

LOCAL PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE AGENDA

Monday, 21st August 2023 at 7.15pm

Council Chamber, Braintree District Council, Causeway House,
Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB

THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

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Members of the Local Plan Sub-Committee are requested to attend this meeting to transact the business set out in the Agenda.

Councillor J Abbott
Councillor K Bowers
Councillor L Bowers-Flint
Councillor G Butland
Councillor J Coleridge
Councillor T Cunningham
Councillor M Fincken

Councillor J Martin
Councillor A Munday
Councillor I Parker
Councillor F Ricci
Councillor G Spray (Chairman)
Councillor T Walsh

Members unable to attend the meeting are requested to forward their apologies for absence to the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email governance@braintree.gov.uk by 3pm on the day of the meeting.

D GASCOYNE
Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS – DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), Other Pecuniary Interests (OPI), or Non-Pecuniary Interests (NPI).

Any Member with a DPI, OPI or NPI must declare the nature of their interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Members must not participate in any discussion of the matter in which they have declared a DPI or OPI or participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting. In addition, the Member must withdraw from the Chamber where the meeting considering the business is being held unless the Member has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.

Public Question Time - Registration and Speaking

The Agenda allows for a period of up to 30 minutes for Public Question Time. Members of the public may ask questions or make a statement to the Cabinet on matters listed on the Agenda for this meeting.

All questions or statements should be concise and should be able to be heard within the 3 minutes allotted to each speaker.

Anyone wishing to ask a question or make a statement is requested to register their interest by completing the Public Question Time registration [online form](#) by **midday on the second working day** before the day of the meeting.

For example, if the meeting is on a Tuesday, the registration deadline is midday on Friday, (where there is a Bank Holiday Monday you will need to register by midday on the previous Thursday). The Council reserves the right to decline any requests to register to speak if they are received after this time.

When registering for Public Question Time please indicate whether you wish to attend the meeting 'in person', or to participate remotely. People who choose to join the meeting remotely will be provided with the relevant link and joining instructions for the meeting.

Please note that completion of the on-line form does not guarantee you a place to speak during Public Question Time. You will receive email notification from the Governance Service confirming whether your request is successful.

The Leader has discretion to extend the time allocated to registered speakers and to amend the order in which they may speak.

In the event that a registered speaker is unable to connect to the meeting, or if there are any technical issues, their question/statement may be read by a Council Officer.

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Comments and Suggestions

We welcome comments to make our services as efficient and effective as possible. If you have any suggestions regarding the meeting you have attended you may send these to governance@braintree.gov.uk

PUBLIC SESSION

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1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declarations of Interest

To declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, other Pecuniary Interest, or Non-Pecuniary Interest relating to items on the agenda having regard to the Code of Conduct for Members and having taken appropriate advice where necessary before the meeting.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee held on 3rd August 2023 (copy to follow).

4 Public Question Time

(See paragraph above)

5 Rivenhall Integrated Waste Management Facility - PEIR Consultation

5 - 21

6 Wethersfield Conservation Area - Character Appraisal and Management Plan

22 - 102

7 Urgent Business - Public Session

To consider any matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

8 Exclusion of the Public and Press

To agree the exclusion of the public and press for the consideration of any items for the reasons set out in Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

At the time of compiling this agenda there were none.

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PRIVATE SESSION

9 Urgent Business - Private Session

To consider any matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered in private by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

Report Title: Rivenhall IWMF Development Consent Order – Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) Consultation.	
Report to: Local Plan Sub-Committee	
Date: 21st August 2023	For: Decision
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Alan Massow – Principal Planning Policy Officer	
Enquiries to: Alan Massow – Principal Planning Policy Officer.	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Indaver Rivenhall Limited intends to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to increase the generating capacity of the previously consented Rivenhall Integrated Waste Management Facility (IWMF).
- 1.2 The development site is located at the former Rivenhall Airfield north west of Kelvedon in Essex, it is also located near to the villages of Silver End, Bradwell and Coggeshall.
- 1.3 The currently consent scheme is for 49.9 mw. A DCO is now required as the energy generating capacity of the site is proposed to be increased to over 50 mw.
- 1.4 A DCO is how consent is obtained for the construction of a development which is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project or NSIP. What constitutes an NSIP is defined in the Planning Act 2008, and in this case, it is because the project can generate more than 50 mw of electricity.
- 1.5 It should be noted that the majority of the scheme already has the benefit of planning permission, and that the proposed changes which enable the increase in electricity generation are all internal to the already consented building. As such this is not an opportunity to propose changes to the already consented use of the site beyond the increased energy generation.
- 1.6 The proposed development is Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development as defined by the EIA Regulations and therefore requires an Environmental Impact Assessment. The PEIR report presents the preliminary findings of the EIA undertaken for the proposed development
- 1.7 The current consultation is the Statutory Consultation and takes place between the 28th June and 23rd of August 2023. The following documents published in support of the consultation;
 - PEIR Volume 1;
 - PEIR Volume 2;
 - PEIR Non-Technical Summary;

- S47 Newspaper Notice;
- S48 Newspaper Notice;
- Statement of Community Consultation;
- EIA Scoping Report;
- Have Your Say Leaflet;
- IWMF Brochure;
- Newspaper Advert.

1.8 It should be noted that the Planning Inspectorate has previously issued an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion for this proposal, which is available from the link below;

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/rivenhall-iwmf-and-energy-centre/>

1.9 If approved the proposed IWMF is expected to be commissioned in 2025.

2. Recommendations

2.1 *To approve the response to the PEIR consultation as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.*

3. Summary of Issues

3.1 EIA is the process used to identify and assess the likely significant effects of a proposed development on the environment and to identify measures to mitigate or manage any significant negative effects. The PEI Report and its Non-Technical Summary is part of the EIA process and provides preliminary assessment information for consultation in advance of a submission.

3.2 Previous consultations have taken place on the EIA Scoping in which the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State, considered the EIA Scoping Report and consulted statutory consultees, and the host authorities which in this case are Braintree District Council and Essex County Council. The Scoping Opinion was issued by PINS on the 6th of June 2023 and scoped out most issues except for Climate Change/ Greenhouse Gases, and noise.

3.3 Both these issues are discussed below.

Climate Change

3.4 To summarise the position set out in the PEIR, the potential effects have been assessed for the operational phase only, as construction and decommissioning effects are scoped out of the EIA.

3.5 The residual effects of the Proposed Development are considered to be predominantly negligible or, for there to be no change relative to the Consented Scheme. The Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases

assessment has identified the potential for a negligible beneficial effect on climate, due to the Proposed Development being able to generate more electrical output from the same fuel input (and generating more energy per unit greenhouse gas emitted).

- 3.6 No moderate or major effects have been identified, and no significant effects are anticipated associated with the Proposed Development.
- 3.7 In terms of comments on the PEIR Braintree District Council is of the opinion that whilst the documentation states that there will be no increase in direct greenhouse gas emissions from the facility, this statement could be misleading (Para 7.1 to 7.4 – PEIR Non-Technical Summary). It doesn't cite the scope 1 (direct emissions from the plant), scope 2 (emissions from electricity purchased by the organisation) and potentially scope 3 emissions (indirect emissions including those from general suppliers) of the plant despite the fact it will be overall positive from a carbon emissions point of view. At paragraph 7.3 it is suggested that it should state that carbon emissions shall be recorded and published and offset against the positive carbon impact for the environment and that these would be nominal in relative to the positive effects of the site upon carbon emissions.

Noise

- 3.8 The Noise PEIR Chapter discusses the effects of operational noise associated with the Proposed Development upon the closest residential receptors surrounding the site.
- 3.9 The baseline conditions were established by a noise survey undertaken in October 2005 by Golder Associates (UK) Ltd at locations representative of the closest NSRs as part of the original 2008 planning application for the Site and confirmed in an updated survey in 2015 which stated baseline noise levels had remained consistent.
- 3.10 Noise-related conditions associated with the 2016 planning consent outline noise limits at the closest sensitive receptors during the daytime, evening and night-time period. The noise assessment for the Proposed Development will use noise modelling to determine noise levels from the operation of the site at the closest receptors surrounding the site.

Operational Development Effects

- 3.11 Operational effects associated with the Proposed Development will be assessed in conjunction with an updated modelling exercise, following receipt of the required information.
- 3.12 In the absence of the full updated assessment at this stage, the previous noise assessment undertaken by Belair Research Limited identified that operational noise at the site would be at or below the conditioned noise limits during the daytime and night-time periods.

- 3.13 A range of mitigation measures could be included should the full assessment identify any significant effects associated with the operation of the Site.

Cumulative Noise Effects

- 3.14 The project noise consultant, SLR, will assess cumulative impacts including operations at Bradwell Quay.
- 3.15 Given the higher noise level limits during the daytime period, there is a greater allowance for noise from site operations. It is likely that given operations of the quarry already make up the baseline noise environment that the daytime noise limits would be met.

Summary of Environmental Effects

- 3.16 Potential effects have been assessed for the operational phase only. Construction and decommissioning effects are scoped out of this EIA.
- 3.17 The residual effects of the Proposed Development are considered to be predominantly negligible or, for there to be no change relative to the Consented Scheme. The Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases assessment has identified the potential for a negligible beneficial effect on climate, due to the Proposed Development being able to generate more electrical output from the same fuel input (and generating more energy per unit greenhouse gas emitted).
- 3.18 No moderate or major effects have been identified, and no significant effects are anticipated associated with the Proposed Development.
- 3.19 The recommendations set out in this report will help the Council to deliver the following Corporate Objectives: (*Delete as appropriate*)
- A well connected and growing district with high quality homes and infrastructure;
 - A prosperous district that attracts business growth and provides high quality employment opportunities;

Comments on Noise

- 3.20 Braintree District Council along with Essex County Council commissioned Jacobs to provide advice on noise contained within the PEIR.
- 3.21 To summaries the mains points raised by Jacobs, in the PEIR reference is needed to Planning Practice Guidance on the consideration of noise impacts. It is considered that that is it unclear how the facility will generate a greater output of electricity and what the impactions of that would be.
- 3.22 In terms of the noise survey, it is unclear whether a new survey has been undertaken or if it was just for new noise receptors in Silver End or a more extensive survey was undertaken. In addition, information is needed to

substantiate the claim that the 2005 measurements are still relevant as reference in the 2015 survey, as such the baseline data needs to be robustly demonstrated that it is justified.

3.23 One final point is that the facility needs to be treated as one noise source, and not just the additional components of that facility, as such combined noise levels needs to be considered.

3.24 The full technical note provided by Jacobs is included in the appendix to this report.

4. Consultation

4.1 The current consultation is the Statutory Consultation and runs between the 28th of June and 23rd of August 2023.

4.2 Previous consultations have taken place on the EIA Scoping in which the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State, considered the EIA Scoping Report and consulted statutory consultees, and the host authorities which in this case are Braintree District Council and Essex County Council. The Scoping Opinion was issued by PINS on the 6th June 2023 and scoped out the majority of issues with the exception of Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases, and noise.

4.3 Previous non-statutory consultation has taken place with the first being informal consultation with stakeholders, which included engagement with local community representatives and other stakeholders including local councils, and the Environment Agency.

4.4 As part of the consultation process 6 public engagement events are being held at Kelvedon, Rivenhall, Bradwell, Coggeshall and Silver End, with an additional event was also arranged in Witham.

5. Options

5.1 To approve the response to the PEIR consultation as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

5.2 To not approve the response to the PEIR consultation as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

5.3 To alter the proposed response to the PEIR consultation.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 All costs associated with the NSIP will be recovered through a Planning Performance Agreement.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 None at this time.

8. Other Implications

8.1 None.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

9.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

9.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

9.3 The Equality Impact Assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will/will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

10. List of Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 – Proposed Response to PEIR consultation.

10.2 Appendix 2 - Rivenhall IWMF DCO Preliminary Environmental Information Report Noise response – Jacobs,

11. Background Papers

11.1 PEIR Volume 1;
PEIR Volume 2;
PEIR Non-Technical Summary;
S47 Newspaper Notice;
S48 Newspaper Notice;
Statement of Community Consultation;
EIA Scoping Report;
Have Your Say Leaflet;
IWMF Brochure;
Newspaper Advert.



Your ref: -
Ask for: Alan Massow
Dial: 01376 552525
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Date: /08/23

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Rivenhall IWMF Development Consent Order – Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) Consultation

Thank you for consulting Braintree District Council on the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), for the proposal to increase generating capacity at the Rivenhall Integrated Waste Management Facility (IWMF).

Our understanding of the currently consented scheme is that the site will be capable of generating 49.9mw, and if the Development Consent Order (DCO) is approved this generating capacity will be increased to over 50mw.

It is noted that the scheme already has the benefit of planning permission, and that the proposed changes which enable the increased electricity generation are all internal to the already consented building, that is currently under construction.

It is noted that previous consultations have taken place EIA scoping, in which the Planning Inspectorate scoped out most issues except Climate Change, Greenhouse Gases, and noise. As such these are the only two topics which this response will cover.

Climate change

In terms of comments on the PEIR, Braintree District Council is of the opinion that whilst the documentation states that there will be no increase in direct greenhouse gas emissions from the facility, this statement could be misleading (Para 7.1 to 7.4 PEIR Non-Technical Summary). It doesn't cite the scope 1, scope 2 or scope 3 emissions of the plant despite the fact it will be overall positive from a carbon emissions point of view. At paragraph 7.3 it is suggested that it should state that carbon emissions shall be recorded and published and offset against the positive carbon impact for the environment and that these would be nominal in relative to the positive effects of the site upon carbon emissions.

Noise

Braintree District Council along with Essex County Council commissioned Jacobs to provide advice on noise contained within the PEIR.

To summaries the mains points raised by Jacobs contained in the technical note attached, in the PEIR reference is needed to Planning Practice Guidance on the

consideration of noise impacts. It is considered that that is it unclear how the facility will generate a greater output of electricity and what the impacts of that would be.

In terms of the noise survey, it is unclear whether a new survey has been undertaken or if it was just for new noise receptors in Silver End or a more extensive survey was undertaken. In addition, information is needed to substantiate the claim that the 2005 measurements are still relevant as reference in the 2015 survey, as such the baseline data needs to be robustly demonstrated that it is justified.

One final point is that the facility needs to be treated as one noise source, and not the additional components of that facility, as such combined noise levels needs to be considered.

The full technical note provided by Jacobs is included in the appendix to this report.

Yours faithfully,

Councillor G Spray
Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure
Chairman of the Local Plan Sub Committee

Attachments

Rivenhall IWMF DCO Preliminary Environmental Information Report Noise response
- Jacobs

Rivenhall IWMF DCO
Preliminary Environmental Information Report
Noise response

Consultation Request Details

DCO Case Reference	EN010138
Site	Land at Rivenhall Airfield, Coggeshall Road (A120), Braintree CO5 9DF
Proposal	Rivenhall Integrated Waste Management Facility and Energy Centre.
Case Officer	Claire Tomalin
Date of request from ECC	27/07/23
Date of response	09/08/23
Jacobs Ref	B3553P13/93
Jacobs Consultee	Robert Mansfield
Information reviewed	EIA Scoping Report, Rivenhall IWMF Development Consent Order Project. Quod, April 2023. Scoping Opinion: Proposed Rivenhall IWMF and Energy Centre. PINS, 6 June 2023 Rivenhall IWMF Development Consent Order Preliminary Environmental Information Report Volume I – Chapters, June 2023. Preliminary Environmental Information Report Volume II - Appendices June, 2023.

Site History and Existing Consent Conditions

Current site use	Consent for IWMF generating less than 49.9MW granted in 2016. Excavation and enabling works underway in April 2023.	
Consent number	ESS/34/15/BTE	
Consent date	26 February 2016	
	Condition Number	Summary
Temporary operations	42	Noise limit of 70dB LAeq 1hr for upto 8 weeks in any 12 month period. Temporary operations shall include site preparation, bund formation and removal, site stripping and restoration, or as agreed with the WPA.
Normal operations	38	Freefield daytime (0700-1900hrs) LAeq 1hr noise limits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herring's Farm 45 • Deeks Cottage 45 • Haywards 45 • Allshot's Farm 47 • The Lodge 49

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheepcotes Farm 45 • Greenpastures Bungalow 45 • Goslings Cottage 47 • Goslings Farm 47 • Goslings Barn 47 • Bumby Hall 45 • Parkgate Farm Cottages 45 <p>It should be noted, that with the exception of the last two locations, these noise limits mirror those within the consent for normal mineral extraction operations at Bradwell Quarry (ESS/12/20/BTE).</p>
	39	Freefield evening (1900-2300hrs) noise limit of 42 dB LAeq 1hr at all noise sensitive properties.
	40	Freefield night-time (2300-0700hrs) noise limit of 40 dB LAeq 5 min at 1m from the façade facing the site of all noise sensitive properties.
Monitoring requirements	41	Quarterly noise monitoring at up to 5 locations to be agreed with WPA. 2 No. 15 min daytime (0700-1830hrs) periods, and 2 No. evening/night-time (1830-0700hrs) periods.
Operational hours	34	Mineral Extraction: 0700-1830 hrs weekday 0700-1300 hrs Saturday
	35	Construction: 0700-1900 hrs Monday to Sunday, but not Bank Holidays.
	36	Importation and export of materials during IWMF operation: 0700-1830 hrs weekdays 0700-1300 hrs Saturdays 1000-1600 hrs Sundays and Bank Holidays as required by WDA and agreed with WPA.
HGV movements	3	Limits for mineral extraction and IWMF operations: 404 HGV movements per weekday. 202 movements on Saturdays. Sundays and Bank holidays as agreed by WDA and WPA.
	4	Limits for IWMF construction: 404 HGV movements Monday to Sunday
Other noise related conditions	19	Process layout and configuration details to be agreed by WPA.
	69	Noise assessment to be updated once layout and configuration agreed under C19. Compliance with C38 to be demonstrated and agreed by WPA.
Historic site uses		WWII airfield and Bradwell Quarry

The original consent ESS/34/15/BTE has been subject to a number of applications for discharges of conditions and non-material amendments including:

- NMA6 – changes to working hours May-December 2023 to allow concrete pours. Noise mitigation considered.

No submissions have been identified from the Essex County Council's (ECC) planning portal website regarding C41 (Noise monitoring), C19 (process layout details) or C69 (updated noise assessment).

Summary of Noise/vibration Related Aspects of the Proposals

On-site activities (construction, operation, restoration)	Increase in the generating capacity of the Energy from Waste (EfW) process to over 50MW (approx. 65MW) via modification of governor valves to increase steam capacity or installation of unrestricted governor valves. These works will take 1-2 weeks. No change to building envelope, quantity of waste. Scoping opinion requires additional justification to scope out vibration effects. Scoping Opinion requires identification of noise and vibration impacts arising from increased volume of steam sent to turbine. Scoping Opinion does not agree to scope out all construction effects and, requests clarification of whether existing Environmental Permit will apply to the Proposed DCO development.
Site access	No change – via Bradwell Quarry access to A120
Road traffic	No change to HGV numbers. Scoping Opinion confirmed road traffic noise as scoped out.
Operational hours	No change.

Noise/Vibration Sensitive Receptors

The Scoping Opinion requires that all noise sensitive receptors are identified, and justification provided for any that are excluded from assessment.

From an examination of the application information submitted and publicly available Ordnance Survey mapping and aerial photography (www.maps.google.com, www.bing.com/maps, www.magic.gov.uk), potential noise sensitive receptors may include (but not be limited to):

Receptor	Approximate Distance from site	Direction	Comments
Residential (including hotels etc)	425m	East	The Lodge, Woodhouse Lane (as per Scoping Report 8.5.7)
	660m	West	Sheepcotes Farm (as per Scoping Report 8.5.7)
	745m	North	Heron's Farm, Cut Hedge Lane (as per Scoping Report 8.5.7).
	750m	West	Brick House (as per Scoping report 2.1.9)
	1km	North west	Gosling's Farm, Sheepcotes Lane (as per Scoping Report 8.5.7)

Receptor	Approximate Distance from site	Direction	Comments
	1km	South and south west	Jewitt Way, Silver End – ECC response to scoping report identifies these new receptors under construction and some occupation. Silver End and Park Gate Road identified by Braintree District Council response to Scoping Report.
	No other residential properties within 1km according to Scoping report 2.1.9. Scoping opinion has confirmed human health impacts are scoped out.		
Schools			
Hospitals/Healthcare			
Offices/commercial property	400m	South East	Industrial estate at Allshots Farm.
Community facilities (including Places of Worship)	-	-	-
Ecologically designated sites	290m	South	Storey's Wood Local Wildlife Site (Scoping Opinion requires its consideration).
	900m	South east	Upney Wood (Scoping Opinion requires its consideration).
	Note that although ecological effects have been agreed by the Scoping Opinion as scoped out, it does require these to be considered as potential receptors for noise and justification be provided for their exclusion.		
Heritage assets	Archaeological and cultural heritage agreed by Scoping Opinion as scoped out.		

Scope of Assessment

The Scoping Report proposes that no new baseline data needs to be gathered as the existing consent noise limits form the basis of the baseline. It is also noted at 8.3.6 that operations at Bradwell Quarry may potentially influence the daytime baseline noise levels, but that evening, weekend and night-time periods would not be influenced. This has failed to acknowledge the consented operations of the Dry Silo Mortar Plant from 0600-0700 and 1900-2200hrs.

The ECC response to the Scoping Report has identified that the primary guidance to be used for operational noise impact assessment should be BS4142:2014 +A1:2019. It also notes that there are no specific noise limits set by the existing Environmental Permit. Additional background noise monitoring was not considered as necessary, except for the new receptors identified on Jewitt Way, Silver End.

The Braintree District Council (BDC) response to the Scoping Report warns against the use of the existing planning condition noise limits to assess the likelihood of residential effects. That is, correlation between planning condition compliance and residential effects should not be used by the ES. It is noted that compliance with planning limits would involve the specific noise levels only, and not the rating noise levels (which would include any appropriate penalties related to the characteristics of the noise). An updated survey is requested, with the lower of historic and new data being suggested as a basis for setting thresholds. An assessment of rating levels compared with background levels is recommended in accordance with BS4142:2014 +A1:2019.

It is noted that the Scoping Opinion requires due consideration to the potential impacts on ecological receptors. Typically, this would be contained within the Ecology chapter of an ES; however, it is noted that ecological effects have been agreed by the Scoping Opinion as scoped out. Therefore, it will be necessary for this element to be considered within the Noise and Vibration Chapter.

PEIR Review

Chapter 8 of the PEIR relates to noise and vibration. Comments are provided on relevant chapter sections below in the order they are contained within the document:

8.2 Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

The chapter references the majority of the documents expected and largely represent the current framework for noise assessment of this nature. However, we would expect reference to be made to Planning Practice Guidance – Noise, which provides guidance on matters of planning in considering and managing noise from new developments.

It shall be noted that reference is made to BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 within this section, which is appropriate given the nature of the application, i.e. the potential noise effects from an industrial facility on residential receptor. However, no further consideration is made within the chapter to this Standard. Further comment is provided on this below.

8.3 Consultation

Table 8.1 summarises *“key comments raised by consultees of relevance to this assessment during the EIA Scoping study and how the assessment responded to them.”* Responses are provided to comments raised by the Planning Inspectorate and BDC. Responses are not provided to the comments raised by ECC (see ‘Scope of Assessment’ above), which given the relevance of these comments and the planning history of the site, would be expected.

With regard to the comments responded to, we note the following response to the Planning Inspector’s question relating to whether there will be an increase in turbine rotations and the consequential effect in terms of noise and vibration: *“The total amount of steam generated by the Consented Scheme will not be changed by the Proposed Development. The increased volume of steam to the turbine does not increase the number of turbine rotations. This is because the generator, which is connected to the turbine, is required to operate at a fixed speed in order to generate electricity at the correct frequency for the grid (50 Hz). Notwithstanding, the ES will provide an assessment of potential noise effects of the operational phase of the Proposed Development.”* It is unclear how the facility will therefore generate a greater output of electricity, e.g. increased or modified plant, how this varies from the original application in 2008, and what are the implications in terms of noise emissions. Such information should be provided within the ES.

With regard to the response to BDC's comment relating to source data, the document responds: *"Octave band sound power levels for proposed plant have been provided by the EPC contractor and will be used for the purposes of the assessment."* This does not appear to respond directly to the BDC query. However, we read this to infer that Method 2 would be utilised, that being source noise data provided by the EPC contractor would be used in the noise modelling exercise. It would be expected that sufficient details be provided within the ES to demonstrate that the source noise data is robust, including details of how the data was obtained (i.e. measurement methodology, test certifications, etc) and under what operating conditions (e.g. operating under full load).

With regard to the response to BDC's comment that an updated survey is undertaken to identify thresholds and that background sound levels obtained from these should be compared to rating levels from the facility, the document responds: *"An updated survey has been undertaken, the results of which will be included as an Appendix within the ES Chapter. In terms of the proposed assessment methodology and thresholds used, this remains in-line with the methodology used for the Consented Scheme and has been agreed with the Inspectorate. Therefore, the noise limits used as part of this assessment will remain consistent with the Consented Scheme."* Firstly, it is unclear if the "updated survey" relates to the additional receptors at on Jewitt Way, Silver End (see Scoping Response from Essex CC), or to a more expansive survey including those existing receptors contained within the extant Planning Permission (as requested by BDC). Secondly, it shall be noted that there is no comment within the Scoping Opinion to the effect that the Inspectorate has agreed with the methodology. In fact, reference should be made to 1.0.11 of the Scoping Opinion which states *"This Opinion should not be construed as implying that the Inspectorate agrees with the information or comments provided by the Applicant in their request for an opinion from the Inspectorate"*.

8.4 Assessment Methodology

Under 'Operational Vibration' the chapter sets out justification for scoping out operational vibration. We would agree that, given the separation distances involved, that operational vibration can be scoped out.

Under 'Establishing Baseline Scenarios', the chapter states that a noise survey undertaken in 2015 demonstrated that initial noise measurements undertaken in 2005 were still relevant. Firstly, we would wish to see the information to substantiate this statement. On reviewing previous documentation, we can observe statements to this effect; however, we cannot locate the supporting evidence. Secondly, given that it has been almost 8 years since the 2015 survey and 18 years since the original survey, we would seek further justification to robustly demonstrate that the baseline data used for the basis of the assessment remain valid.

Also under 'Establishing Baseline Scenarios', reference is made to Future Baseline stating *"The baseline for the noise and vibration assessment is taken as the Consented Scheme Future Baseline; this is defined as the operation of the Consented Scheme once fully constructed and operational"*. Clarification would be sought on this as this implies the noise baseline consists of the consented scheme, which would not be considered an appropriate approach. Instead, the baseline should consist of the scenario without the facility in use. In considering BS4142:2014+A1:2019, the Standard is clear that the residual and background sound sources/levels should not include any contribution from the specific sound source. Given this application is for a revision to the consented specific sound source, then it can be considered that the entire facility is the specific source, not the additional component.

Also under 'Establishing Baseline Scenarios', the chapter presents the current planning conditions (Conditions 38, 39 and 40), concluding in 8.4.18 that these will be used for the basis of the assessment for the proposed development (note BDC and ECC concerns within the Scoping Opinion to this approach, highlighted earlier). Firstly, reference is made to comments above with regard to demonstrating the suitability of using historic noise measurements for the basis of establishing noise limits. Secondly, it would be expected that the ES robustly demonstrate that the use of the current noise limits remains valid. In particular, reference should be made to BS4142:2014+A1:2019, given this is recognised as the appropriate guidance when considering the noise effects of industrial facilities on residential premises.

We would agree with BDC that relying on extant planning conditions as a basis for determining significance is not appropriate without further consideration given to their derivation and continued suitability. It shall be noted that an assessment in line with the requirements of BS4142:2014+A1:2019 would allow the consideration of impact in accordance with the most current and relevant guidance. It would enable consideration of existing and updated baseline noise monitoring to confirm or revise proposed noise limits. In deriving such limits, the Standard allows for due consideration to be given, as appropriate, to matters such as absolute noise levels (i.e. consideration to guidance in BS 8233 and WHO), context of the sound, and characteristics of the sound.

It is noted that the 2009 Planning Inspectorate's decision makes reference to BS 4142 (note this would be the 1997 version of the Standard) in considering the potential impact from noise, with no specific reference appearing to other guidance or Standards. Para 13.69 of the decision states: *"...The assessment of operational noise level at all receptor locations for both day and night time periods shows that noise levels of operations would be below the level of 'marginal significance' according to British Standard 4142. The physical noise levels predicted for daytime operations fall within the range of 22 to 34 dB(A), and 22 to 30 dB(A) for night time periods. I am satisfied that such levels of noise would not have a material impact on the amenity of local residents."* It is assumed that the Inspector drew this conclusion based on the Golder Associates Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) submitted with the original application, which stated *"...However, in the absence of other relevant guidance the application of BS 4142 has been applied for the assessment of the noise impact from the proposed eRCF operations."*

Reference to the predicted noise levels stated above are contained in the Golder Associates NIA. The NIA compares these predictions to *"existing noise limits associated with the existing quarrying operations within Bradwell Quarry"*, noting that these limits were derived with reference to historic minerals guidance (e.g. MPS 2). These existing limits appear to then form the basis of the consented permission for the IWMF. As such, it would appear that guidance relevant to minerals working has been used for an industrial facility. Although, the IWMF is cited withing a minerals development, it is an industrial facility and therefore, the approach taken is questionable.

Under 'Identifying Likely Significant Effects', the chapter states *"The predicted noise levels undertaken by HZI, who are the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contractor for the Proposed Development, will be used and are based on the exact specification of the plant"*. As discussed above, it would be expected that sufficient details be provided within the ES to demonstrate that the source noise data is robust. It would also be expected that sufficient information be provided to allow third parties (e.g. BDC and ECCs Acoustic adviser's) to verify the predictions provided. Furthermore, as part of any review by third parties, it would be expected that noise model files would be made available.

Also under 'Identifying Likely Significant Effects', Table 8.4 presents magnitude of impacts derived through comparing predicted specific noise levels against the noise limits with conditions 38, 39 and 40. Notwithstanding comments above relating to the validity of continuing with these limits, and the previous comments from ECC and BDC on their suitability, these should be viewed as maximum not to be exceeded. We would not agree with an assessment approach which infers an exceedance of a noise limit as . That is, limits by definition, are set for the purpose stipulating a threshold to protect sensitive receptors, not to be exceeded.

Determining Effect Significance

Table 8.5 presents a scale of sensitivity for receptors. Ultimately, when combined with the magnitude of impact (see previous comment on this matter) this results in a significant of effect within the assessment. Notwithstanding the general disagreement with the assessment approach used, no justification is provided on why night-time is deemed as more sensitive when compared to daytime. Furthermore, in using this approach, we would question where does the evening period fall in this table?

Table 8.7 presents a Significance of Effects Matrix. The matrix infers that, during the day, defined noise limits can be exceeded by 3 dB before a significant effect is determined. Whereas, at night, any exceedance of the noise limits would result in a significant effect. We refer to our comments above on the appropriateness of such an approach and the question of a variation in sensitivity between day and night. Notwithstanding this, if such a matrix was employed to determine significance, this particular concern would be alleviated through applying consistent sensitivities for day, evening and night-time periods, i.e. deploy 'High' sensitivity for all periods for residential premises.

Under 'Assumptions and Limitations', reference is made to data provision by the EPC Contractor. We would refer to previous responses on this with regard to ensuring sufficient detail is provided to demonstrate that the source noise data is robust.

8.5 Baseline Conditions

Under 'Future Baseline Scenario', the chapter notes *"The operation of the Bradwell Quarry to the north of the Proposed Development may have the potential to impact on daytime baseline sound levels. Therefore, once operations at the quarry cease daytime baseline sound levels at the nearest receptors may decrease. However, it is considered that the more sensitive evening, weekend and night-time baseline levels would not be influenced by changes in the operational status of the quarry."* However, the ES should take account of the Dry Silo Mortar plant that is consented for the site and operates during the evening and a proportion of the night-time periods.

8.6 Assessment of Operational Effects

The assessment is currently based on an assessment undertaken by Belair Research Limited in 2015. It should be noted that comments provided on this assessment in 2015 and 2016 highlighted that a number of assumptions had been made within the noise modelling process that required resolution, including confirmation of various plant items. Therefore, caution should be applied to the predictions presented at this time. Notwithstanding this, and with reference to comments above with regard to reviewing assessment criteria, only once updated predictions are robustly presented, can it be determined if there is the potential for adverse impacts.

8.7 Cumulative Effects

Notwithstanding previous comments on the use of existing noise limits to form the basis of the assessment, when considering cumulative effects, the ES should ensure that different elements of the site do not combine to result in exceedances. For example, should both the proposed facility operate and the DSM be permitted to operate at 42 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$ at night, this could result in a combined noise level of 45 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$.

Report Title: The Wethersfield Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan	
Report to: Local Plan Sub-Committee	
Date: 21st August 2023	For: Decision
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Julie O'Hara	
Enquiries to: Julie O'Hara	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Wethersfield Conservation Area has been reviewed for the first time since its designation in 1973. This report seeks to consider the Conservation Area Character Assessment and Management Plan undertaken as a part of the review and amended following the public consultation exercise, and determine whether the document, including its proposed alterations to the Conservation Area, should be approved.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **The Wethersfield Conservation Area Character Assessment and Management Plan be approved.**
- 2.2 **That approval be delegated to the Corporate Director (Growth) to make any minor wording changes to the Conservation Area Character Assessment and Management Plan.**

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 The Council has been undertaking a series of reviews of Conservation Areas in the District. The basis for designation and review are set out primarily in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and advice is contained in NPPF (Section 16) and Planning Practice Guidance. English Heritage issues more detailed advice in the following:

- Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management, (Historic England Advice Note No 1 (Second Edition) Feb 2019 (based on 2018 NPPF)
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition);

- 3.2 NPPF guidance is set out in Section 16 paragraph 191 as follows:

“When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.”

- 3.3 Wethersfield was considered as part of this most recent review programme as it has not been reviewed since its designation in 1973. Due to the specialist nature of the work heritage experts from Place Services have been procured to undertake this review and others in the District.
- 3.4 The Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (CACAMP) looks at Wethersfield’s origin and evolution and location of listed buildings, heritage at risk, archaeological potential and an assessment of the Conservation Area’s significance. It delineates three character areas which it describes in some detail. It states that *“the special interest of the Wethersfield Conservation Area is predominately derived from its development as a small rural historic settlement and the resulting characteristic architecture and landscape.”*
- 3.5 The CACAMP is intended as a baseline study to inform decisions any future planning applications and development. As well as the legislative background, it sets out the history, evolution and character of the village. It contains three character areas which are described in detail and looks at such matters as listed buildings, important views, the public realm, archaeology, buildings at risk, management of future development. Opportunities for improvement and management are also included.
- 3.6 A draft version of the CACAMP was issued for public consultation initially between 10th July and 12th August 2019. Following a request from residents the consultation period was extended to the 9th September 2019 to allow more people to make comments. The public consultation exercise above involved sending letters to all households within the Conservation Area and the Parish Council informing them of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, how they could access the report and how they could respond. Copies of the CACAMP were deposited at Wethersfield Village Hall, Braintree Library and Braintree District Council reception. An electronic copy was made available online on the Council’s Consultation Portal and details of how to access copies were included in the householder’s letters. Details of the public meeting were supplied to the Parish Council it was arranged that this would take place with a scheduled Parish Council meeting, and a public notice advertising the meeting put up at the village hall.
- 3.7 A public meeting was held during the consultation period on the 17th July 2019 in Wethersfield to enable residents to discuss the draft CACAMP with the heritage consultants and Braintree Council officers. This was attended by approximately 120 people. Following a request from the Parish Council, a site visit was undertaken by officers and representatives from the Parish and the Parish was given more time to submit further evidence. This allowed the

Parish to put forward their views in detail to the heritage consultants and officers. The CACAMP was altered following this consultation exercise and it is this changed document which is now before committee.

- 3.8 During the consultation, strong objections to removing areas from the Conservation Area boundary were received. Residents raised concerns that those areas, once removed, would lack protection from inappropriate or damaging development or that its significance would be harmed. Several mentioned Hudson's Hill, the Manor area and the southern Conservation Area around Braintree Road in particular. It was not widely appreciated that the setting of Conservation Areas are carefully considered such that development should not be permitted which would harm Conservation Area significance or appreciation. Many representations view the Conservation Area as a protection against new housing development and that its removal would result in such development being likely.
- 3.9 Matters relating to housing scale and location or the adequacy of local services to accommodate such growth is a matter considered in the Local Plan whereas consideration of Conservation Area boundaries relates to heritage matters only. The Local Plan allocated only one site for housing and this was developed before the plan was formally adopted and so the allocation was removed. No further sites were allocated.
- 3.10 Many representations cite a lack of justification for removal of areas from the Conservation Area. Both original and revised CACAMPs mention the need that Conservation Areas comprise areas of "*special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.*" A distinction must be made between areas which can demonstrate these terms in their own right, and which under the legislation can be included inside the Conservation Area, and those areas which do not possess these characteristics. This criteria is the justification for inclusion within the Conservation Area.
- 3.11 Areas which cannot demonstrate this requirement as set out in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, may still be important if it represents Conservation Area setting. Historic England in their 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (second edition) state that setting is not in itself a heritage asset. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the asset or the ability to appreciate that asset. The 2023 CACAMP includes mention of some instances where setting is likely to be important (not intended as an exhaustive list) and this includes some of the land to be removed such as the site on Braintree Road labelled D in Figure 7 of the CACAMP.
- 3.12 The NPPF (paragraph 207) states that not all areas within the Conservation Areas necessarily contribute to its significance. Thus a judgement must be

made on whether development proposals should be treated as causing substantial or less than substantial harm when weighing a proposal in the Conservation Area against the proposal's public benefits. In doing so, the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance to the Conservation Area as a whole need be considered. If there is little or no significance to a location or element, less weight may be given to its protection.

- 3.13 Many representations raise concern that the loss of Conservation Area would result in greater development pressure on the village with negative consequences for wildlife and countryside character. These are issues addressed by the Local Plan, development management processes and wider legislation rather than in the consideration of Conservation Area boundaries. The Publication Plan as proposed to be modified, shows low residential growth proposed for Wethersfield. There are no further housing allocations following the completion of an earlier proposed allocation. It is classed as a third tier settlement, the lowest settlement rank with a settlement boundary.
- 3.14 Following receipt of further information relating to some of the areas to be removed, during the public consultation, the abovementioned alterations were made to the first CACAMP reducing the areas to be removed. This will address many concerns raised by residents while ensuring that those areas which remain included do merit Conservation Area status. Many residents support the inclusion of the areas now to be retained.
- 3.15 Some respondents questioned the need for changes to the conservation area. However, it is however a duty of the Local Planning Authority to review these boundaries. It is recognised that change does occur over time and that the boundaries should be checked to avoid eroding the quality of the conservation area and to seek opportunities for inclusion of new areas where appropriate.
- 3.16 Concerns were raised regarding the process, citing that insufficient time had been given in which to comment and exercise had insufficient coverage. The consultation steps mentioned above exceed those required for this exercise and include extending the time permitted for comments to be submitted.
- 3.17 Other concerns were raised that the report was presented as a fait accompli and that it was confusing or poorly worded. It is regrettable that some found the report confusing and this has attempted to be addressed in the final version. It does contain terms and concepts that for some are unfamiliar and derived from those which are set out in legislation and guidance. It is hoped that the additional explanation around setting will be helpful.

- 3.18 Several respondents cite references to Trodds Garage/John Pease and United Reform Church as being out of date, however these relate to the name under which the Listed Building is registered and would not need to be removed.
- 3.19 The following errors were identified will be corrected in a finalised CACAMP.
- (i) Bus station can be corrected to bus shelter
 - (ii) Page 6, 1.2, 4th para - “principals” should be corrected to “principles”
- 3.20 The full text of all responses received can be found on the Councils consultation portal at https://braintree.objective.co.uk/portal/ca_appraisals/wethersfield_ca_appraisal_1/ and a summary is set out in Appendix 1 .
- 3.21 The 2019 CACAMP, which was subject to public consultation, had proposed to tighten the boundary to more closely follow development on Braintree Road, thereby removing most of the southern part of the Conservation area. It had also proposed the exclusion of much of the area from Hudsons Hill to the former Manor and removal of area D as set out in the CACAMP. Some small alterations were also proposed within the built up area of the settlement. These include adding the walled garden of the former Manor House and the southern part of the Congregational graveyard adjacent to the United Reform Church.
- 3.22 The present 2023 CACAMP proposals differ from that proposed above, to remove three smaller areas from the existing Conservation Area and more minor boundary adjustments as shown in CACAMP Figure 7. The Conservation Area now retains some areas previously shown for removal including the Hudson’s Hill/Brook Farm/Former Manor Area to the north and east, and Braintree Road area south of the former Manor. Areas labelled B, D and E in the CACAMP remain proposed for removal. Areas C and F remain proposed for inclusion.
- 3.23 The reasons for alterations are set out below:
- A - Exclusion of field north of the Manor. This has a history of agricultural use though more recently has been used for grazing of horses in association with a neighbouring use. It is easily distinguishable from areas used in connection with the Manor
 - D – Although used for village activities in the past, this field does not have sufficient architectural or historic interest in its own right to justify inclusion. This area includes some modern estate style housing facing the field.

E – This area mainly in agricultural use, paddocks, wooded and open meadows though it does include the outlying areas of some larger residential gardens does not in itself have sufficient architectural or historic interest to justify its retention within the Conservation Area.

Other alterations

B - Removal of late 20th century modern houses at Saffron Close with insufficient architectural or historic interest to merit inclusion and do not contribute to Conservation Area character.

C – The boundary has been extended to include the southern part of the Congregational Church graveyard – of historical interest and related to the Congregational Church.

F - The boundary has been extended to include the walled garden of the former Manor, thus ensuring that all parts of the former Manor with architectural or historic interest have been included within the Conservation Area. (The boundary of the walled garden of the Manor has been altered to remove a cartographical error which included some adjacent land).

3.24 Other minor alterations include

- an adjustment to the North western boundary such that it better follows a domestic and landscape boundary.
- to more accurately follow a dwelling boundary on Braintree/Gosfield Road at the southern edge of the Conservation Area.
- At former Parsonage Farm the boundary has been adjust to better reflect the field edge.

3.25 Additional text has also been added to the CACAMP to explain the importance of setting and the ability to protect it, which was an area of specific concern from the public consultation. This is set out both in general terms and in relation to specific sites adjacent to the new boundary.

3.26 The Parish Council have been given the opportunity to view the 2023 CACAMP prior to this committee meeting and have made comments. They reiterate their objection to the removal of Areas A and E.

3.27 The final CACAMP for approval, as altered following the public consultation period is attached as Appendix 2 to this report. Any minor wording or typographical changes to this are recommended to be delegated to the Corporate Director for Growth

4. Options

- 4.1 Approval as submitted or approval subject to further alterations could be undertaken if members felt there were other changes which were desirable and which met the requirements of the legislation.
- 4.2 Refusal of the proposal would mean that areas described as having significance would remain inside the Conservation Area and devalue its quality as set out within the Conservation Area Review.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 A final Conservation Area Character Appraisal Document will be produced in paper form and an electronic copy placed on the Council's website. Relevant bodies will be notified and alterations made to the Council's electronic records. The final document would be used in determining planning proposals within the Conservation Area and its setting.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 No further financial implications from the contents of this report. The cost of appointing consultants to complete this work has been met from a specific budget secured to undertake Conservation Area Appraisals.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal will be a material planning consideration in determining planning applications within and adjacent to the revised boundary.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 There are no other implications of this decision

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
 - (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

(c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

9.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

9.3 The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

10. List of Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1. Summary of representations from public consultations.

10.2 Appendix 2 Wethersfield Conservation Area and Conservation Management Plan (CACAMP)

10.3 Appendix 3 Wethersfield Parish Council letter dated 13th July 2023

11. Background Papers

11.1 List of background papers

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practise Guidance (NPPG)
- Localism Act (2011)
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)
- Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended
- Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (second edition)
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition)

Appendix 1: Summary of representations from public consultations.

The below includes an overall summary of the comments which were received to the CACAMP in its public consultation period in the summer of 2019. The full text of all comments can be found on the Councils consultation portal

https://braintree.objective.co.uk/portal/ca_appraisals/wethersfield_ca_appraisal_1/

The CACAMP

- Has been poorly publicised
- Is poorly written, confusing and poorly/incorrectly researched, contains inaccuracies, misrepresentations, inaccurately referenced photos and conflicting statements
- Contains no or poor justification for the changes
- Report written as if changes were determined and does not mention it is a draft.
- Should work with the Parish to produce a more considered report
- Figure 13 views show an inward looking policy constrained to the 'revised' area.
- Residents views should be considered

The Conservation Area should not be reduced in size for the following reasons

- No local support as evidenced at the meeting
- Areas of historical and visual significance important to the conservation area are being omitted contrary to government guidance
- Some key views are not shown
- It has served the village well for many years. There is no need for or benefit from the change
- Boundary revisions will encourage inappropriate new residential development, harming local views, the beauty and setting of Wethersfield, its wildlife and stressing local services and harming its leisure value
- Reason for boundary alterations is to facilitate development following previous housing refusals
- Management proposals are generic in nature
- Existing boundaries are defensible and appropriate
- Reduction will not strengthen the conservation area
- The MOD site at Wethersfield threatens to engulf our village if permitted.
- The document does not properly justify the changes
- Omits impact of overhead wires
- Character unchanged over many years
- Village needs understood in context of surrounding land /setting character and views and reductions will prevent this
- Removing countryside around the Manor will remove historic area with associations with the village and reduce its significance. Should be retained.

- Description of the playing field supports its inclusion not exclusion. This area has historical associations and key views under researched in the report. Its importance recognised in the refusal of an application in this area.
- Braintree Road area under researched. Braintree Road area retains its historic character, eg listed walls, buildings contrasting with open arable land
- Wethersfield has significant historical interest, 13th C church, treed village green, historic homes and landscape interest.
- The ancient wall defining the boundary to Ivanhoe House and Wethersfield Hall leads to Brook Farm which was the historic owner of both these properties and links them with the church and village centre and should be preserved for future generations
- The proposals are at odds with the integrity of listed buildings e.g. removal of fields belonging to Brook Farm. These views are a spectacular public vista.
- How can the heritage value of these listed buildings be preserved if the land next to them not protected from development?
- Recognise the need for affordable homes but this is not the way to proceed.
- Growth is necessary to support services/facilities but north of the village is more suitable.
- Reduction will harm tourism
- This will not preserve and enhance the Conservation Area

Wethersfield Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

Client:
Braintree District Council

Date:
March 2023





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1. Introduction

1.1 Summary

This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will provide an overview of the designation of the Wethersfield Conservation Area, outlining its designation history, alterations to the Conservation Area boundary, and highlighting the special interest of the area along with those buildings and features which contribute to its character. Conservation area designation gives broader protection than the listing of individual buildings, as it recognises all features within the area which form part of its character and ensures that planning decisions take the enhancement and preservation of the quality of the area into consideration.

The special interest of the Wethersfield Conservation Area is predominantly derived from its development as a small, rural historic settlement and the resulting characteristic architecture and landscape. Most notably this includes: the historic core to the north, following the linear development along the High Street; Silver Street; the Village Green; and the open fields and manorial land to the south. The southern part includes dispersed farmsteads and red brick walls flanking the southern approach to Manor House and Wethersfield Hall. The high density of listed buildings in the village centre, the prominent church, central Green, undulating topography and unusual red brick walls make positive contributions to the special interest of Wethersfield Conservation Area, enhancing its rural character and offering quality examples of vernacular timber framed buildings.

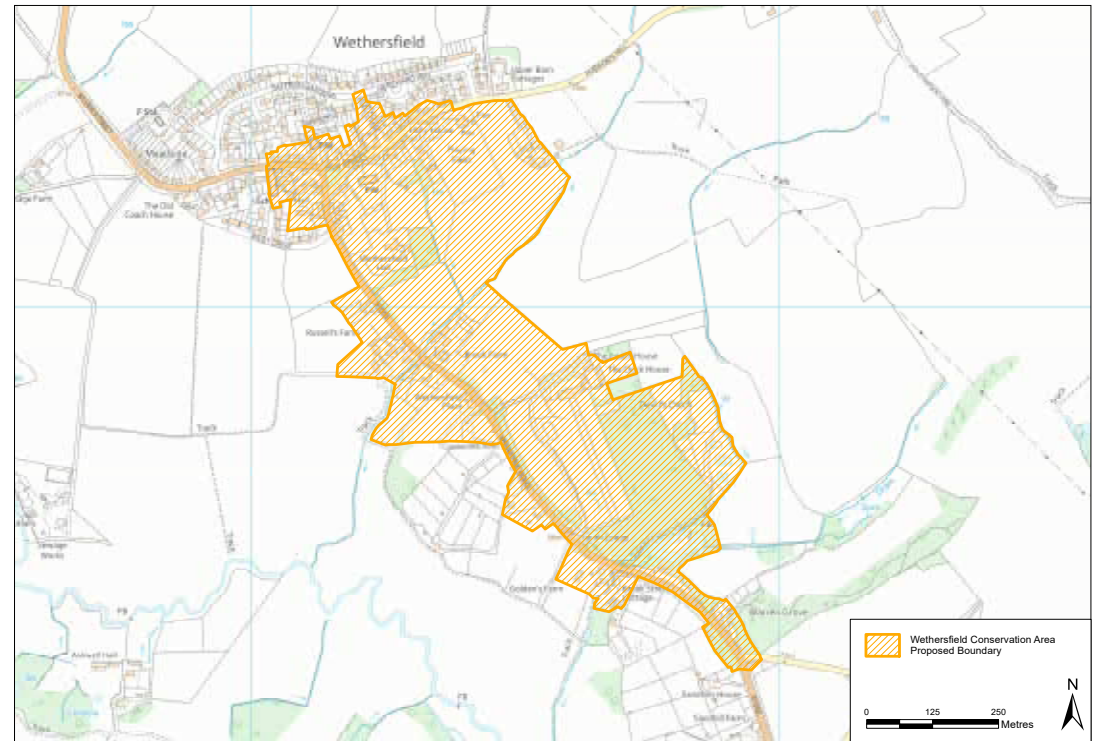


Figure 1 Wethersfield Conservation Area (2023)



In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, a review of the Conservation Area boundary has been undertaken and this appraisal reflects the adopted changes. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest. As a result of the boundary review, some areas have been excluded from the Conservation Area, which do not possess the requisite special architectural or historic interest.

Figure 1 depicts the extent of the Wethersfield Conservation Area, as revised for this appraisal. For details of the revision history of the boundary, please see section "2.4 Revisions to the Boundary" on page 12.

These areas may have historical associations with the village, as part of the pastoral hinterland upon which Wethersfield has relied for centuries, but they lack the necessary special architectural or historic interest necessary for inclusion within the Conservation Area. However, these spaces, now positioned outside the boundary, form an important element of the Conservation Area's setting, allowing the significance of the Conservation Area to be appreciated. The description of the Conservation Area's setting and how it is important to preserve the particular attributes of setting which contribute to the area's significance, or allow it to be experienced and appreciated, can be found in section "3.3 The Setting of Wethersfield Conservation Area" on page 47.

1.2 Conserving Braintree's Heritage

Braintree District Council has appointed Place Services to prepare a conservation area appraisal for the village of Wethersfield. This conservation area appraisal and management document is provided as baseline information for applicants to consider when designing or planning new development in Wethersfield and its environs.

This appraisal provides an assessment of the historic development and character of Wethersfield and outlines its special interest. This will also consider the significance of individual heritage assets and the contribution that these, along with their setting, make to the character and special interest of the area. The understanding of significance will be used to assess the susceptibility of the Conservation Area to new development and highlighting key heritage assets of importance.

This assessment will consider how different character areas within Wethersfield Conservation Area came to be developed, their building styles, forms, materials, scale, density, roads, footpaths, alleys, streetscapes, open spaces, views, landscape, landmarks, and topography. These qualities can be used to assess the key characteristics of each area, highlighting potential impacts future developments may have upon the significance of heritage assets and the overall character of Wethersfield. This assessment is based on information derived from documentary research and an analysis of the individual character areas.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) highlights good design as a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Sustainable development relies on sympathetic design, achieved through an understanding of context, the immediate and larger character of the area in which new development is sited.



This assessment follows best practice guidance, including Historic England's revised Historic England Advice Note 1 for Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2nd Edition 2019) and The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition 2017).

1.3 Purpose of this Appraisal

This document should be used as a baseline to inform future development and design with regard to the sensitivities of the Historic Environment and its unique character.

It is expected that applications for planning permission will also consult and follow the best practice guidance outlined in the bibliography.

Applications that demonstrate a genuine understanding of the character of a conservation area are more likely to produce good design and good outcomes for agents and their clients. This appraisal will strengthen understanding of Wethersfield Conservation Area and its development, informing future design.

1.4 Planning Policy Context

The legislative framework for conservation and enhancement of conservation areas and listed buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (HMSO 1990).

In particular Section 69 of this act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate areas which they consider to be of architectural and historic interest as Conservation Areas, and Section 72 requires that special attention should be paid to ensuring that the character and appearance of these areas is preserved or enhanced.

Section 71 also requires the Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposal for the preservation and enhancement of these areas. National planning policy in relation

to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets is outlined in Part 16 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, the NPPF (February 2021).

The Wethersfield Conservation Area, which is the subject of this appraisal, is located within the area covered by Braintree District Council. Local planning policy is set out in the Braintree Development Plan. The Braintree Local Plan 2033 is in two parts: **Part 1** which contains strategic policies also covering Colchester City and Tendring Councils and **Part 2** which relates to Braintree District only.

The New Local Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in October 2017 and adopted by the Council in July 2022.

Relevant Policies within the Braintree District Local Plan are:

- SP 7 Place Shaping Principles
- LPP 52 – Layout and design of development
- LPP 53 – Conservation Areas
- LPP 54 - Demolition in Conservation Areas
- LPP 55 – Shop fronts, fascias and signs in Conservation Areas
- LPP 56 – Illuminated signs in Conservation Areas
- LPP 57 – Heritage Assets and their setting
- LPP 58 – Demolition of Listed Buildings or structures
- LPP 63 – Archaeological Evaluation Excavation and Recording
- LPP 62 – Cemeteries and churchyards
- LPP 65 – Tree protection

The latest policy position and Development Plan Documents can be found in the Planning Policy section of the Council's website: <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/planning-building-control>

2. Wethersfield Conservation Area

2.1 Context and General Character

The village of Wethersfield is located in the northern half of Braintree District (NGR TL71153125). It is sited on a slight promontory formed by the junction of the Pant valley and a tributary, the Wethersfield Brook. The ground rises up to the village, from OD 58m at Brook Farm to OD 73m at Hudson's Hill on the eastern edge of the village. The historic village developed at the junction between the Braintree to Finchingfield Road (B1053) and also a road to Sible Hedingham. The junction forms a small triangular green. The road is slightly sunken, with many of the buildings on plots higher than the carriageway. The Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene is located on the southern side of the village. The village is clearly historic in origin, with the two roads flanked by largely historic buildings, many of them late medieval or early post-medieval in origin.

Modern development is largely confined to the Saffron Gardens housing estate to the north of the High Street and a smaller development to the south-west of the road junction at West Drive. Neither of these modern developments are located within the Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area's boundary is unusual, in that it incorporates a large amount of open land to the south of the historic settlement.

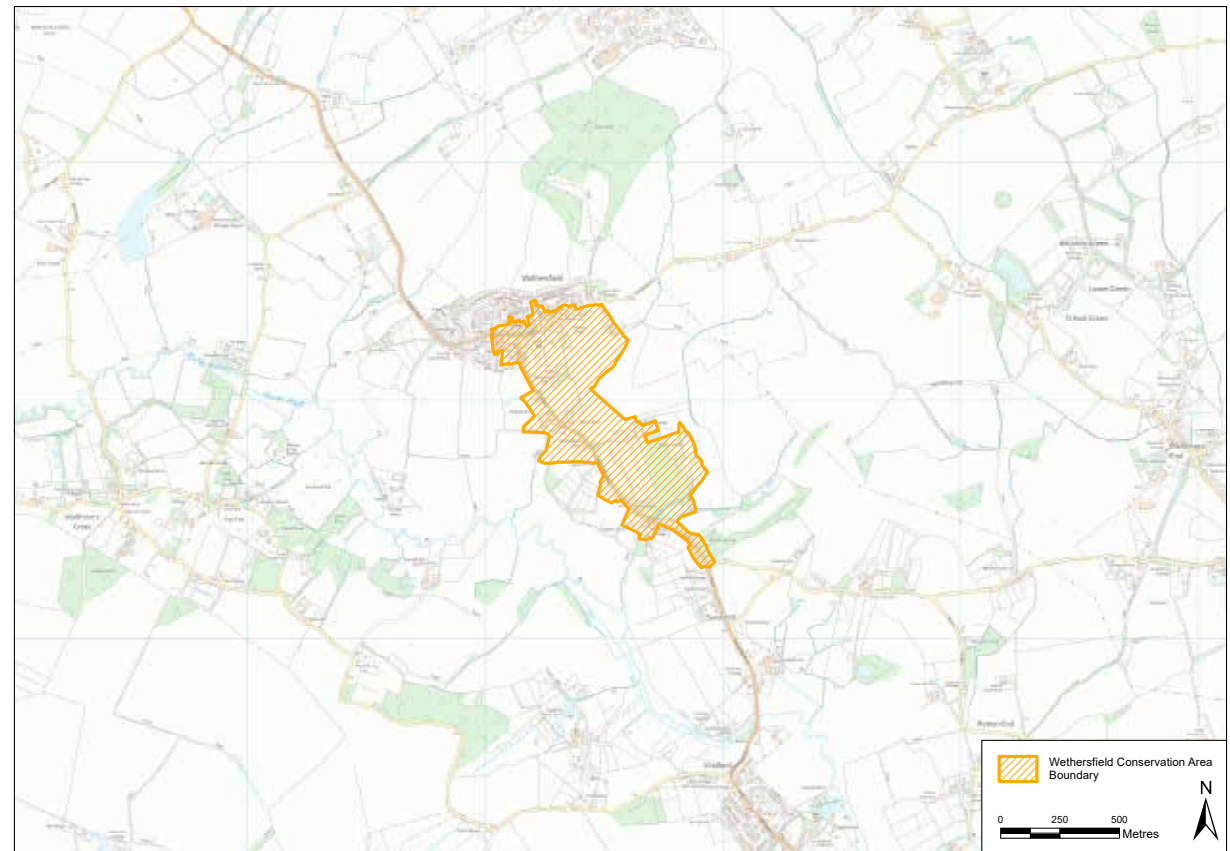


Figure 2 Wethersfield Conservation Area (2023) within its wider context

2.2 Origin and Evolution

Wethersfield is first recorded in the Domesday Book (1086) when it was held by Picot from the King, having been held by Earl Algar in 1066. It was already a reasonably large holding, with 43 households. In 1086 there was arable land for 13 plough-teams and a large amount of woodland (sufficient for 500 pigs), as well as meadows and two mills. In addition to the main manorial holding there were other smaller land-holdings, of which two were held by priests before the Conquest, and a third mill. At this date all of the mills would have been water-mills, presumably located on the River Pant and the Wethersfield Brook.

The historic village is focussed on the junction of the Braintree Road, High Street and Silver Street. The junction forms a small triangular green. The road is slightly sunken, with many of the buildings on plots that are higher than the carriageway.

The Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene is located on the southern side of the village, on the eastern side of the junction. The Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene has a possibly pre-Conquest nave, with ongoing additions and remodelling throughout the medieval period. The tower is early thirteenth century, and the chancel is early fourteenth century in origin.

Wethersfield Hall is located approximately 130m to the south of the Church, and was accessed by a lane from the High Street next to the Churchyard and a second lane from the Braintree Road. The Manor of Wethersfield was held by Henry de Cornhill, Bailiff of London in 1190, and then by the Nevill family in the thirteenth century. The Parsonage (now Parsonage Farm) was situated on the eastern edge of the village.

Dispersed farms and cottages were positioned along the Braintree Road led into the village; these were not as densely grouped as those within the historic core of the village.



Figure 3 Excerpt from the 1777 Chapman and André map showing Wethersfield and its immediate environs

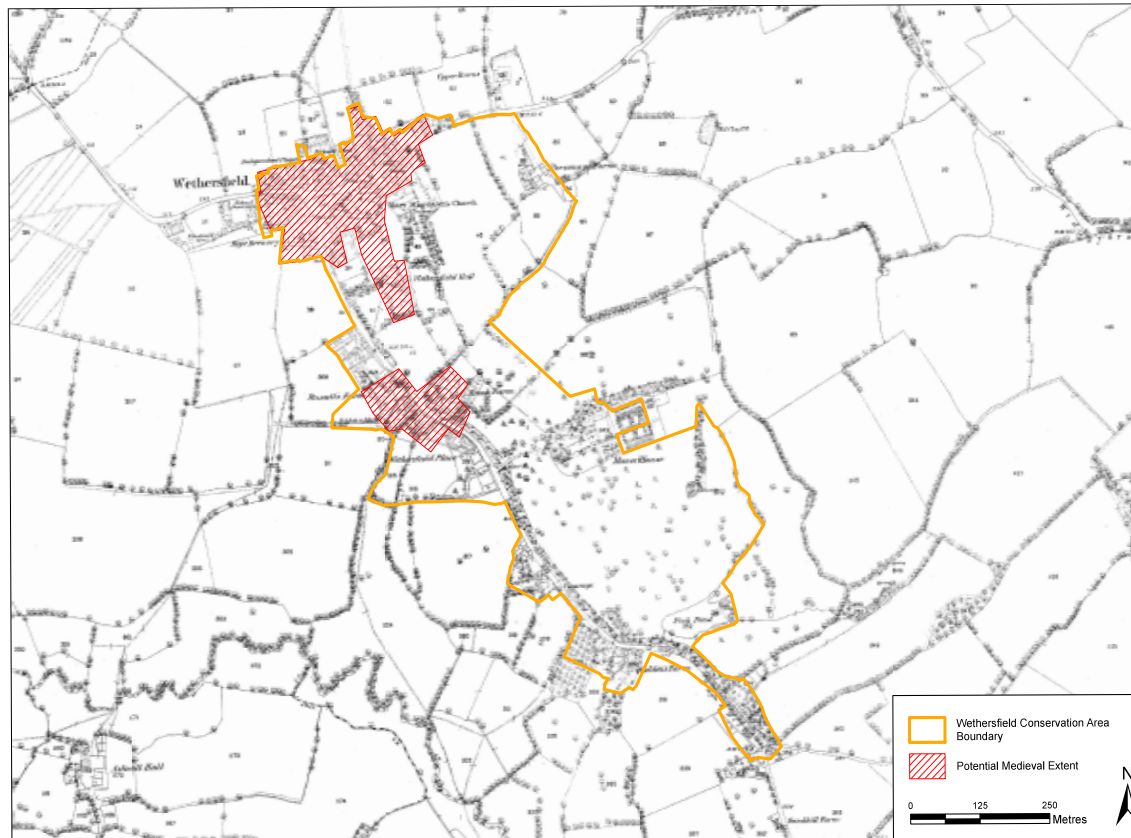


Figure 4 Potential Medieval extent in Wethersfield

A number of medieval buildings survive in Wethersfield, in addition to the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene. Brook Farmhouse on the Braintree Road has late thirteenth/early fourteenth century origins, before being altered in the sixteenth century. On the High Street, Trodds Garage is a fifteenth century hall house, and The Gables and Church Hill House are late fifteenth or early sixteenth century timber-framed houses with later alterations.

The sixteenth century in Wethersfield appears to have been associated with a period of growth, or at least of rebuilding, with many of the listed buildings on the northern side of the High Street dating to this period – it is not known what proportion of these may have incorporated earlier fabric. To the south, Russell’s Farm is largely seventeenth century in date. There was a phase of nineteenth century building within the village, most notably with the United Reformed Church (formerly the Congregational Chapel), which is located on the north side of the Green. A chapel was constructed on the site in 1707, and was rebuilt in 1822, before being enlarged in 1861. The former schoolroom was constructed in 1876 in the Gothic Revival style. To the right of the approach to the chapel is the late sixteenth century Manse.

The industries associated with Wethersfield are typical of rural Essex settlements, comprising milling, brewing and brick-making. The Wethersfield or Hope Brewery site, on the south-western corner of the road junction, is a complex formed of a number of extant components of a large nineteenth century village brewery, comprising a brewhouse, malthouse, brewery owner’s house, public house and stabling. There was a second malthouse to the rear of Brook Farm; part of the kiln of this structure survives.

A windmill, known as South Mill, was depicted on the 1777 Chapman and André map to the south of the eighteenth century village, and another is depicted on the western side of the village on the 1881 first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map.

Russell's Farm Brickyard, Finchingfield, manufactured bricks and tiles in the 1840's to 1850s. It was located to the south-west of the village to the rear of Russell's Farm. John Giblin was the owner and occupier of this brickyard and kiln until succeeded by Charles Davey, circa 1844. At the time of his death in 1850, Charles Davey held wind and water mills in addition to this brick kiln. His father, Matthias Davey was a miller at South Mill, Wethersfield by 1782 until 1810 when Charles Davey went took it over. Charles Davey also purchased a post mill (which stood near his West Mill) from the executors of John Livermore, formerly a farmer and miller of Wethersfield. This was a newly built post mill probably erected c.1806. There is no further reference to it after 1814 and it is presumed that it was demolished.

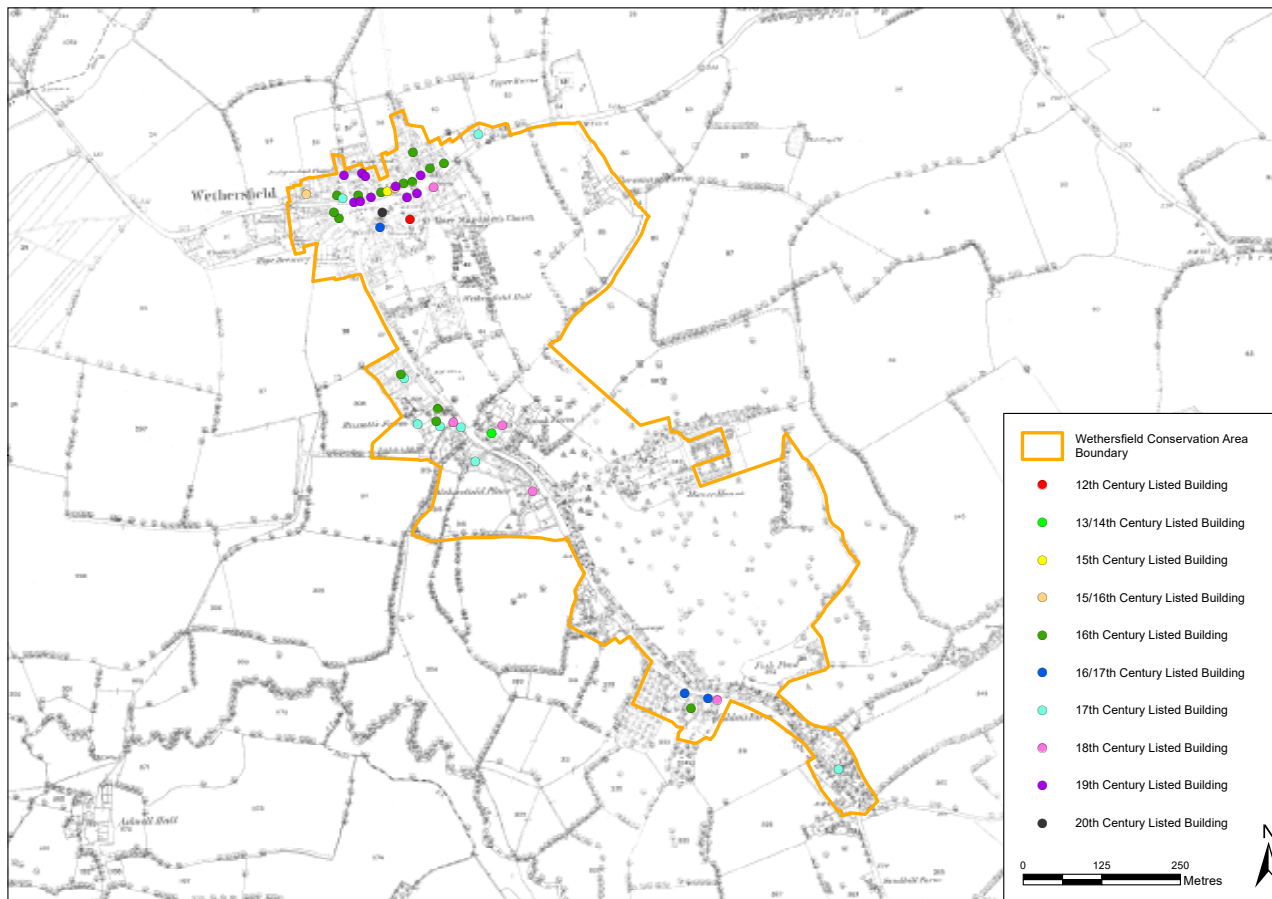
The Manor House, located 600m to the south-west of the Church, is depicted on the 1881 first edition OS map, and it is not shown on the 1777 map. It had formal gardens and an area of parkland. The current building is on the site of former Dobbins Farmhouse, (as shown on the 1724 'Plan of the Alexandra Palace and Park' by Bland Joseph, Parker Samuel, Smyth Payler and Warburton John). However, it is now known how much if any for this building survives, as a fire originated in this earlier part of the house in 1933, and the western wing was rebuilt as a result. The Manor House now comprises of an early nineteenth century high status building.

The immediate surroundings of the village are overwhelmingly agrarian in character, as they would have been during the entirety of its existence. To the west of the village, cropmarks show where smaller fields have been amalgamated to form larger fields.

Twentieth century built development has been largely confined to the north of the conservation area Conservation Area, with few areas of infill within the historic core. This development includes the Saffron Gardens housing estate to the north of the High Street, and a smaller development to the south-west of the road junction at West Drive. The introduction of the playing fields expanded the village to the east and provided a key, communal public space for the residents of



Figure 5 Kiln at Wethersfield, ERO (Ref IMb 397-1-3)



Wethersfield, where useable public realm spaces had previously been lacking.

Figure 6 Post-medieval Wethersfield. The Listed Buildings have been superimposed over the first edition OS map (1881)



2.3 Designation of the Conservation Area

Wethersfield Conservation Area was designated in 1973. The extent of the Conservation Area was mapped, but there has been no accompanying Character Appraisal or Management Plan.

In 1988 Braintree District Council produced a booklet on 'Conservation Areas and Historic Buildings in Braintree District' which in the introduction makes comment that 'The 1967 Civic Amenities Act introduced the concept of conservation areas as a basis for safeguarding areas of special architectural or historic interest thereby acknowledging that the quality of the architectural interest lay not only in the buildings themselves but in building groups and entire environments.' The criteria for conservation area designation include the setting of the conservation areas 8a. Landscape setting/topography (settlement in valley, hilltop or ridge), 8b. Settlement landscape: village greens, ponds, trees, riverside setting.

2.4 Revisions to the Boundary

As part of this review, the Conservation Area boundary has been revised to reflect modern practice and provide a clearer strategy which acknowledges the practicalities of Wethersfield's unique historic built environment. A map which highlights the changes is included on the following page, as Figure 7.

Justification for the Boundary Revisions

The NPPF (2021, para. 191) states that 'When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest'.

The significance of the Wethersfield Conservation Area is derived from its historic settlement pattern and its high-quality buildings of historic and architectural merit. The Conservation Area has been divided into three distinct character areas, the historic village centre, Wethersfield Hall and Russel's Farm area and the manor House area (see Section 3.3). The varying elements of Wethersfield's historic settlement pattern is legible in these three areas and the rural setting of the Conservation Area enhances the observer's ability to experience and appreciate that significance.

The Glossary of the NPPF defines setting 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: Glossary).

Wethersfield Conservation Area was designated in 1973 and no review of its boundary has been undertaken since its designation. Since 1973 the understanding of conservation and heritage issues, such as significance and setting, has evolved significantly, partly due to the pressure from development. This evolution of understanding has been reflected in the latest iteration of planning policy, the National Planning Policy Framework and its associated guidance.

Throughout England it is impossible to find an area of land, field, paddock, plantation or meadow that does not have a long history of use, cultivation or ownership. Yet this alone does not provide sufficient historical significance worthy of Conservation Area designation. An area would need to have special architectural or historic interest for such designation and it is solely in order to ensure the robustness of the Wethersfield Conservation Area, that those parts lacking the necessary special interest have been excluded. However, open areas that have been excluded form an important part of the setting of the

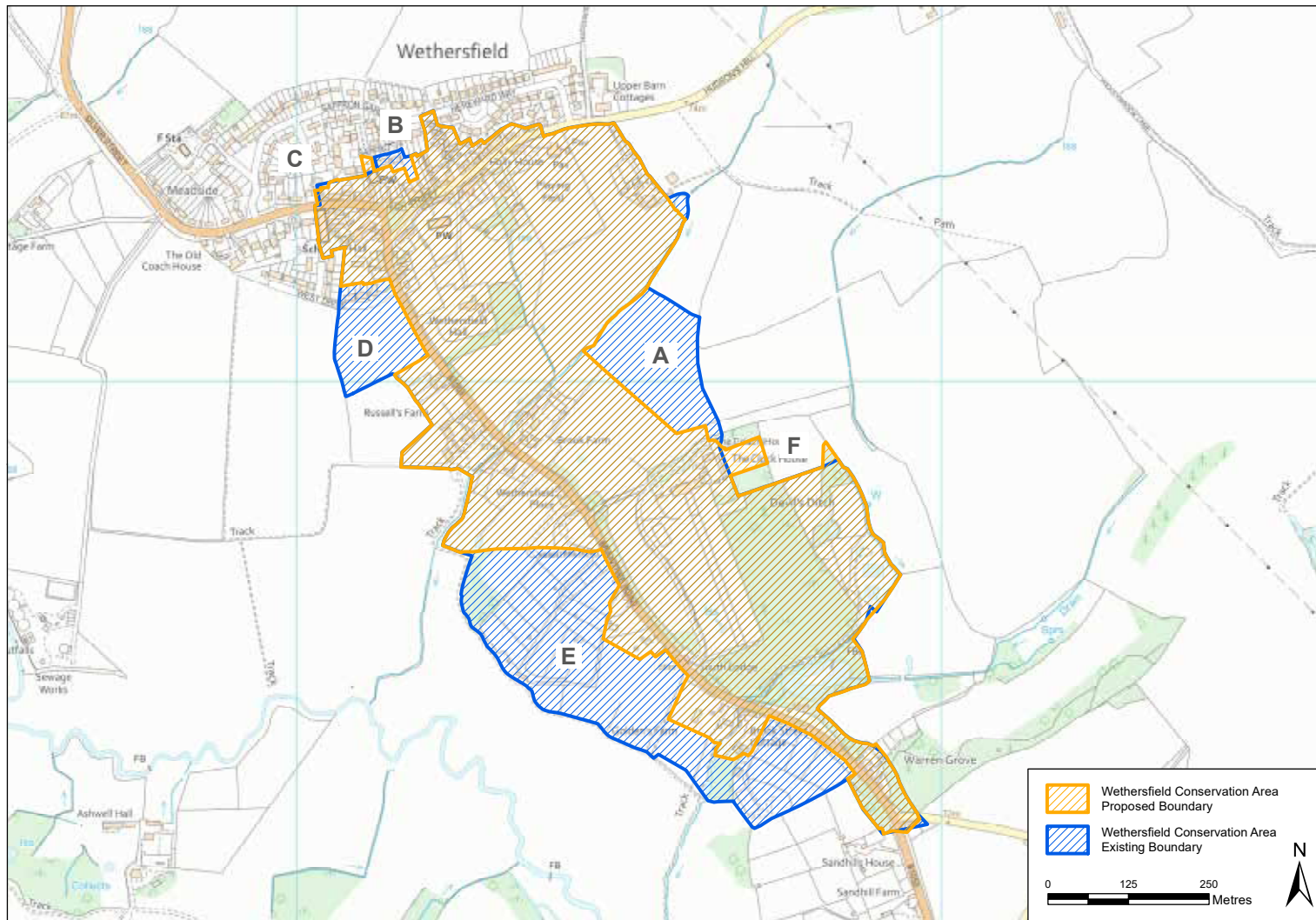


Figure 7 Map showing the revisions to the 1973 Conservation Area Boundary



Conservation Area. The undeveloped pastoral character of the setting contributes to the Conservation Area's significance and allows that significance to be appreciated. The setting of the Conservation Area is discussed in detail in section 3.4.

Any application for inappropriate development within the setting of the Conservation Area would therefore be considered unacceptable, if it failed to preserve the elements of setting that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area (or which better reveal its significance). Therefore, the local authority would actively support proposals that retain the open, pastoral character of the Conservation Area's setting. Any development proposals that fail to retain this character would not be favourably judged by the local planning authority as there would be a detrimental impact on the significance of the Conservation Area. This forms a strong and clear argument for the retention and preservation of the pastoral character of the Conservation Area's setting and the contribution it makes to its significance.

The removal of open meadows and fields that do not have special architectural or historic interest and their subsequent characterisation as part of the Conservation Area's setting, is essential in order to ensure the continued strength of protection the Conservation Area designation brings.

The Boundary Changes

Please refer to Figure 7 and the numbered areas described in the text below.

Area A

This area has been excluded from the east of the former Conservation Area boundary. It is currently an agricultural field and is shown as being under arable cultivation on the 1842 Tithe Apportionment. Similarly, the field is shown as being one of the many agricultural fields of the Manor House Estate, within the landscape to the east of the

village, in maps relating to the sale of the estate in 1877. The area excluded therefore has a history of agricultural use and a functional connection to the village, which it shares with many of the fields in the wider landscape. To the west and north of Area A, the open area belonging to the Manor was landscaped and the entry drive up to the Manor was known to have originally run through this area, with a gated entrance off the High Street, to the east of St Mary Magdalene Church. Therefore, this area, with its historic special interest, and its landscaped character, can be easily distinguished from Area A, the cultivated land to the east. The boundary has therefore been redrawn to retain the open land with historic special interest in the form of the designed and landscaped approach to the Manor but exclude the agricultural field to the east. The excluded area forms a valuable part of the agricultural setting of the Conservation Area and this is discussed in detail in Section 3.4.

Area B

To the north of the Conservation Area, numbers 3 and 4 Saffron Close have been excluded. The semi-detached dwellings were built in the late twentieth century and lack architectural or historic special interest. In appearance they do not contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.

Area C

The boundary has been extended to include the southern part of the Congregational Graveyard, containing well maintained open green space of historical interest and forming a strong relationship with the United Reformed Church.

Area D

Area D is an open meadow to the south of West Drive. Prior to the development of West Drive the meadow was more extensive and the area is known to have been used as the site of village cricket matches in the past. The area is flanked to the west by a public footpath (PROW 117_10) and the open space allows important views towards the village



and the Conservation Area. However, while the space is close to the village core and has been utilised by the village in the past, the space does not have sufficient architectural or historic interest in its own right to justify inclusion within the Conservation Area. Yet as an element of setting, its undeveloped and pastoral character makes a valuable contribution to the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area's setting is discussed in detail in Section 3.4.

Area E

The open meadows and paddocks to the south-west within Area E have a history of agricultural use and doubtless a historical connection to the nearby properties of Wethersfield Place, Parkside, the Vicarage and Goldens Farm. Much of Area E is still sub-divided to form paddocks, while other areas are more wooded or open meadows. However, in its own right Area E does not have sufficient architectural or historic interest to justify inclusion within the Conservation Area. Yet, as a setting, the pastoral character of the area provides an important element that makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, allowing its significance and special interest to be appreciated.

Area F

The boundary has been extended to include the walled gardens of the former Manor House. Thus, the parts of the manorial estate, that retain the requisite special architectural or historic interest, have been brought into the Conservation Area boundary.

Appropriate alternative designation for excluded open areas

While areas that have been excluded lack the architectural and historic special interest worthy of Conservation Area designation, they may qualify for Local Green Space designation. Historic England describe this as a discretionary designation, to be made by inclusion within a local development plan or neighbourhood development plan.

The designation should only be used where the land is not extensive, is local in character and reasonably close to the community; and, where it is demonstrably special, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife. Policies within the local development plan or neighbourhood development plan for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with the policies protecting green belts within the NPPF. Where a community wishes to take up the opportunities offered by neighbourhood planning, the legislation enables a parish or town council, a neighbourhood forum, or a community organisation to lead in the formation of a local development plan and designations such as Local Green Spaces.



2.5 Designated Heritage Assets

There are 44 listed buildings within the Conservation Area (see Appendices 6.2). Of these, the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene is Grade I listed, and there are two of Grade II*: Simm's Farmhouse and St George's House. The remainder are Grade II listed. The location of these assets is shown on Figure 8.

2.6 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets. There are a number of processes through which non-designated heritage assets may be identified, including the local and neighbourhood plan-making processes and conservation area appraisals and reviews. In some cases, local planning authorities may also identify non-designated heritage assets as part of the decision-making process on planning applications.

A map showing non-designated heritage assets within and surrounding Wethersfield Conservation Area which are recorded on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) is included as Figure 9.

There is currently no adopted list of buildings of local historical and/or architectural interest in the District. In 2017 Braintree District Council, in partnership with Place Services, began the process of reviewing built development within Wethersfield to assess suitability for inclusion in a local list. At present no non-designated heritage assets within Wethersfield have been considered for inclusion, however, buildings within the Conservation Area which should be considered for inclusion are identified below.

These buildings have been identified as they are either considered to be good examples of their type or architectural style, are prominent local landmarks, demonstrate use of local materials or design features, or are connected to local historical events, activities or people, and are all relatively complete in their survival. Other buildings within the Conservation Area that make a beneficial contribution to the area's character may also be identified in the future as non-designated heritage assets, during the decision-making process on planning applications.

- The Wethersfield or Hope Brewery site (HER 15973), including: the Brewhouse; brewery malthouse, now the village hall; 'Hillfoot House', the former brewery owner's house; the Brewery Tap public house; and the former stables;
- Wethersfield Hall; and
- The Manor House and its associated buildings.

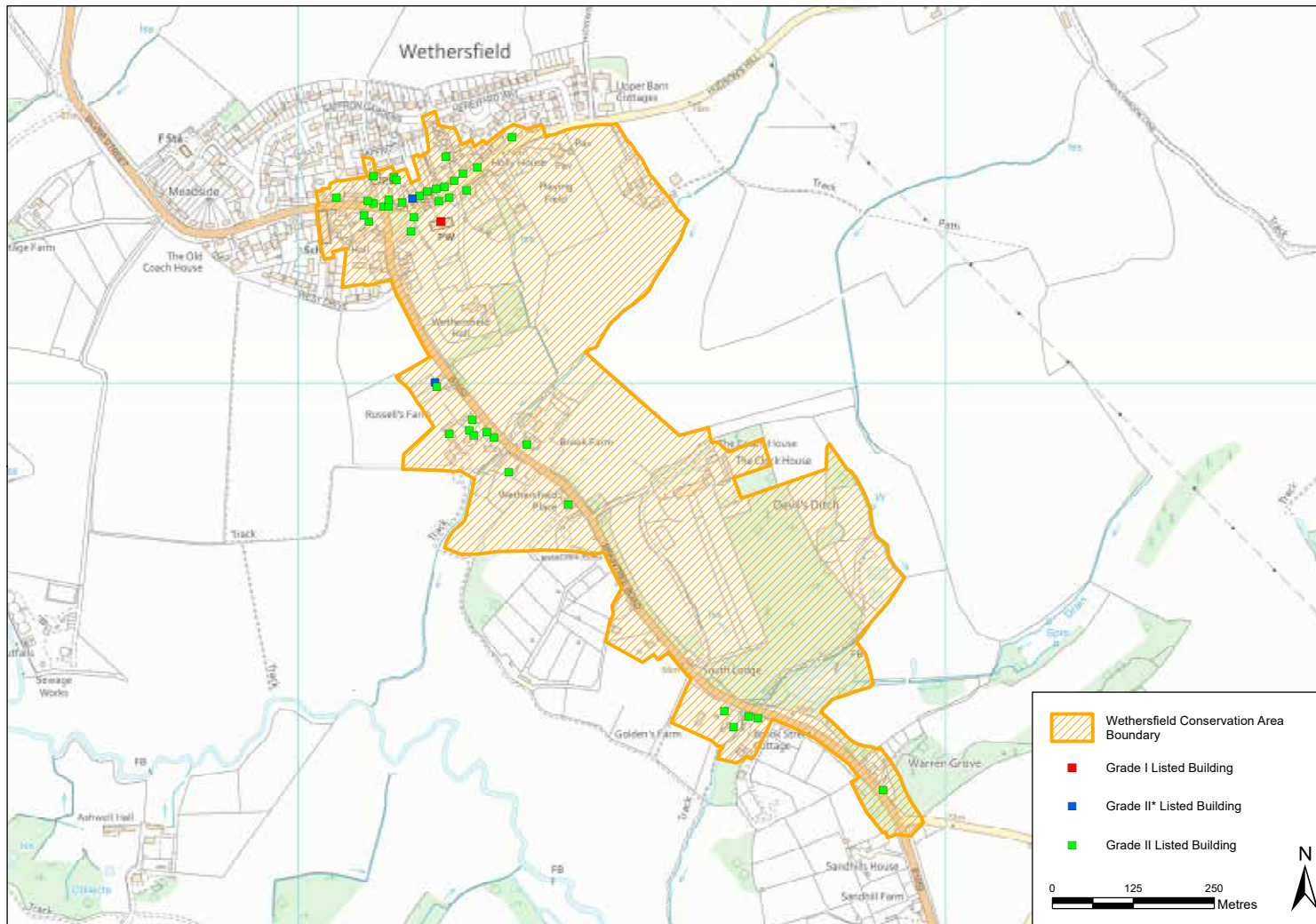


Figure 8 Designated Heritage Assets within Wethersfield Conservation Area

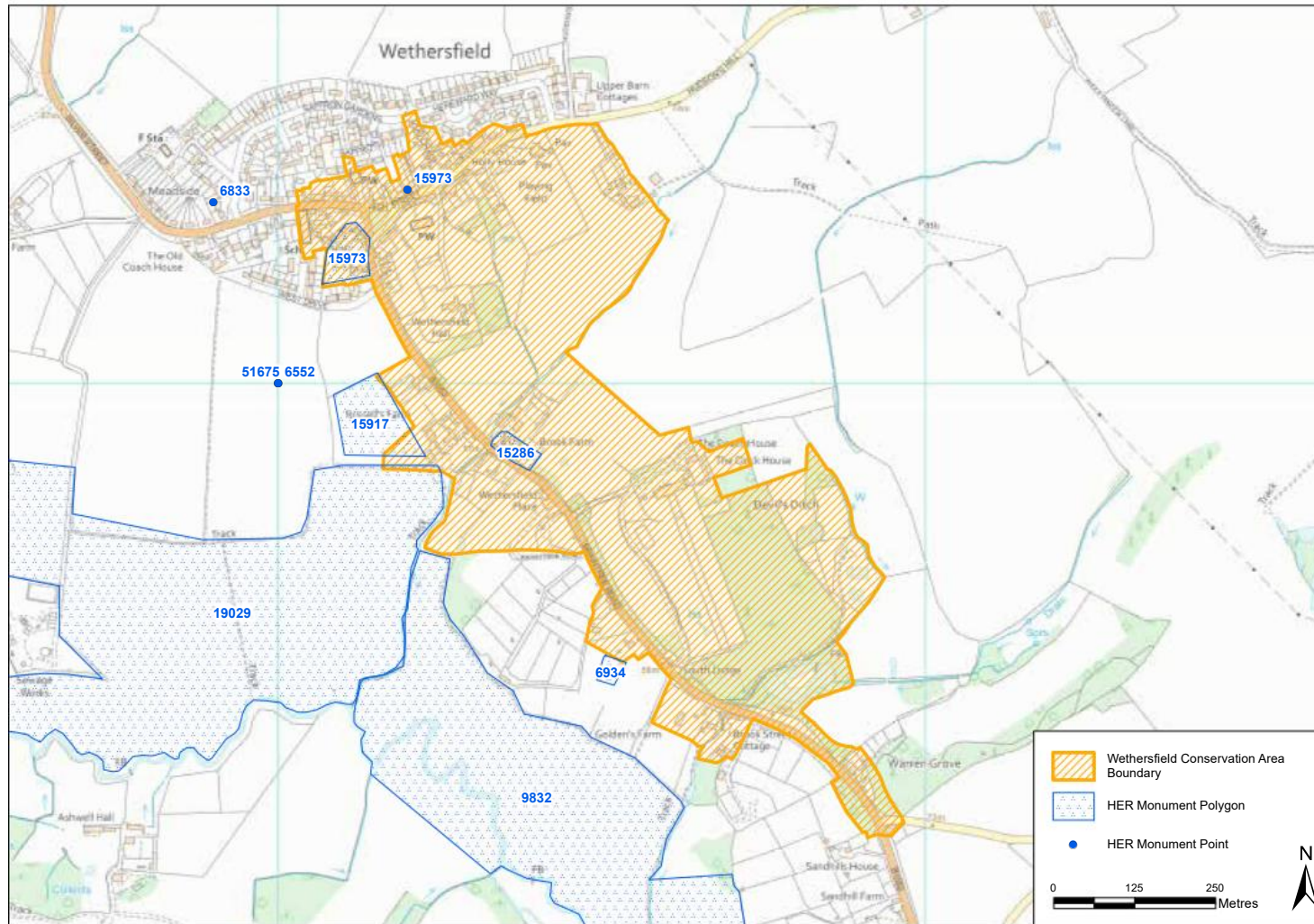


Figure 9 Map showing Non-Designated Heritage Assets Within and Surrounding the Conservation Area



2.7 Heritage at Risk

The Grade II Listed Barn, approximately 12 metres South West of Russell's Farmhouse, is currently in state of deterioration, and is considered to be at risk from further deterioration and potential loss of fabric. It will require maintenance and appropriate repairs.

It is also considered that the red brick walls in the Conservation Area are regularly assessed and maintained, as these form a unique feature of the Conservation Area and contribute to its significance, and parts could be lost if remedial works are not undertaken.

2.8 Archaeological Potential

There has been no archaeological fieldwork within Wethersfield to date. However excavations in neighbouring Great Bardfield have demonstrated the survival of below-ground archaeological deposits relating to the origins and development of the settlement, and there is no reason to believe that Wethersfield would be any different. Whilst settlement evidence is more likely to be sited along the street frontage, the backyard areas will contain evidence for ancillary activity, such as wells, cess-pits, yards and middens, as well as industrial activity. The soil-type is conducive to the survival of bone and ceramics, and there is the potential for significant palaeoenvironmental deposits associated with the River Pant. Waterlogged deposits can also be anticipated within deeper features such as wells and cess-pits.

3. Assessment of Significance

3.1 Summary

Introduction

The special interest of Wethersfield is derived mainly from its historic settlement pattern, which is still discernible in the existing landscape, and high-quality buildings of historic and architectural merit. The historic housing stock is in good condition across the Conservation Area, with buildings ranging from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. Modern development has largely been confined to the north of and east of the Conservation Area, leaving the historic core as predominantly historic in terms of its building stock.

Its open manorial and farm character to the south also contributes to its special interest, the open fields juxtaposing with the brick walls and historic hedgerows which line the route north to the village centre.

The topography of the Conservation Area also contributes to its character; undulation within the village core provides a varied roofscape and street scene and elevates buildings surrounding the Green to create a visually appealing core to the village. The Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene and The Manor House are located on high ground, on either side of the valley; this creates inter-visibility between the two and creates views from within and towards the Conservation Area.

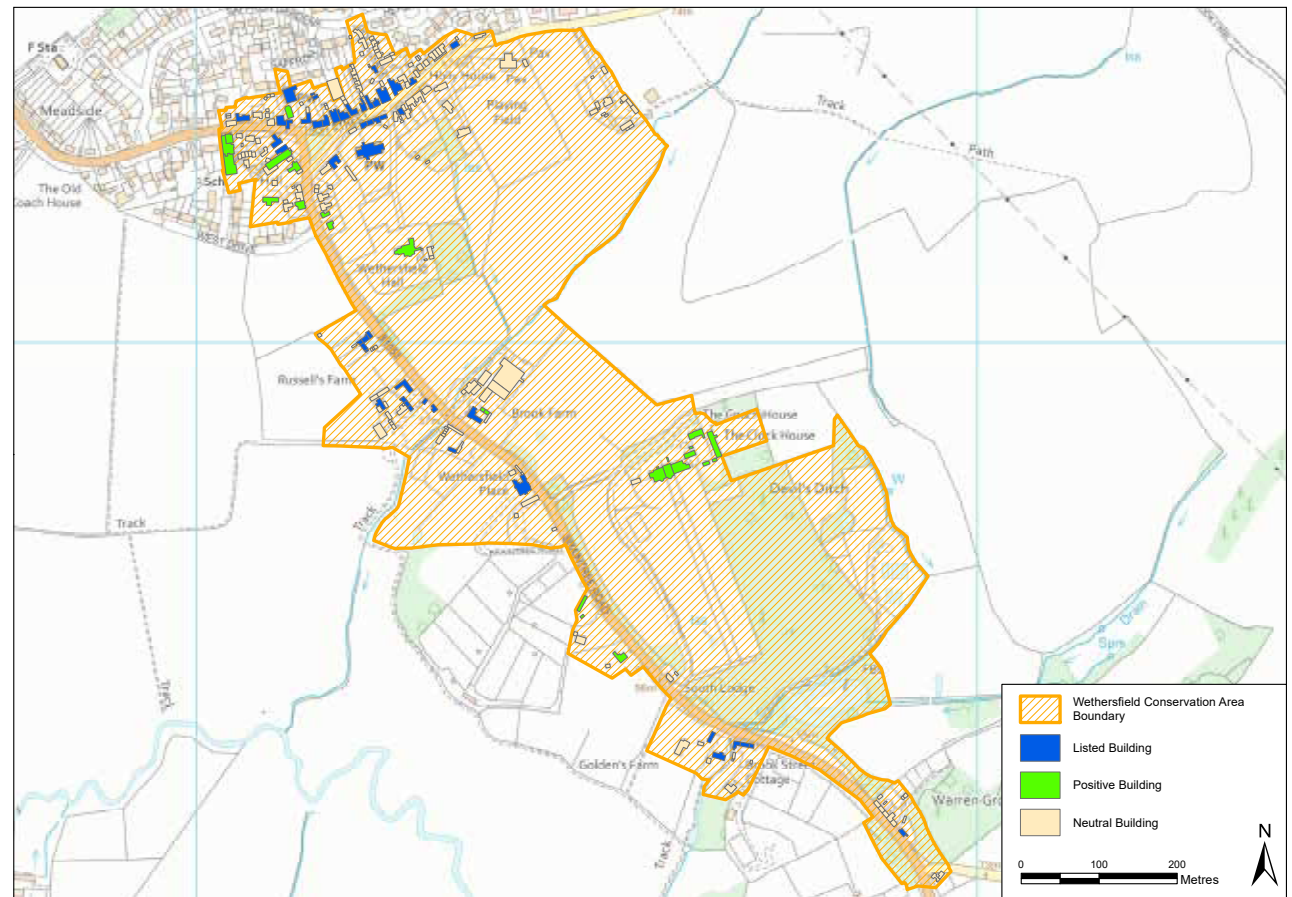


Figure 10 Map of Significant Features in the Wethersfield Conservation Area



Built Environment

The late medieval and post-medieval housing stock is in good condition throughout the village; as such, a number of buildings make a positive contribution to the area. These, along with neutral, negative and listed buildings, are highlighted in Figure 10.

Land Usage

The conservation area predominantly comprises of residential buildings to the north, with some commercial elements and amenity buildings such as the school, churches, playing field, and former breweries. To the south, the conservation area consists of some residential buildings, including Manor House, Wethersfield Hall and dispersed farmsteads, set within agricultural land.

Key Views

Key types of views are identified below, although this list is not comprehensive and other views of significance may be identified during decision-making process on planning applications. Any proposals for development within the Conservation Area, or its environs, should consider the types views below and any others which may be relevant or bespoke to that proposal. It is also notable how these views alter in character between winter and summer months which must be taken into account.

- Type 1 Open views towards the settlement;
- Type 2 Designed views between notable buildings;
- Type 3 Views out to the agrarian landscape;
- Type 4 Views of notable buildings;
- Type 5 Views of notable spaces;
- Type 6 Medium distance developing views;
- Type 7 Views from alleys and narrow streets; and
- Type 8 Glimpsed views throughout the Conservation Area.

Some key views of these types have identified based on the above criteria. Note the views included are a selection of key views; this list is not exhaustive and there are numerous other views of significance. Examples of these view types are identified on Figure 11.

- Type 1 Towards the settlement from the public footpath which adjoins the settlement at West Drive;
- Type 2 Views between Manor House and the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene;
- Type 3 South and south east from the churchyard of St Mary Magdalene;
- Type 4 Towards the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene's from the village Green;
- Type 5 East and west along Silver Street;
- Type 5 West from Braintree Road towards the Brewery;
- Type 6 North East from Public Right of Way towards the village centre; and
- Type 7 North from Dog Chase towards open fields.

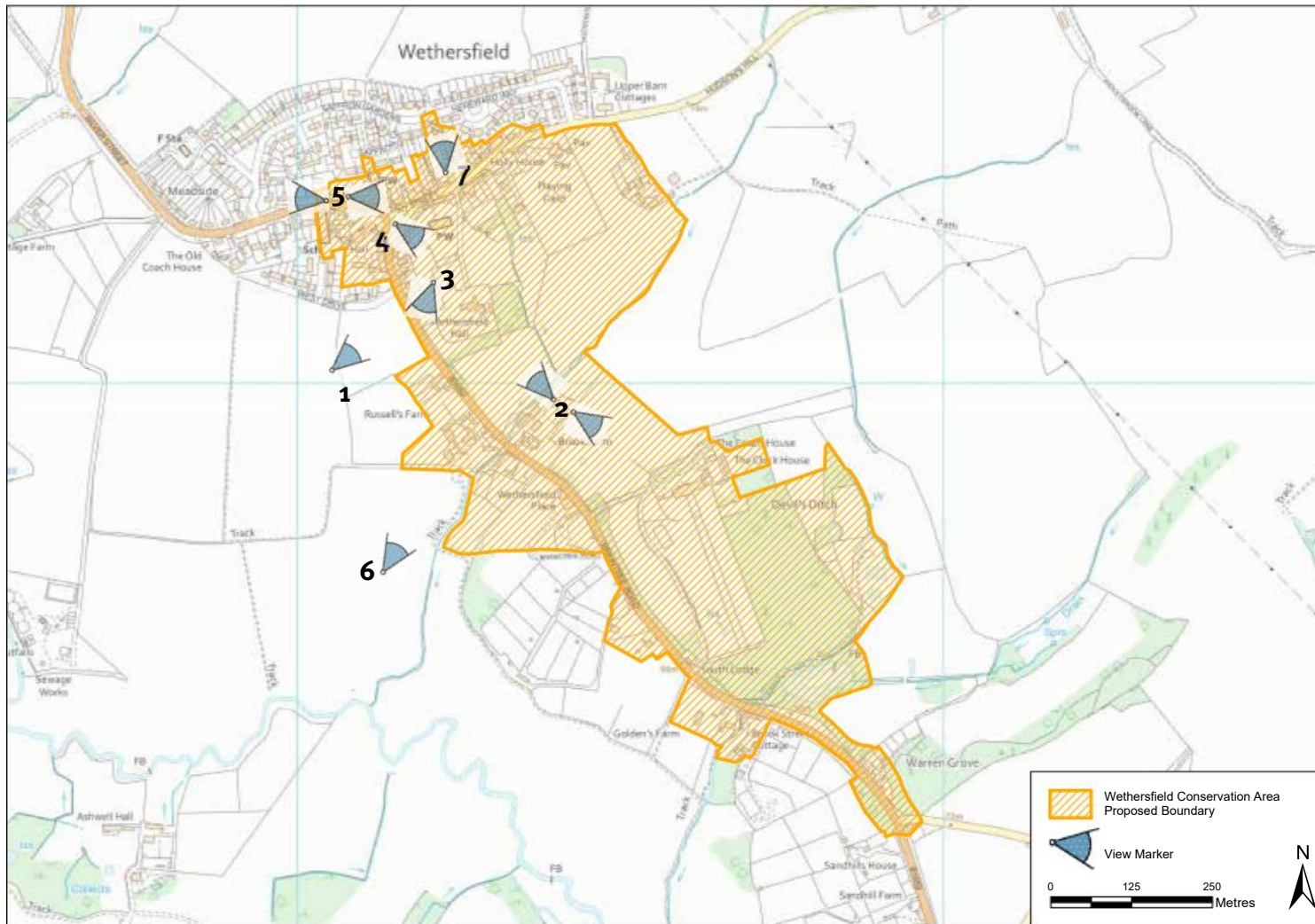


Figure 11 A Selection of Key Views

Landscaping and Open Spaces

There are several key areas of green space within the Conservation Area. They make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area in that they are visually appealing elements of the village, however they do not provide public realm or amenities for congregation and village activity. The later addition of the recreation ground to the east reflects this.

The most significant open space from a public realm perspective within the Conservation Area is, arguably, the central village Green [Figure 12]. The Green is located at the village's main junction of three arterial routes, creating a space where the buildings which surround it can be appreciated. The land slopes to the north, creating aesthetic views of the Green and giving it more prominence in these views. The Green is planted with mature plain trees. This makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

Uncharacteristically within the Conservation Area, buildings which surround the Green are also set back from the street behind smaller areas of grassed verges. These visually enhance the street scene, providing an aesthetic break between the street and surrounding buildings; the generosity of this space also provides juxtaposition between the enclosed character of those streets which adjoin it, most notably perhaps Silver Street.

The churchyard of the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene [Figure 13] is another key area of green space within the Conservation Area. Its mature boundary trees are partially visible from the High Street and make a positive impact on the street scape. The churchyard itself provides an important area of public realm, of historical associative and communal value to the village, and consists of a well maintained and positive ecclesiastical setting to the church. The churchyard is enclosed by some buildings and planting to the north, however shares a visual link with fields to the south east, which enhance the rural landscape setting of the church, assisting in establishing a tranquil space of remembrance.



Figure 12 The Green looking west



Figure 13 The Churchyard

To the south of the village core, wide areas of open landscape form a significant feature of the Conservation Area. These fields and manorial grounds are reflective of historic land use, and have been retained to the south of the Conservation Area.

Traditional/Local Building Materials and Details

Buildings within the village core are constructed in materials which are regionally typical; in red brick with plaster rendering and handmade red clay tile roofs. Barn buildings to the south of the conservation area are clad in weatherboard with red clay tile roofs [Figure 15]. There are examples of later buildings which are red brick, or stucco, and slate roofs in the north of the conservation area, and some thatched cottages to the south. Red brick and plaster are the predominant building materials in buildings and boundary walls throughout the conservation area.

Architectural detailing is simple. Flat and arched lintels can be found on nineteenth century buildings [Figure 16], as well as some decorative brick coursing, pargetting and exposed timber beams [Figure 14]. Bow windows are also a common feature, and many buildings have retained sash windows. Cast iron and red brick boundary treatments are also common features across the conservation area.

Public Realm

Public realm is largely formed of pavements, roads and associated street signage to the north of the area. Many properties in the historic core front directly onto the pavement, and while some have land between their front doors and the street, this is often small and enclosed by boundary walls. Some buildings have steps leading to front doors above street level and several feature iron railings. This pattern of development has left little room for public realm features such as benches, bins, and street lighting along the High Street and Silver Street. There are some benches on the Green and a village sign [Figure 16]; however this area is predominantly sparse of street furniture.



Figure 14 Example of pargetting, exposed timber framing and brick work at Ivanhoe House



Figure 15 Weatherboarding and render, Russells Farm



Figure 16 Various window types and materials are present on The Green, yet the use of traditional materials and construction creates a unified appearance



Figure 17 View of Manor Park 1988 (ECC)

To the south of the area, the historic route often has stretches without a pavement, and there is no street furniture.

Beyond the Conservation Area Boundary

The Conservation Area draws significance from the wider landscape. The former manorial park, associated with the Manor House, is located in the south of the area and south east of the House; this provides the Manor House's original setting, and contributes to our understanding of the heritage asset, and how we experience and interpret the heritage values of the Manor House and Conservation Area [Figure 17]. It is not, however, included in the Conservation Area, due to the significant change in land use and loss of original parkland features. These areas contribute positively to the setting of the Manor House and the setting of the Conservation Area; however they are no longer in themselves of significance.

Open fields to the south west and north of the area also make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area; they enhance our understanding of the development of the village within its rural landscape, and the valley topography allows for clear views from the village

and into the village from its arable setting. They also provide a clear distinction between the agrarian landscape, comprising of fields associated with each farm, and the village.

The playing fields to the north east of the area contribute to the Conservation Area's significance by forming an important part of its setting, enhancing the way in which it is experienced, understood and appreciated. They also form an area of open space which affords wide reaching views towards the south of the area.

The airfield to the north of the village is also a significant feature which contributes to the area. Although it is not visible from the village, the introduction of the airfield would have impacted on the village economically and socially during the war and is of historic and communal value to Wethersfield.

There is now considerable twentieth century housing to the north of the Conservation Area, which forms the immediate setting of the historic core. This has impacted the historic plan and detached the core from its agrarian landscape setting in the north.

3.2 Character Analysis

The Conservation Area is divided into three character areas reflecting the predominant land use, location and historic development of the village.

The three distinct character areas which comprise the Conservation Area are:

- The Historic Village Core (Character Area 1),
-
- The Wethersfield Hall and Russell's Farm area (Character Area 2), and
-
- The Manor House area (Character Area 3).

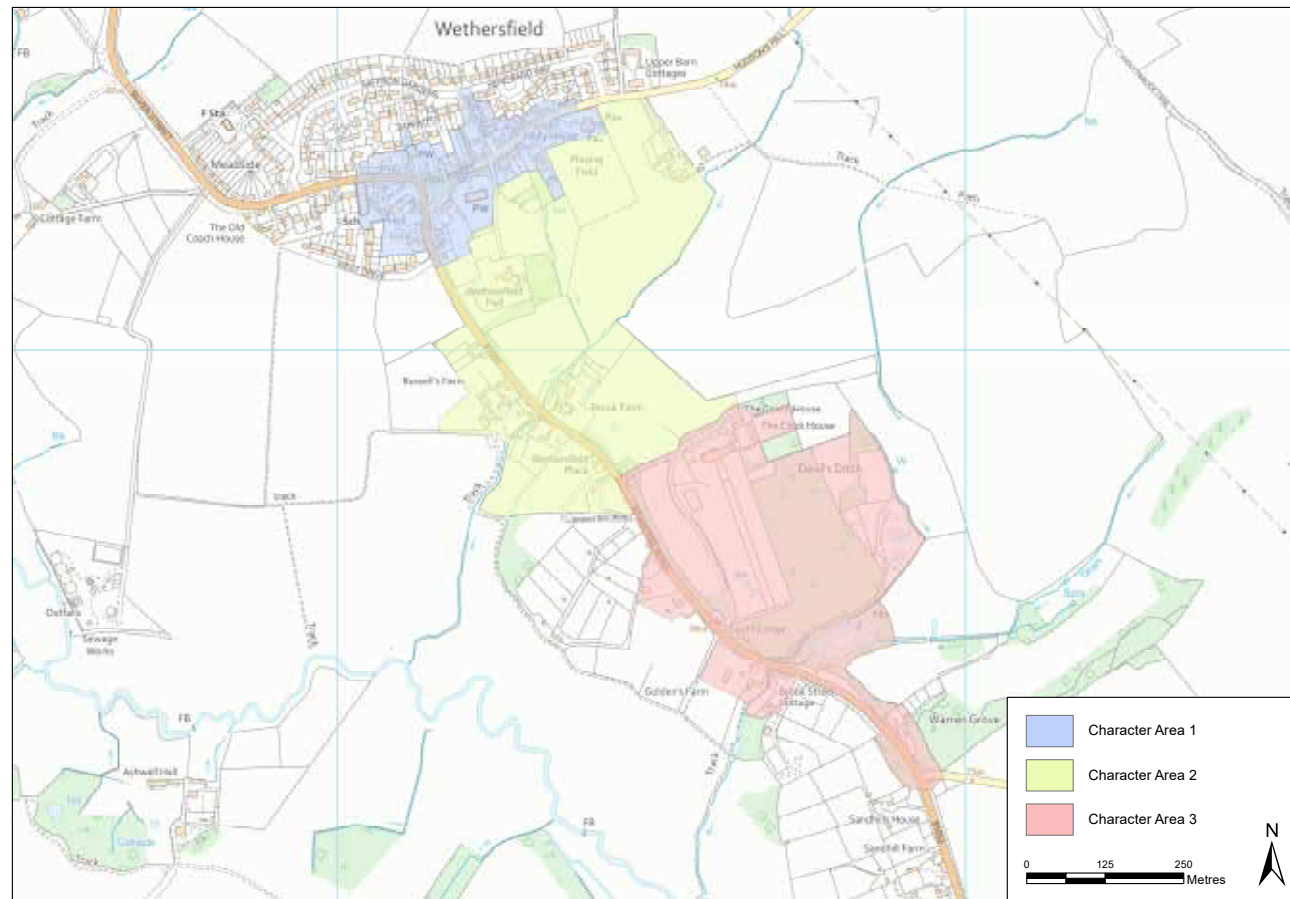


Figure 18 Map of the three Character Areas

Character Area 1: Historic Village Centre

This character area includes the historic core of the village, which is centred on the road junction [Figure 19]. The area consists of the majority of the built development in the conservation area, developed around the High Street, Silver Street and the Green. The area is formed of high land to the north, with the Green partly sunken, affording clear views of surrounding dwellings and sense of enclosure from within the village centre.

Streetscape and building materials

The building stock is largely formed of rendered timber frame buildings, often cream coloured with red clay tile roofs, and later nineteenth century red brick, with slate and plain tile roofs. The majority of buildings are residential and of a fairly small scale, typically ranging from 1.5 to 3 storeys (the latter being the exception rather than the rule). Gables, dormers and chimneys, combined with the gradual include in topography, create lively roofscapes. Windows and doors are typically of timber and single glazed, though there are exceptions, which has on occasion been to the detriment of the properties aesthetic value and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Historically the village has developed around the convergence of Silver Street, Braintree Road and High

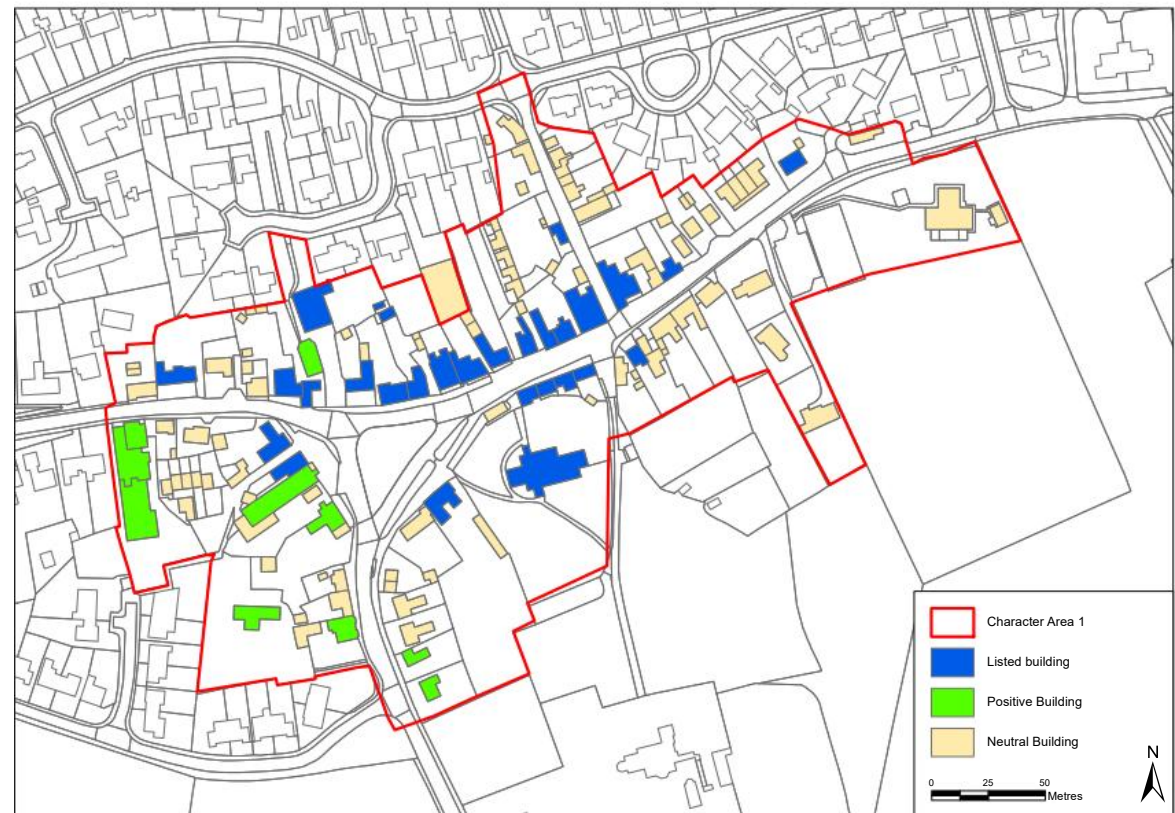


Figure 19 Map of listed, positive and neutral buildings in Character Area 1: Historic Village Centre



Figure 20 High Street looking east



Figure 21 Example of boundary treatment, Olive House Silver Street



Figure 22 Churchyard looking South East

Street, centred on the village Green. This has resulted in typically narrow plots, with buildings slightly set back from the pavement behind small front gardens or planting, sometimes defined by low brick walls or iron railings. This gives a strong sense of enclosure within the historic core [Figure 21]

Boundary treatments

Many dwellings have retained boundary treatment, formed of low brick walls and iron fencing, with planting in gardens. This contributes positively to the character of the area, with original plots well defined, well maintained and enhanced by planting which softens the streetscape [Figure 21].

Planting

With the exception of the central green and churchyard, soft landscaping (including trees and hedges) is primarily within private land. There are frequent examples of established planting in front gardens, and even houses which front onto the pavement and street have well maintained pots of climbing plants, to bring greenery to the streetscape. The garden of the Manse is particularly notable; in a prominent position overlooking the green, and set behind Grade II listed iron railings, the garden is planted with well-maintained box hedge parterre.

There is also substantial boundary planting within the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene's churchyard [Figure 22], which is visible from views towards the church.

Views

This area comprises of the following kinetic views:

- Continual views of church tower throughout conservation area;
- Glimpsed views of some areas of backland development (for example Dog

- Chase);
- Glimpsed views of Wethersfield Hall from the south of the area;
- Views towards the settlement from roads and PROW, as well as key properties (Manor House); and
- The topography of the area, together with differing building heights, gives layered views throughout the High Street.

There are limited outward views when within village, due to the building density and enclosed character.

Individual Listed Buildings

This character area includes the highest density of listed buildings along the historic high street and surrounding the village green. All of the Listed Buildings are Grade II unless otherwise stated.

North of Silver Street and High Street

To the north of the High Street, a high density of listed buildings forms the streetscape, all of which make a positive contribution to the historic character of the village.

Along Silver Street, The Gables is located at the north west end of the conservation area. The house is predominantly of fifteenth and sixteenth century, altered in eighteenth, twentieth and twenty first centuries. The building is timber framed, rendered (although previously clad with twentieth century weatherboards), and roofed with handmade red clay tiles. The main range is of one storey with attics, dormer windows and gabled dormers.

Further east is Castle House, an early sixteenth century jettied and plastered timber framed building, of four bays and two storeys, with a handmade red clay tile roof. The



Figure 23 Castle House, High Street



Figure 24 United Reformed Church

house is set back from the road and enclosed by adjacent building, Chapel Cottage, to the east. Castle House was altered in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and now includes a stack at the left end, eighteenth century extension with gambrel roof to rear of right bay, twentieth century extensions to the rear, and twentieth century door and shop window in right bay. The building retains simple architectural features such as the four nineteenth century scrolled brackets below the jetty [Figure 23].

Adjoining Castle House at the east is Chapel Cottage. This early seventeenth century house, extended in the twentieth century, was possibly built as an extension to Castle House, although is now a separate dwelling. The house is timber framed, rendered, with handmade red clay tiles. A twentieth century extension extends to the north east, forming an L-plan footprint. The building encloses a small garden to the east, and garden wall abutting the pavement. The west elevation retains the head of an original oriel window, with mortices for 4 mullions and 3 diamond saddle bars, a rare feature.

Set back from the road opposite the junction of Silver Street and High Street is the early nineteenth century United Reformed Church. Its southern main façade is constructed in gault brick with dentileaves course, and in red brick elsewhere, in Flemish bond with a slate roof. The church was built in two stages, beginning with the north part and extending to the south in 1822. The Church is two storeys, with two pairs of pedimented double doors, each with two panels, and overlights, with panelled jambs and lintels. Each side wall has four similar windows on each floor, with a straight joint between the two stages.

The Mausoleum approx. 20 metres east of United Reformed Church is early nineteenth century in origin, built in red brick in Flemish bond under a slate roof. It is a rectangular plan, facing west, and is of one storey in height. Inscribed stone panels represent the Legerton family, including Isaac Legerton, 1832, Susanna Mary Ann Ledgerton, 1856, and the other members of the same family, all of Shalford.

South of the Mausoleum is the Cottage approx. 30 metres north-north-west of Lysvean. This early nineteenth century cottage is timber framed, plastered and weatherboarded, and roofed with handmade red clay tiles. It consists of two bays facing south east, and is one storey with attic.

Further east are 'railings approx. 37 metres south-south-east of United Reformed Church'. This includes railings and two square piers of early nineteenth century. The railings are cast iron with fleur-de-lys finials, and the piers are hollow with an ornate scroll and foliage design; these were filled with concrete in twentieth century, and are topped with solid iron tented finials.

The listing entry for the Railings and gateway approx. 7 metres south of The Manse includes the nineteenth century cast iron railings and gateway. The railings are in six sections, stepped up gradient, and set on a low red brick base, with fleur-de-lys finials. The hollow square piers at East end and on each side of gate are elaborately designed with scrolls and foliage.

The Manse [Figure 25] is an impressive dwelling set behind the cast iron railings and an ornate garden, walled to the west. The house is late sixteenth century, altered in the early seventeenth, and is timber framed, rendered and roofed with handmade red clay tiles. The south façade is of three bays, with a stack in middle bay against the front wall, and a seventeenth century bay extension to right. The building is two storeys and attic, the rear wing of one storey and attic. The south façade consists of three-window range of eighteenth century three-light windows, which have been restored. The two feature gables and central gabled dormer are prominent in the main facade, each with one eighteenth century two-light window. The building is symmetrical, apart from the front door which sits to the east of the centre bay with 6 fielded panels and a shallow hood on scrolled brackets.



Figure 25 The Manse



Figure 26 Brick House and Lysvean



To the north of the Green is Brick House and Lysvean [Figure 26]. This early nineteenth century dwelling was originally constructed as one house, and is now two separate dwellings. It is constructed in red brick in Flemish bond, roofed with handmade red clay tiles. Its main façade is well proportioned, with simple architectural details retained, with windows decorated with rendered flat arches and the western doorway adorned with a decorative fanlight. The main façade fronts south overlooking the Green.

St. George's House is Grade II* listed. It was constructed in the early sixteenth century, extended in the eighteenth century, and altered in nineteenth. The building is timber framed, rendered and partly of painted brick, with slate roof. It has a symmetrical principle southern façade, comprising a sashed front of c.1800 three windows wide. It has a small, paved front patio enclosed by iron railings and a gate with steps down to pavement level.

Further east is Trodd's Garage (John Pease Motors). This fifteenth century timber framed building extends east from St George's House, and is stepped up following the gradient of the High Street. The building is two storeys in height, rendered, roofed with slate.

Church Hill House, was formerly listed as Church View and Hill Cottage. The timber framed house was constructed in c.1500, later altered in the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. In keeping with the High Street, it is rendered, and roofed with handmade red clay tiles. The house is two storeys, with three twentieth century casements at first floor level and twentieth century bow window, six panel door and garage under tiled hipped canopy at ground floor level. The western façade contains the exposed red brick chimney stack. Under the bow window, a small garden plot is enclosed by a low brick wall, planted with an established wisteria and flowerbed.

The Hoods, constructed in the early sixteenth century and extended in the late seventeenth, is a timber framed, rendered dwelling with handmade red clay roof tiles. Its

south east elevation fronts onto the High Street, and comprises of a two-window range of twentieth century sashes of four lights. The twentieth century door is designed in late sixteenth century style, and fronts onto brick steps and iron handrails leading to the pavement level.

The Bakery and Burleigh Cottage were constructed in c.1580, and extended in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is a two storey property, with two separate front entrances and well-proportioned windows. The bakery is set back slightly from the main cottage façade to the west, with the nineteenth century shopfront window under a slated canopy. The roof is red clay tiles, and the building timber framed and plastered.

The Dog Inn was constructed in the early nineteenth century in red brick, with stucco at the principle southern façade only, with a slate roof. It is two storeys, with early nineteenth century sash windows of a good proportion. The building was converted to residential use in the twenty-first century and is referred to as Chase House.

Following Dog Chase north [Figure 27], The Cottage is located to the west of the lane. The house is timber framed, rendered and with a red clay tile roof constructed c.1550. Its interest is derived from its simple frontage, which has retained its historic character. An abstract of title states that it was built by Richard Hitching on land formerly part of The Hoods, date not stated.

Further east, the Virginia House and The Stores is located on the other side of Dog Chase on High Street. The building was constructed in c.1570, and the site comprises of a house, set back from the pavement, and shop. These are timber framed, rendered and roofed with handmade red clay tiles. The left bay of the main range forms The Stores; the remainder to the east is Virginia House. Virginia House is set back behind a small garden enclosed by a low red brick wall. Iron railings and piers are located atop the wall, with a

hedgerow behind. The house has bow windows at ground and first floor level, with the Stores consisting of large commercial windows to ground floor and a small sash window to the first floor.

Blenheim House, built in the late sixteenth century, is a timber framed, rendered dwelling, with some exposed imitation framing to the eastern façade, and roofed with handmade red clay tiles. It is one storey with attics, with leaded dormer windows and bow window at ground floor level.

Seventeenth century Briar Cottage is located north east of the High Street; the house is one storey house with attic dormers, constructed in timber frame and roughcast render, roofed with handmade red clay tiles. The building is an unusual example of a small house of the first half of the seventeenth century, with high quality finish. It was originally symmetrical, but was extended by one bay to the east, with a bay window to the western end. The house is set back from the street, within a planted garden.

South of the High Street

Eighteenth century Smithy Cottage is set back from the High Street behind a low garden wall and front garden; it is a timber framed, rendered, dwelling, roofed with handmade red clay tiles. The building is two storeys in height and of an L-shaped plan, orientated north-west.

1 and 2 Post Office Cottages consists of a row of early nineteenth century red brick cottages, roofed with handmade red clay tiles. These are prominent in the street scene, and are 3 storeys in height, with a well-proportioned frontage and simple plaster architectural details over the ground and first floor sash windows and semi-circular arches above the panelled doors.

Further west, Numbers 3 and 4, (Churchyard Cottage), Post Office Cottages are located. These are a pair of mid-nineteenth century attached cottages, built in red brick and roofed with handmade red clay tiles. The dwellings are a rectangular block plan form, orientated North West with a prominent central stack. The sash windows are symmetrical apart from the ground floor eastern window, which has been enlarged to form a shop window and subsequently converted to a twentieth century casement.

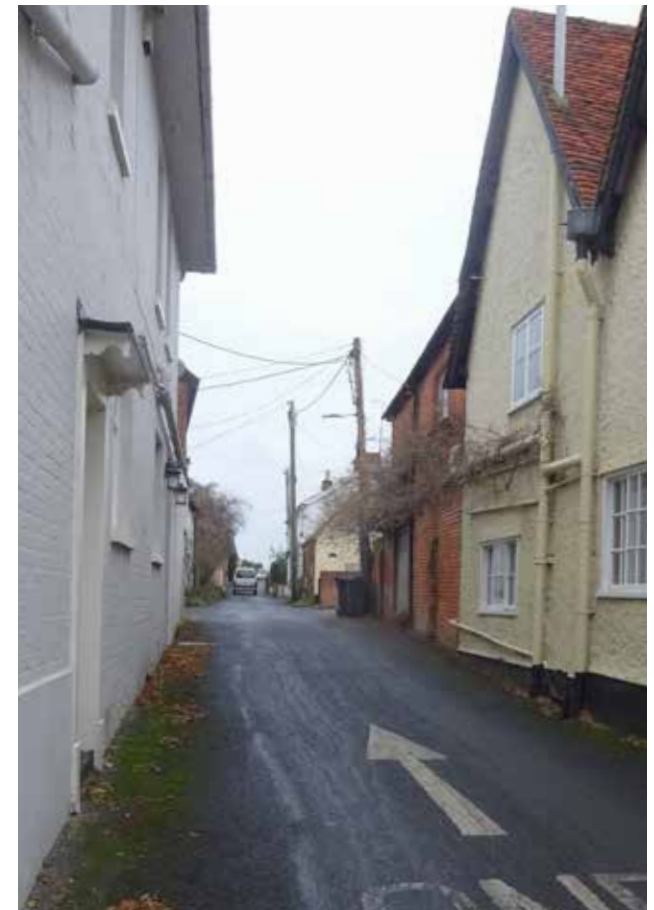


Figure 27 Dog Chase



Figure 28 High Street looking east



Figure 29 The Green and Church

South of the Green

The Parish Church of St. Mary Magdalene is a prominent feature of the Green, despite being set back, due to the topography of the area. The church is mainly twelfth to early fifteenth century in origin, altered in eighteenth century and restored in nineteenth. It is constructed in flint and pebble rubble, with dressings of limestone and clunch, and roofed with handmade red clay tiles and lead.

Opposite the Green is Ivanhoe House; this house fronts onto the Green, its main façade to the North West. The house was constructed in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and altered in the twentieth century. It is characteristic of the area, timber framed, rendered with some exposed framing and roofed with handmade clay tiles. The two bays facing onto the Green are early sixteenth century. The dwelling is two storeys with dormer attic, however appears prominent due to its position on high ground. The right half of the front elevation is jettied, with the jetty and framing above exposed. The Bressumer is carved with folded leaf design.

The Telephone Kiosk to north of Ivanhoe House is a K6 type telephone box designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in 1935. The square kiosk is constructed in cast iron, with its recognisable domed roof.

To the west of the village green is the dwelling named The Green (listed as The House on the corner of The Green and Silver Street); the building is a late sixteenth century house, which was extended in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is timber framed, plastered and roofed with handmade red clay tiles. It is two-storeys high with attics. The original house comprised 4 bays facing onto the green, with an original wing behind the left end. Subsequent extensions on all sides have produced a complex building plan; it was in multiple occupation until c.1970. The house forms a substantial corner plot at the joining of High Street and Silver Street, set back from the street behind a low boundary wall.

Further south is Mill Chase House (listed as Rudi's Restaurant), a sixteenth century timber framed and rendered house under a slate roof. The building was altered in the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The house is set back from the street, although due to later alterations is three storeys tall, making it prominent in the group of buildings on the west of the Green.

Other Buildings that Make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution to the Street Scene

The school forms the boundary to the north west of the conservation area, and makes a positive contribution to its character. Constructed in 1876, the Gothic Revival building is constructed in red brick under a slate roof, with decorative polychrome brickwork on its northern façade facing onto the street. Further east, and set back from the street, is the meeting room (former schoolroom). This building was constructed in 1876 in the Gothic Revival style, in red brick with stock brick and stone dressings. It is located within the complex of the United Reformed Church, the Chapel Cottage, the Manse and Mausoleum, therefore contributing to the significance of this grouping.

To the southern boundary of the character area are two cottages, elevated above street level behind a grassed verge, pavement and low brick wall boundary. The cottages are typical of the building stock in the historic core, constructed in timber frame, rendered and under a red clay tile roof. The northernmost cottage has an early eighteenth-century extension at the southern end and a modern addition at the back. This extension alters the original plan of the building, and modern window replacements also impact its historic character. The cottage to the south has retained more of its historic façade and features, however modern window replacements impact on its character.

A significant complex of buildings located in the south west of the area make a positive contribution to its character and our appreciation of its history. These buildings are the



Figure 30 Looking West over the Green



Figure 31 Ivanhoe House

Brewhouse, former Malthouse (now the Village Hall), the former brewery owner's house (now Hillfoot House), and the Brewery Tavern. This grouping is a rare example of a large rural village brewery complex, intact, and of historic and architectural value. The nineteenth century brewery buildings are now all under separate ownership and uses, however are still discernible as a heritage asset. A report in 2002 on Breweries in Essex, produced by Essex County Council, describes these buildings:

'The brewhouse is a three storey red brick building, under a pantiled roof with single storey out buildings and the boiler house chimney extant. There are two full length round headed windows on the ground floor of the west facade, otherwise window openings are much altered. It was converted to private residential use in 1952 and remains a private house. To the north of the brewhouse is the brewery malthouse, now the village hall. This too is of red brick, two storeys under a slate roof with a lucam on the road front facade (north east).

There has been some poor alteration to this structure - the kiln was demolished in the 1950s, a modern porch has been added to the ground floor under the lucam and some of the side extensions are in a poor state. 'Hillfoot House' to the south of the malthouse was the brewery owner's house. This is a magnificent double fronted house with a two storey bay either side of the front door. It is of rendered brick with white brick chimneys and a slate roof. The final component is the Brewery Tavern public house, built according to the plaque in 1879. It is of red brick with yellow brick dressings under a slate roof and also has much moulded tile decoration, such as on the gable ends, around some of the first floor windows and marking the top of the first floor. To the rear of the Brewery Tavern are the former stables, again of red and yellow brick, now under a corrugated roof."

The Village Hall is situated in a particularly prominent location within the character area, overlooking the Green. It was gifted to the village for use as a community hall in 1920/21,



Figure 32 Graveyard of the United Reformed Church



and has undergone unfavourable alterations since, including the erection of a lean-to bus shelter in 1975. The building still makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and has potential for enhancement.

Further south, between Hillfoot House and the Brewery Tavern are a row of cottages, which adjoin the Tavern. Hillfoot Cottage is two storeys in height, rendered, with simple architectural detailing, timber windows and slate roofs. These details contribute to the historic character of the Cottage. The cottage adjoining this to the south, also two storeys in height, has intricate pargetting on its façade, and a bow window at ground level; however, plastic window replacements and concrete roof replacement has affected the architectural interest of the building.

Important Trees and Open Spaces

The Green forms a key central open space, with the surrounding high quality building stock and topography contributing to the visual appeal of the Green, and its prominence within village centre.

The established plain trees in the Green and the boundary trees of the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene make a positive contribution to the area, providing a verdant core to the village.

Detracting Elements

To the south of the area, some plastic window and roof replacements have impacted the historic character of the buildings; however, the architectural features are of a high quality throughout the majority of the area.

There are some areas of inconsistent approach to hard surfacing, where driveways, private roads and sections of pavement are in varying states of repair and of varied

material; along the road leading to the United Reformed Church and Dog's Chase in particular, may be enhanced through a consistent approach to material and maintenance of hard surfacing throughout the area.

Revised Boundary Changes

The Conservation Area has been extended to the north to include the churchyard for the United Reformed Church; this space is of historical and communal value to the village, and forms a clear relationship with the Church and Memorial buildings. Therefore, its inclusion enhances our appreciation of this group of heritage assets, and makes a positive contribution to the area. Further details of boundary changes are included in "2.4 Revisions to the Boundary" on page 12.

Character Area 2 Wethersfield Hall and Russell's Farm Area

This area comprises a small hamlet on the Braintree Road, adjacent to the Wethersfield Brook. It draws its significance from its historic rural character.

Streetscape and building materials

Development throughout this area is dispersed, consisting of farm houses and associated barns, isolated cottages, and Wethersfield Hall. Development is broken up by mature hedgerows, red brick walls associated with the Hall, and views out into the wider rural landscape.

The building stock consists predominantly of timber framed, rendered buildings under slate or red clay tile roofs, with some thatched cottages. Barns are typically black stained featheredge weatherboard. Materials are generally commensurate with the status and function of the building.

Boundary treatments

This area is characterised by extensive stretches of walls bordering the Braintree Road, from north to south. These comprise a high leaning red brick retaining wall along the Wethersfield Hall boundary, and then the high red brick wall associated with Russell's Farmyard. The farmhouse itself has a low brick wall with ornamental cast iron

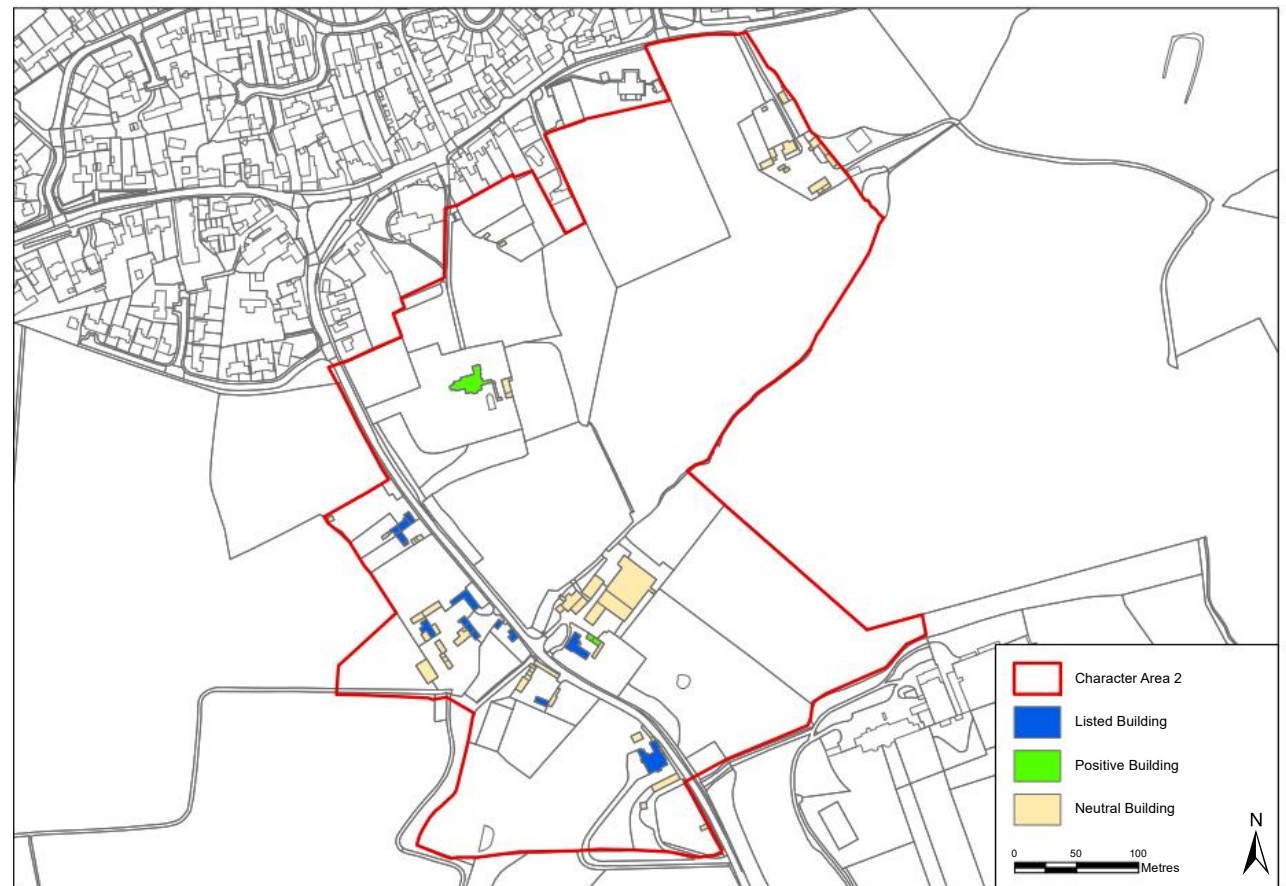


Figure 33 Character Area 2 Wethersfield Hall and Russell's Farm Area



Figure 34 Simm's Farmhouse, Braintree Road



Figure 35 Russell's Farmhouse, Braintree Road



Figure 36 Listed barn and ancillary building, Russell's farm, Braintree Road



Figure 37 Wethersfield Place, Braintree Road

railings in front of it. A new low brick wall follows the entrance to Brook's Farm, and a high red brick and buttressed wall along the former Wethersfield Place stableyard and gardens becomes a high redbrick garden wall with flint panels to the south of the main building. There is a low intermittent brick wall marking the Old Vicarage boundary with a wall of flint rubble with brick piers marking its former stableyard.

The other boundaries comprise hedges and chainlink fences. Those along the boundary with Wethersfield Manor are high and well-maintained. On the opposite side of the road the hedge is lower, enabling views out into open countryside and into the gardens of Wethersfield Place. Opposite Wethersfield Place, the boundary comprises chain link fence with a mix of hedge and mature trees, allowing views into the former parkland and up to the planting around Wethersfield Manor. The garden boundary of Brook Farmhouse is a cast-iron fence with well-maintained hedge, low enough to afford good views of the historic property. The boundary to the north of this comprises a chain-link fence and there has very recently been earth removal parallel to it, impacting on a possible historic lynchet or former roadside bank. There are views into the wider countryside from here. This is succeeded by hedges and then the brick wall associated with Wethersfield Hall and the main entry into the historic core of the village.

The overall effect is one of increased enclosure and settlement, as the observer moves from the southern edge of the Character Area into the historic core.

Views

This area is characterised by a mix of enclosure due to the high walls and hedges bounding the Braintree Road (see above), where the views are largely drawn along the road and the properties fronting onto it. At places along Braintree Road are wider views out across hedges or fences, both into the wider rural setting of the Conservation Area and into the gardens of the larger properties.



Figure 38 Brook Farmhouse, Braintree Road



Figure 39 Wethersfield Manor, looking east



Figure 40 North elevation of the Hall 1984 (ECC)



Figure 41 South elevation of the Hall (Wethersfield Local History Group)

Individual Listed Buildings

There are eleven Listed Buildings within the Character Area. Full listing descriptions are included in the Appendix.

The northernmost building is the Grade II* listed, Numbers 1-4 Simm's Farmhouse [Figure 34]. This comprises a sixteenth century timber-framed and rendered house, with a prominent panel of late seventeenth century pargetting in high relief, of conventional foliage and scrolls on the road frontage. It abuts Number 1 Sim'ms Cottage, a Grade II seventeenth-century or earlier timber framed and rendered house.

To the south is Russell's Farm. Russell's Farmhouse is a two-storeyed sixteenth century timber framed house. It forms part of a group of Grade II listed buildings that formed the principle structures within the historic farmyard; they include an eighteenth century stable block, an early seventeenth century barn, a late seventeenth century barn and an early sixteenth century ancillary building [Figure 36], possibly a granary. This structure is a building of high quality and unusual type. The farmyard buildings are all in various stages of disrepair.

To the immediate south of this group is the late seventeenth century timber-framed Brookside Cottage. This one storey cottage is timber framed, rendered with decorative pargetting, under a thatched roof. It retains its original boarded and ledged door with one small light.

To the south of this is Wethersfield Place (Six Apples) a large eighteenth-century house [Figure 37]. The main range is of red brick, it faces south-west into its own gardens, which are screened by a high brick and flint wall. The rear wings are timber framed and rendered, and visible from the road. Stables Cottage is seventeenth century in date, with eighteenth century extensions. It was presumably incorporated into the stable yard for

Wethersfield Place when it was built. The stable yard is largely screened from the road by a high brick wall.

On the opposite side of the road is Brook Farmhouse [Figure 38]. The hall house (c.1400) now forms the service wing behind a late seventeenth century range, which was remodelled in the eighteenth century with the addition of a four-bay sashed front. There are a number of historic farmyard buildings, including a former maltings associated with Brooks Farm, as well as extensive new barns. It is still an active agricultural enterprise.

Other Buildings that Make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution to the Street Scene

Wethersfield Hall is a rendered and tiled building of probable mid-late nineteenth century date [Figure 39]. It replaced a seventeenth century predecessor, of which only the cellar survives underneath the existing structure. Its location is shown on the 1777 Chapman and Andre map as occupying roughly the same footprint as the modern hall and it is likely that the earlier hall was on the same site. The 1875 first edition OS map shows it had formal gardens to the south and west, and much of this area is still garden. It is linked to the High Street by a long driveway which is accessed via a pair of ornamental wrought iron gates

The Hall's walls make a positive contribution to the character of this area; high, red brick walls flank Braintree Road on the approach to the Hall and Village from the South. This creates a sense of enclosure and grandeur, indicating the presence of the manor site and forming its wider setting.

The Old Vicarage [Figure 42] is located at the southern end of the character area. This early-mid nineteenth century house is of red brick with sash windows and a central door. It is not shown on the 1777 map, when the Parsonage was located at what is now



Figure 42 The Old Vicarage, Braintree Road



Figure 43 The Old Vicarage outbuildings (Parkside to the right)



Figure 44 View towards the centre of Wethersfield



Parsonage Farm, but is depicted on the 1875 first edition OS map. Elements of the original formal gardens survive, including some of the tree planting. To the north are two former outbuildings (Parkside and an un-named shed, Figure 43), which appear to have been part of the associated stable-yard. They are of red brick with tiled roofs.

Behind Brook's Farmhouse was a small seventeenth century building, part brick and part timber framed. This originated as a maltings, part of the kiln of which survives before being converted to a brew house.

Important Trees and Open Spaces

The open fields and historic manorial grounds form important open spaces within this area; they contribute to our understanding of the historic context of the village and its rural character. These fields and open grassland areas are visible from places along Braintree Road, providing fortuitous views of the village's arable farmland and manorial pastures.

The hedgerows which flank Braintree Road also make a positive contribution to the character of the area, complementing the high red brick walls and creating the sense of enclosure. Some trees have been retained within the grounds of Wethersfield Hall to the west of the Hall, and within the Old Vicarage's grounds.

Detracting elements

The majority of this character area is of high quality, and has retained its rural character. Some elements of the Russell's Farm complex, however, detract from the character, due to their varying state of repairs. As these farm buildings are visible from Braintree Road, their disrepair impacts the appreciation of the area and the southern approach to the village.

Revised boundary changes

The Conservation Area has been made smaller to exclude the playing fields which have no historic or architectural interest; the value of this open space is drawn from the contribution it makes to the Conservation Area's significance by forming an important part of its setting, enhancing the way in which it is experienced, understood and appreciated. Further details of boundary changes are included in Section 2.4.

Character Area 3 Manor House Area

This area comprises of Wethersfield Manor, its associated buildings, and its existing formal gardens to the south, along with dwellings on the southern periphery of the village. Its character is derived from its use as a historic landscape park and gardens, with principal house to the north of the area and associated buildings to the east and south. The area also includes buildings on the Braintree Road down to the junction with Gosfield Road. These dwellings include cottages thought to have been occupied by agricultural workers who would have worked on nearby hop poles and plantations, associated with Goldens Farm.

Streetscape and Building Materials

The only public route within this character area is Braintree Road, located to the western boundary of the Manor House. The streetscape here comprises of tall hedgerows and established boundary planting, creating a sense of enclosure to the west of the area, with low red brick semi-circular entrance marking the approach to the Manor House.

The buildings within this area include a variety of materials, and differ in colour palette to the other character areas. The Manor House is a rendered building, with parapet

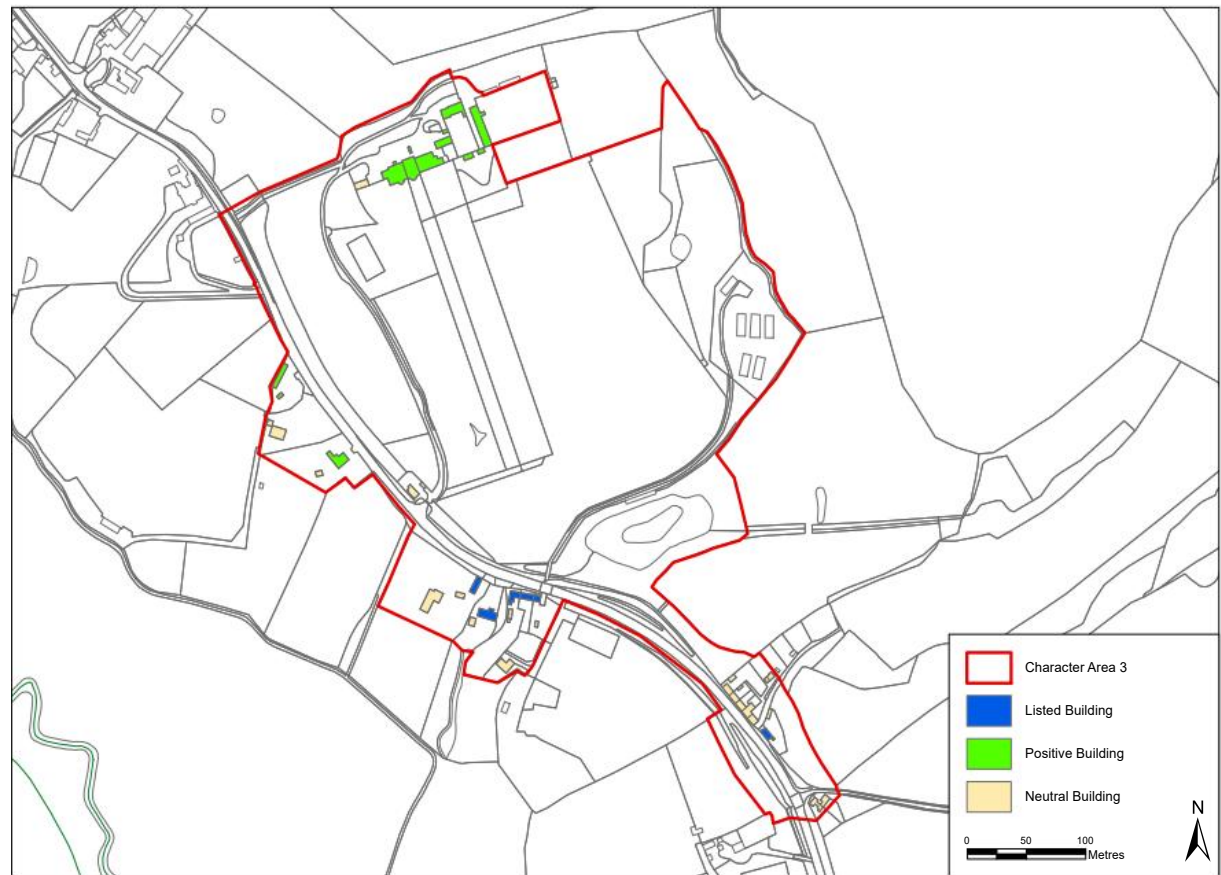


Figure 45 Character Area 3 Manor House

and simple, classical ornamental urns enlivening the roofscape. Pediments and a porch supported by classical columns mark the main entrances to the house. Low red brick walls enclose the planting on the front driveway.

The South Lodge is one storey with attic and dormers, plastered, and under a red clay tile roof. The plaster is painted in a pastel pink.

Boundary treatments

The grounds of the Manor House are fairly open in character, with wide reaching views into the surrounding landscape and across the valley to the north of the house. Within the immediate setting of the house, however, high brick walls enclose areas of planting and separate the main façade to provide separate driveways. These walls have an impact on our appreciation of the historic building, as they break up the façade to accommodate its modern residential use. The Manor House would be better understood as a single entity, without boundary walls here.

Views

Key views within this area are drawn predominantly from the north, over the valley and towards the village. The Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene is visible from the Manor House, and views across the southern edge of the village and arable fields. There are also designed views within the grounds of the House, with the formal gardens visible to the south.

Other Buildings That Make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution to The Street Scene

The buildings within this area are unlisted, but are of considerable local value. These include: The Manor House, Clock House, The Coach House, Carol Cottage, East Wing, Fortesque, West Wing, and South Lodge.



Figure 47 South elevation of Manor House [nd] (ECC)



Figure 46 Separate driveways at Manor House [nd]



Figure 49 Wethersfield Manor House Ref <https://greatwarhomehospitals.wordpress.com/home/wethersfield-wethersfield-auxiliary-hospital-essex/>



Figure 48 South Lodge

The Manor House is a significant building within the character and Conservation Area. It consists of an early nineteenth century high status building, displaying a number of Georgian features, and with a post-war west wing. The Manor House is thought to have originally incorporated the earlier timber framed Dobbins Farmhouse as its western wing, as shown on the 1724 'Plan of the Alexandra Palace and Park' by Bland, Joseph, Parker, Samuel, Smyth, Payler and Warburton, John. A major fire originated in this earlier part of the house in 1933, and while the western wing was rebuilt it is not known how much of the original fabric was retained.

The House makes a positive contribution to the character area; it is prominent in the landscape, located on the highest point, allowing inter-visibility between the heritage asset and the wider Conservation Area. It is of local significance to the area, and architectural interest for its distinctive features.

Important Trees and Open Spaces

The majority of the area is undeveloped and consists of the manorial grounds, formal gardens and former parkland, with wide reaching views to the north and east creating an open character.

The southern boundary of the Conservation Area is densely planted, forming part of the Wethersfield Eco Project, with tree boundary following Braintree Road and within the immediate setting of the Manor House. Formal planting in the immediate setting of the Manor include designed swathes of mature trees and good individual specimens including cedars, chestnuts and oaks along the approach.

Detracting Elements

The Manor site remains relatively intact though gradual erosion of character is evident through small changes such as boundary treatments, parked vehicles, outbuildings and inconsistent landscaping.



Revised Boundary Changes

The exclusion of the old park boundary of the Manor House is considered to be necessary, due to the existing character and land use of the former park. While the Manor House has retained its formal gardens to the south, the wider landscape has been put back to arable use, and is no longer discernible as parkland. Therefore, while it is not worthy of inclusion within the Conservation Area, it is important as the setting to the Manor House and Conservation Area. The area has been extended to include the walled garden, an existing historic garden feature which makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. Further details of boundary changes are included in Section 2.4.



3.3 The Setting of Wethersfield Conservation Area

The Setting of Heritage Assets

The important contribution that setting makes to the significance of heritage assets is recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021), as well as in other guidance. Decision makers are obliged to have special regard to the desirability of preserving not only designated heritage assets, such as listed buildings and conservation areas, but also their settings.

The setting of a heritage asset is defined in the NPPF Glossary 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: Glossary).

Historic England provide detailed guidance on the setting of heritage assets, stating that all heritage assets have a setting, whether they are designated or not, irrespective of the form in which they survive. In the analysis of setting, the important contribution of views to the significance of heritage assets and the ability to appreciate that significance is often a primary consideration. Yet the contribution a setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset, such as the Wethersfield Conservation Area, is not limited to views alone. Setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses. The detrimental alteration of the character of a setting may reduce our ability to understand the historic relationship between places. The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access, view or experience that setting. Therefore, any application for development within the setting of a heritage asset is subject to constraints.

The NPPF states that for any development within the setting of a heritage asset, a thorough assessment of the impact on the setting is required. This should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset under consideration and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it (NPPF, paragraph 194).

In addition, paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets (including the setting of conservation areas), to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably. Therefore, the favourable treatment of proposals that retain the open, pastoral character of Wethersfield Conservation Area’s setting is obligatory by the local authority, while proposals that fail to retain this character would be rejected.

When assessing an application for development which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities should also consider the implications of cumulative change and incremental harm. New developments and changes can not only detract from a heritage asset’s significance in the short-term but may also damage its significance and economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its on-going conservation.

The Setting of Wethersfield Conservation Area

Along with its high-quality buildings of historic and architectural merit, the Wethersfield Conservation Area derives significance from its historic settlement pattern. The agrarian landscape that historically surrounded the settlement of Wethersfield has played a vital part in the evolution of this settlement pattern, the village’s development

and the economic function of the community for many centuries. The quality of the surrounding rural landscape therefore makes an important contribution to the historic setting and significance of the Wethersfield Conservation Area.

There are many vantage points within the Conservation Area, where the open pastoral landscape of its setting can be viewed and experienced. The historic and rustic character of this setting is highly tangible and the increased appreciation it affords of the Conservation Area's significance, along with that of individual listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets is clear. The surrounding open landscape and fields have a direct historical and functional association with Wethersfield village and the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area's setting's surviving agrarian character, empty of modern development, greatly enhances its significance.

Revisions to the boundary of the Conservation Area have been undertaken as a part of this appraisal in order to ensure those areas designated fulfill the necessary criteria for designation. As a result, some open areas and fields on the edge of the village have been excluded. The National Planning Policy Framework states in paragraph 186 that 'when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.' Where open fields and landscape features have a definite special historic interest, such as the former estate lands of Wethersfield Manor, with formal gardens and a landscaped park, these have been retained within the boundary, in order to preserve their significance.

Areas that are currently and historically empty of development, are lacking in this specific special architectural or historic interest. They may have had agricultural uses



Figure 50 The view northeast towards the Conservation Area from the public right of way (PROW 117_10). The scaffolded spire of St Mary Magdalene can be seen, while the listed Simms farmstead can be seen in the foreground.



Figure 51 The view southeast across the setting of the Conservation Area towards the listed Russell's Farmstead. Brook Farm is beyond, with Wethersfield Hall and estate on the hill behind.

in the past and uses that have historically support the community of Wethersfield, as has much of the surrounding landscape, but due to their lack of significance in their own right, their inclusion within the boundary of the Conservation Area is open to a potential challenge. For example, it would not be possible to demonstrate that they have the necessary special architectural or historic interest worthy of conservation area protection and therefore they would be more vulnerable to development, were they to remain within the boundary.

However, as part of the setting for the Conservation Area, the open and agrarian character of the surrounding fields and meadows contributes to and permits an appreciation of the Conservation Area's significance and this contribution is considered worthy of preservation under the NPPF and national guidance. In paragraph 200 of the NPPF it states that 'local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas... and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably'. Any development within the recently excluded open areas around Wethersfield, now the setting of the Conservation Area, would need to preserve the contribution the setting makes to the significance of the Wethersfield Conservation Area or the ability to appreciate that significance.

The open agrarian character of the setting to the west of the Braintree Road is particularly important. The public right of way in this area (PROW 117_10) allows good views across the landscape towards the Conservation Area and some of its listed buildings and the significance of the heritage assets, as part of a rural settlement surrounded by a largely agrarian landscape, can be appreciated.



To the south east of the Conservation Area, its setting is characterised open pastures and paddocks. The areas to the south of Wethersfield Place, and around the Vicarage, Goldens Farm and Sand Hill retain their open, undeveloped pastoral character and form the historic agrarian setting for the Conservation Area. Two public footpaths traverse this area (PROW 117_11 and PROW 117_38), which allow views of the Conservation Area within its setting to be appreciated.

The agricultural character of the setting to the east and to the north of the Conservation Area is also evident, with many fields in these areas being under cultivation. The Conservation Area's setting and significance can be appreciated in views from two further public footpaths (PROW 117_3 to the east and PROW 117_33 to the north).

4. Opportunities for Enhancement

4.1 Car Parking

Car parking is an inevitable concern within any historic village settlement, and the same is true of Wethersfield Conservation Area. The High Street is wide enough to accommodate on-street parking; however on-street parking surrounding the village Green narrows the roads down to single-lane traffic.

4.2 Loss of Architectural Details

As highlighted within the appraisal, numerous buildings within Wethersfield have been subjected to unsympathetic alterations which has resulted in the gradual, and in some cases irrevocable, loss of architectural detailing which would contribute positively to the village's distinctive character. Two key examples of this is the loss of original timber windows and doors and replacement with modern windows which do not replicate the high quality detailing of those they are replacing.

The Village Hall is situated in a particularly prominent location within the character area, overlooking the Green. It was gifted to the village for use as a community hall in 1920/21, but has undergone intrusive alterations since, including the erection of a lean-to bus shelter in 1975. The building still makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and has potential for enhancement through the removal of the bus station to better reveal the original façade, including the window behind.

4.3 Boundary Walls

Boundary walls contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, assisting in defining the streetscape and in many areas creating a sense of enclosure. Throughout the Conservation Area there are examples of walls



Figure 52 Car parking on the village green



which are in need of repair to avoid continued deterioration, which can accelerate significantly where mortar has been washed out, bricks have spalled, vegetation is unchecked or areas have been repointed in cementitious mortar mixes.

4.4 Colour Palette

The Conservation Area is currently characterised by its red brick and light painted render. Future alterations should respond to the existing and historic palette to preserve the local distinctiveness; however, it should also reflect the age, status and architectural style of its host building. The introduction of an inappropriate modern colour palette into the street scene is considered to be a concern within the Conservation Area, and if left unchecked will have a cumulative and significant impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is also imperative that appropriate paints are used to ensure that the passage of moisture through historic properties fabric is not inhibited which can cause decay.

4.5 Access and Integration

Wethersfield is a relatively compact village and there are few issues regarding access and integration. There is scope for enhancement in terms of wayfinding within the village, to signpost key features such as the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene, the United Reformed Church and wider public rights of way to enhance the link between the village and its surrounding countryside.

It is considered that the continued maintenance of the red brick walls on Braintree Road is supported, in order to preserve the character of the Conservation Area and approach to the village from the south, which currently enhances the access to and across the Conservation Area.

4.6 Inappropriate Modern Development

There has only been small-scale modern development within the Conservation Area and most of this is located to the rear of older properties. These developments have been largely designed in accordance with Essex Design Guideline principles and can be considered as neutral in their impact on the Conservation Area.

Care needs to be taken within the Conservation Area that windows, doors, roofs and other architectural elements are not replaced with those of inappropriate design and materials. The character of the Conservation Area is defined by the historic palette of materials used and this piecemeal loss of fabric can cumulatively have a more significant impact on the character and appearance than any of the other concerns.

The impact of modern development on the outskirts of the village or the Conservation Area will need to be controlled or appropriately mitigated so that it does not impact on the setting of the Conservation Area, or on its wider views, and the contribution these make to its significance.

4.7 Neutral Contributors

A number of buildings are currently considered to make a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The buildings that fall into this category still contribute to the area's character and appearance, and their contribution should not be underestimated and certainly should not be considered negative. Small scale improvement works, such as reinstating boundary treatments, planting, appropriate replacement windows and roofs, use of colour and preventing loss of architectural form and features would enhance these buildings. Similar interventions to the more modern neutral buildings could help to further sympathetically integrate them into the area. Care needs to be taken through the planning process to ensure

that neutral buildings do not become negative through inappropriate alterations and additions. Neutral contributors are identified on Figure 19.

4.8 Public Realm

Hard Landscaping

It is considered that there are some areas of inconsistency in the approach to hard surfacing, where driveways, private roads and sections of pavement are in varying states of repair and of varied material. Along the road leading to the United Reformed Church and Dog's Chase in particular, are areas that may be enhanced through a consistent approach to material and maintenance of hard surfacing.

Open Spaces

The open and green spaces across the Conservation Area make a positive contribution and are integral to its character in many instances. Appropriate levels of maintenance needs should be considered to these spaces and where appropriate, opportunities for enhancement sought.

Trees and Planting

Appropriate levels of maintenance needs to be ensured and where appropriate, opportunities for enhancement sought.



Figure 53 Hard Landscaping outside the United Reformed Church



5.0 Management Proposals

5.1 Positive Management Short Term

These proposals relate to positive management and focus on good practice and improved ways of working within the local planning authority. These are generally low cost and can be implemented within a short time-frame, typically within one or two years.

Local Heritage List

Wethersfield would benefit from the local planning authority adopting and maintaining a comprehensive Local List in order to preserve its historic environment from further deterioration. A Local List identifies buildings and structures of local architectural and/or historic interest, and these are considered to be 'non-designated heritage assets' under the provisions of the NPPF. A Local List may be beneficial to ensure the upkeep of buildings which are significant to the history and character of Wethersfield. The exercise would also facilitate a greater understanding of the area and could be utilised as a public engagement strategy to improve awareness and understanding. There are a number of buildings within the conservation area which are of sufficient quality to be considered for local list status, as highlighted in Section 2.6.

Enforcement

Where the necessary permission has not been sought for alterations, such as advertising signage and building alterations which are not contained within the General Permitted Development Order, the Local Planning Authority's powers of enforcement should be considered. This could assist in reinstating any lost character or architectural features whose loss may have a negative cumulative effect on the conservation area, as well as avoiding a precedence being set for similar, uncharacteristic works.

General Maintenance: Public Realm and Highways

Through the agreement of a standard good practice within the conservation area between relevant Local Authority teams and other landowners, long term goals can be set to promote good design within the public realm, such as avoiding excessive road markings or signage and agreeing a standard street furniture to ensure consistency over time as elements are introduced or replaced. This will have a long term positive impact on the conservation area.

A positive working interdepartmental relationship is key to improving the public realm and highways.

Planning and Highways should work together to agree standard good practice within a conservation area such as avoiding excessive road markings and where necessary using narrow road markings.

Planning and Highways should work together to agree standard street furniture to ensure consistency over time as elements are introduced or replaced.

Heritage Statements

In accordance with the NPPF (Para.194), applicants must describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

All applications within the conservation area and setting require an appropriately detailed Heritage Statement. Any application without a Heritage Statement should not be validated.



The key views analysed within this document are in no way exhaustive. The impact of any addition, alteration or removal of buildings, structures, tree's or highways on key views should be considered to aid decision making. This includes development outside the conservation area. Where appropriate, views must be considered within Design and Access or Heritage Statements. This should be in accordance with Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017). Applications which fail to have assessed impact upon views, setting and significance should not be validated.

Tree Management

In line with Braintree District Council's policy, all trees in conservation areas which have a trunk diameter of more than 75mm, at a height of 1.5m from the ground, are subject to protection. They may not be felled or lopped unless six weeks written notice has been given to the Council. If the Council objects to the work a TPO may be served. It is also considered that any prominent trees, street trees, and trees with amenity value on private land throughout the conservation area should be monitored and maintained appropriately. Any tree that makes a positive contribution to the area should be retained, maintained and, if felled (only if dead, dying or dangerous) replaced with an appropriate new tree.

New Development

To be successful, any future development needs to be mindful of the local character of the conservation area, while at the same time addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability. Historic England and CABI guidelines are:-

Successful new development will:

- Relate to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land;
- Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and

- around it (including public footpaths);
- Respect important views;
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings;
- Use materials and building methods which as high in quality of those used in existing buildings; and
- Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of their setting.

Braintree District Council should guide development in a positive manner by:

- Engaging with developers at an early stage through the Pre-Application Process to ensure modern development is high quality in design, detail and materials;
- Ensuring medium-large scale development schemes are referred to a Design Review (or similar) to ensure that new buildings, additions and alterations are designed to be in sympathy with the established character of the area. The choice of materials and the detailed design of building features are important in making sure proposals are appropriate to a conservation area; and
- Seeking opportunities for developers to make a positive contribution to the wider historic environment through Section 106 Agreements.

Neutral Elements

The dilution of positive buildings amongst those which are neutral leads to an underwhelming and indistinctive overall character.

Braintree Council must not allow for the quality of design to be 'averaged down' by the neutral and negative elements of the built environment. The Local Planning Authority must where possible seek schemes which enhance the built environment and not allow previous poor quality schemes to become precedents.



Tall Buildings

Any development within the conservation area, and its setting, must take into account existing built development, key views, rural character and significance, to ensure that the height of new buildings does not impact the area negatively.

Public Facing Resources

The preservation and enhancement of private properties can be improved through the publishing of resources aimed to inform property owners and members of the public. An introductory summary of the conservation area Appraisal in the form of a leaflet or factsheet(s) is a simple way to communicate the significance of the area and ensure members of the public are aware of the implications of owning a property within a conservation area. In addition, a maintenance guide would assist property owners in caring for their property in an appropriate manner. A single Good Practice Design Guide on standard alterations such as signage, shop-fronts, windows, doors, rainwater goods, boundaries and roof extensions will ensure inappropriate development does not continue to be the accepted norm.

Poor maintenance leads to the deterioration of the fabric of the built environment and results in a loss of architectural details. Improved awareness of simple maintenance and repair would be conducive with the preservation of Wethersfield's built heritage.

Improved Understanding and Awareness

At present there is no interpretation (information boards, signage, interactive QR Codes) within the conservation area aimed at improving understanding and appreciation of its significance. This would be an effective way to improve the awareness and enhance the identity of Wethersfield as a historic settlement.

Further research into the significance of the Manor House complex and the Brewery

would enhance understanding and appreciation of the unique history of Wethersfield, and would work to better integrate associated buildings.

Design Guidance on Historic Paint Colours and Types

Braintree District Council should consider adopting a design approach to defining appropriate colours, tones and materials within the area, to ensure that the distinctive local character is retained throughout.

5.2 Positive Management: Longer Term

These proposals are focussed around long term positive management.

Boundary

The conservation area boundary has been considered within this appraisal in accordance with the NPPF (2021) and Historic England Advice Note 1 Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2019).

The conservation area should be reviewed every five years to monitor change and inform management proposals. The boundary should be assessed as part of this review to ensure it is robust and adequately protects the significance of the area.

Character Appraisal and Management Plan

The conservation area should be reviewed periodically to monitor change and inform management proposals. Identifying concerns and management within the area should be the main focus when reviewing the conservation area.

Interpretation

It is considered that further research into the brewery complex, and the integrated interpretation of the existing buildings, would benefit appreciation of this grouping of



heritage assets. The 2002 Essex County Council Report on Breweries in Essex notes that:

*'All are in current use as private houses, a public house and village hall and as such are generally well maintained. Should the opportunity arise all structures should be individually recorded and all mapped in relation to each other and any other former structures. Particular attention should be paid to the malthouse. This was not assessed as part of the earlier Essex County Council surveys of malthouses and hence needs to be assessed in relation to those already surveyed (and others elsewhere in this report which were not previously assessed). It is probably the most vulnerable of the extant structures as it is in the worst condition and may be subject to proposals for other uses. It is also recommended that there is no in-filling of the open space between these four structures as this would detract from the integrity of the total former brewery site.'*¹

5.3 Council-Led Projects

Opportunity Sites

The first opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area is through investment to improve the wider public realm. This can be achieved through continuing to improve hard surfacing, and maintaining areas of open space.

There is also opportunity for improvement to the south of the conservation area, including some elements of the Russell's Farm complex. Due to their varying state of repairs, and visibility from Braintree Road, the disrepair of some farm buildings here impacts the appreciation of the area and the southern approach to the village.

¹ Essex County Council, Breweries in Essex, op. cit.

5.4 Funding Opportunities

There are four main funding opportunities which would assist in the execution of these plans:

Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund is the single largest dedicated funder of heritage in the UK and therefore is the most obvious potential source of funding. Funding is often targeted at schemes which preserve, enhance and better reveal the special interest of the area whilst also improving public awareness and understanding. Grant opportunities and requirements change overtime, for up-to-date information on HLF schemes Braintree Council should consult their appointed Heritage Specialist.

Heritage Action Zones (Historic England)

Heritage Action Zones are intended to help unlock the economic potential of an area through investing in heritage, making them more attractive to resident, businesses, tourists and investors.

Section 106 Agreements

Planning obligations, also known as Section 106 agreements, can be used by the local authority to ensure any future development has a positive impact upon Wethersfield. These agreements could be used to fund public realm or site specific improvements.

Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (Historic England)

Planning obligations, also known as Section 106 agreements, can be used by the local authority to ensure any future development has a positive impact upon Wethersfield. These agreements could be used to fund public realm or site specific improvements.

6. Appendices

6.1 Bibliography

Publications

Crosby, T (Essex County Council)	2002	<i>Essex Breweries: comparative survey of modern / industrial sites and monuments No. 16</i>
Historic England	2017	<i>The Setting of Heritage Assets</i>
Historic England	2019	<i>Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (Second Edition)</i>
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	2021	<i>National Planning and Policy Framework</i>
Morant, P.	1763-8	<i>The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex, Vol II, Reprint 1978, EP Publishing Ltd. with Essex County Library, 370-373</i>
Rumble, A.	1983	<i>Domesday Book, Phillimore, Chichester</i>

Archives

- Essex Record Office
- Francis Frith Collection
- Braintree Museum

6.2 List of all Designated Heritage Assets within the Conservation Area

LIST ENTRY NO.	NAME	GRADE	BUILDING TYPE
1337860	PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY MAGDALENE	I	PARISH CHURCH
1123356	SIMMS FARMHOUSE	II*	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1337878	ST GEORGE'S HOUSE	II*	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1123329	THE COTTAGE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1123334	CHAPEL COTTAGE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1123335	RAILINGS APPROXIMATELY 37 METRES SOUTH SOUTH EAST OF UNITED REFORMED CHURCH	II	RAILINGS; GATE PIER
1123336	RAILINGS AND GATEWAY APPROXIMATELY 7 METRES SOUTH OF THE MANSE	II	RAILINGS; GATE

LIST ENTRY NO.	NAME	GRADE	BUILDING TYPE
1123337	RUDI'S RESTAURANT	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1123338	TRODD'S GARAGE (JOHN PEASE MOTORS)	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE; HALL HOUSE
1123339	THE HOODS	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1123340	BLENHEIM HOUSE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1123357	ANCILLARY BUILDING APPROXIMATELY 6 METRES SOUTH OF RUSSELL'S FARMHOUSE	II	GRANARY?; TIMBER FRAMED BUILDING
1123358	STABLES COTTAGE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1123359	WETHERSFIELD PLACE (SIX APPLES)	II	HOUSE
1123360	BROOK COTTAGES	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1123361	BROOK FARMHOUSE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE

LIST ENTRY NO.	NAME	GRADE	BUILDING TYPE
1123299	3 AND 4 (CHURCHYARD COTTAGE AND POST OFFICE COTTAGES) HIGH STREET	II	HOUSE
1168248	BARN APPROXIMATELY 8 METRES SOUTH OF RUSSELL'S FARMHOUSE	II	TIMBER FRAMED BARN
1168278	GOLDEN'S FARMHOUSE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1168308	FIR COTTAGE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1168521	CASTLE HOUSE (THE SPINNING WHEEL)	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1168561	THE MANSE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1168614	HOUSE ON THE CORNER OF THE GREEN AND SILVER STREET	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1168649	THE BAKERY AND BURLEIGH COTTAGE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE; SHOP
1168634	CHURCH HILL HOUSE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE

LIST ENTRY NO.	NAME	GRADE	BUILDING TYPE
1168689	VIRGINIA HOUSE AND THE STORES	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE; SHOP
1168699	BRIAR COTTAGE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1168712	1 AND 2 HIGH STREET (SPARROWS) POST OFFICE COTTAGES	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1306920	IVANHOE HOUSE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1306940	MAUSOLEUM APPROXIMATELY 20 METRES EAST OF UNITED REFORMED CHURCH	II	MAUSOLEUM
1306955	BRICK HOUSE AND LYSVEAN	II	HOUSE
1307078	BROOKSIDE COTTAGE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1307092	EDGEBROOK AND ROSAMOND	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1307106	SIMS COTTAGE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE



LIST ENTRY NO.	NAME	GRADE	BUILDING TYPE
1307111	STABLE BLOCK APPROXIMATELY 9 METRES SOUTH EAST OF RUSSELL'S FARMHOUSE	II	STABLE
1329385	K6 TELEPHONE KIOSK TO NORTH OF IVANHOE HOUSE [WETHERSFIELD]	II	TELEPHONE BOX
1337840	THE DOG INN	II	INN
1337841	SMITHY COTTAGE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1337864	THE GABLES	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1337848	RUSSELL'S FARMHOUSE	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE
1337849	BARN APPROXIMATELY 12 METRES SOUTH WEST OF RUSSELL'S FARMHOUSE	II	TIMBER FRAMED BARN
1337850	BARN APPROXIMATELY 15 METRES SOUTH EAST OF GOLDEN'S FARMHOUSE	II	TIMBER FRAMED BARN

LIST ENTRY NO.	NAME	GRADE	BUILDING TYPE
1337876	UNITED REFORMED CHURCH [WETHERSFIELD]	II	CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL
1337877	COTTAGE APPROXIMATELY 30 METRES NORTH WEST OF LYSVEAN	II	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE

6.3 Relevant Policy and Guidance

LEGISLATION/POLICY/GUIDANCE	DOCUMENT	SECTION/POLICY
Primary Legislation	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	66: General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions. 72: General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.
National Planning Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (2021)	Section 16; Annex 2
National Guidance	National Planning Practice Guidance (2019)	ID: 18a
National Guidance	English Heritage (2019) Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance	
Local Supplementary Planning Document	Braintree District Council Local Plan; Policy LPP 47 Built and Historic Environment	

6.4 Glossary (National Planning Policy Framework)

Term	Description
Archaeological interest	There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
Conservation (for heritage policy)	The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.
Designated heritage asset	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.
Heritage asset	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).
Historic environment	All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.
Historic environment record	Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.
Setting of a heritage asset	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.
Significance (for heritage policy)	The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.



6.5 Frequently Asked Questions

What is a conservation area?

Conservation areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority as areas of special architectural and historic interest. There are many different types of conservation area, which vary in size and character, and range from historic town centres to country houses set in historic parks. Conservation area designation introduces additional planning controls and considerations, which exist to protect an area's special character and appearance and the features that make it unique and distinctive. Although designation introduces controls over the way that owners can develop their properties, it is generally considered that these controls are beneficial as they sustain and/or enhance the value of properties within conservation areas.

The National Planning Policy Framework regards conservation areas as 'designated heritage assets'.

The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act specifies the general duty of Local Authorities, in the exercise of planning functions (Section 72). The 1990 Act states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

How are conservation areas designated and managed?

The designation process includes detailed analysis of the proposed conservation area and adoption by the local planning authority. A review process should be periodically undertaken and the Conservation Area assessed to safeguard that it retains special architectural or historic interest. Threats can be identified, and the boundary reviewed, to ensure it is still relevant and appropriate.

This Conservation Area is supported by an appraisal and management plan. The appraisal describes the importance of an area in terms of its character, architecture, history, development form and landscaping. The management plan, included within the appraisal, sets out various positive proposals to improve, enhance and protect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

What are the Council's duties regarding development in conservation areas?

The Local Authority must follow the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). These set out in clear terms how development proposals within Conservation Areas should be considered on the basis of whether they preserve and enhance the character

and appearance of the area. Applications which fail to preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area are likely to be refused as a result. An authority's Local Plan also typically includes a specific policy on Conservation Areas.

How can I find out if I live in a conservation area?

Boundary maps of conservation areas can be found on your Local Planning Authority website. Some authorities have an online interactive map search allowing you to search for a property. You can also contact your local planning authority directly to find out if you reside within a conservation area. Braintree District Council has an interactive Conservation Areas map which can be found by following the link below:

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/planning-building-control/conservation-areas>.

Do I need permission to alter a property in a conservation area?

Many conservation areas have an Article 4 Direction which covers the painting, rendering or cladding of external walls. Alterations or extensions to buildings in conservation areas will generally need planning permission. Your Local Authority will provide advice as to how to proceed.



Do I need to make an application for routine maintenance work?

If routine works of maintenance are to be carried out using authentic materials and traditional craft techniques, on a like-for-like basis, you are not likely to need to apply for permission. The use of a contractor with the necessary skills and experience of working on historic buildings is essential. Inappropriate maintenance works and the use of the wrong materials will cause damage to the fabric of a historic building. It is recommended you contact the local planning authority for clarification before commencing any works.

Will I need to apply for permission for a new or replacement garage, fence, boundary wall or garden structure?

Any demolition, development or construction in conservation areas will generally need planning permission. A replacement boundary, garage, cartlodge or greenhouse will need to be designed with the special historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area in mind. Your Local Authority will provide advice as to how to proceed with an application.

Can I demolish a building in a conservation area?

Demolition or substantial demolition of a building within a conservation area will usually require permission from the local planning authority.

What is an Article 4 Direction?

Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, certain minor works, such as domestic alterations, can normally be carried out without planning permission. However, some conservation areas are covered by an Article 4 Direction, which brings certain types of development back under the control of a local planning authority. This allows potentially harmful proposals to be considered on a case by case basis through planning applications. Article 4 Directions are used to control works that could threaten the character of an area and a planning application may be required for development that would otherwise have been permitted. Historic England provides information on Article 4 Directions on their website.

Can I remove a tree within a conservation area?

If you are thinking of cutting down a tree or doing any pruning work, the local planning authority must be notified 6 weeks before any work begins. This enables

the authority to assess the contribution the tree makes to the character of the conservation area and, if necessary, create a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to protect it. Consent will be required for any works to trees that are protected. Further information on TPOs can be found on Historic England's website.

How do I find out more about a conservation area?

Historic England's website has information on conservation areas and their designation. Further information on the value of conservation areas and what it means to live in a conservation area can also be accessed via their website.

Historic England has also published an advice note called Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management which sets out advice on the appraisal of conservation areas and managing change in conservation areas.

In addition, local planning authorities have information on the conservation areas within their boundaries available on their websites. They will have information pertaining to when the conservation area was designated, how far it extends and the reason for its designation.

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WETHERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
REPRESENTING WETHERSFIELD, BLACKMORE END & BEAZLEY END



4 Sims Cottages
 Braintree Road
 Wethersfield
 CM7 4BX

13 July 2023

Julie O'Hara
 Senior Planning Officer (Policy)
 Braintree District Council
 Causeway House
 Bocking End
 Braintree
 CM7 9HB

Dear Julie

Wethersfield Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Thank you for sending the revised CAAMP for further comments. Wethersfield Parish Council (WPC) considered the document at its meeting on 12 July and wishes to make further representations.

The Parish Council welcomes, in principle, an appraisal and management plan which identifies and addresses the need for positive measures aimed at preserving and enhancing the historic character and appearance of Wethersfield Conservation Area. As you know such an appraisal has not been carried out since designation in 1973 . Yet other than as a result of one or two recent decisions on planning applications such as the riding arena at Brook Farm, the historic character and appearance of the conservation area has been successfully maintained and enhanced largely through the efforts of the local community and your Council's use of planning controls.

The WPC considers the revised CAAMP to be a substantial improvement on the initial version in 2019 and WPC hopes that the walkabout with officers and further information supplied to you and Place Services around that time and since has assisted in achieving this. In particular, the Parish Council is pleased that the extent of reductions in the area of the Wethersfield Conservation Area has been substantially reduced from

around two thirds to around a quarter of the conservation area recognizing the historical interest of the manor lands east of Braintree Road and the significance of the Goldens area at the southern end.

Insofar as the revised areas of reductions in the conservation boundary are concerned, the WPC acknowledges the inclusion of a clearly structured justification for those reductions presented repeatedly throughout the document but in particular at pages 13-15 of the CAAMP. The WPC had previously commented that the western boundary of the currently designated conservation area is coherent, easily understood and rational because it clearly defines and distinguishes the overall area of historical significance within the village from the adjoining arable farmland to the west. The WPC remain of this view but nevertheless recognizes that the revised CAAMP at least offers some justification for the proposed boundary changes. Furthermore, the WPC is pleased that those areas proposed for removal are recognized as being important to the setting of the retained areas, make a positive contribution to the conservation area and enable its significance and special interest to be appreciated. To that extent the WPC welcomes the inclusion of section 3.3 which explains the importance of the excluded areas to the setting of the revised conservation area and their role in protecting the historical significance of heritage assets.

Nevertheless, in spite of the improvements made to the CAAMP in terms of the extent of reductions, justification for them and the explanation of the importance of setting of the areas proposed to be removed and the WPC views on the western boundary referred to above, the Parish Council asks that at the very least reconsideration is given to Area A and part of E on the plan at Figure 7 .

The WPC fully understands the distinction and implications between sites containing heritage assets which have special architectural and historic interest and those that do not but contribute to the setting of those assets. However, WPC considers there are still areas proposed for deletion that not only provide an important setting that helps preserve historic character and interest to designated heritage assets but also have qualities that amount to special interest.

In particular the justification on p14 to removal of Area A is as follows

This area has been excluded from the east of the former Conservation Area boundary. It is currently an agricultural field and is shown as being under arable cultivation on the 1842 Tithe Apportionment. Similarly, the field is shown as being one of the many agricultural fields of the Manor House Estate, within the landscape to the east of the

village, in maps relating to the sale of the estate in 1877. The area excluded therefore has a history of agricultural use and a functional connection to the village, which it shares with many of the fields in the wider landscape. To the west and north of Area A, the open area belonging to the Manor was landscaped and the entry drive up to the Manor was known to have originally run through this area, with a gated entrance off the High Street, to the east of St Mary Magdalene Church. Therefore, this area, with its historic special interest, and its landscaped character, can be easily distinguished from Area A, the cultivated land to the east. The boundary has therefore been redrawn to retain the open land with historic special interest in the form of the designed and landscaped approach to the Manor but exclude the agricultural field to the east. The excluded area forms a valuable part of the agricultural setting of the Conservation Area and this is discussed in detail in Section 3.4.

In fact, Area A is not in arable cultivation (it may have been let to the adjacent farmer some years ago for a short period) and is owned and used for grazing in the same way as the retained area to the west and north of Area A referred to above. Area A is not distinguishable in use or parkland appearance from that retained area. Moreover the 1842 plan did not show the Manor at all but the Manor Estate sale plans of 1895, also provided previously by WPC to officers, showed Area A as part of an area described as "Pleasure Gardens and Grounds,." The Coach House and former stable yard are on the east side of the Manor. WPC has already supplied photographs of the remains of the gateway posts to the carriage drive which linked the Manor to the High Street. Those posts are on the boundary of Area A. WPC also supplied an arial photograph of part of the carriage drive (the line to the Manor can still be seen in certain climatic conditions) which suggests the drive passed across from the carriage drive gates from the stable yard through Area A. For these reasons, WPC again requests a reconsideration of the suggested deletion of Area A from the Conservation Area.

Area A appears to include the small nib of land due north of the Area A adjacent to Parsonage Farm. . This seems an unnecessary removal from the conservation area- it is the location of a spring and pond. Its historical significance arises from its connection to the Parsonage Farm, formerly the 'Parsonage' and its function within the community. From the time when parsonages were first built by the Norman and medieval Lord of the Manor, the parson was the spiritual guardian of the community. Traditionally the parsonage stood on Glebe land given to the church by the initial patron in Saxon or Norman times so the site may have remained the same for centuries although the parsonage buildings may have been rebuilt several times.

In Wethersfield there was no vicarage in 1840 so the Parsonage would have performed that function presumably until the Vicarage on Braintree Road was built. The serif type style used to identify the Parsonage suggests its status at the time. The Parsonage pre-dates not only the Vicarage, but also Wethersfield Place, Wethersfield Manor and Wethersfield Hall and several other listed buildings. [Note before the construction of the Manor - Brooke Farm was the manorial home - built on the water course that the spring at the parsonage feeds].

On the 1840/41 map of Wethersfield (already provided to you) the current building group was already in existence and remain unchanged today. The parsonage house, barn, shelter sheds and animal sheds and the central yard are clearly identifiable and the

all-important water source is shown to the south east. The spring and pond is shown as being quite large and was obviously an important feature to Parsonage and the community at that time. It has shrunk slightly now due to lack of maintenance but water is always to be found there and it is presumed that the Parsonage was sited here in the first place because of the constant and reliable source of water.

The land around the Parsonage remained as Glebe land at least until after the sale of the estate in the late 1800's then presumably the land was amalgamated into the estate's farms and re-sold various times since then. Around the mid 1800's the spiritual leader of the community would have become the Vicar and the parsonage became known as Parsonage Farm. The WPC again requests that the site of the spring and pond be retained in the conservation area. The whole conservation area to the east of Braintree Road should be retained as currently designated.

WPC also wish to make further comment on the removal of part of Area E from the conservation area. The PC believe that the current western boundary is coherent and distinguishes the overall spread of historic assets of the built up part of the village together with associated gardens, orchards, and paddocks from the adjoining agrarian landscape to the west. In particular ,those areas of land which lie within the curtilage of buildings retained in the conservation area should also be retained. That includes the gardens at the rear of the cluster of cottages at Goldens Farmhouse, Brook Street Cottage and Goldens Barn; the grounds of The Vicarage (former glebe land) and the ancient track once known as Moutons Lane, previously pointed out to officers which separates the Vicarage from Goldens Barn; the track to Wethersfield Place which falls within its curtilage. It seems appropriate that these spaces falling within the curtilage of heritage assets should be retained as part of those heritage assets and continuing enhancement encouraged.

In connection with the boundary reductions there is the need to recognize the proposed changes to proposed boundary reductions at pp 26 and 46 (the Manor) and at p42 (the playing field)

Many of the measures in the management proposals are welcomed as being of good practice though the Parish Council notes the lack of analysis of weaknesses across the current designated area, the generic nature of most of the proposals largely based on existing district wide planning controls (and nationwide good practice) rather than measures specific to identified issues in Wethersfield and an emphasis on the need for further future projects which may well be unlikely to materialise . The few specific management proposals are not always appropriate e.g. the reference to the need for waymarking to the URC is not appropriate (the URC was converted to a house many years ago) and it is self-evident where the parish church is. However the WPC welcomes the suggestion of an interpretation board.

The WPC is currently progressing a Neighbourhood Plan with Finchingfield and heritage will be an important element of issues that will be addressed. That is likely to include an analysis of heritage issues facing the existing conservation areas and the need for policies and implementation proposals such as Local Green Spaces; proposals for a more comprehensive Local List than suggested in the CAAMP; more specific identification of weaknesses; as well as proposals for archaeology, traffic calming measures, public realm, enhancement , additional key views particularly long range views across the Pant Valley and from the higher land to the east of the village, greater reference to social and economic history, further enhancement proposals such overhead cable removal, telecommunications policies, climate mitigation measures, highway enhancements, analysis of buildings in need of repairs etc.

Other errors include ;P57 duplicates reference to section 106 agreements and Partnership Schemes; Trodds Garage pp9 and 32 no longer exists; United Reform Church p9, 30 , 37 no longer exists; repetition on p30 in connection with Castle Cottage; spelling of plane on p23

The Parish Council hopes that you will consider these comments carefully before finalizing the document. The Council repeats its offer to meet to discuss the content of the document with officers and with the Local History Society, is very willing to assist in providing any further information held in local records in order to progress this work in a positive way. Please let me know if you need anything further from the Parish Council. Also, please advise of any amendments to the appraisal and when it is going to Committee as WPC may wish to speak at the meeting

Yours sincerely

D. Roder

Donna Roder
Wethersfield Parish Council Clerk