

Chelmsford Local Plan
Evidence Base Document
Heritage Assessments
Technical Note
Addendum
May 2018



1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following engagement with stakeholders this addendum has been prepared to provide further assessment in relation to planned development at North East Chelmsford. This specifically relates to concerns raised by Historic England regarding evidence assessing the potential cumulative impacts on the setting of New Hall. The note should be read in conjunction with the Heritage Technical Note (March 2017).

Background

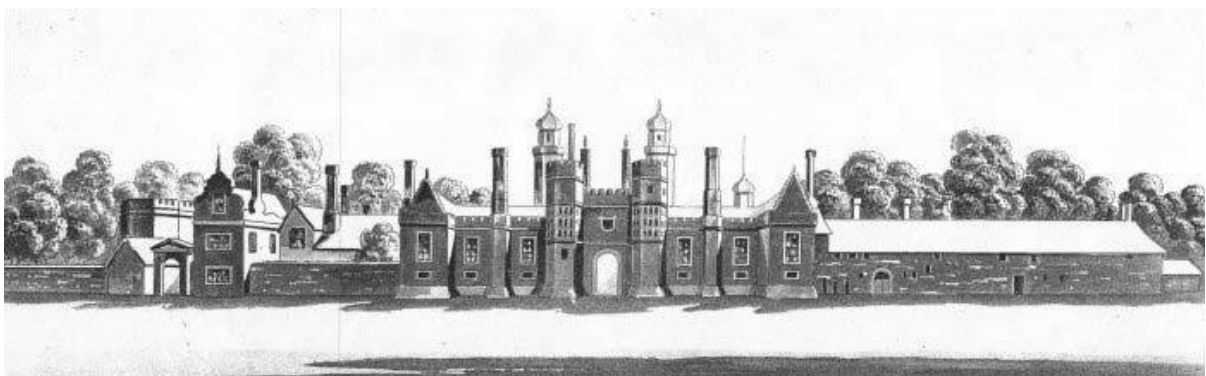
- 1.2 The new Local Plan proposes development in North East Chelmsford – Strategic Growth Site 4 to include:
- Around 3,000 new homes of mixed size and type to include affordable housing and specialist residential accommodation
 - 45,000sqm of floorspace in a new office/business park providing a range of unit sizes and types
 - Travelling Showpeople site for 9 serviced plots.
 - A new country park
 - Other supporting infrastructure, including a secondary school, two primary schools and two nurseries.
- 1.3 As part of the previous North East Chelmsford Area Action Plan (NCAAP) development is currently underway around New Hall and south of Channels. Part of the evidence base to support these allocations was a study undertaken by Beacon Planning (September 2009) assessing the impact on New Hall and other listed buildings in the vicinity. A statement of common ground was prepared with (the then) English Heritage. It was accepted by all parties that there would be harm to the setting of New Hall through the allocated development and compensatory measures were required to mitigate this harm. A Landscape Design Management Plan (LDMP) was prepared (2012) in association with English Heritage, which set out landscape works

required to protect New Hall and mitigate the impact on its setting, these works included creating a new parkland setting to the south together with buffers, planting belts and specific areas restricted for development.

- 1.4 The existing North East Chelmsford allocation extends to the north of New Hall, anticipated for completion in c.2022

2.0 History of New Hall

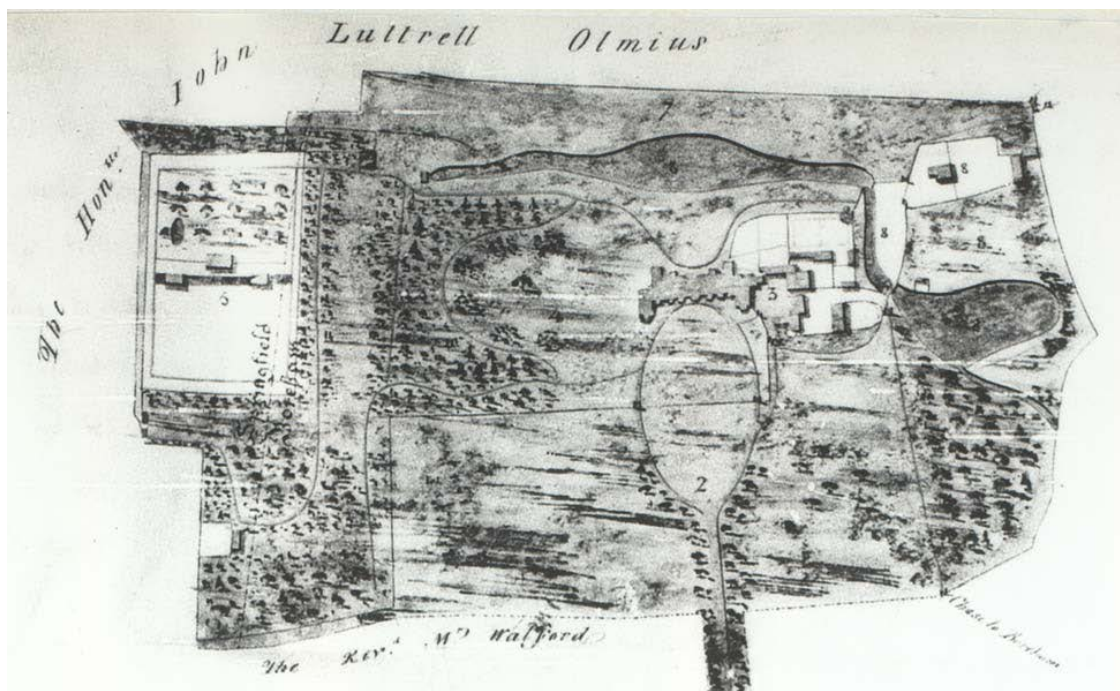
- 2.1 New Hall, one of the six manors of Boreham, was granted to the Cannons of Waltham in 1062. It became the property of the crown in 1450 and a licence to fortify and crenellate was granted in 1491. This house was developed into a large quadrangle mansion (known as Beaulieu) by Henry VIII from 1516, and set within a 1,500 acre deer park. The house was extensively remodelled by successive owners, before falling into decline and being partly demolished c.1738. The Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre of Liege purchased New Hall in 1798 and set up a boarding school. The site was extensively bomb damaged in 1943 and subject to development the later twentieth century. It is now a private boarding school.



The south (entrance) range of New Hall in 1669

- 2.2 From the 16th century until c.1738, there were formal enclosed gardens near the house, all set within a deer park. The formal approach was from the south, the London to Colchester Road (now curtailed by the A138), via a long straight drive between a double avenue of trees.

- 2.3 After 1738, the drive and avenue were retained, but now terminating in a small area of parkland crossed by a formal carriage sweep, beyond which was and is a ha-ha marking the extent of the demolished wings, now covered by a lawn. The walled garden to the west of the house incorporates some surviving 16th century structure as well as 18th century work. A surviving Wilderness Garden to the south-west of the house is a 17th century feature, with, from 1799, the convent cemetery, still in use, set in a enclosure at its western side. The immediate surroundings of the house are shown in some detail on plan of about 1800.



The building and gardens of New Hall c.1800.

- 2.4 Most of the fields around New Hall now have straight boundaries, reflecting the sub-division of its extensive deer park into arable fields after 1738. Most have names (recorded in the 1840s Tithe Awards) like 'Park Field', 'Ten Acres', 'Pasture', which are typical of lately-enclosed landscapes. A continuous boundary extending north from the west side of the house for more than a kilometre forms an axis to this pattern of boundaries and may reflect a former long straight ride or chase through the park.

- 2.5 The extent of the sixteenth century Park around New Hall is suggested by the names 'Old Lodge' and 'Bulls Lodge' to west and east of the Hall, which must have originated as lodges within the Park, and Park Farm to the north, whose name also indicates inclusion. In fact, beyond these buildings there were until the mid-20th century continuous boundaries running north-south through the landscape, with very few east-west features crossing them, which serve to indicate the greatest extent of the park to the east and west. Towards the south-east, on the opposite side of the London-Colchester road, they meet the park of Boreham House as it existed into the early 20th century. It is immediately apparent that the new house was built in the southern part of New Hall park, always divided from the remainder by the main (Roman) road.

The significance of New Hall

- 2.6 New Hall is architecturally important both for its surviving 16th century royal and courtier level buildings, and for its interiors dating from the later 17th century. Its associations with Henry VIII, Mary Tudor, Cromwell and other leading figures make it historically important, as does its prolonged association with one of the first Catholic religious orders to re-establish themselves in England after the reformation. It is included in the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at grade I, placing it among the most important 2% of listed buildings in England.
- 2.7 The south drive and immediate landscape setting of New Hall are included in the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England at grade II. As well as being of some intrinsic significance in historic landscape terms, reflected in this grading, it makes an important contribution to the setting and context of the Grade I listed main building.

The importance of the setting of New Hall

- 2.8 The *raison d'être* of Beaulieu Palace was its rural setting, surrounded by a large deer park, with formal gardens close to the house. As New Hall, it was until the end of the 18th century a country house, now set in less formal

gardens, but by definition and intention isolated from other visible settlement and set within parkland. The nature and extent of that parkland varied, being much more extensive before 1738 than afterwards.

- 2.9 A sense of isolation and tranquillity was important to the subsequent conventual character of New Hall, and in particular the conventual cemetery. The change from country house to convent school brought with it a change from parkland to agricultural land as the immediate setting beyond the gardens and ha-ha. However, its visual setting, views of and views out from the gardens and immediate environs of the house, remained essentially rural.
- 2.10 The demolition of the south courtyard range in 1737 opened up long southward views from the principal apartments on the first floor of the north range. The removal of gatehouse ranges to open up views in this way was a common response to courtyard houses in the first half of the 18th century (eg Sutton Place, Surrey), and is an important part of the character and quality of the historic building as it has been perceived ever since.

The impact of recent and approved development

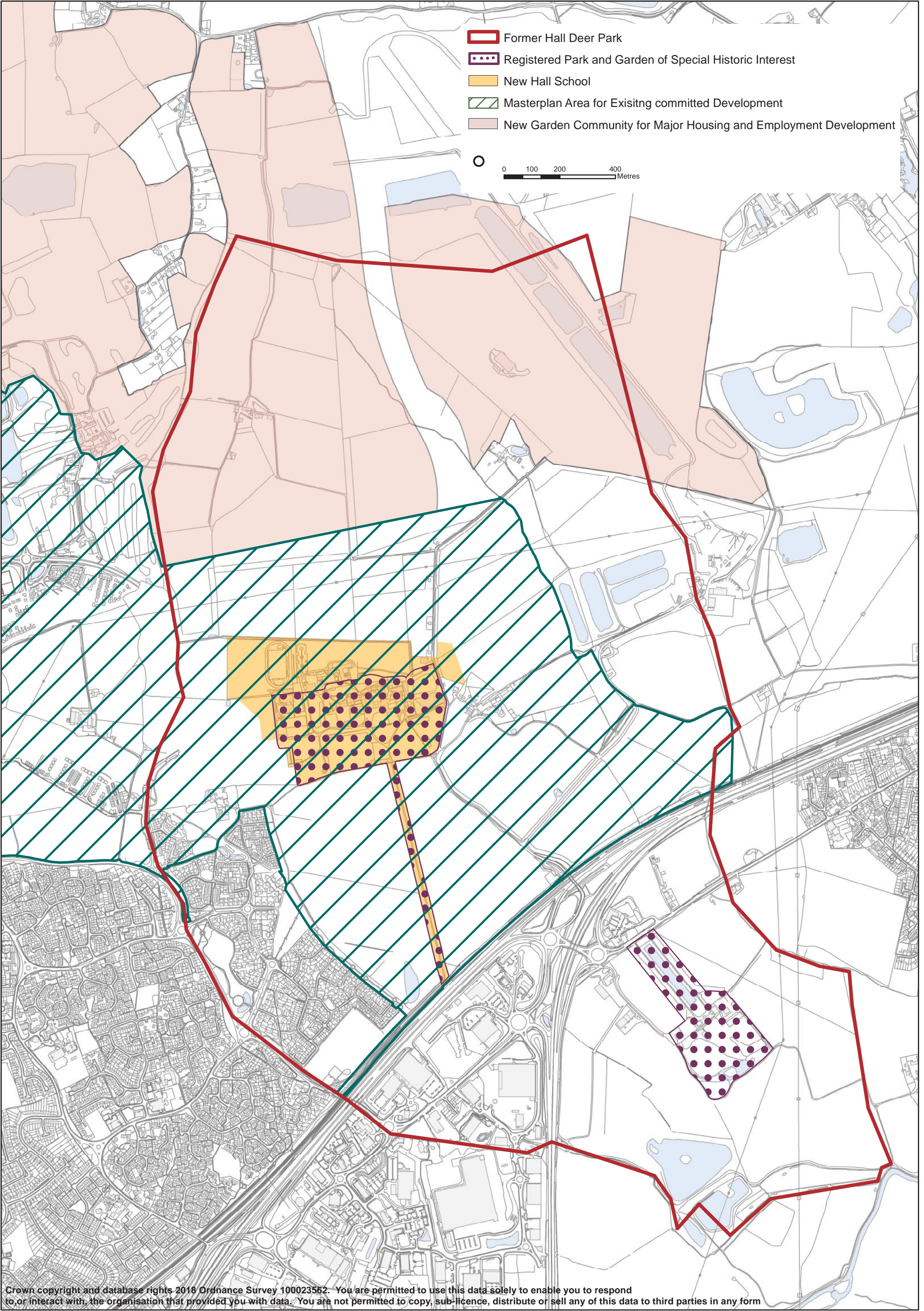
- 2.11 During the past four decades the rural setting of New Hall has begun to be eroded. There have been two principal contributors to this process: the expansion of the A12 corridor, and the development of 'Beaulieu Park'.
- 2.12 The initial re-routing of the A12 (now the A138) as a dual carriageway south of the railway in the 1970s severed the long drive and avenue at the railway line. Subsequently, the area between the new and original A12 has been developed for commercial purposes. Apart from the physical severance of the drive, and the diverted approach through a suburban housing area, the visual impact of the A12 corridor on the setting of New Hall has been relatively modest, because of the fall of the ground southwards.

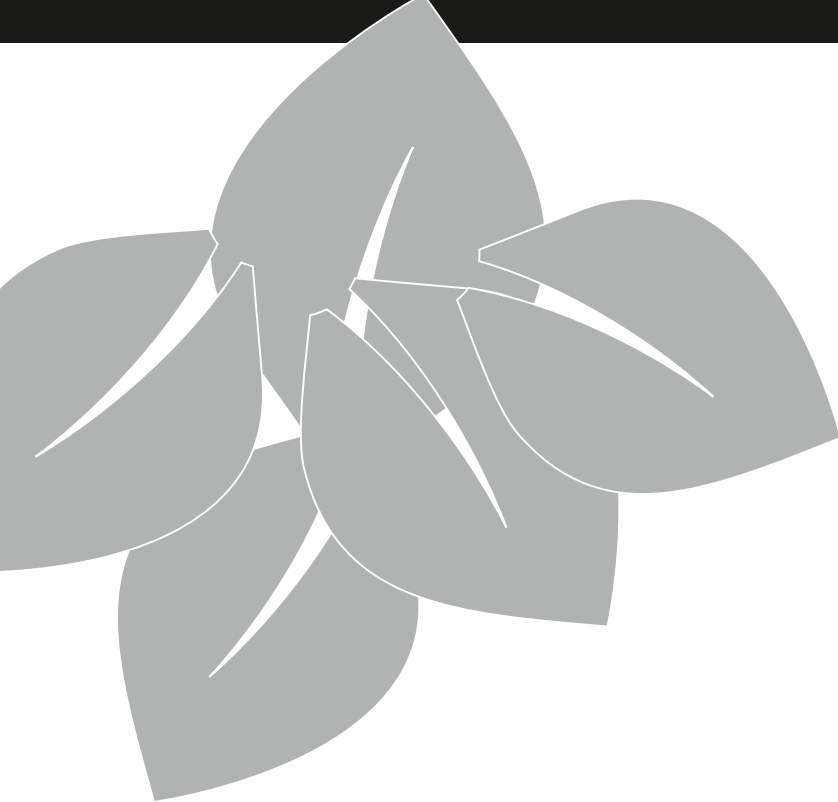
The impact of allocations at North East Chelmsford

- 2.13 The previous approved expansion of Beaulieu Park currently under construction, includes new residential development, a school and radial distribution road (RDR) to the immediate north of New Hall. The LDMP requires a generous planting belt to the northern boundary of New Hall as a means of providing separation, screening and privacy from the new development. The development anticipated within the future allocation would be beyond the RDR, LDMP planting belt and approved housing parcels, over 250m from the current northern boundary of New Hall and over 600m from the historic core of buildings. There would therefore be no additional visual impact on New Hall. The previous allocation delivered through NCAAP effectively severed New Hall from its countryside setting to the north, with the compensation for this being the creation of a new parkland in the more visually sensitive and positively related to the listed complex and its registered grounds to the south, together with undergrounding of pylons and planting belts to the north.
- 2.14 The area to the north of New Hall was historically part of the former deer park, which was cultivated as agricultural land from 1738, the northeast corner was later part of the WWII Boreham Airfield and subject to quarry extraction in the late twentieth century. Fragmentary evidence of the former deer park remains, with elements of banks and ditches of the formed enclosure surviving. There is also a long straight field boundary running north of New Hall, possibly associated with a former ride or chase through park. The LDMP includes the requirement for this route to reference as a new tree lined avenue.
- 2.15 The former park lodges remain at Bulls Lodge, Old Lodge and Park Farm. Park Farm lies within the new allocation area and has a complex of traditional farm buildings (see Heritage Technical Note, March 2017).

3.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 3.1 New Hall and its Registered Park and Garden are highly significant. The grade I listed house is architecturally important both for its surviving 16th century royal and courtier level buildings, and for its interiors dating from the later 17th century and its historic associations. The Register Park and Garden is important for its landscape design, but is also an essential part of the setting to the historic complex of buildings.
- 3.2 The land to the north of New Hall historically formed part of the deer park associated with the Tudor Palace. This land was enclosed for agricultural cultivation from 1738 and later subject to degradation in part of the creation of a WWII airfield and quarrying. The previous site allocation delivered through NCCAP (2009) and currently under construction effectively severs New Hall from its countryside setting to the north. This was justified on the basis that the compensatory measures, including the new parkland setting to the south of New Hall, offset this harm.
- 3.3 Further development anticipated in the North East Chelmsford allocation would have no significant impact on the setting of New Hall or its Registered Park and Garden due to the previous development currently under construction. Taken cumulatively there would be no additional harm.
- 3.4 There are fragmentary remains of the former deer park, which are important to the wider context of New Hall and the new development should take account of these including:
 - a) Retain the long north-south field boundary to the north of New Hall, providing a new treed avenue to recognise this landscape feature and reference the former ride or chase.
 - b) Retain the traditional farm buildings at Park Farm and set them with a new landscape framework retaining linkages with the New Hall site.
 - c) Retain the extant elements of the former deer park enclosure where possible.
 - d) Reference the former deer park with interpretation boards and public art.





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