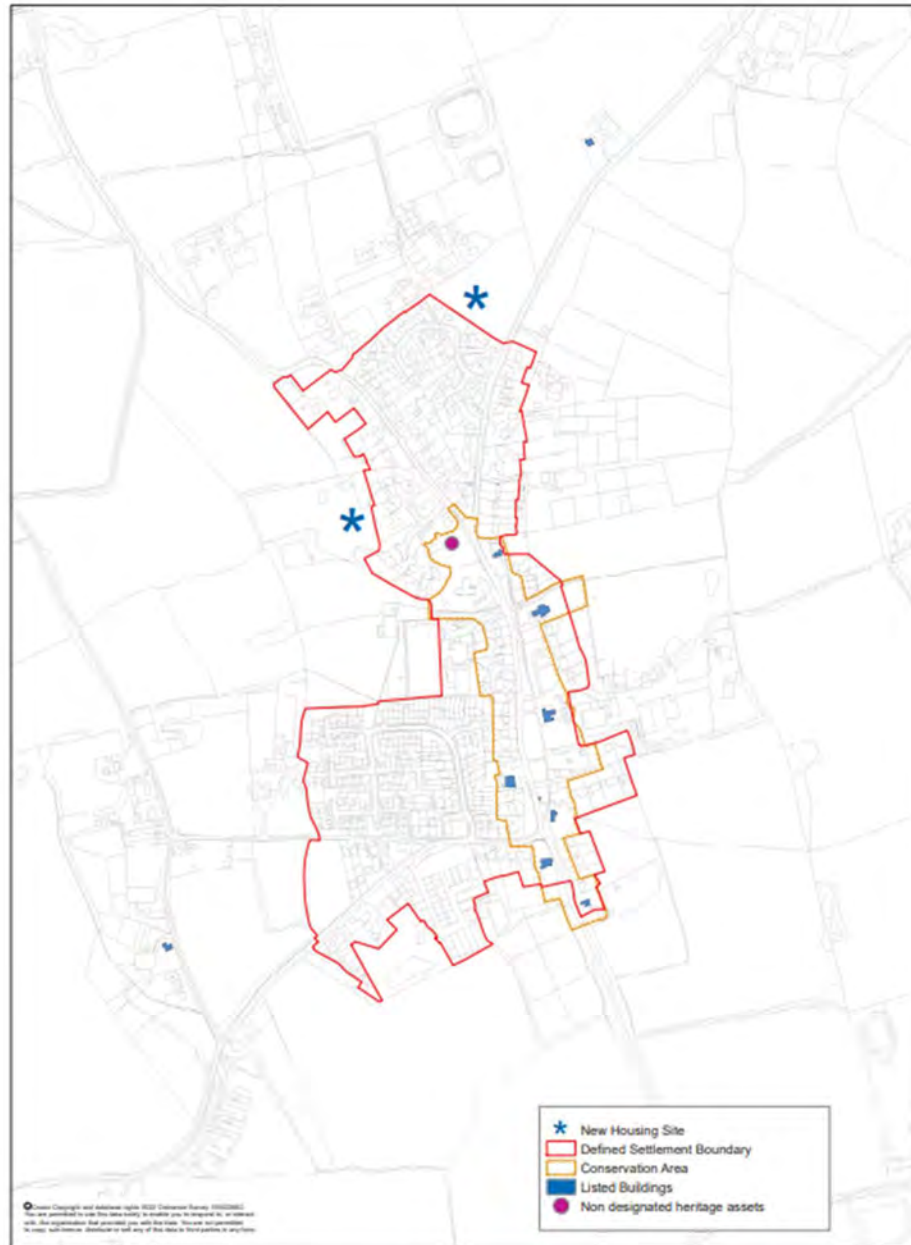
3.9 To the east of the allocation site there is mixture of nineteenth and twentieth century houses on The Common. Some of these properties are traditional cottages with some character, but they have been considerably altered and do not possess sufficient interest to be considered as non designated heritage assets.

3.10 The Old Rectory is a characterful and imposing mid nineteenth century building with crow stepped gables. It was converted into flats c.1980, with Abbey Fields close also developed with housing post 1976. The building holds some architectural and historic interest, sufficient to be considered as a non designated heritage asset. The building is partly screened by trees, its garage blocks and modern housing on Abbey Fields. The proposed development would be sufficiently set away from the Old Rectory that there would be no harm to its setting. Whilst the allocation site was historically associated with the Old Rectory, this relationship is no longer readily apparent.

3.11 To the west, beyond Back Lane, is Claydons Manor a sixteenth century timber framed farmhouse, grade II listed. It has a rural setting. The allocation site can be seen in the distance from the area around Claydons Manor, but it is over 500m away and partly screened by existing hedgerows. There would be no impact on the experience of the listed building within an expansive rural setting.

### **Principles for Land North of Abbey Fields**

3.12 There are no notable heritage impacts for this allocation.



East Hanningfield Sites



**Chelmsford**  
City Council

*Figure 2, East Hanningfield proposed site allocations*



## 4.0 LAND EAST OF HIGHFIELDS MEAD EAST HANNINGFIELD

### Location

4.1 East Hanningfield Lies c.8.0km southeast of Chelmsford City Centre. The proposed site is located on the northeast side of the village, accessed via The Chase. See figure 2 above.

### Historic Background

4.2 The allocation site lies on part of the former common to the north of the village. The northern boundary was once a track along the northern side of the common, linking Common Farm. See figure 3.



Figure 3, Chapman and Andrea Map 1777

### Assessment of Designated and Non Designated Built Heritage Assets

4.3 To the east of the allocation site lies Common Farmhouse, originating from the sixteenth century, grade II listed. The farmhouse has an isolated rural setting beyond the village. The allocation site boundary is c.160m southwest of the listed building with an intervening mature hedged boundary. Whilst the expansion of the modern village would become closer, it is sufficiently set away that the appreciation of the listed building in an isolated rural setting would be unchanged.

4.4 Vita Bella (formerly the Three Horse Shoes PH) and the northern edge of the East Hanningfield Conservation Area lie c.300m to the south of the allocation site. They are sufficiently screened and separate from the allocation site that there would be no impact upon their settings.

4.5 Highfield Farm Cottage to the north is of nineteenth century origins but has been considerably altered and is not of sufficient interest to be considered as a non designated heritage asset.

#### **Principles for Land East of Highfields Mead**

4.6 There are no notable heritage impacts for this allocation.

## 5.0 LAND AT KINGSGATE BICKNACRE ROAD BICKNACRE

### Location

5.1 Bicknacre is located c.8.5km southeast of Chelmsford City Centre and c.2.5km south of Danbury Village Centre. The proposed site lies the north of the main settlement, just north of Priory Primary School and the adjacent playing fields. The site is accessed from Bicknacre Road to the north of the main part of the settlement. See figure 6 at the end of this section. There is a mid twentieth century bungalow and outbuildings on the application site.

### Historic Background

5.2 Bicknacre was a collection of isolated collection of farms, houses and cottages set within a agricultural landscape, with much woodland and common land. See figure 4. In the twentieth century it has expanded considerably with modern housing.

5.3 A hermitage existed there until 1154 when it was converted to a friary by the Augustinian Cannons. The remaining standing arch dates from c.1250. The priory declined in the fifteenth century, until being dissolved in 1536.

5.4 Historically, the proposed site was farmland associated with Peartree Farm to the southeast.



Figure 4, Chapman and Andrea Map 1777.



## **Assessment of Designated and Non Designated Built Heritage Assets**

5.5 There are groups of traditional buildings to the east and southeast of the site, associated with the former Peartree and Compasses Farms. However, these buildings appear to be considerably rebuilt/altered, not of sufficient interest to be considered as non designated heritage assets.

5.6 On the southern boundary of the site is a greenway of ancient origins, lined with mature oak trees. It has some character and should be considered as a significant landscape feature.

5.7 To the southeast on Moor Hall Lane, are the remains of a Leper Colony and an associated graveyard, founded in 1914 by a community of monks and sisters of St Giles for the care and treatment of leprosy. It is included on the Councils Register of Buildings of Local Value. There is a 1920s lychgate and mortuary chapel within the graveyard on the east side of the lane. To the west side is the former convent and remains of the hospital, built from 1914 and repurposing a nineteenth century farmhouse. The site was in use from 1914-1984 and is significant as the only purpose-built hospital for the care of leprosy at that time, to be considered as non designated heritage assets. The site is some 380m distant at its closest point and is well screened. There would be no impact upon its setting.

5.8 To the north, on Moor Hall Lane, is Bridge House, a post-modern private dwelling built c.1976. It is included on the Councils Register of Buildings of Local Value for its architectural interest. The allocation site, c.260m south-southeast, makes no contribution to its setting.

5.9 Bicknacre Priory lies c.400m to the south, with a standing west archway from the church crossing dating from c.1250. See figure 5. It is grade II listed and the site founded c.1157 is designated as a Scheduled Monument. There is considerable screening between the sites, together with the distance and lack of historic association so there would be no harm to the setting. There are no other listed buildings within 1km of the site.



*Figure 5, Bicknacre Priory*

## Principles for Kingsgate, Bicknacre Road

- Maintain a landscape margin adjacent the green lane to the south.
- Carefully consider boundary treatments to retain the rural edge to lane.
- Retain matures trees.

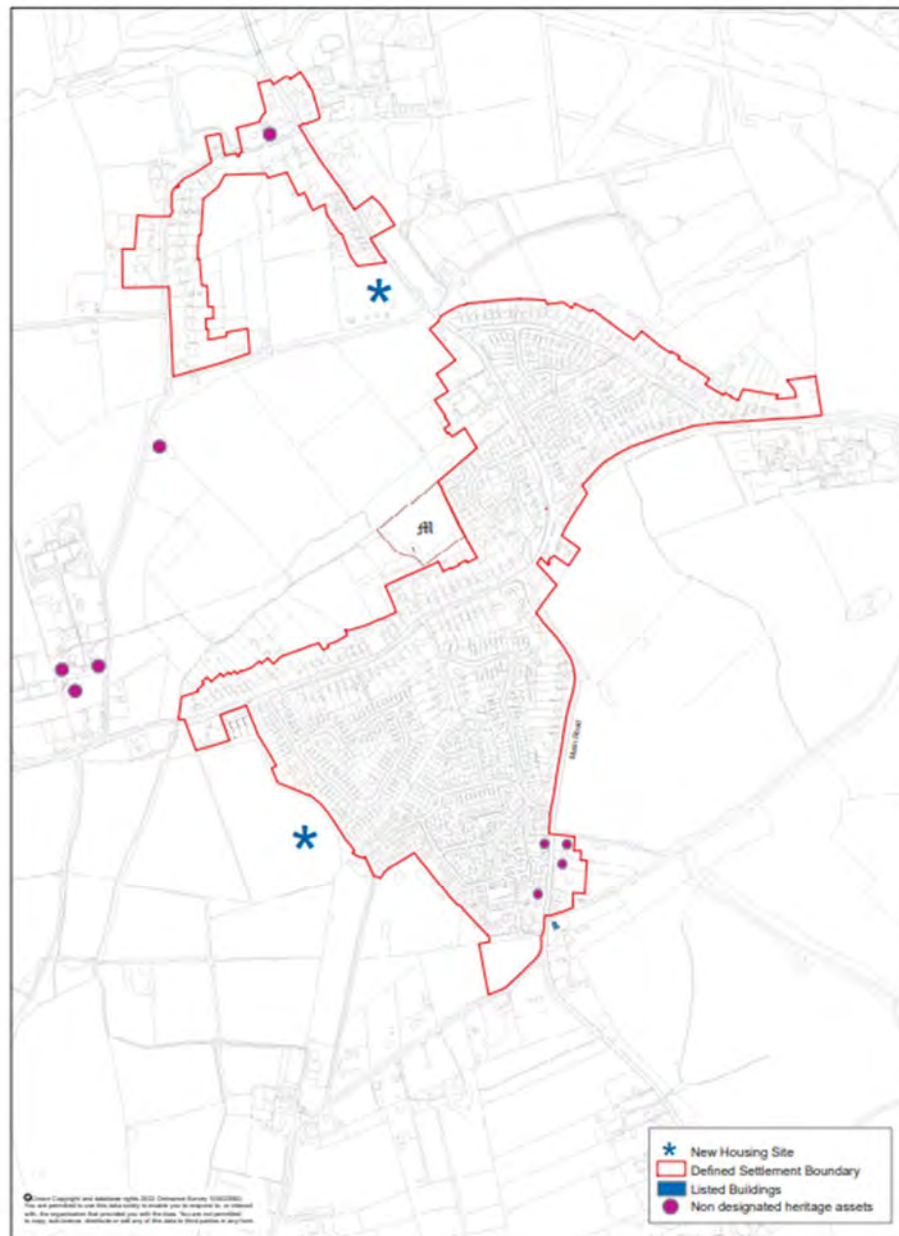


Figure 6, Bicknacre proposed site allocations

## 6.0 LAND WEST OF BARBROOK WAY BICKNACRE

### Location

6.1 The proposed allocation site lies to the west side of the main settlement, to the west of Barbrook Way. See figure 6 above.

### Historic Background

6.2 The site is shown as agricultural land on maps from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See figure 7. The Land to the east was developed for housing from the 1970s.

6.3 The proposed site allocation was associated with Mill Farm. The farmhouse remains today to the southeast of the site, accessed off Deerhurst Chase.



Figure 7, First Edition OS Map, surveyed 1873-4, published 1881

### Assessment of Designated and Non Designated Built Heritage Assets

6.4 To the west lies Common Farmhouse, a timber framed farmhouse of sixteenth century origins, grade II listed. It has an extensive rural setting, remote from the edge of East Hanningfield village. It is c.850m from the allocation site and is well screened by intervening hedgerows, there would be no impact on its setting.

6.5 To the northeast is Bicknacre Priory, c.430m away. The standing grade II listed arch and the site of the priory is a scheduled monument. The site is well screened from the heritage asset by intervening housing development. There is no impact up the setting.

6.6 Star House, an eighteenth-century brick house is c.550m southwest and is grade II listed. There are various historic buildings on Main Road, of historic and architectural interest, sufficient to be non designated heritage assets, including a pub, a chapel and cottages. They are sufficiently distant away and well screened so there would be no impact on their settings.

6.7 Mill Farmhouse likely originates from the late eighteenth or nineteenth century. It has been considerably altered and its setting eroded, so is not of sufficient interest to be considered as a non designated heritage asset.

6.8 On Moor Hall Lane, c.250m to the northwest, there is a collection of buildings associated with a former hospital from the treatment of leprosy. They are to be considered as non designated heritage assets (as described above). They are sufficiently distant and screened that there would be no impact on their settings.

6.9 There are no other designated heritage assets within 1km of the allocation site.

#### **Principles for Land West of Barbrook Way**

6.10 There are no notable heritage impacts for this allocation.



## 7.0 LAND WEST OF BACK LANE FORD END

### Location

7.1 Ford End is located within Great Waltham parish on the B1008 Road between Great Dunmow and Little Waltham. It is c.9.8km north-northwest of Chelmsford City Centre and c.3.9km north-northwest of Great Waltham Village.

7.2 The proposed allocation site is located on the southwestern side of Ford End, to the west of Back Lane. See figure 10 at the end of this section.

### Historic Background

7.3 Ford End was historically a small rural hamlet, with a number of cottages, houses and farms on the main route towards Great Dunmow, within a rural landscape. It was noted as Fourth-end on the 1777 map. See figure 8.



Figure 8, Chapman and Andrea Map 1777

7.4 There are a number of eighteenth and nineteenth century houses and cottages, reflecting a period of agricultural prosperity. The population in 1870 was 7775, similar to today.

### Assessment of Designated and Non Designated Built Heritage Assets

7.5 Mid way along Back Lane on the east side, April Cottage and Wayfares are eighteenth/nineteenth century thatched cottages, grade II listed. The rural context contributes to the setting and significance. Development of the adjacent land would erode the rural setting and be harmful to the setting of the listed building.



7.6 Felford cottage and Gables are early nineteenth century gambrel roofed cottages. They have some character and as vernacular cottages should be considered as non designated heritage assets.

7.7 Holly House (see figure 9), Lavender House, Lavender Cottage and Lavender Farm all date from the eighteenth/nineteenth century and have considerable character and should also be considered as non designated heritage assets.



*Figure 9, Holly House, Sandon Hill, around the late nineteenth century*

7.8 The extent of the allocation site is yet to be defined, but up to 20 units and 1 hectare is likely to be two-thirds of the field, taking in land opposite the April Cottage and Wayfares.

7.9 Back Lane has a rural character, with expansive agricultural land to the west and southwest. The allocation site is notably higher than the lane, with a sporadic hedge line.

7.10 Development of the allocation site would erode the rural setting to the designated and non designated heritage assets nearby, particularly so on Back Lane. It is therefore essential the layout and design are carefully considered to respond to the local context and minimise its impact. Subject to mitigation there is still likely to be a low level of harm remaining to the setting of the designated and non designated heritage assets.

#### **Principles for Land West of Back Lane**

- Low density, landscape led development
- Hedge and tree planting reinstated along Back Lane edge
- Layout, scale, design and materials informed by the local context
- Setback, landscaping and modest scale used to minimise the impact due to the higher ground levels
- Retain a generous gap in the built form opposite April Cottage and Wayfares, with a landscape corridor retaining a visual connection with the wider rural landscape.



Figure 10, Ford End proposed site allocations

## 8.0 LAND SOUTH OF FORD END PRIMARY SCHOOL

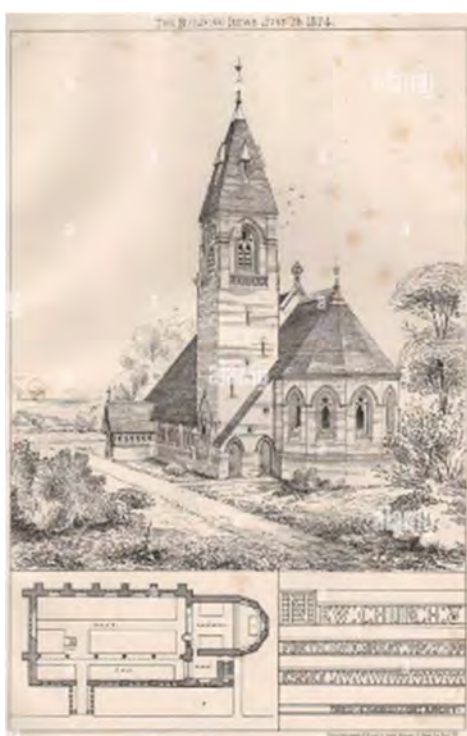
### Location

8.1 Ford End is located within Great Waltham parish on the B1008 Road between Great Dunmow and Little Waltham. It is c.9.8km north-northwest of Chelmsford City Centre and c.3.9km north-northwest of Great Waltham Village.

8.2 The proposed allocation site is on the south side of Ford End, to the west side of Main Road, south of the Ford End Church of England Primary School. See figure 10 above.

### Historic Background

8.3 Ford End developed as a rural hamlet. The application site is shown as agricultural land on historic maps. The development of the school (1873) and church (1870-1) reflect a period of expansion in the village.



*Figure 11, St John the Evangelist, designed by Frederic Chancellor 1870-1*

### Assessment of Designated and Non Designated Built Heritage Assets

8.4 To the immediate north of the proposed allocation site is Ford End Church of England Primary School. The original part of the building dates from 1873, designated by Frank Whitmore, a local architect responsible for many buildings around Chelmsford. The original building has a school room and masters house, with a small tower between the two, originally with a spire. The building has architectural interest for its design, community value for its long running continued use and is a landmark on the main approach to the village from the south. See figures 12 and 13. There is a visual link with the grade II listed church to the northeast (from 1870-1, designed by Frederic Chancellor). See figure 11. The school should be considered as a non designated heritage asset.



*Figure 12, The approach from the southeast towards the village*



*Figure 13, Ford End School*

8.5 The school has a modern extension to its south side and there is a parking layby to the southeast. The allocation site has notably higher ground levels.

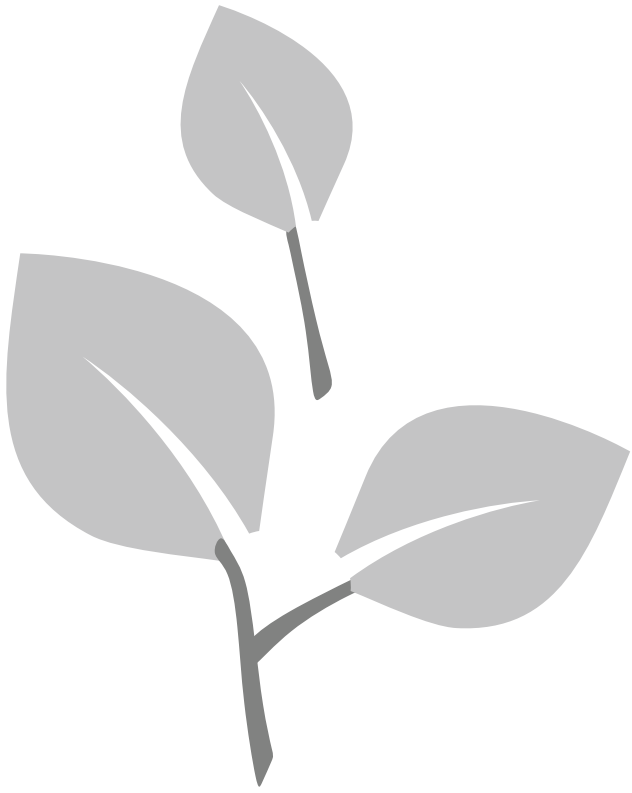
8.6 Development of the allocation site would need to be setback from the roadside and the hedge line reinstated, to avoid being overly dominant in key views from the north and south. Scale, design and materials should be informed by the local context. Height near to the school should be limited to 1 ½ storeys. Subject to the development being setback and carefully responding to the context, any harm to the setting of the school could be avoided.

8.7 To the north, the church is grade II listed. To the northeast, Little Owls and to the northwest the Old Smithy and Signpost Cottage are all grade II listed. These buildings are all sufficient set away and screened that there would be no impact upon their settings.

### **Principles for Land South of Ford End Primary School**

- Set development back from Main Road
- Reinststate hedge line
- Layout, scale, design and materials informed by the local context
- Setback, landscaping and modest scale used to minimise the impact due to the higher ground levels





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