

Conservation area
Character Appraisal

Boreham Roman Road/Plantation Road Conservation Area

Status:
Consultation Draft

Design and conservation
01245 606294
michael.hurst@chelmsford.gov.uk



Introduction

Boreham Plantation Road/Roman Road conservation area is a group of historic buildings which developed around a junction on one of the main routes towards Boreham Village. The area includes the Six Bells Public House at its centre, with agricultural land to the east and north, the recreation ground to the southwest and housing development to the west and south which links with Boreham Village.

The area is located south of the London-Norwich railway line and A12 road and approximately 5.5km north-east of Chelmsford town centre and 0.5km north-northeast of Boreham Village.

The conservation area boundary is tightly drawn around a group of historic buildings at the junction of Plantation Road and Roman Road.

Purpose of Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are 'Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Central Government Planning Policy Statement 5, Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5), emphasises that the character of conservation areas derives not simply from the quality of individual buildings, but also depends on the historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares; on a particular "mix" of uses; on characteristic materials; on appropriate scaling and detailing of contemporary buildings; on the quality of advertisements, shop fronts, street furniture and hard and soft surfaces; on vistas along streets and between buildings; and on the extent to which traffic intrudes and limits pedestrian use of space between buildings.

Designation of a conservation area extends planning controls over certain types of development, including extensions, alteration to roofs, the demolition of unlisted buildings and works to trees. While designation does not preclude any change, it necessitates careful scrutiny of proposals and the area may be subject to pressures that harm or enhance its character and appearance.

Character of the Area

Boreham Plantation Road/Roman Road derives much of its special character from its historic buildings, open setting and trees. There have been significant areas of new development adjacent to the area in the late twentieth century. Its history is intimately linked with the Roman Road.

The Purpose of Conservation Area Appraisals

This conservation area appraisal was prepared by Chelmsford Borough Council. The research and fieldwork were carried out in January and February 2010.

The appraisal provides a brief development history of the current settlement, followed by a description and assessment of character. The contribution of its different elements to the character is identified. Any issues which may affect the protection of character will be highlighted and opportunities for enhancement identified.

Statutory Protection

The conservation area was designated by Chelmsford Borough Council on the 21st July 1987 (figure 1).

There are four listed buildings within the area. These are the Six Bells Public House, Clock House, Maltings Cottages and The Chestnuts, all grade II listed.

There is a public footpath which runs along the field boundaries east of the area and to the north across the railway line.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) within the area, but any tree within the conservation area is protected by the requirement to give written notification of proposed works to a tree in a conservation area to the local planning authority at least six weeks before it is intended to carry out those works.

Location and Setting

Roman Road/Plantation Road is located within the village of Boreham, approximately 5.5km northeast of the town centre (figure 2). The London to Norwich railway line and A12 road are immediately to the north. To the north and east there is 1970s estate housing.

The main approaches are from Hatfield Peverel to the east and Chelmsford to the west, along Roman Road and from Boreham Village to the south via Plantation Road.

The site is on high ground to the north of the Chelmer river valley, on glacial brick earth deposits.

Origins and Development

There is archaeological evidence of human habitation in the wider area from the prehistoric period, when the fertile valleys of the rivers Chelmer and Wid provided a scene for hunter gatherers. Bronze Age evidence has been found across the Boreham-Little Baddow area, with the late Bronze age fragments found in Plantation Road, part of a concentration of late Bronze age activity in the area. The area is approximately 3.5km from the Springfield Enclosure, where evidence of large scale metal production was found.

Roman Road is the historic route of the London to Colchester Roman Road. Although there is no evidence of Roman occupation within the area, there was a Roman villa at the site of Great Holts Farm (1.7km north). The closest known major roman settlement was at Moulsham.

The name Boreham is thought to be of Saxon origin and probably meant Market Town, which developed due its location on the main route between London and Colchester. No archaeological evidence of Saxon occupation has been found in Boreham to date, but the Church of St Andrews includes fragments of Saxon fabric.

Medieval tofts, a plot of land occupied by a single farmstead, have been uncovered in Boreham village itself.

The current building group at Roman Road and Plantation Road probably developed as a small hamlet due to the commercial importance of its location on the main road between London and Colchester

where there was a turning towards Boreham and Little Baddow. Three buildings originating from the sixteenth century survive (The Chestnuts, Clockhouse and Maltings Cottages), all of which have high quality timber framing. It is probable that other lower status buildings pre dated the current buildings.

Figure I - Key features

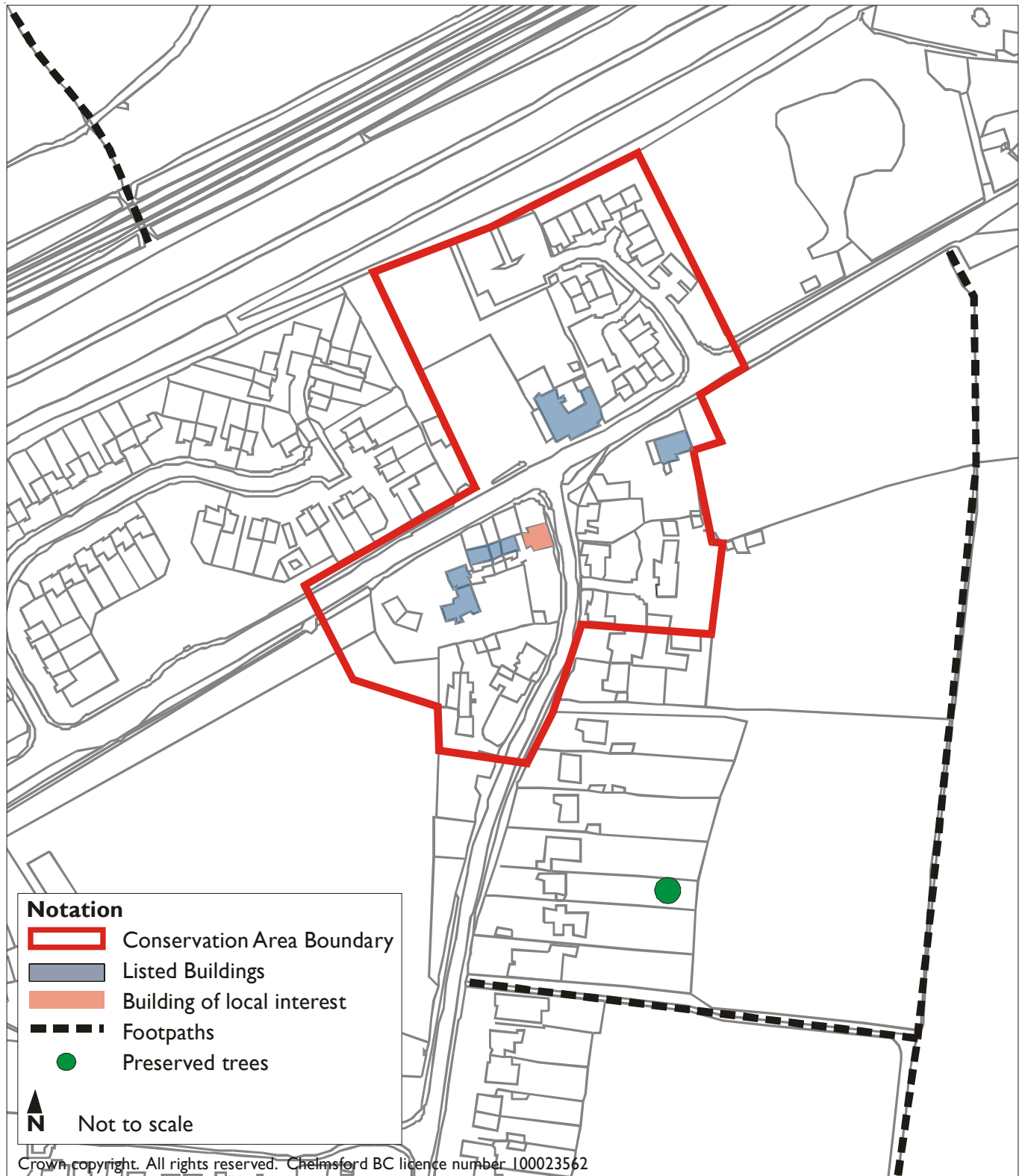
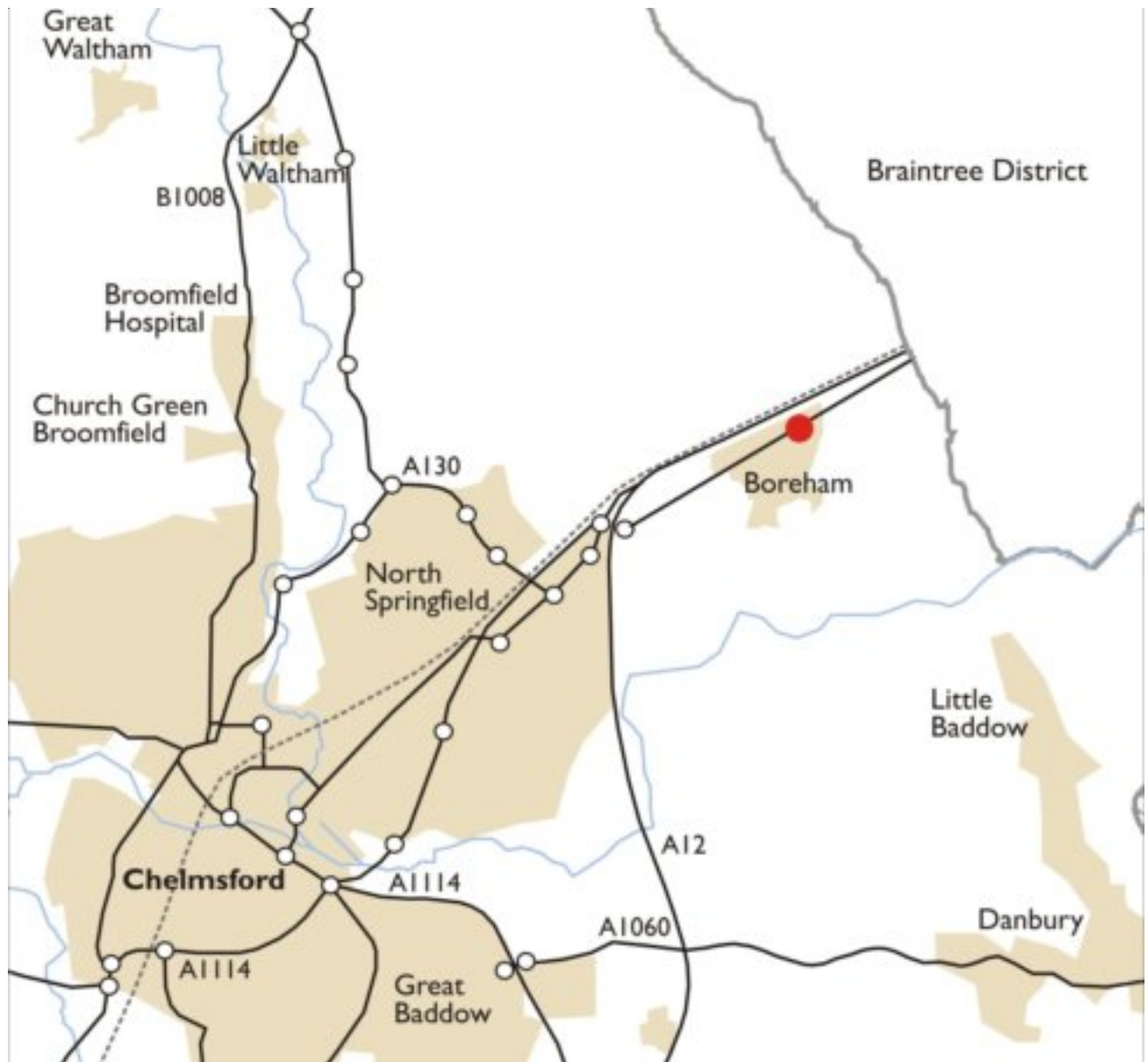


Figure 2 - Location



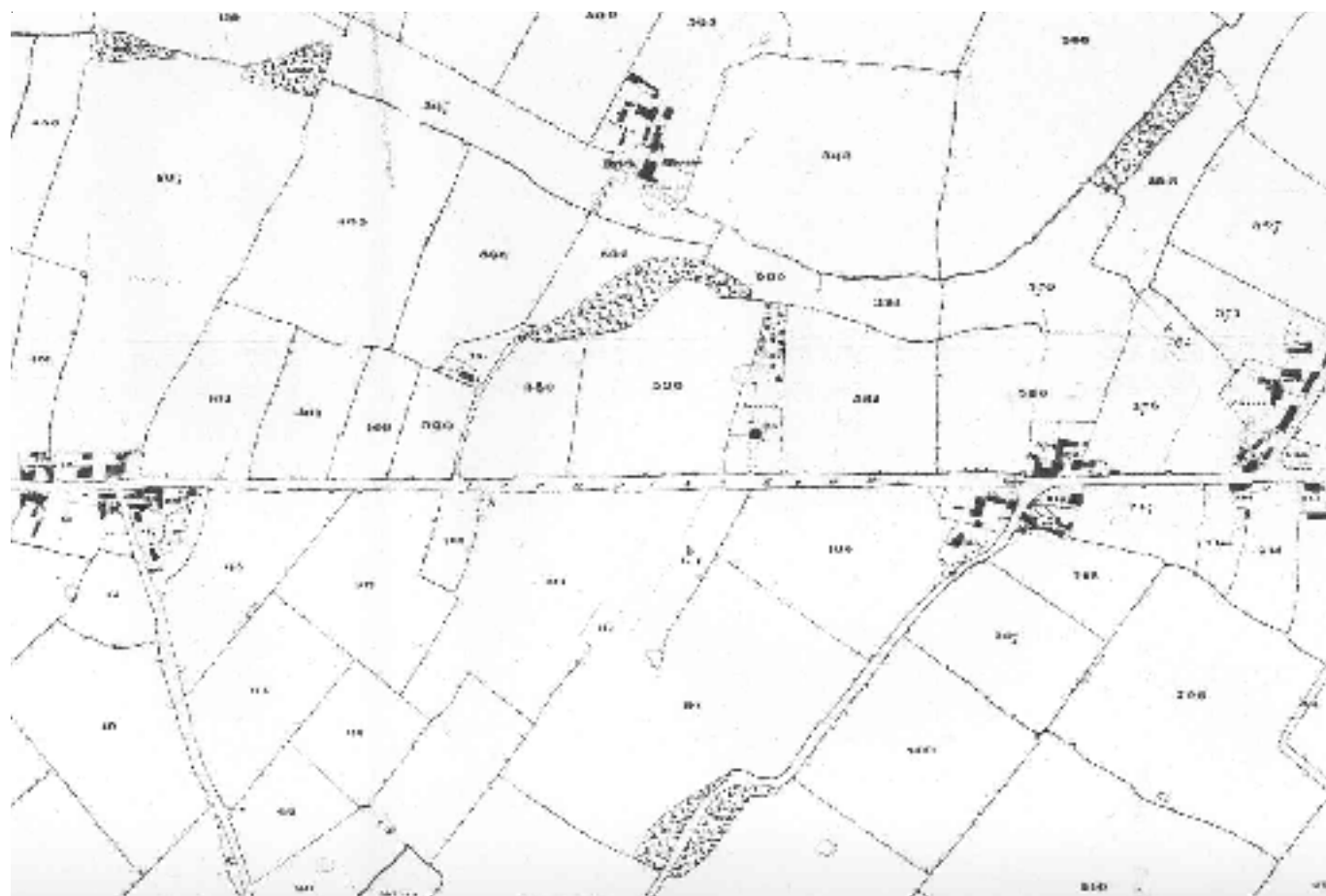
The Chapman and Andre Map of 1777 (Figure 3) is the earliest map of the area and shows a concentration of buildings around the junction, with 'Clock House' specifically named, indicating its high status. The route of Plantation Road to the south and the other main routes in the area are unchanged today. Other groups of buildings developing around road junctions are shown along the Roman Road, including the Red Lion Public House at the junction with Church Road and the Cock Inn at the junction with Boreham Road.

The Tithe Map of 1841 (figure 4) is the first map which clearly shows the buildings, many of which remain today. The tithe award shows much of the surrounding land owned by Haslefoot Robert Clere (a blacksmith operating out of the Six Bells site) Tyrell Sir John Tyson (of Boreham House) and Lord Rayleigh (of Terling Place).

Figure 3 - Chapman and Andre map 1777

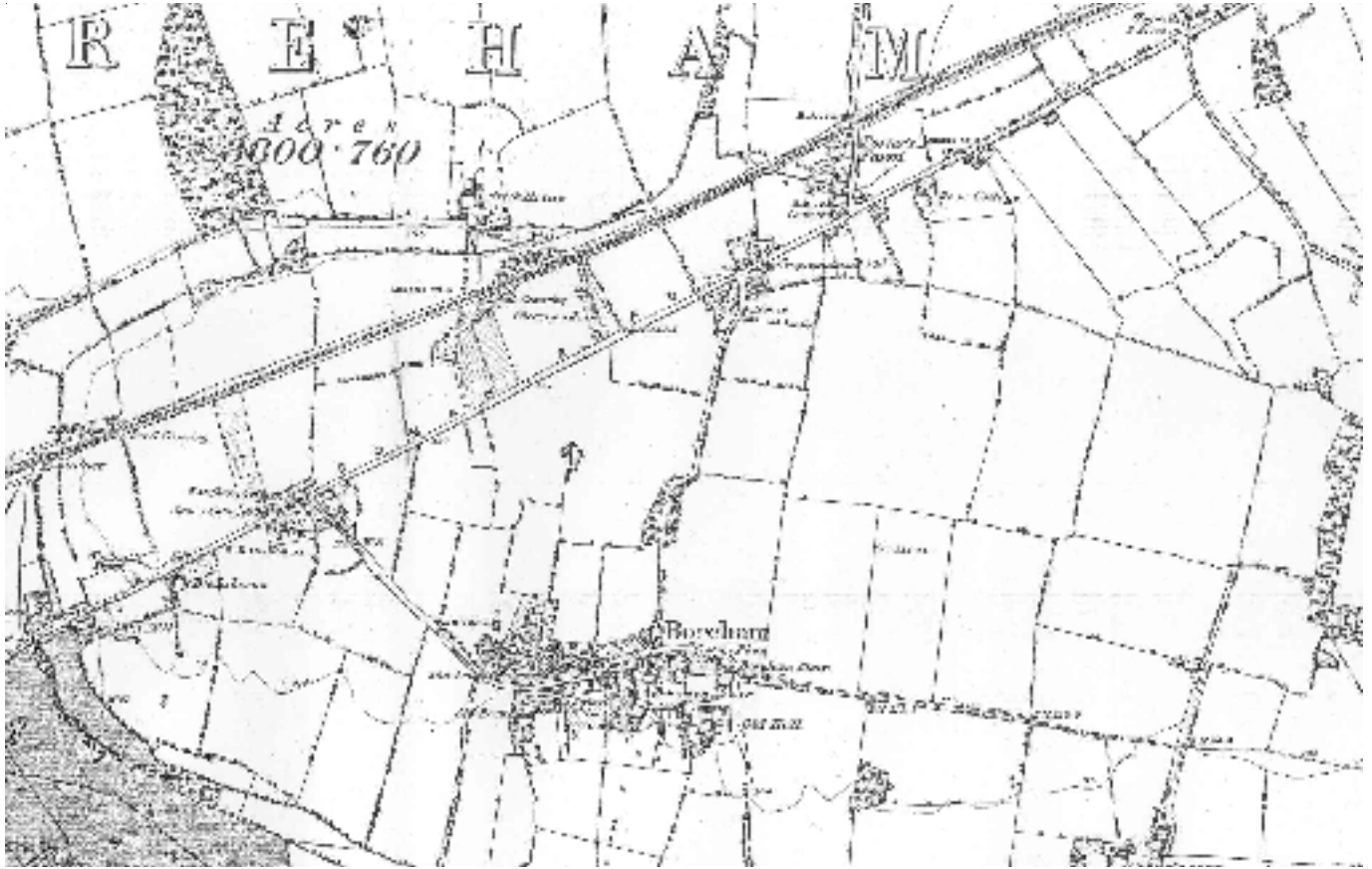


Figure 4 - Tithe map 1841



The first edition ordnance survey map of 1881 (figure 5) shows little development, but notes the smithy at the Six Bells and a new congregational chapel (now demolished) east of the Chestnuts. The railway line (completed in 1843) is shown to the north of the settlement.

Figure 5 - 1881



The second (1897, figure 6) and fourth (1924, figure 7) edition ordnance survey maps show little change other than gradual development along Roman Road.

The modern day settlement is set within the urban expansion of Boreham, with estate housing to the west and south, mostly dating from the 1970s. The Six Bells public house and Smiths the butchers remain important features, signifying the continuing commercial importance of the location.

Character Appraisal

The area is centred on the junction between Roman Road and Plantation Road. This junction could have developed as a route to the Saxon village of Boreham, with the commercial advantageous position on the main road being developed with commercial units and dwellings.

Plantation Road, to the south, follows the line of historic field boundaries towards Boreham village centre.

On the approach along the long straight Roman Road the historic settlement is buffered by agricultural land to the east, open space to the west and modern development south and northwest and the A12 to the north. These open spaces are significant to the character of the area (figure 8).

Townscape analysis and the contribution of individual buildings is shown at figures 9 and 10.

Figure 6 - 1897

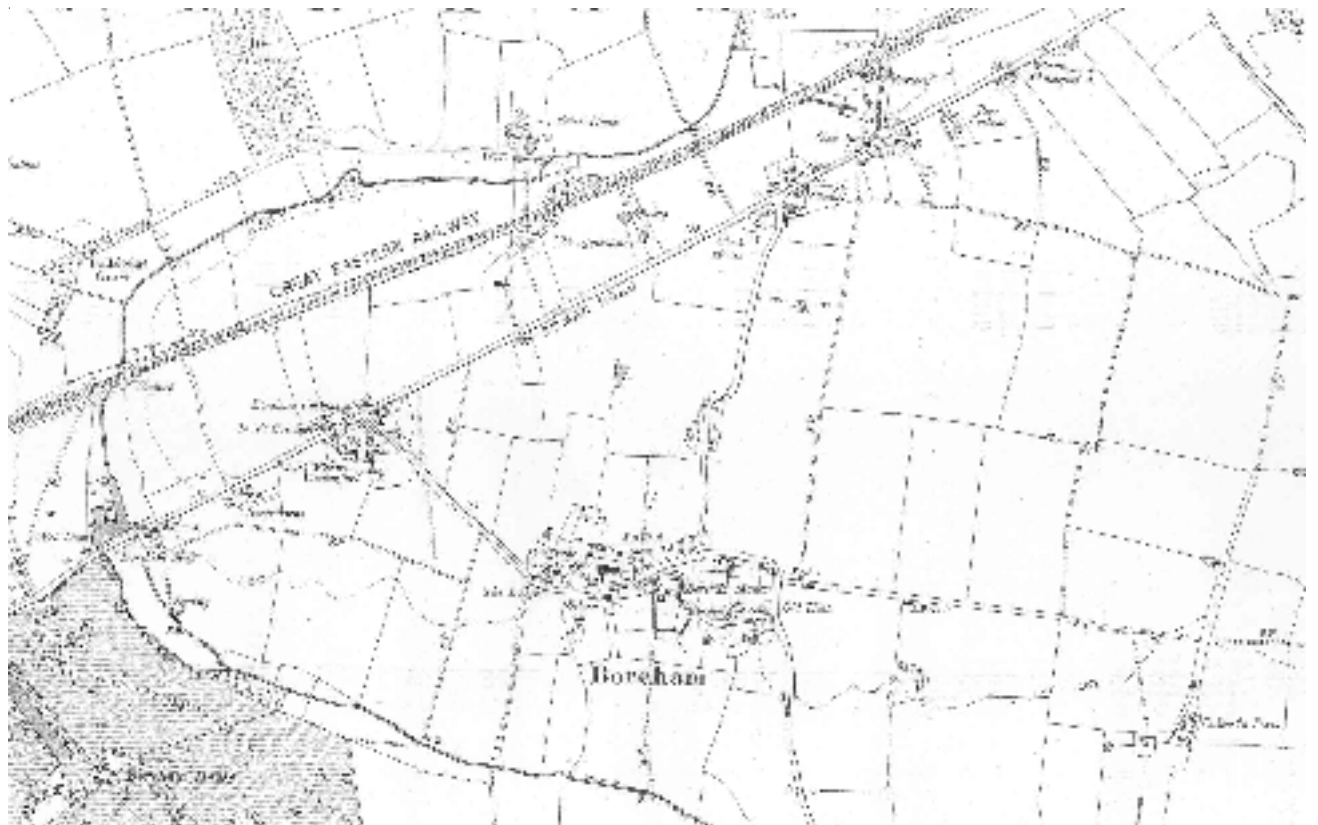


Figure 7 - 1924



Figure 8 - Aerial view



Figure 9 - Townscape Analysis

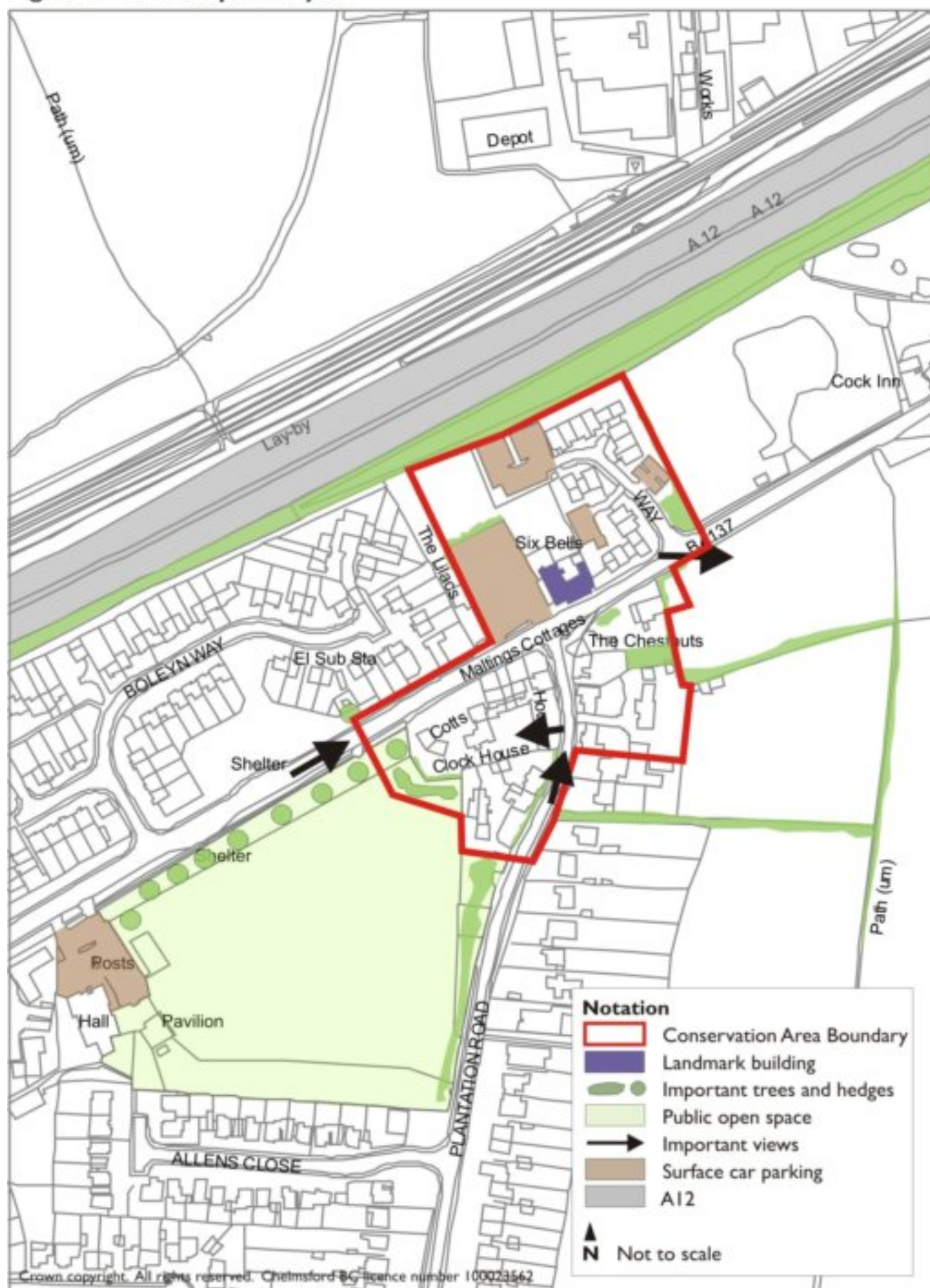
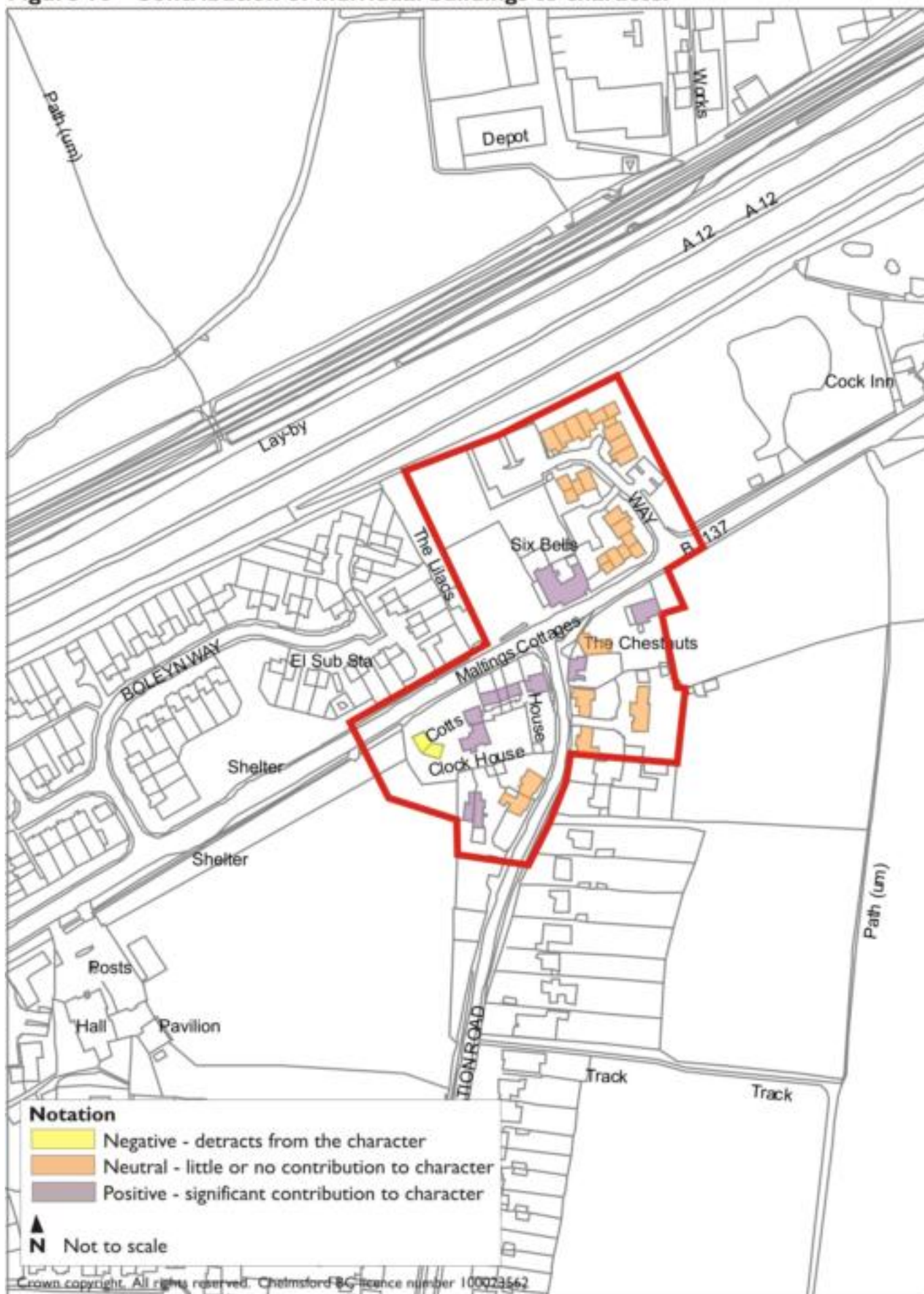


Figure 10 - Contribution of individual buildings to character



Boundary Justification

The conservation area boundary is drawn tightly around the historic core and includes modern infill development. To the west the boundary includes parts of the playing fields as a significant open setting to the Clock House with some trees and hedges. The verge along Roman Road, to the rear of houses in Boleyn Way, is included because the softened edge contributes to the character of the area. The land surrounding the Six Bells and Shearers Way is defined by property boundaries. To the south traditional buildings and sympathetic modern development is included. There are few areas where there is scope to alter the existing conservation area boundary to take account of new development, property boundary changes, more accurate map bases and significant groups of trees, see figure 11. The section of Plantation Road to the immediate south and the edge of the playing field provide an open tree lined setting which is significant on the approach to the conservation area. To the rear of 122 Plantation Road the conservation area boundary cuts through a modern building and does not follow current property boundaries.

Roman Road

When approaching from Chelmsford along the Roman Road the recreation ground and green adjacent to Boleyn Close form an open setting with specimen trees (figure 12). In the distance the Six Bells Public House projects out into the road, acting as a landmark. The backs of houses in Boleyn Close and mixture of boundary fences appear disordered and intrusive.

The car park for the Six Bells is open and appears visually intrusive and provides a poor setting for the attractive building group. The pub is an important local landmark and comprises a group of four modest eighteenth and nineteenth century cottages which have been combined (figure 13). Their modest scale, simple traditional proportions, appearance and materials, and roofscape interest are important features.

Shearers Way (figure 14) is a modern development of houses and flats, built in a neo-vernacular style, but over-scaled and of poor materials. The simple form, views out, built edge to Roman Road and planting are significant features. To the north the thick planting belt helps to visually and acoustically screen the A12.

At the eastern edge of the area, the Roman Road continues onto Hatfield Peverel. Good views are available across agricultural land to the southeast.



Figure 12

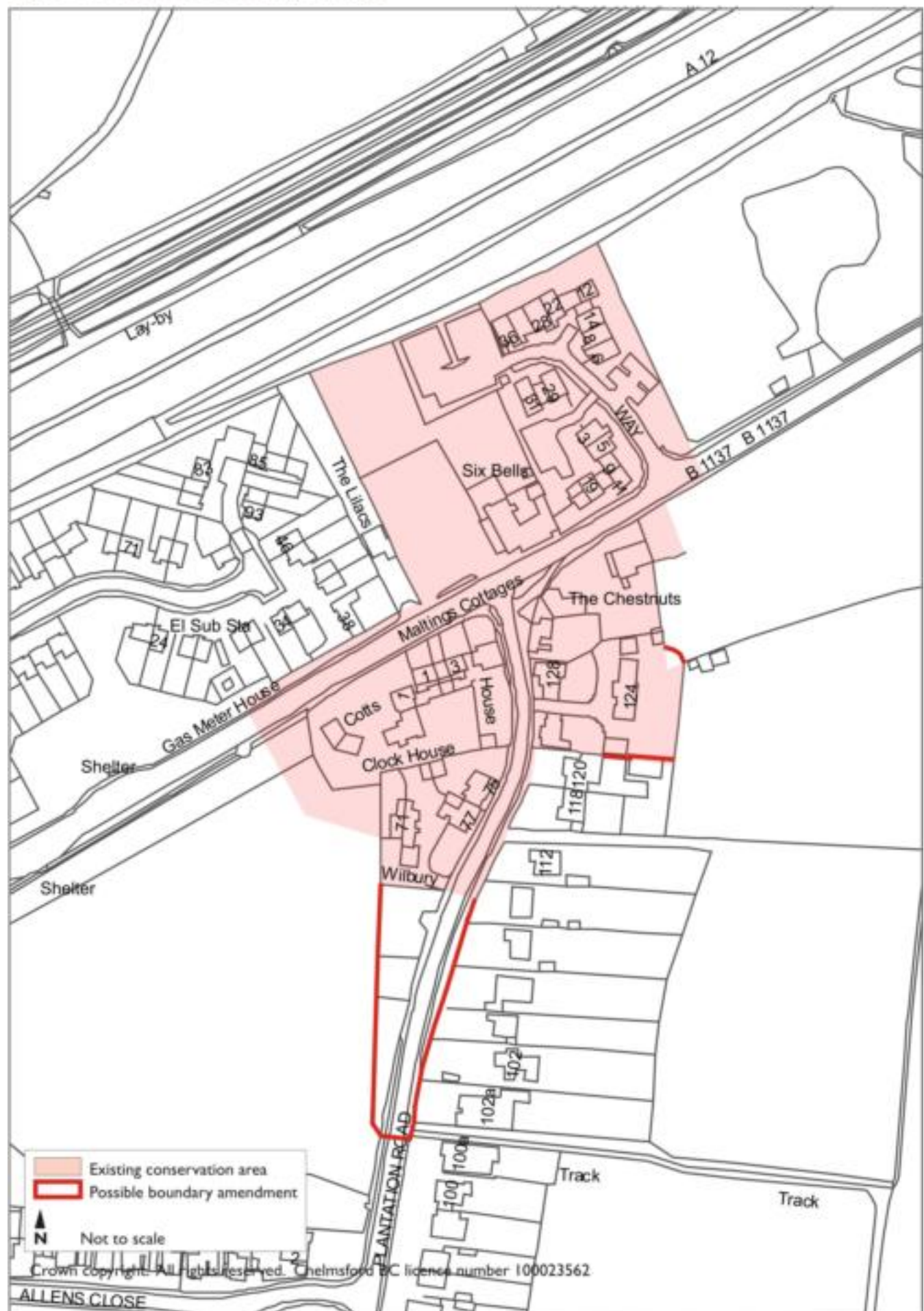


Figure 13



Figure 14

Figure 11 - Possible boundary changes



North of the Roman Road the yard between Shearers Way and the Cock Inn appears untidy, it is largely screened by earth bunding, but this appears unnatural and linear in form, there is also some planting to the boundaries, which gives intermittent screening.

On the south side of Roman Road, beyond the suburban looking garage block, the rear elevation of the Clock House (figure 15) is revealed. Much of its timber framing is exposed and its traditional H plan layout, modest scale and materials give it immense character. Its open gardens, front and rear, are important in giving views towards it and provide a setting.

Adjacent to the Clock House, Maltings Cottages is an attractive row of late sixteenth century timber framed and thatched buildings (figure 16). They are of modest scale and simple form. They are aligned at 90 degrees to the Clock House, which gives an attractive space to the rear, only publicly glimpsed from Plantation Road.

Maltings House is on the corner with Plantation Road, with a low cat slide roof down to the road. It is largely of early nineteenth century construction, but could contain earlier fabric. With Smiths Butchers, this frames Plantation Road.

Chestnuts is at the eastern edge of the area. This is a fine sixteenth century timber framed house, with various extensions. Its relationship with the agricultural land to the east is significant. The conifer planting, boundary fence and unsympathetic additions detract from its setting.

Butchers Cottage and Smiths Butchers shop curve into Plantation Road and act as a gateway with Maltings House (figure 17). Their articulated form adds to the variety in the area.

Plantation Road

Beyond Maltings House and Smiths Butchers the narrow width, curve to the road and established hedge boundary on the west side give a rural character to Plantation Road (figure 18).



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

To the rear of Maltings House there is a fine glimpsed view (figure 19) of the historic front of the Clock House and the rear of Maltings Cottage.



Figure 19

122-128 Plantation Road is a group of modern, neo-vernacular houses, which relate well to the street scene. Beyond this group on the east side of Plantation Road there are 1970s bungalows following the road to Boreham village. They are beyond the conservation area boundary, but the open frontages, trees and hedges are significant to the setting of the area (figure 20).



Figure 20

75 and 77 Plantation Road follow the line of the road and are low and traditional in form. The hedged front boundary adds significantly to the rural character of the area. To the rear 71 and 73 Plantation Road are a pair of nineteenth century cottages with gable slate covered roofs glimpsed from Plantation Road (figure 21) and the recreation grounds.

Beyond the conservation area boundary to the south the trees lining Plantation Road and the open setting provided by the recreation ground are important features.

When approaching Roman Road from the south the curved road eventually reveals the Six Bells as a landmark (figure 22).



Figure 21



Figure 22

Management Proposals

The conservation area is very small and generally well cared for by its residents, there are however works which could enhance the character of the area (figure 23), and opportunities include:

Enhancement opportunities

- Car park improvements
- Public realm improvements
- Tree planting
- Hedge planting
- Improvements to boundary treatments

▲ N Not to scale

Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Chelmsford BC licence number 100023562

ALLENS CLOSE

1. The Six Bells Public House

The Six Bells is an important group of historic buildings and a prominent landmark within the area. The car park (see figure 13) currently appears visually intrusive. Re-surfacing, subtle demarcation of parking bays and specimen tree planting would improve its appearance.

2. Landscaping works

Trees and soft landscaping are important elements which contribute to the area's character, however there are a number of areas where additional tree planting could enhance the area. The rear of the properties in Boleyn Way (figures 12 and 24) are intrusive on the approach and from the western side of the conservation area and additional screening could be used to minimise its impact.

3. Boundary Treatments

There are areas where timber boundary fences (figure 25) and modern walls appear intrusive and out of character with the area, and replacement with native hedges backed by railings or picket fences would be a visual enhancement.

4. Public Realm

The public realm is relatively uncluttered at present, but the verge adjacent to Smiths and standard highway paraphernalia detract from the area's appearance (figure 26). If the opportunity arises the verge could be improved by removing the concrete bollards and replacing them with timber posts. The use of coordinated street furniture, including street lights and signs would be a significant enhancement.



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26

Bibliography

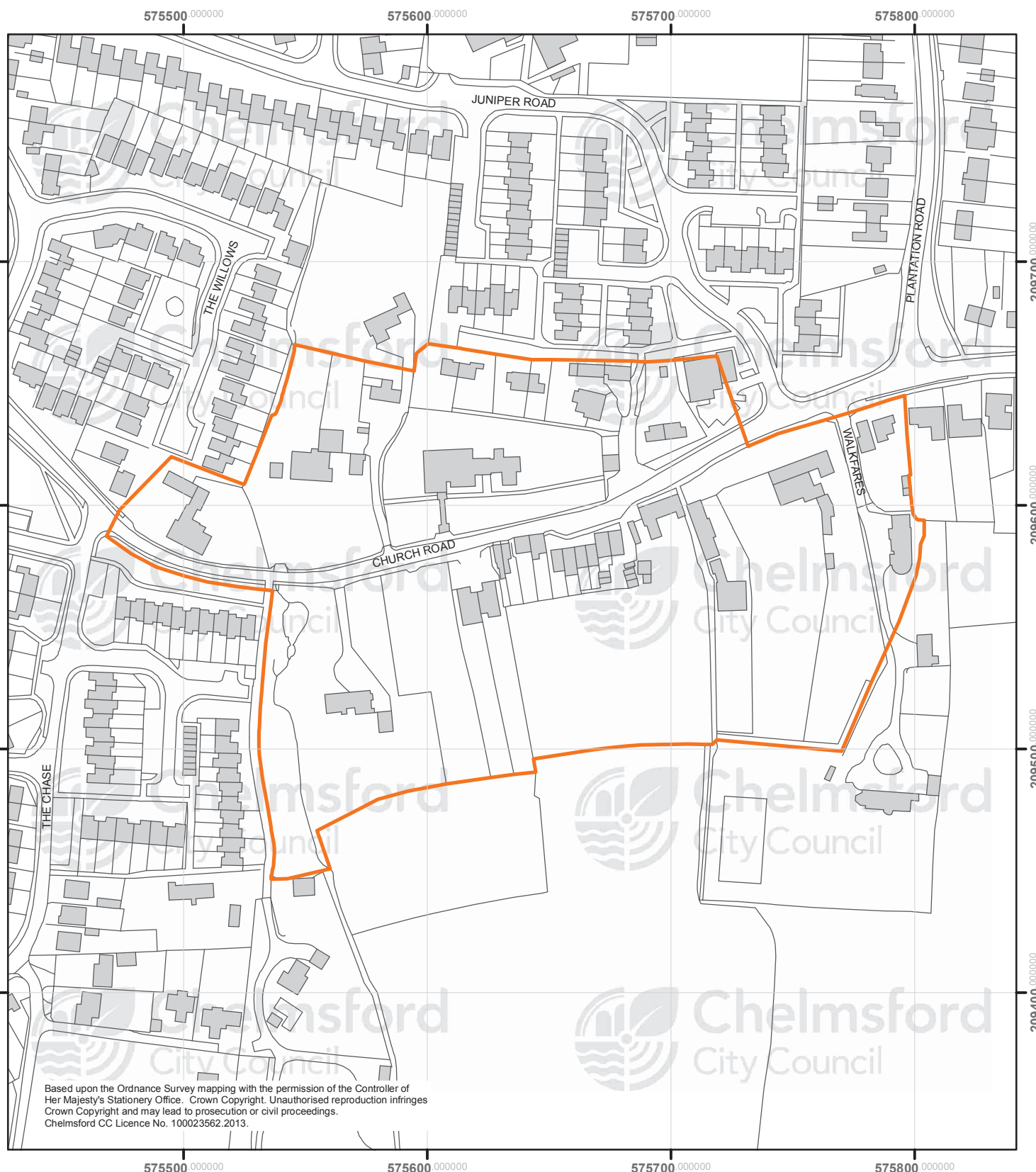
Historic Environment Characterisation, Essex County Council, 2004.

Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, English Heritage, 2005.

<http://www.essexinfo.net/borehamparishcouncil/history-of-boreham/>

Boreham - Church Road Conservation Area

Reference	G015B
Designated	10.03.1981
First amendment	21.07.1987
Second amendment	30.04.1991
Third amendment	-



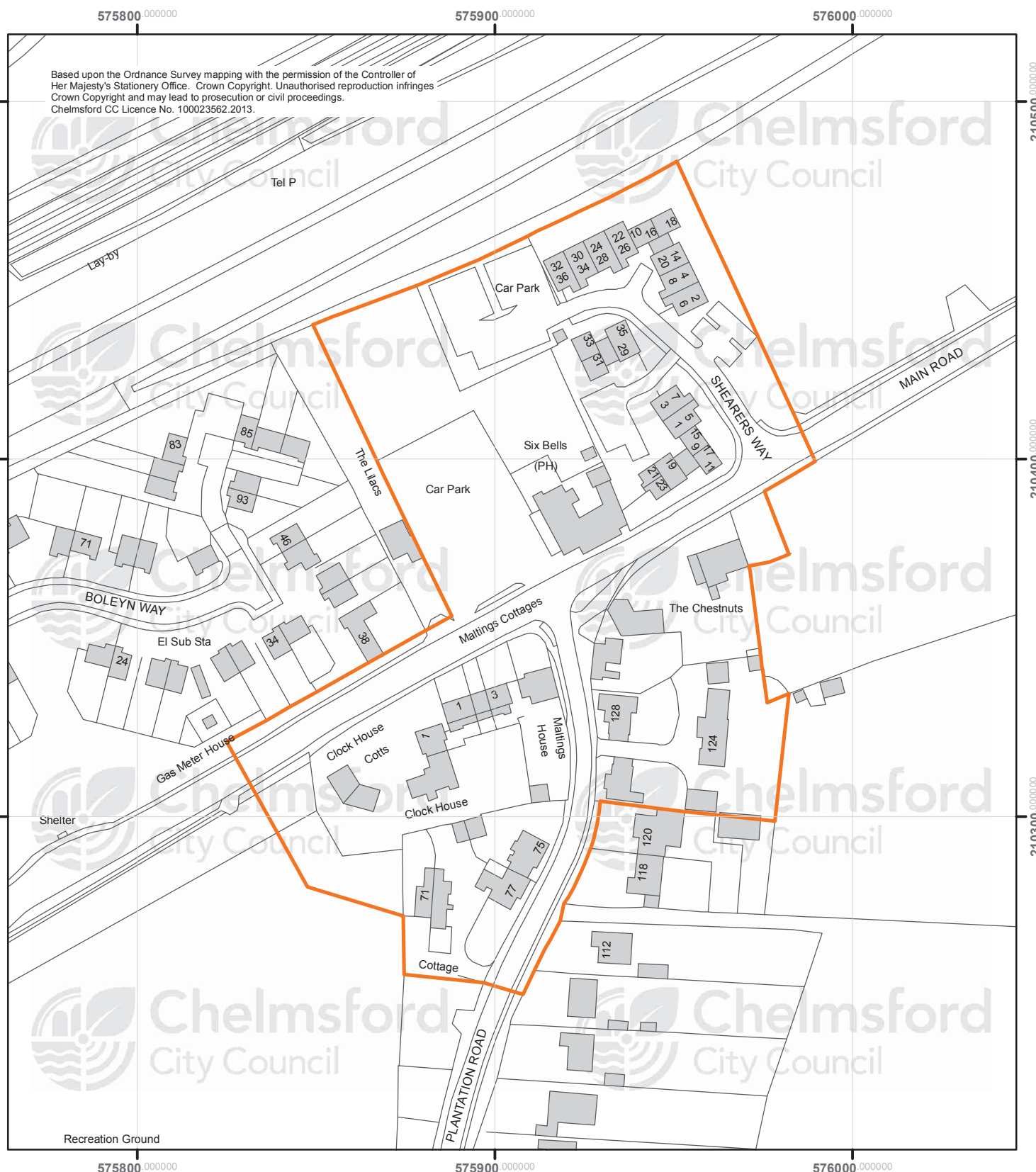
0 50 Metres
JULY 2013

Directorate for Sustainable Communities
Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE
Tel. 01245 606606 Fax. 01245 606642
Web www.chelmsford.gov.uk



Boreham - Roman Road / Plantation Road Conservation Area

Reference	G015A
Designated	21.07.1987
First amendment	-
Second amendment	-
Third amendment	-



0 50 Metres
JULY 2013

Directorate for Sustainable Communities
Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE
Tel. 01245 606606 Fax. 01245 606642
Web www.chelmsford.gov.uk

