BARRATT HOMES

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AND SOUTH OF WEST ROAD
SAWBRIDGEWORTH
HERTFORDSHIRE

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL
APPRAISAL AND
GREEN BELT ISSUES REPORT

MAY 2014
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

David Williams Landscape Consultancy (DWLC) were instructed by Barratt Homes in April 2012 to undertake a preliminary landscape and visual and Green Belt assessment of land to the west of Chalks Farm on the western eastern edge of Sawbridgeworth (hereinafter referred to as the Site). This included advising on the landscape and visual issues which might affect the possible future development of the Site for residential use and to prepare an outline landscape strategy.

The aim of the appraisal is to assess the landscape characteristics of the Site and its local context, to identify the potential to accommodate development and to highlight the landscape and visual issues that would need to be addressed moving forward. This report represents the results of the landscape and visual assessment.

The Site is located to the south of West Road and west of Coney Gree immediately adjoining the built up area of Sawbridgeworth and the housing areas served of West Road, Roseacres, White Post Field, Coney Gree, Chalks Avenue and Gilders; which form the western part of the town. The Site forms an irregular shaped parcel of open countryside of some 14.16 hectares (35 acres) comprising one large arable field to the south of West Road, and a small square shaped arable field on the eastern edge of the Site. The location of the Site is shown on Drawing No. 0113/L1 – Landscape Context Plan whilst details of the Site are shown on Drawing No.0113/L2 – Site Appraisal Plan.

The Site is not designated as having any particular landscape value or quality, such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Special Landscape Area and, in Section 4.0 of this report, consideration is given to the landscape and visual issues likely to arise from the development of the Site for housing and associated infrastructure. Four landscape and visual issues have been identified as forming opportunities to developing the Site and these are: landscape character, existing trees and vegetation, visibility and public views of the Site and planning designations, including the Green Belt. The Site lies outside the built up settlement boundary of Sawbridgeworth and is identified as lying within the open countryside and Green Belt.

The following can be concluded from the landscape and visual appraisal of the Site and the surrounding area, and consideration of the likely landscape and visual issues relating to potential development of the Site for housing, associated infrastructure and open space:

- That the boundaries to the Site, are largely well defined by existing landscape features such as field boundary hedgerows and trees including development along West Road to the north, south and north west and by streamside vegetation adjoining Sawbridgeworth Brook and built up area of the town to the east;
• That a short section of the southern boundary is not defined by any physical feature and is open and allows views into south western parts of the Site, providing the opportunity to enhance the landscape and Green Belt;

• That, whilst there are a number of near and middle distance views towards the Site, it is generally well contained and enclosed within the landscape, to the west of Sawbridgeworth, mainly by the landform and to a lesser degree by the framework of woodlands and hedgerows in the vicinity of the Site;

• That the initial assessment of the Site indicates that its western boundary could form a stronger and more robust new Green Belt boundary which accords with the guidance in paragraph 85 of the National Planning Policy Framework;

• That the assessment of the Site indicates it could accommodate residential development associated infrastructure and open space; subject to the provision of mitigation measures to reduce landscape and visual effects;

• That there is an excellent opportunity to improve and enhance the built up edge of Sawbridgeworth through the provision of areas of new structural planting and open space, (including the retention of the existing hedgerow and trees) within the Site, and;

• That the introduction of new structural planting whilst ‘softening’ the built up edge of Sawbridgeworth, would also enhance the landscape, visual amenities and biodiversity of the area and have a positive effect on the adjoining Green Belt.
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 David Williams Landscape Consultancy (DWLC) were instructed by Barratt Homes in April 2012 to undertake a preliminary landscape and visual and Green Belt assessment of land to the west of Chalks Farm and south of West Road on the western eastern edge of Sawbridgeworth, and to advise on the landscape and visual issues which might affect the possible future development of the Site for residential development and to prepare an outline landscape strategy for the Site.

1.2 The aim of the appraisal is to assess the landscape characteristics of the Site and its surroundings, to identify its potential to accommodate development and to highlight the landscape and visual issues that would need to be addressed as part of the next stage of the project.

1.3 The approach taken to this assessment was to undertake a field survey of the Site and surrounding area and to review the background information available, including the: emerging East Hertfordshire Draft District Plan – Preferred Options Consultation 2014, East Herts District-Wide Green Belt Review 2013 and the East Herts District Landscape Character Assessment 2007 to assess the landscape context of the Site.

1.4 A number of site visits have been carried out initially in April 2012 and then again in October 2012, to assess the landscape context of the Site and a limited number of photographs were taken as a record of the Site’s visibility and the Site’s landscape and visual characteristics. This report represents the results of the landscape and visual assessment of the Site and its surroundings.

1.5 This report is set out under the following headings:
   - Landscape Context;
   - Site Description and Visual Appraisal;
   - Consideration of Development Issues, and;
   - Conclusions.

1.6 Information is presented on the following plans:
   - Drawing No. 0113/L1 – Landscape Context Plan;
   - Drawing No. 0113/L2 – Site Appraisal Plan;
   - Drawing No. 0113/L3 – Photograph Location Plan;
   - Drawing No. 0113/L4 – Landscape Opportunities and Constraints Plan, and;
   - Drawing No. 0113/L5 – Landscape Strategy Plan.
2.0 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Site Location

2.1 The Site is located to the south of West Road and west of Coney Gree immediately adjoining the built up area of Sawbridgeworth and housing areas served off West Road, Roseacres, White Post Field, Coney Gree, Chalks Avenue and Gilders; which form the western part of the town. The town of Sawbridgeworth lies between Bishop’s Stortford, (6.0 kilometres to the north of the Site) and Harlow New Town (5.0 kilometres to the south of the Site) within an area of open countryside. The western parts of the settlement lie on a low ridge and eastern facing slopes of the River Stort valley with the river flowing southwards to join the River Lee to the west of Harlow.

2.2 The Site forms an irregular shaped parcel of open countryside of some 14.16 hectares (35 acres) comprising one large arable field to the south of West Road, and a small square shaped arable field on the eastern edge of the Site. The location of the Site and surrounding landscape context is shown on Drawing No. 0113/L1 – Landscape Context Plan.

2.3 The Site lies approximately 400 metres west of the A1184 (London Road) / West Road / Station Road junction, near the centre of Sawbridgeworth, and about 1.2 kilometres from Sawbridgeworth railway station, which is situated on the eastern fringes of the settlement. To the north, west and south of the Site lie areas of open farmland which extend towards Bishop’s Stortford to the north, the River Ash valley and cluster of hamlets along B 1004 / Widford Road to the west and River Stort valley and settlement of Harlow to the south.

2.4 High Wych village is situated approximately 800 metres to the south west of the Site whilst Rivers Hospital and a ribbon of residential development is located about 500 metres to the south of the Site. The housing areas near the hospital extend westwards along High Wych Road with a ribbon development continuing southwards along the A1184 / London Road towards Harlow. Beyond this development, to the south, lies the River Stort valley and ‘Temple Fields’ industrial/retail estate on the northern edge of Harlow, about 2.6 kilometres to the south and south west of the Site.

2.5 The Site and settlement of Sawbridgeworth lie in an area of gently undulating topography of low ridges and shallow valleys between 10 to 80 metres AOD between the valley of the River Stort, to the east and south, and River Ash valley to the west. The Site is situated on the east facing slopes of a broad ridge (Hunsdon Plateau) aligned north - south between High Wych and Crumps to the west of the Site. The elevation of the ridge / plateau is about 78 metres AOD with the land falling gently eastward by about 10 to 12
metres, to a shallow valley of a tributary stream to the River Stort, (known locally as the Sawbridgeworth Brook), on the western edge of Sawbridgeworth with the built up areas of the town adjoining the Site occupying the west facing slopes of the tributary stream valley.

**Surrounding Area**

2.6 The landscape in the vicinity of the Site comprises predominantly open farmland subdivided by a weak structure of field hedgerows, belt of mature trees and small blocks of woodland occupying the broad plateau / ridge and within the valley of Sawbridgeworth Brook. The farmland consists of medium to very large sized irregular shaped fields in predominantly arable use with the occasional smaller fields in pasture use adjoining isolated farmsteads or within low lying areas adjoining drainage ditches / streams. To the south of the Site, occupying the sloping ground, are a number of irregular shaped rough pasture fields and meadows, and an area of new woodland planting and orchards close to Rivers Hospital. This area has public access with a number of permissive footpaths crossing the land.

2.7 To the west of Sawbridgeworth, the landscape is generally very open with little tree cover apart from hedgerow trees following the network of local roads and subdividing fields, areas of woodland situated some distance to the south and west of the Site or trees following Sawbridgeworth Brook on the edge of or within the built up area of the settlement. The predominant tree species in the locality is Ash with Oak and Sycamore species and an under-storey of mainly Hawthorn, Hazel and Blackthorn. Within the immediate vicinity of the Site, tree cover comprises mature trees, mainly Ash, on the northern boundary following West Road and mix of trees species: Willow, Ash, Field Maple and Oak, following the brook, which defines the eastern boundary of the Site.

2.8 Tree cover increases to the south of the Site, around Rivers Hospital, with an area of orchards and several irregular blocks of woodland, and also to the west around High Wych and within the Manor of Groves Golf Course (north west of High Wych) with two smaller blocks of woodland near Crumps Farm and a rectangular block of woodland situated to the north of West Road between Claylane Farm and Tharbies Farm.

2.9 The undulating topography together with the existing framework of hedgerows, belts of trees and occasional blocks of woodland in the area surrounding the Site provide some enclosure and containment to views within the landscape.
2.10 The landscape character of the area is defined, in the Countryside Character Assessment Volume 6: East of England (published by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) in 1999), as the ‘South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland’ - Character Area No. 86. The South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland Character Area covers an extensive area of countryside from Stevenage in the west to Ipswich in the east and from Harlow / Chelmsford in the south to Bury St Edmund in the north.

2.11 Whilst the Countryside Character Assessment is a generalised overview of the character of England, the assessment identifies the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland as having the following key characteristics:

- Broadly flat, chalky, boulder clay plateau dissected by undulating river valley topography, particularly marked in upper valley reaches, which are much smaller in scale.
- Predominantly arable with wooded appearance. Some pasture in valley floors. Irregular field pattern despite rationalization; remnant Ancient Countryside.
- Scattered farmsteads, deep ditches and moats, parishes with scattered, small settlements around ‘tyes’ (commons) or strip greens, with isolated hamlets. Concentration of isolated moated sites.
- Timber-framed and colour-washed houses, sometimes faced with Georgian red brick. Impressive churches. Large villages and frequent towns, most with medieval street plans and elaborate timber-frame houses. Rich heritage of barns. Fewer settlements and more 20th century development towards coast, with several large estates.
- Cultural association with Constable and tourist honey pot of Dedham Vale. Preserved, archetypal, lowland pastoral, English countryside coupled with attractive vernacular buildings dating from period of industrial wealth.
- Hedgerow tree of area is elm (with hornbeam) in Essex. Oak and ash in Suffolk. Few large woods (20 acres plus), but some ancient coppice woods and typical pattern of copses connected by hedgerow. Trees and woods appear to join together to give wooded skyline, with some bare ridgelines.
- Winding road pattern away from major routes, often with wide verges and strong hedgerows. Sunken hollow lanes are a feature, lined with hedgerows, but impact of Dutch Elm disease apparent.

2.12 The assessment also identifies a number of changes in the countryside including:
• Development relating to the possible expansion of Stansted airport, expansion of local settlements and development of the road transport infrastructure (A14) and associated retail and commercial outlets.

• Agricultural change. Field rationalization and change to arable is now regarded as largely complete although there are still some isolated examples. Within the Stour valley, areas of pasture have increased although, in other valleys, there have been losses of pasture.

• Neglect of ancient woodland and other woodland planting, and increase in poplar and willow plantations.

• Predominance of winter cereals has resulted in a loss of winter field stubble which has seasonal landscape and ecological implications.

• Conversion of historic farm buildings to residential use has been found to lead to a change of character, but change of use may not be the only way to prevent these buildings becoming derelict. Gentrification is perceived as a threat to local character.

• Proliferation of mobile telephone transmitter masts and National Grid power lines particularly near the Gipping Valley and in parts of Essex.

• Visitor congestion at honey-pot sites, with pressure to accommodate cars and coaches.

2.13 In terms of ‘Shaping the Future’ of the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland landscape, the assessment suggests the following:

• The conservation and management of hedgerows is important to the area. This should include the encouragement of trees from existing hedgerow stocks and managing and replanting hedgerows.

• Tree planting would help maintain the traditional wooded appearance and character of this landscape. Planting on pastures and greens needs careful consideration.

• The maintenance and extension of river valley pasture should be considered.

• Planning and design guidelines would encourage alternative uses for redundant farm buildings to respect the character of this agricultural area.

• The conservation of ancient sunken lanes and botanically-rich and historic grass verges should be addressed.

2.14 A copy of the description of Character Area No. 86 – South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland, taken from the Countryside Character Assessment Volume 6: East of England is contained in Appendix A to this report.
2.15 In 1997, Hertfordshire County Council adopted, as Supplementary Planning Guidance, the Hertfordshire Landscape Strategy: Volume 1. The landscape strategy set out six landscape character regions for the county of which there are three within East Herts District, namely: Region 4 - The East Hertfordshire Plateau; Region 5 - The Central River Valleys Region; and a small part of Region 6 - The South Hertfordshire Plateau. A key action within the landscape strategy was the pledge to under-take landscape character assessments, at a finer resolution, for each of the ten district councils. This ‘local level’ landscape character assessment work was completed in stages and, in September 2007, the Council adopted the ‘East Herts Landscape Character Assessment’ (EHLCA) as a Supplementary Planning Document to the East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007.

2.16 The EHLCA built upon the earlier county character assessment and the Site is identified as lying within Character Area 84 – High Wych Slopes LCA, which extends along part of the western fringes of Sawbridgeworth, with Character Area 85 – Thorley Uplands LCA identified to the north.

2.17 The High Wych Slopes area is described as:

“A south-facing slope of mixed farming within a small irregular field pattern, usually ditched rather than hedged. An area of transition, showing increasing urban influence in the southern part and with links to the parkland area to the west. Around High Wych there are wide stretches of open farmland with old houses nestling in small coppices. The flint church is surrounded by the school, ancient houses and thatched cottages.”

2.18 The key characteristics of Character Area 84 are identified as follows:

- isolated farms and houses
- small-scale open farmed landscape
- gently undulating south-facing slope
- discrete blocks of woodland
- tight network of narrow, winding, sunken lanes, usually ditched
- small areas of parkland on the western edge.”

2.19 The assessment identifies the High Wych Slopes Character Area as having three distinctive features. These are:

- “High Wych retains village character despite links to Sawbridgeworth;
- golf course and hotel add suburban character to generally rural area;
- High Wych Road is a commuter-run, therefore not tranquil.”
2.20 The assessment also includes an evaluation section and in terms of the visibility of the High Wych Slopes Character Area, it states the following:

"VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

From outside this area is largely concealed from view by its topography, while from within it offers extensive views over the Stort valley to the industrial edge of Harlow and mineral workings. The scale of landscape elements is mixed and there is little visual unity, giving an appearance of incoherence, despite the openness. This is not a tranquil area, with commuter through routes and the constant noise of traffic.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The change within this area from north to south provides a good indication of the effect of creeping urbanisation.

VISUAL IMPACT

There is a widespread and significant visual impact on this area from the transport corridor and urban development to the south and east. Farmland is being lost to the spread of suburban housing and the balance of the landscape is changing. This is particularly noticeable along Gangies Hill and West Road. West of the junction with Beaufield Road isolated farmhouses are strung along the lane with indigenous vegetation associated with them. East of the junction the development is cramped suburban with 'golf course' vegetation - laurels and cherry trees - set in the still predominantly agricultural landscape. On the western edge of this area there are links to the parkland beyond, at High Wych Park and The Manor of Groves, but these give the appearance of being relic rather than maintained historic elements."

2.21 The assessment goes on to conclude the following, in terms of condition and strength of character (robustness) of the landscape:

"CONDITION

Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: declining
Impact of built development: high
Impact of land-use change: high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Impact of landform: apparent
Impact of land cover: apparent
Impact of historic pattern: relic
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: open
Visual unity: incoherent
Distinctiveness / rarity: frequent

2.22 The assessment suggests an “Improve and restore” strategy for managing future change and lists seven guidelines or bullet points for the area. Of relevance to the Site, and its development, are the following guidelines:

- **Encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available**
- **Discourage the use of non-native species for woodland and hedgerow planting**
- **Encourage the use of native species of local provenance for all new planting**
- **Encourage the replanting of former hedges along historic boundaries, ensuring that historic features such as ditches and banks are not destroyed**
- **Encourage the reduction of urban impact by dense woodland planting around settlements. Over time this could become a valuable local amenity; public participation in its establishment should be encouraged**
- **Encourage a reversion of arable to pasture and the management of new and existing grasslands to maximise their biodiversity potential, using low-density stock grazing where possible.”**

2.23 Copies of the relevant extracts taken from the ‘East Herts Landscape Character Assessment’ are contained in Appendix B to this report.

Landscape Planning Context

2.24 In terms of the landscape planning context, the relevant Government guidance and Statutory Plans for the area are:

- the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March 2012;
- the National Planning Policy Guidance 2014;
- the ‘saved’ policies contained in the East Herts Local Plan 2007;
- the emerging East Hertfordshire Draft District Plan – Preferred Options Consultation 2014.
East Herts Local Plan 2007 (saved policies)

2.25 The East Herts Local Plan is to be replaced by a Local Development Framework, which is now called the East Herts District Plan, and the District Plan is being prepared in a number of stages and until the District Plan is adopted, many of the Local Plan policies have been ‘saved’ and will continue to be used to determine planning applications in the district.

2.26 The Site lies outside but on the edge of the built up area of Sawbridgeworth which follows the alignment of the Sawbridgeworth Brook and also the edge of the housing areas served off The Crest to the south of the Site. The adopted Proposals Map for the East Herts Local Plan identifies the Site as lying in open countryside and the Metropolitan Green Belt and therefore subject to the ‘saved’ policies contained in the Green Belt and Countryside chapter (Chapter 4) of the plan. The Proposals Map of the Local Plan also shows the land to the south near Rivers Hospital identified as a ‘Wildlife Site’ protected by Policy ENV14 of the plan.

2.27 The Proposals Map shows the Metropolitan Green Belt as a blanket designation covering the countryside areas within the south western and eastern parts of the District. The Green Belt surrounds Sawbridgeworth, covering the Site, and extends in an arch from Bishop’s Stortford in the north to Harlow and Hertford in the south and south west. There are no landscape designations such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Special Landscape Areas covering the Site or surrounding area.

2.28 The ‘saved’ Local Plan policies, relevant to the Site and its potential development for housing, include the following:

- Policy GBC1 – Appropriate Development in the Green Belt
- Policy GBC14 – Landscape Character
- Policy ENV1 – Design and Environmental Quality
- Policy ENV2 – Landscaping
- Policy ENV11 – Protection of Existing Hedgerows and Trees
- Policy LRC5 – Countryside Recreation
- Policy LRC9 – Public Rights of Way

2.29 In addition to the above planning policies relating to the Site, there are three Listed Buildings within the vicinity of the Site. These are shown on Drawing No.0113/L2 – Site Appraisal Plan and include:

- Small barn (Grade II) at Claylane on north side of the yard adjoining West Road;
- Large barn (Grade II) at Claylane Farm on west side of the yard, and;
• Farm buildings (Grade II) at Chalks Farm on west, north and east sides of the yard.

2.30 A copy of the descriptions of the listings taken from the English Heritage website is contained in Appendix C to this report.

Emerging East Herts District Plan

2.31 Since 2006, East Herts Council have been progressing with the Local Development Framework (now known as the East Herts District Plan). Since then, there have been significant changes to the planning system including the proposed abolition of regional plans, the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 and proposed neighbourhood plans.

2.32 As referred to in paragraph 2.25 above, the District Plan is being prepared in a number of stages and, in relation to the progress of the District Plan, the plan has completed the ‘Awareness Raising’ and ‘Issues and Options’ stages during 2008 to 2011. The Council are presently consulting on the Draft District Plan - Preferred Options Plan for 12 weeks until 22 May 2014 and following the Pre-Submission and Submission & Examination stages, the District Plan will be adopted sometime in early 2016. Until the District Plan is adopted, the East Herts Local Plan 2007 and its ‘saved’ policies will continue to be used to determine planning applications across the district.

2.33 The Draft District Plan – Preferred Options Plan 2014 identifies the Site as a suitable location for housing development (300 dwellings) in conjunction with the land to the north of West Road (100 dwellings) and Chapter 8 of the Plan sets out the development strategy for Sawbridgeworth and Policy SAWB1 – Development in Sawbridgeworth states:

“In accordance with Policy DPS2 (Housing Supply 2011 – 2031), Sawbridgeworth will accommodate at least 405 new homes, which will include:

(a) identified SLAA sites amounting to at least 5 homes;
(b) 100 homes to the west of the town on land to the north of West Road, as set out in Policy SAWB2 (Land to the North of West Road);
(c) 300 homes to the west of the town on land south of West Road, as set out in Policy SAWB3 (Land to the South of West Road); and
(d) a proportion of the windfall allowance for the District.”

2.34 Policy SAWB3, in addition to stating that land to the south of West Road is allocated for residential development of approximately 300 homes by 2021 and that a development brief or masterplan is to be prepared by, or approved by, the District Council also requires the development to address a number of provisions and issues. Of the 14 provisions /
issues listed in the policy items (d), (j) and (l) relate to landscape and Green Belt matters which are considered in section 4.0 of this report.

2.35 As part of the preparation of the Draft District Plan – Preferred Options Plan, the Council produced a number of reports as part of its supporting evidence base. These included the East Herts Landscape Character Assessment (already referred to above in paragraph 2.15), a ‘Housing Capacity Assessment’ October 2007, an ‘Edge of Settlement Assessment’ (EoSA) November 2007 both prepared by consultants Entec UK to inform the ‘Strategic Land Availability Assessment’ 2011 (SHLAA) which is being prepared by the Council and Green Belt Review technical study.

**Strategic Land Availability Assessment**’ 2011

2.36 In response to submission through the “Call for Sites” process, the Site has been allocated the ref. Site 04/006 by the Council whilst a wide swathe of land to the south and west of Chalks Farm is known as Site 07/006.

**Green Belt Review 2013**

2.37 The Green Belt Review seeks to address whether the District’s assessed need for development can be accommodated within the constraints created by the Green Belt (GB). The GB Review addresses the five purposes of the GB, as set out in the NPPF (Paragraph 80), to determine which Green Belt sites are suitable and sequentially preferable to release to meet strategic development needs as well as considering the functions of the GB (Paragraph 83 of the NPPF) and also the GB role in promote sustainable patterns of development (Paragraph 84 of the NPPF). The GB Review also considered the six criteria within the NPPF (Paragraph 85 of the NPPF) that should be used when defining new GB boundaries. The approach / methodology used to undertaken the review is similar to and consistent with that used by adjoining local planning authorities and therefore is considered to be a ‘sound’ and appropriate approach for determining the release of land from the Metropolitan Green Belt within the district.

2.38 The GB Review recommends the omission of the land to the north and south of West Road and reaffirms the conclusions reached in paragraph No’s 4.25 to 4.29 of this report.

**Previous Local Plan Inspectors Comments in respect of Chalks Farm**

2.39 The eastern parts of the Site (6.33 hectares) were promoted by the landowners at the last Local Plan Review in 2005/2006. The Local Plan Inspector considered the Site and proposals at that time and made the following comments (Chapter 14 - paragraphs 14.17.1 to 14.17.3), relating to the suitability of the Site to accommodate housing development and likely impact on the open countryside and Green Belt:
“The stream to the east of the site provides a strong defensible Green Belt boundary, but to the south there is precedence of the barrier being breached by the built up areas extending westwards. The omission site may not be as well contained by development as the allocated sites, but the contours and landforms would help to mitigate the intrusive effects of new development and there would be scope for creating new Green Belt boundaries in much the same way that such boundaries are defined by the built up areas to the south. I am also satisfied that the site performs comparatively well against the allocations, in terms of proximity to the town centre, to services and facilities.

The factor that militates against the omission site is the likely position of the access road. A new road would have to traverse across an open area of countryside to the west. Not only would this involve increased urbanisation of the countryside, but is likely to make that area of land vulnerable to pressure for further development. On balance, I find that there is scope for less harm to the Green Belt through the Council’s allocations.”

2.40 The Inspectors recommendation in paragraph 14.17.3 was:

“Make no modification in response to the objections.”

2.41 Whilst the Inspector did not support the allocation of the land at that time; she however highlighted the proximity of the Site to the town centre, the containment of the Site by contours and landform and considered that a new Green Belt boundary could be created to define the built up area.

2.42 The land promoted at the previous Local Plan Review in 2005/2006 only included the eastern half of the northern parts of the current Site. The western boundary of the previous site followed no physical or visual feature on the ground and therefore the land to the west was vulnerable to future development pressure as suggested by the Inspector.

2.43 The present Site boundaries follow existing physical and visual features in the landscape and these are capable of forming future defensible long term boundaries to the Site and built up area of Sawbridgeworth and also the Green Belt. In addition, the access roads to serve the current Site are contained within the Site area and therefore the open countryside to the west of the Site would not be affected by the access arrangement which was a criticism of the previous proposals.

Public Rights of Way

2.44 There is a number of Public Rights of Way (PROW) in close proximity to the Site and these are shown on Drawing No.0113/L1 – Landscape Context Plan.

2.45 There are no Public Rights of Way across the Site. The nearest two public footpaths to the Site include Public Footpath SW014 and SW015 which extend from Sawbridgeworth Brook near the south eastern corner of the Site following field boundaries to cross the
open fields (to become Public Footpath HW006 and HW036) and connect to High Wych Lane to the west of the Site. In addition, Public Footpath SW012 and SW013 follow the east side of Sawbridgeworth Brook (north / south) adjoining the eastern boundary of the Site whilst Public Footpath SW016 extends from the built up area of Sawbridgeworth to cross the open meadow field immediately to the south of the Site and continues westwards (to become Public Footpath HW002) and connects to High Wych Lane and High Wych village to the south west.

2.46 In addition to the above PROW’s, there are a number of Public Footpaths and Bridleways located within the vicinity of the Site. These are also shown on Drawing No.0113/L1 - Landscape Context Plan and include:

- Public Bridleway SW010 which extends northwards from West Road to follow the brook for a short distance into the adjoining field. An informal footpath continues northwards following the brook to connect to Public Footpath SW009 on the edge of The Leventhorpe School playing fields;
- Public Footpath SW009 which extends westwards from the A1184 / Cambridge Road to follow the southern edge of The Leventhorpe School playing fields up to Sawbridgeworth Brook where the footpath turns northwards and becomes Public Footpath HW042;
- Public Footpath HW042 extends from Public Footpath SW009 to follow Sawbridgeworth Brook for a short distance before turning westwards to cross the open fields to Tharbies Farm and connects to a local lane near Tharbies Farmhouse;
- Public Footpath SW011 which extends northwards from West Road near Tharbies Lodge to follow a local drainage ditch before turning westwards to become Public Footpath HW026;
- Public Footpath HW026 extends westwards from Public Footpath SW011 to cross the open fields and follows field boundaries to connect to a local lane to the west of Tharbies Farmhouse;

2.47 In addition to the above PROW’s the land immediately to the south of the Site was formerly part of the Thomas Rivers Nursery and permissive access is now allowed across the whole area although there are a number of informal mown grass paths which users tend to follow. The extent of this area is also shown on Drawing No.0113/L1.
3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

Site Description

3.1 As shown on Drawing No. 0113/L2 – Site Appraisal Plan, the Site forms an irregular shaped parcel of land of some 14.16 hectares (35 acres) comprising one large arable field to the south of West Road, and a small square shaped arable field on the south eastern edge of the Site. The existing boundary features, land uses and topography within and adjoining the Site are illustrated on the Site Appraisal Plan, Drawing No.0113/L2 contained at the rear of this report.

3.2 The boundaries to the Site are well defined to the north, east, south and part of the western boundary. To the north, the Site’s boundary is defined by a section of West Road and the rear gardens of a row of semi-detached houses (Small Gains Cottages) with an existing dilapidated field gate (located to the east of the cottages adjoining Sawbridgeworth Brook) providing access to the Site. The boundary along the road section is formed by a discontinuous hedgerow and line of mature trees including Ash and Sycamore trees whilst the boundary to the rear of the cottages is formed by a mix of garden hedgerows, trees and sections of panel or post & rail fencing about 2m high. The hedgerows, trees and row of cottages located on this boundary provide containment and enclosure along this edge limiting views into the Site from West Road and also from vantage points to the north of the Site. However, partial views are possible into the Site from short sections of West Road and elevated vantage points to the north on Public Footpath HW042.

3.3 To the east, the Site’s boundary is defined by Sawbridgeworth Brook and its adjoining robust trees and streamside vegetation which provide containment and enclosure to the Site. The vegetation along this boundary comprises a mix of mature trees up to 15m in height including Willow, Ash, Field Maple and Oak with an under-storey of Hawthorn, hazel, Blackthorn, Wild Rose and brambles.

3.4 Beyond the eastern boundary, adjoining the brook, is Public Footpath SW012/013 and to the north east of the Site is the West Road play area and open space. Chalks Farm is situated about midway along this boundary to the east of the Site. Chalks Farm is served off Coney Gree with an existing field access bridging the stream opposite the farm entrance. This access appears to be blocked by an earth mound and garden waste / grass cuttings. To the north of Chalks Farm are No.11 to 29 Coney Gree with the houses fronting on to the road and overlooking the streamside trees and under-storey vegetation, although partial and glimpsed views are possible into the Site from the road and open space to the north east. To the south of Chalks Farm are a block of flats (No.39 to 54), a row of houses (No.20 to 36) and further block of flats (No.9 to 19) served off Nursery
Fields. To the east side of the footpath adjoining the brook, the boundary to these properties is formed by close board and panel fencing about 2 metres in height and this fencing, together with the streamside vegetation, limits views into the Site from these dwellings.

3.5 The southern boundary of the Site is defined by a section of discontinuous tall hedgerow and groups of mature trees following Public Footpath SW014, which provides some containment to the Site along this edge. The hedgerow along this boundary consists of a mixed species thorn hedge about 4 to 6 metres in height with groups of Ash, Field Maple and Oak trees, about to 12 to 15 metres in height, within the hedgerow. Due the open nature of the western section of this boundary there are open views into and across the central and western parts of the Site from the footpath. To the south of the Site is an open triangular shaped field in arable use and following the southern edge of this field is Public Footpath SW015. From a short section of Public Footpath SW015, partial views into the western and southern parts of the Site are possible.

3.6 The western boundary of the Site follows an irregular alignment with a ‘dog leg’ approximately midway along the boundary. Adjoining the north western corner of the Site is Claylane Farm and Ridgeons Timber and Builders Merchants with the section of the Site’s boundary formed by close board fencing about 2 metres in height. The remaining northern and central sections of the western boundary is formed by a discontinuous tall maintained thorn hedgerow about 3 to 4 metres in height which extends southwards up Public Footpath SW014. Due to the open nature of some sections of the Site’s western boundary, views into the Site are possible from the public footpaths immediately to the west of the Site although the hedgerow along the Site’s boundary together with the sloping topography effectively screens views into the northern and eastern parts of the Site.

**Topography**

3.7 The Site lies within an area of undulating topography dominated by the River Stort and River Ash valleys, their tributary streams and broad ridgelines to the west of the Site. The highest point within the Site is on its western boundary at about 72 m AOD with the land gently falling to a low point on the south eastern corner of the Site at about 55 m AOD adjoining the Sawbridgeworth Brook.

**Vegetation**

3.8 Vegetation in the vicinity of the Site comprises predominantly Ash with Oak and Sycamore tree species and an under-storey of mainly Hawthorn, Hazel and Blackthorn. In addition, to the hedgerows and trees forming the Sites boundaries, the small square field (situated
on the south eastern edge of the Site) is enclosed by a tall robust trimmed hedgerow about 2 to 3 metres in height, otherwise the Site is devoid of any other vegetation.

3.9 The Site Appraisal Plan, Drawing No.0113/L2, also illustrates the nature and extent of views into and towards the Site, and a number of photographic panoramas are included in the Photographic Appendix 0113/P01 – Site Appraisal Photographs, contained at the rear of this report. These photographs illustrate the character and visual appearance of the Site as existing.

**Landscape and Visual Appraisal**

3.10 A preliminary assessment of the Site’s visibility was undertaken in April 2012 and then again in October 2012. This assessment indicated that whilst there are a number of near and middle distance views towards the Site, the Site is generally well contained and enclosed within the landscape to the west of Sawbridgeworth. This containment is mainly formed by the landform and to a lesser degree by the framework of woodlands and hedgerows in the vicinity of the Site.

3.11 The assessment also showed that views towards the Site can be obtained from a limited number of vantage points in the immediate vicinity of the Site (Photograph No’s 1 to 15); and in some middle distance views (Photograph No’s 16 to 21) to the west, north and south west. Near distant views towards the Site are obtained from short sections of public footpaths and roads in close proximity to the Site where partial and glimpsed views are possible through and / or over the boundary vegetation. These include views from sections of Public Footpaths SW009, SW012, SW013, SW014, SW015 and SW016, and the local roads including West Road, Coney Gree and Chalks Avenue.

3.12 The assessment indicated that, whilst there a number of middle distance vantage points where views towards the Site (and the built up area of Sawbridgeworth) can be obtained; views into the open parts of the Site are generally screened or curtailed by intervening vegetation and the sloping landform, when seen from the west and south west; and by intervening vegetation and development along West Road when viewed from locations to the north.

3.13 The assessment confirmed that there are no long distance views (views over 1 kilometre in length) from elevated ground to the north, west and south. The assessment also confirmed that the built up areas of Sawbridgeworth effectively restrict middle and long distance views from locations to the east of the Site.

3.14 The assessment therefore concentrated on the limited number of key views towards the Site and a second set of photographs (Photograph No’s.1 to 21) were taken from
publicly accessible viewpoints. These photographs are included in the second part of the Photographic Appendices 0113/P02 – Site Context Photographs contained at the rear of the report. The locations from where these photographs were taken are shown on Drawing No.0113/L3 – Photograph Location Plan.

3.15 The photographs illustrate the visibility of the Site as existing and its relationship to the adjoining built up area of Sawbridgeworth, its relationship to the wider countryside and the character of the surrounding landscape. The photographs consist of primarily near distance partial and glimpsed views from locations to the east and north of the Site; open near distance views from the south and west and open panoramic middle distance views from locations to north, west and south west.

3.16 As part of the visual assessment consideration was given to the following:

i) The Site’s contribution to the wider landscape;
ii) The Site’s suitability for accommodating housing development, and;
iii) The identification of those areas of the Site where landscape mitigation measures would be required to minimise the effects of housing development on the Site, in the locality and wider surrounding area.

3.17 Based on the site visit in April and October 2012, the following viewpoints with views in to or towards the Site were identified:

- Near distance partial and glimpsed views from sections of Coney Gree, Public Footpath 012 and West Road play area immediately to the east and north east of the Site looking westwards (Photograph No’s.1 and 2);
- Near distance partial views from a short section of West Road looking south and south westwards (Photograph No’s 3, 4 and 8);
- Near distance open views from sections of Public Footpath SW014, SW015 and SW016 looking northwards and eastwards (Photograph No’s 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14);
- Near distance views from short sections of Public Footpath SW009 / HW042 looking southwards (Photograph No’s 15 and 16);
- Middle distance open views from Public Footpath HW002 and HW036 looking eastwards towards the Site (Photograph No’s 17 and 18);
- Middle distance views from a very short section of West Road near Crumps Farm looking south eastwards towards the Site (Photograph No. 19);
- Middle distance open views from a section of Public Footpath HW042 looking southwards towards the Site (Photograph No. 20);
- Middle distance open views from Broadfields on the edge of High Wych village looking north eastwards towards the Site (Photograph No. 21).
Summary

3.18 In general, it can be concluded that, apart from a short section of the western boundary, the boundaries to the Site are well defined by existing landscape features such as field boundary hedgerows and trees to the north, south and north west and to the east, by streamside vegetation adjoining Sawbridgeworth Brook and built up area of the town and housing development to the north along West Road. These boundaries together with the east facing sloping landform provide containment and enclosure to the Site, apart from a short section of the western boundary which is open and allows views into south western parts of the Site.

3.19 In the immediate vicinity of the Site, the perception of the Site and its surrounding varies depending on the location of the viewer. In the majority of views from the north and east, only a small part of the Site can be seen or perceived as open arable farmland adjoining the built up areas of Sawbridgeworth. This is due to the robust vegetation and trees located along the eastern Sawbridgeworth Brook boundary, the row of cottages and trees situated on the northern boundary of the Site and the east facing sloping landform which effectively screen or curtail views into the open parts of the Site. In views from near distance viewpoints to the south, views towards and into the Site are possible with the south western and central parts of the Site clearly seen as open arable sloping fields with a backdrop of trees (and roof tops) along West Road to the north.

3.20 In views from near distance vantage points to the south west (sections of Public Footpath SW016), the open parts of the Site are partially visible through the intervening hedgerows and trees with the Site contributing in a limited way to the character and visual appearance of the landscape. From these viewpoints the rooftops of the new houses would be clearly visible but the Site and development would be seen against a backdrop of trees to the north of the Site and the rising ground occupied by the built up areas of Sawbridgeworth, (which forms the visual horizon), to the east of the Site.

3.21 In the views in close proximity to the Site (sections of Public Footpath's SW014 and SW015) the sloping nature of the Site is clearly evident with views extending across the open fields to the rising ground and built up areas of Sawbridgeworth to the east. The tall discontinuous hedgerow forming the southern boundary of the Site effectively curtails some of the open views into the northern central and eastern, low lying parts of the Site with the views extending over the Site to the built up areas of Sawbridgeworth.

3.22 In near distance views from the west (sections of Public Footpath's SW014 and SW015) the open parts of the Site are just perceived (mainly the south western parts of the Site), through gaps in the boundary hedgerows and the intervening vegetation; although, the
Site is seen as part of the wider panoramic views across the landscape with the view extending across the Site to the built up areas of Sawbridgeworth, which forms the backdrop and visual context of the Site.

3.23 In the middle distance views from locations to the west (sections of Public Footpath’s SW016 / HW002, and SW015 / HW036) the extent of the Site visible in the view is significantly reduced. This is due to the intervening hedgerows and trees and the sloping landform of the Site which effectively screens views into the low lying parts of the Site. However, the roof tops of new dwellings located on elevated parts of the Site close to the western boundary would be visible but these houses would screen development within the remaining central and eastern parts of the Site and the development would be seen against a backdrop of trees and the rising ground occupied by the built up areas of Sawbridgeworth to the east of the Site.

3.24 In middle distance views from West Road (Photograph No.19) to the west, and sections of Public Footpath HW042 (Photograph No.20) to the north, the Site is effectively screened by intervening trees and the ribbon of development that extends along West Road although views are possible of small parts of the western elevated portions of the Site. The introduction of housing located on the elevated parts of the Site is likely to be visible, however, the roof tops of the new dwellings would be seen in the context of existing development on West Road or seen against a backdrop of trees and the rising ground occupied by the built up areas of Sawbridgeworth to the east of the Site.

3.25 In middle distance views from the edge of High Wych (Photograph No.21) to the south west of the Site, the open parts of the Site is very difficult to see through the intervening vegetation and the Site appears to merge with the surrounding trees. In addition, the Site forms a very small component in the wider panoramic views across the open farmland with the built up areas of Sawbridgeworth, forming the backdrop and visual context of the Site. In these views, the contribution that the Site makes to the visual appearance and character of the landscape is limited and the introduction of housing within the Site would result in a minimal / negligible change to the view; although the roof tops of the houses located on the elevated western edge of the Site may just be perceived. However, development within the low lying central and eastern parts of the Site would be screened from view.
4.0 CONSIDERATION OF DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

4.1 In this section of the report, consideration is given to the landscape and visual issues likely to arise from the development of the Site for housing and associated infrastructure.

4.2 There are four landscape and visual issues which have been identified as forming constraints or opportunities to developing the Site (also refer to Drawing No.0113/L4 - Landscape Constraints and Opportunities Plan) and these are set out in the sections which follow.

Landscape Character

4.3 The Site forms an irregular shaped parcel of land of some 14.16 hectares (35 acres) comprising one large arable field to the south of West Road, and a small square shaped enclosed arable field in the south eastern corner of the Site. The boundaries to the Site, apart from short sections of the southern and western boundaries, are well defined by existing landscape features such as field boundary hedgerows and trees to the north, south and north west and to the east, by streamside vegetation adjoining Sawbridgeworth Brook and the built up area of the town and by housing development along West Road to the north. These boundaries, together with the east facing sloping landform, provide containment and enclosure to the Site. However, short sections of the southern and western boundaries are not defined by any physical feature and are open allowing views into south western parts of the Site.

4.4 The Site lies in an area of gently undulating topography of low ridges and shallow valleys between 10 to 80 metres AOD between the valley of the River Stort, to the east and south, and River Ash valley to the west. The Site is situated on the east facing slopes of a broad ridge (Hunsdon Plateau) aligned north - south between High Wych and Crumps to the west of the Site. The highest point within the Site is on its western boundary at about 72 m AOD with the land gently falling to a low point on the south eastern corner of the Site at about 55 m AOD adjoining the Sawbridgeworth Brook. The undulating topography together with the existing framework of hedgerows, belts of trees and occasional blocks of woodland in the area surrounding the Site provide some enclosure and containment to views within the landscape.

4.5 The overall character of the Site reflects the landscape character areas described in the East Herts Landscape Character Assessment (see paragraph 2.15 to 2.22 earlier). The Site lies within the ‘South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland’ - Character Area No. 86 as defined, in the Countryside Character Assessment Volume 6: East of England (published
Consideration of Development Issues

by the Countryside Agency), and Character Area 84 - High Wych Slopes LCA as defined in the East Herts Landscape Character Assessment which describes the area as:

“largely concealed from view by its topography, while from within it offers extensive views over the Stort valley to the industrial edge of Harlow and mineral workings. The scale of landscape elements is mixed and there is little visual unity, giving an appearance of incoherence, despite the openness. This is not a tranquil area, with commuter through routes and the constant noise of traffic.

The change within this area from north to south provides a good indication of the effect of creeping urbanisation.

There is a widespread and significant visual impact on this area from the transport corridor and urban development to the south and east. Farmland is being lost to the spread of suburban housing and the balance of the landscape is changing...”

4.6 The assessment suggests an “Improve and restore” strategy for managing future change and lists seven guidelines for the area a number of which are of relevance and could be brought forward if the Site was developed for housing.

4.7 It is acknowledged that development of the Site for housing would result in a notable change to the character and visual appearance of the Site. This is unavoidable given that the Site is a ‘greenfield’ site and is inevitably the case for an area of land located adjacent to an urban area. However, the introduction of mitigation measures, such as the retention of the existing hedgerow and trees within the Site and the provision of areas of new structural planting and open space, would result in the landscape effects of developing the Site for a housing scheme being localised and the effects minimised.

Existing Trees and Vegetation

4.8 Development of the majority of the Site would be unconstrained by hedgerows and trees, as it is mostly devoid of these features being open arable fields with field boundary hedgerows and trees. The Site contains a mature hedgerow surrounding the small square field on the eastern boundary of the Site, and mature hedgerows and groups / lines of trees forming the boundaries to the Site. The hedgerow and trees form visually significant features and provide containment and screening within the landscape and should be retained and strengthened, where possible, for these reasons.

4.9 The proximity of the trees and hedgerow would constrain the location and extent of built development due to the protection distances required to retain and protect the trees as well as minimising the effects of overshadowing and the loss of daylight. The proposed land uses close to retained trees should preferably be an open use such as rear gardens or as public open space where the long term management of the trees can be secured.
4.10 However, if the Site is taken further in the consideration process, a detailed tree condition survey (compliant with BS 5837:2012) would need to be undertaken by a qualified Arboricultural Consultant to determine the condition, likely quality and value of the trees and hedgerows on or adjoining the Site and identify those trees and hedgerows which are worthy of retention and would constrain the development of the Site.

Visibility and Public Views of the Site

4.11 The visual assessment indicated that, whilst there are a number of near and middle distance views towards the Site, the Site is generally well contained and enclosed within the landscape, to the west of Sawbridgeworth, mainly by the landform and to a lesser degree by the framework of woodlands and hedgerows in the vicinity of the Site.

4.12 The assessment also showed that views towards the Site can be obtained from a limited number of vantage points in the immediate vicinity of the Site; and in some middle distance views to the west, north and south west. Near distant views towards the Site are obtained from short sections of public footpaths and roads in close proximity to the Site where partial and glimpsed views are possible through and/or over the boundary vegetation.

4.13 The assessment indicated that, whilst there a number of middle distance vantage points where views towards the Site and the built up area of Sawbridgeworth can be obtained; views into the open parts of the Site are generally screened or curtailed by intervening vegetation and the sloping landform when seen from the west and south west and by intervening vegetation and development along West Road when viewed from locations to the north.

4.14 In addition, the assessment confirmed that there are no long distance views (views over 1 kilometre in length) from elevated ground to the north, west and south and that the built up areas of Sawbridgeworth effectively restricts middle and long distance views from locations to the east of the Site.

4.15 On the basis of the visual appraisal, it is possible to identify the relative visibility of various parts of the Site and these are shown on Drawing No. 0113/L4 – Landscape Constraints and Opportunities Plan. Three categories of visibility are shown on the plan, although in reality, the visibility of various parts of the Site is ranked on a sliding scale from visually contained areas through to visually exposed or least contained areas.

4.16 It should be noted that the assessment is based on views from publicly accessible areas, although it is recognised that that a number of residential properties within the surrounding area (houses on West Road and some houses in the western parts of
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Sawbridgeworth) would obtain private views towards the Site. In addition, Drawing No. 0113/L4 shows existing visual barriers (mostly vegetation) and the existing built up areas of Sawbridgeworth, which influence some of the views of the Site and form the context of the Site in the majority of views from locations to the north and west.

4.17 The areas of land with a highest degree of visual containment which are considered most suitable (from a visual point of view) for accommodating new housing development comprise:

- The low lying eastern parts of the Site.

These areas of the Site occupy relatively low lying land and are generally well contained in views by existing hedgerows / trees and rising topography to the west in the local views and screened from view in the longer middle distance views from the south west, west and north. The rooftops of new houses introduced into this part of the Site may be seen in local views from the east, south and west but the change in view will have a limited effect when from more distant vantage points.

4.18 The areas of land with a moderate degree of visual containment are:

- The central and northern parts of the Site.

These areas are visible in the majority of local views within and immediately adjoining the Site, mainly to the south, but are screened from view in longer middle distance views from the south west, west and north. These areas are therefore considered to be slightly less well contained than the visually contained areas referred to above. However, it is considered that these areas are suitable for development but careful consideration needs to be given to form, scale and layout of the development and the introduction of appropriate mitigation measures within and on the edges of the development would be required to minimise the visual effects.

4.19 Those areas of the Site with the least degree of visual containment comprise:

- The elevated western and southern parts of the Site.

These areas are visible in the majority of local views within and immediately adjoining the Site to the south and west; as well as being perceived in a number of the middle distance views towards the Site from the south west, west and north. It is considered that these areas are also suitable for development, at a lower density, with careful consideration given to height, form, scale and layout of the development, particularly the roofscape of the development and the building platforms within the south western parts of the Site set into the slope, where possible, to reduce the ridgeline heights of
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buildings. In addition, the development would need to set back from the western and southern boundaries in order to allow for the introduction of appropriate mitigation measures within and on the edges of the development to minimise the visual effects.

Planning Designations

4.20 The Site currently lies outside the built up settlement boundary of Sawbridgeworth and is identified as lying within the open countryside and Green Belt. The Site, however, is not designated as having any particular landscape value or quality, such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Special Landscape Area.

4.21 The policies in the National Planning Policy Framework apply from the 27th March 2012 and therefore it is a material consideration in dealing with planning applications for development. The Framework sets out the Government's vision of sustainable development, which should be interpreted and applied locally to meet local aspirations.

4.22 Section two of the Framework provides a definition of what is meant by delivering sustainable development and sets out three components of what this means for the planning system. The three components are planning for prosperity (the economic role), planning for people (a social role) and planning for places (an environmental role). Throughout the Framework document it emphasises that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and requires policies in Local plans to follow this approach.

4.23 Of particular relevance to the Site is Section 9 ‘Protecting Green Belt land’ of the Framework. This section provides guidance on the Green Belt land surrounding settlements to which the Government attaches ‘great importance’. Paragraph 79 of the Framework sets out the fundamental aim of Green Belt Policy which is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristic of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

4.24 Paragraphs 80 to 85 of the NPPF provide guidance to local planning authorities on the purposes, land uses and advice on when defining (existing and new) Green Belt boundaries. Paragraph 81 provides guidance on the beneficial uses of Green Belts and states:

"Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land".
4.25 The initial assessment of the Site indicates that the Site contributes in a limited way to the beneficial uses of the Green Belt being a relatively small area of open farmland with no public access across the land. The Site currently does not contribute to opportunities for public access, outdoor sport and recreation and it is not damaged or derelict land. However, there is an excellent opportunity to promote the Site through the review of The East Herts District Plan and this could deliver significant public access improvements and provision of some open space areas for outdoor sport and recreation activities through the development of the Site for housing and open space.

4.26 In addition to the above, the assessment also indicated that, whilst the Site does contribute in a limited way to the character and visual appearance of landscape immediately adjoining the western edge of Sawbridgeworth (when seen from locations in close proximity to the Site), the assessment concluded that in the middle and longer distance views towards the Site, the contribution that the Site makes to the visual appearance and character of the landscape is limited and the introduction of housing within the Site would result in a minimal / negligible change to the view.

4.27 It is acknowledged that development of the Site for housing would result in a notable change to the character and visual appearance of the Site and loss of a small area of Green Belt. This is unavoidable given that the Site is a ‘greenfield’ site and is inevitably the case for an area of land located adjacent to an urban area which is surrounded by the Green Belt.

4.28 However, there is an excellent opportunity to improve and enhance the built up edge of Sawbridgeworth through the provision of areas of new structural planting and open space, (including the retention of the existing hedgerow and trees) within the Site and this would minimise the landscape effects of developing the Site for housing on the locality and adjoining Green Belt.

4.29 The introduction of new structural planting whilst ‘softening’ the built up edge of Sawbridgeworth, would also enhance the landscape, visual amenities and biodiversity of the area and have a positive effect on the adjoining Green Belt.

4.30 Paragraph 83 provides on guidance on Green Belt and when they should be reviewed whilst Paragraph 84 and 85 of the Framework provides guidance on the issues that need to be taken into account in reviewing the Green Belt and when defining new Green Belt boundaries.

4.31 In addition to the above, Section 11 ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’ of the Framework is also of particular relevance to the Site and surrounding landscape.
This section provides guidance on the natural and local environment, and in paragraph 109, it goes on to state that:

“The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and
- remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”

4.32 Whilst, at paragraph 113, requires Local Planning Authorities to set out criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged and that the policy criteria need to reflect the hierarchy of the protected status designated sites and give appropriate weight to their importance.

4.33 Paragraph 114 of the NPPF goes on to state that:

“Local planning authorities should:

- set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure; and
- maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast.”

4.34 The NPPF, at paragraph 115, provides guidance on the protection of valued landscapes and ‘great weight’ should be given to protecting the landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. However, this guidance is not relevant to the Site, its immediate surrounding area and the proposed development.
4.35 In addition, the previous Local Plan Inspector considered, at the time, that the Site “performed well against the allocations in terms of proximity to the town to services and facilities” and that the landform of the area assisted in reducing the landscape effects of developing the Site.

4.36 As part of the emerging District Plan, the draft plan proposes to allocate the land to the south of West Road for residential development of about 300 homes under Policy SAWB1 of the plan previously referred to earlier see paragraph 2.33 above.

4.37 Policy SAWB3 of the draft plan sets out a number of criteria which are expected to be addressed as part of the development of the Site for housing, associated infrastructure and landscaping. Criteria (d), (j) and (l) are of relevance to landscape and Green Belt issues.

**Landscape Strategy**

4.38 In order to satisfactorily accommodate residential development, associated infrastructure and open space uses within the Site and surrounding landscape, a landscape strategy will be required. The strategy is illustrated on Drawing No.0113/L5 – Landscape Strategy Plan, included at the rear of this report, and set out below are the broad components of a landscape strategy for the Site which would need to be adhered to:

a) The retention of existing hedgerows and adjoining trees on Site boundaries where possible (this would accord with criteria (d) of Policy SAWB3 of the draft District Plan);

b) The introduction of significant new belts of structural planting and landscape ‘buffers’ along the western and southern boundaries of the Site to provide containment and a visual screen. These tree belts should be up to 40 metres in width to provide a new ‘firm’ development boundary / edge to the Site and a create wooded backdrop to the development on the lower slopes. These landscaped ‘buffer’ areas could form part of the public open space, and include pedestrian links around the development, thereby forming part of a ‘green grid’ network around and through the Site, as well as providing links to the wider public footpath network (these proposals would accord with criteria (j) and (l) of Policy SAWB3 of the draft District Plan);

c) The introduction of an area of open space and landscape planting along the eastern boundary (adjoining the Sawbridgeworth Brook) within the low lying parts of the Site and incorporation of flood attenuation features and pedestrian / cycleway routes thereby forming part of the ‘green grid’ network around and through the development. The existing bridge over the Sawbridgeworth Brook could be enhanced and provide a
direct link to route into the town (these proposals would accord with criteria (d) and (j) of Policy SAWB3 of the draft District Plan);

d) The provision of a comprehensive landscape scheme, including open space areas, within the housing areas and adjoining the access roads to create an attractive and pleasant environment for the new residents (these proposals would accord with criteria (d) and (j) of Policy SAWB3 of the draft District Plan).

4.39 The landscape strategy would assist in reducing the visual effects of the development when seen from the surrounding landscape, strengthen the existing boundaries of the Site and create an appropriate setting and landscape structure for the residential development of the Site. The structural planting proposed along the western boundary of the Site would also create a ‘soft’ edge to the settlement and form an appropriate transition between the town and open countryside to the west. This would accord with criteria (a) and (l) of Policy SAWB3 of the draft District Plan.

4.40 In addition, the landscape strategy would provide an enhanced north to south pedestrian / cycleway link(s) connecting West Road to Public Footpath SW014 along the southern boundary of the Site which connects to Public Footpath SW015 and potentially the permissive access area of land and Public Footpath SW016 to the south bringing wider community benefits, as well as creating new areas of planting and wildlife habitats / corridors along the western edge of Sawbridgeworth.
5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 It can be concluded from the landscape and visual appraisal of the Site and the surrounding area, and consideration of the likely landscape and visual issues relating to potential development of the Site for housing, associated infrastructure and open space, the following:

- That the boundaries to the Site, apart from a short section of the southern section of the western boundary, are well defined by existing landscape features such as field boundary hedgerows and trees including development along West Road to the north, south and north west and by streamside vegetation adjoining Sawbridgeworth Brook and the built up area of the town to the east;
- That these boundaries together with the east facing sloping landform provide containment and enclosure to the Site;
- That a short section of the southern boundary is not defined by any physical feature and is open and allows views into south western parts of the Site;
- That the Site forms an irregular shaped parcel of sloping land of some 14.16 hectares (35 acres) with the land falling about 17 metres from a high point on the western boundary to a low lying area adjoining Sawbridgeworth Brook and low point in the south eastern corner of the Site;
- That the Site is not crossed by any public footpaths although Public Footpath SW014 follows the southern boundary of the Site and extends in an east to west direction;
- That, whilst there are a number of near and middle distance views towards the Site, the Site is generally well contained and enclosed within the landscape, to the west of Sawbridgeworth, mainly by the landform and to a lesser degree by the framework of woodlands and hedgerows in the vicinity of the Site;
- That views towards the Site can be obtained from a limited number of vantage points in the immediate vicinity of the Site; and in some middle distance views to the west, north and south west;
- That near distant views towards the Site are obtained from short sections of public footpaths and roads in close proximity to the Site where partial and glimpsed views are possible through and / or over the boundary vegetation;
- That, whilst there a number of middle distance vantage points where views towards the Site and the built up area of the town can be obtained; views into the open parts of the Site are generally screened or curtailed by intervening vegetation and the sloping landform when seen from the west and south west and by intervening vegetation and development along West Road when viewed from locations to the north;
• That the assessment confirmed that there are no long distance views (views over 1 kilometre in length) from elevated ground to the north, west and south and that the built up areas of Sawbridgeworth effectively restrict middle and long distance views from the east of the Site;

• That the Site is not designated as having any particular landscape value or quality, such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Special Landscape Area; although, it does contain features of importance such as hedgerows and mature trees especially along Sawbridgeworth Brook;

• That the Councils proposals to remove the Site from the Green Belt to provide for housing needs is entirely appropriate and supported as the Site contributes in a limited way to the beneficial uses of retaining land within the Green Belt (paragraph 81 of National Planning Policy Framework);

• That the initial assessment of the Site indicates the western boundary of the Site could form a suitable defensible new Green Belt boundary which accords with the guidance in paragraph 85 of the National Planning Policy Framework;

• That the assessment of the Site indicated that the Site could accommodate residential development associated infrastructure and open space; subject to the provision of mitigation measures to reduce landscape and visual effects.

• That there is an excellent opportunity to improve and enhance the built up edge of Sawbridgeworth through the provision of areas of new structural planting and open space, (including the retention of the existing hedgerow and trees) within the Site and this would minimise the landscape effects of developing the Site for housing on the locality and adjoining Green Belt;

• That the introduction of new structural planting whilst ‘softening’ the built up edge of Sawbridgeworth, would also enhance the landscape, visual amenities and biodiversity of the area and have a positive effect on the adjoining Green Belt, and;

• That the proposed landscape strategy as shown on Drawing No. 0113/L5 - Landscape Strategy Plan, included at the rear of this report, would accord with criteria (d), (j) and (l) of Policy SAWB3 of the draft District Plan.
PLANS - Drawing No. 0113/L1 - Landscape Context Plan
The Scaling of this drawing cannot be assured
Revisions         Date         Initials
A    Site Boundary Amended       05-11-12        PDB

LEGEND
- Boundary of Application Site
- Existing Woodlands
- Existing Tall Hedgerows
- Existing Trimmed Hedgerows
- Contours at 5m intervals
- Slopes
- Watercourses
- Prominent Features
- Public Footpaths / Bridgeway
- Informal Footpaths
- Urban Areas
- Permissive Access Land

Project: LAND WEST OF CHALKS FARM, SAWBRIDGEWORTH
Drawing Title: LANDSCAPE CONTEXT PLAN
Date: October 2012
Scale: 1:10000 @ A1
Drawn by: PDB
Revision: A
PLANS - Drawing No. 0113/L2 - Site Appraisal Plan
Project: LAND WEST OF CHALKS FARM, SAWBRIDGEWORTH
Drawing Title: SITE APPRAISAL PLAN

Date: October 2012
Scale: 1:1250 @ A1
Drawn by: PDB
Revision: A

Legend:
- Boundary of Application Site
- Built Up Areas
- Existing Woodlands
- Existing Tall Hedgerows
- Existing Trimmed Hedgerows
- Contours at 5m Intervals
- Poor Hedgerows
- Conifer Trees
- Land Uses (Arable / Pasture)
- Slopes
- Watercourses
- Public Footpaths
- Permissive Access Land
- Site Appraisal Photographs (A to G)
- Distant Views
- Local Views
- Glimpsed Views
- Contours at 5m Intervals

The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured.

Revisions
Date Initials
A Site Boundary Amended 05-11-12 PDB

Due to the nature of the document, a plain text representation cannot be accurately provided. The diagram includes various annotations and symbols that are not easily translatable into plain text.
The Scaling of this drawing cannot be assured.

Revisions

Date

Initials

A  Site Boundary Amended  06-11-12  PDB

LEGEND

Boundary of Application Site
Contours at 5m Intervals
Public Footpaths / Bridleways
Location of Site Context
Photographs (1 to 20)

Project:
LAND WEST OF CHALKS FARM,
SAWBRIDGEWORTH

Drawing Title:
PHOTO LOCATION PLAN

Date:
October 2012

Scale:
1:2500 @ A1

Drawn by:
PDB

Revision:
A

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PLANS - Drawing No. 0113/L4 - Landscape Opportunities and Constraints Plan
The Scaling of this drawing cannot be assured.

Revisions
Date: Initials
A: Site Boundary Amended 06-11-12 PDB

Normalization

LEGEND
- Boundary of Application Site
- Built Up Areas
- Contours at 5m Intervals
- Existing Woodlands
- Existing Tall Hedgerows
- Existing Trimmed Hedgerows
- Conifer Trees
- Visually Contained Areas
- Moderately Visually Contained Areas
- Least Visually Contained Areas
- Visual Barriers
- Landscape Opportunities
- Landscape Constraint
- Contours at 5m Intervals

NORTH

Project:
LAND WEST OF CHALKS FARM, SAWBRI DGEWORTH

Drawing Title:
LANDSCAPE CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

Date: Scale: Drawn by:
October 2012 1:1250 @ A1 PDB

Project No.: Drawing No.: Revision:
0113 L4 A

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PLANS - Drawing No. 0113/L5 - Landscape Strategy Plan
Project: LAND WEST OF CHALKS FARM, SAWBRIIDGEWORTH
Drawing Title: LANDSCAPE STRATEGY PLAN
Date: October 2012
Scale: 1:150 @ A1
Drawn by: PDB
Project No: 0113
Drawing No: L5
Revision: B

The Scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revisions         Date         Initials
A   Site Boundary Amended               06-11-12         PDB
B   Revised to accord with 300           01-10-13         PDB

LEGEND

- Boundary of Application Site
- Contours at 5m Intervals
- Existing Woodlands
- Existing Tall Hedgerows
- Existing Trimmed Hedgerows
- Conifer Trees
- Proposed Housing Areas
- Indicative Access Routes
- Indicative New Footpath Links
- Central Green
- Linear POS
- Local Open Space
- Entrance / Roadside Planting
- Structural 'Buffer' Planting / POS
- Habitat Enhancement / POS
- Existing PROW retained
- Indicative New Footpath Links

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APPENDICES

Photographic Appendices - Photographs 0113/P01 - Site Appraisal Photographs - A to D inclusive
LAND AT CHALKS FARM, SAWBRIDGEWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE
Site Appraisal Photographs

Date: October 2012
Sheet: 0113/P01 Photographs A-C

Note: For correct viewing size print at A1 size.

For Illustrative Purposes Only

Cottages on West Road

Photograph A - View taken from eastern boundary looking north westwards.

Photograph B - View taken from eastern boundary looking south westwards.

Photograph C - View taken from the western boundary of the Site looking north eastwards.

Public Footpath SW014
Photograph D - View taken from northern boundary of the Site looking southwards.
APPENDICES

Photographic Appendices - Photographs 0113/P02 - Site Context Photographs - 1 to 21 inclusive
Photograph No 1 - View taken from Coney Gree looking westwards.

Photograph No 2 - View taken from West Road playground looking westwards.

Photograph No 3 - View taken from West Road at eastern entrance to the site looking southwards.

LAND AT CHALKS FARM, SAWBRIDGEWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE

Site Context Photographs

Date: October 2012
Sheet: 0113/P02  Photographs 1-3
LAND AT CHALKS FARM, SAWBRIDGEWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE
Site Context Photographs

Date: October 2012
Sheet: 0113/P02  Photographs 4-6

Note: For correct viewing size print at A1 size.

For Illustrative Purposes Only

Photograph No 4 - View taken from West Road looking southwards.
Public Footpath SW015

Photograph No 5 - View taken from Public Footpath SW015 looking north and west.
Site hidden by landform

Photograph No 6 - View taken from Public Footpath SW015 looking eastwards.
Public Footpath SW015

Site behind hedgerow
Photograph No 7 - View taken from Roseacres/ Chalks Avenue junctions looking westwards.
West Road Play Area
Site behind trees
West Road

Photograph No 8 - View taken from West Road adjoining playground looking north westwards.
Public Footpath SW015
Majority of the Site hidden by landform
Public Footpath SW014

Photograph No 9 - View taken from Public Footpath SW016/ Permissive Access Area looking northwards.

LAND AT CHALKS FARM, SAWBRIDGEWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE
Site Context Photographs
Date: October 2012
Sheet: 0113/P02  Photographs 7-9
Photograph No 10 - View taken from Public Footpath SW016 looking north eastwards.

Photograph No 11 - View taken from Public Footpath SW015 looking eastwards.

Photograph No 12 - View taken from Public Footpath HW 006 looking eastwards.
LAND AT CHALKS FARM, SAWBRIDGEWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE

Site Context Photographs

Date: October 2012
Sheet: 0113/P02  Photographs 13-15

Note: For correct viewing size print at A1 size.

For Illustrative Purposes Only

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**Photograph No 13** - View taken from Public Footpath SW015 looking eastwards.

**Photograph No 14** - View taken from Public Footpath SW014 looking eastwards.

**Photograph No 15** - View taken from Public Footpath SW009 looking south westwards.
Majority of the Site hidden by Cottages on West Road

Photograph No 16 - View taken from Public Footpath SW009 looking southwards.

Photograph No 17 - View taken from Public Footpath HW002 looking eastwards.

Photograph No 18 - View taken from Public Footpath HW 036 looking eastwards.
West Road

Claylane Farm

Western boundary of the Site

Photograph No 19 - View taken from West Road near Crumps looking eastwards.

Site hidden by cottages and vegetation along West Road

Claylane Farm

Photograph No 20 - View taken from Public Footpath HW 042 looking southwards.

The Site

Photograph No 21 - View taken from Broadfields, High Wych looking north eastwards.

LAND AT CHALKS FARM, SAWBRIDGEWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE
Site Context Photographs
Date: October 2012
Sheet: 0113/P02  Photographs 19-21
APPENDICES

Appendix A

South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland

Key Characteristics

- Broadly flat, chalky, boulder clay plateau dissected by undulating river valley topography, particularly marked in upper valley reaches, which are much smaller in scale.

- Predominantly arable with wooded appearance. Some pasture in valley floors. Irregular field pattern despite rationalization; remnant Ancient Countryside.

- Scattered farmsteads, deep ditches and moats, parishes with scattered, small settlements around 'tyes' (commons) or strip greens, with isolated hamlets. Concentration of isolated moated sites.

- Timber-framed and colour-washed houses, sometimes faced with Georgian red brick. Impressive churches. Large villages and frequent towns, most with medieval street plans and elaborate timber-frame houses. Rich heritage of barns. Fewer settlements and more 20th century development towards coast, with several large estates.

- Cultural association with Constable and tourist honey pot of Dedham Vale. Preserved, archetypal, lowland pastoral, English countryside coupled with attractive vernacular buildings dating from period of industrial wealth.

- Hedgerow tree of area is elm (with hornbeam) in Essex. Oak and ash in Suffolk. Few large woods (20 acres plus), but some ancient coppice woods and typical pattern of copses connected by hedgerow. Trees and woods appear to join together to give wooded skyline, with some bare ridgelines.

- Winding road pattern away from major routes, often with wide verges and strong hedgerows. Sunken hollow lanes are a feature, lined with hedgerows, but impact of Dutch Elm disease apparent.

Landscape Character

The South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland, while part of the same boulder clay plateau as the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands, is distinguished by differences in topography, vegetation cover, settlement pattern and size. To the north it follows the valley of the river Gipping northwest from Ipswich in a broad transition zone as far as Stowmarket, then loops southwards before skirting the northern fringe of Bury St Edmunds. To the north and west of Bury it abuts Breckland. The western boundary continues southwards to include Saffron Walden, a valley town on the edge of the chalk. The southern edge of this area is delineated by the Northern Thames Basin: a shallow wooded ridge sweeps round in a curve from Tiptree to Epping Forest, marking the northern extent of the London Clay and the western extent of the lighter soils of the Essex coastal heathlands. Also within the area lies the Dedham Vale, with its variable topography and more pastoral character.
This area has an open yet wooded character, demonstrating aspects of medieval enclosure and the impact of 20th century field rationalization and Dutch Elm disease. Although the north-western part of Essex was historically not as forested as the ridge that sweeps round in an arc from Tiptree to Epping Forest, it is now sufficiently endowed with copses and woods to have wooded horizons, which give a large, distantly enclosed character to the landscape – an enclosure that is missing at close quarters due to the loss of hedges and hedgerow trees. This pattern varies slightly in the northern part of the area, where the hedgerow tree is oak and there are a number of larger woods. Within the Stour valley the main impression is of the blocks of willows and poplars planted on the valley floor and sides. The willow pollards along the river are also a notable landscape feature of this area.

It is undulating country, incised by small river valleys flowing east to the North Sea, with sporadic flat areas. It is an area of exceptional medieval towns and villages, frequently photographed examples being settlements such as Lavenham, Finchingfield, Cavendish and Thaxted. When the woollen trade declined after 1700, to focus on northern and western England, the area became fossilised. Although many villages and towns have accommodated significant post-war housing the historic cores remain intact; little local industry has developed and the beauty and charm of these towns and villages have ensured their preservation.

Twentieth-century development in Chelmsford followed the sale of land for railways, and the broad, shallow Chelmer valley is now obliterated by recent development. The north-western part of Essex has largely avoided the massive 20th century outward migration from London which is so pronounced a feature of the London Clay to the south. This is largely due to the effectiveness of Green Belt policy in preventing the coalescence of towns. South Suffolk has seen very little recent development except around Stowmarket which, being on the mainline railway line, now has some characteristics of a commuter town, and the significant expansions of both Sudbury and Ipswich.

Physical Influences

Like the South Norfolk and High Suffolk claylands this is an area of chalky boulder clay (glacial till), but with more topographical variation than the area to the north. This is particularly notable in the upper reaches of the Stour and its tributaries, which are deeply incised, revealing underlying gravel and sand deposits on the valley sides. It, too, is Ancient Countryside, and appears in many areas to have undergone little rationalization to excessively large field sizes. It is more wooded than its northern counterpart, especially towards its southern boundary, and more densely settled.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The dominant historical impact on this area is that of the wealth generated by the woollen trade in the 14th to 16th centuries, manifested in the medieval timber-framed houses clustered in towns and villages, and in the ostentatious but magnificent churches of North Essex and South Suffolk. Between the 15th and early 17th centuries this was the wealthiest part of England. The peak of prosperity was
1450-1550, with a minor boom in the 17th century, and there was little post-17th century architecture until the advent of 20th century housing and commercial estates.

Towns such as Braintree, Great Dunmow, Halstead andCoggeshall were ‘bays and says’ towns, so called because of their production of baize-serge-like cloths from the 14th century onwards. Chelmsford was the county town by the early 13th century despite Colchester’s position as capital of south eastern Britain when the Romans invaded. Settlements owe their charm to idiosyncratic street patterns, the juxtaposition of splendid large church with village green, usually with duckpond, and the groups of colour-washed medieval houses with steeply-pitched pegtile roofs and the occasional Georgian brick front.

The area was already densely settled by the time of Domesday. Timber-framed and colour washed houses, roofs traditionally thatched but later replaced with clay-tile, are still abundant here at Belchamp St Paul. These are often grouped around narrow greens or ‘tyes’.

One distinguishing etymological and historical feature is still displayed in differences between village names: in Essex groups of villages took the name of the lord of the manor, as at Woodham Ferrers/Woodham Mortimer/Woodham Walter, while the more independent Suffolk folk used their local church’s patron saint’s name, as in Creeting St Mary, Creeting All Saints, etc. Norman influence on placenames was much greater in Essex than further north and this lives on in the great number of Norman placenames, such as Beauchamp Roding.

Although the woollen trade declined in the 17th century, at the beginning of the 18th century the Golden Age of local agriculture was beginning. The average landholding was probably 150 acres but improved drainage techniques, increasing mechanization and the influence of the proximity of the London market spread throughout the area by late Georgian times and brought new wealth.

However, the agricultural depressions, of the mid- and late-19th century and the between-wars 20th century, took their toll on agriculture here as elsewhere. There was a drift of labour to the capital, balanced in this century by increased mechanization and the southern drift of Scottish farmers who were prepared to take on derelict farms. Since 1945 this region has been well farmed, producing a wide range of food crops and dairy products, often for the London, and latterly the European, market. This has resulted in significant losses of semi-natural vegetation, especially lowland grassland.

John Constable gave the world the quintessential lowland English landscape of Dedham Vale and there is a persistent appreciation of the beauty of the landscapes he depicted. The Stour was canalized for transport in the 18th century but subsequent growth of riverside vegetation has softened it. Gainsborough, too, painted the landscape around his Sudbury home (cf. ‘Cornard Wood’). More recently Cedric Morris (1889-1982) at Hadleigh and John Nash at Wormingford have been influential. Both Alfred Munnings and Lucien Pisarro painted ‘Constable’ scenes and many artists, amateur and professional, continue to depict this landscape.

Buildings and Settlements

The existing pattern of towns and villages was laid down by the time of Domesday, when the area was already densely settled. This pattern intensified with the development of the woollen trade, which was mainly home-based, and its collection of interdependent tradespeople within each town or village. Villages tend to be larger than in the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands due to this industrial growth but are still quite widely spaced. They are most often found near the top of the valley slopes while isolated farmhouses are found on the clay plateau. From the time of the Norman Conquest until the 19th century spread of London, the north-west part of Essex was the most densely populated part of the county.

This Ancient Countryside contains an intricate maze of narrow, often sunken, lanes bounded by deep ditches which take surprising right-angle turns. Many parishes contain moated farmhouses and they are concentrated in the north-western part of the county where they flow into a similar concentration that spreads throughout High Suffolk and into South Norfolk, numbering over 2,000 in all. This is an area of scattered parishes, which often feature greens or ‘tyes’ and development away from the church. The greens are smaller than in High Suffolk and South Norfolk and tend to be more strip-like, reflecting the narrower interfluves. Essex differs in its development of ‘Ends’, hamlets that grew up away from the main village. There are 150 such hamlets on the boulder clay of north-west Essex but only a handful in Suffolk.

Timber is the main building material of this area, with brick in the valleys, often pink-buff Georgian brick facing a timber frame. This contrasts with the flint used in the coastal region and the clunch (building chalk) or brick used to the west.
Traditional timber construction used an infill of ‘loam and laths’ between vertical timber studs, which was then lime-washed to protect it from the elements. Coloured lime wash is a feature of villages in this area, as are exposed timbers for example Paycockes House, Coggeshall (NT). Pargeting is a form of raised plaster decoration on the external walls; good examples can be seen in Clare, Ipswich and Saffron Walden. Pegtiles rather than pantiles are seen in this area and there is a significant amount of wheat straw thatch. Clay ‘lump’ is also a distinctive building material, used for farm buildings and cottages.

This area contains numerous large villages and towns with extant medieval street plans and a wealth of elaborate timber-framed buildings, built on the prosperity of the woolen trade during that period. One of the best known examples is Lavenham in Suffolk.

The area has relied solely on agricultural wealth since the demise of the wool trade and has changed little since 1700. This area is not one of great landowners and magnificent houses, an exception being Audley End. Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk and Lord Treasurer to James I, built himself a magnificent and enormous house in the early 17th century that subsequently became a royal palace of Charles II. It was substantially remodelled and reduced in size in the 18th century by Vanbrugh, Adam and Brown and the grounds have recently undergone restoration. There are a few substantial estates, such as Ickworth, Kentwell, Long Melford and Chadacre.

Bury St Edmunds, on the northern edge of this regional area, is a fine old market town (significantly expanded in the 20th century) that owes its name, its early fame and consequent monastic wealth to possession of the remains of King Edmund who was martyred by Vikings in 869. By the early Middle Ages this place of pilgrimage was one of the five richest and most powerful abbeys in England, a power that ended at the Dissolution. The town contains a fine blend of medieval and Georgian-fronted houses set within a late 11th century gridiron street pattern.

Other towns, such as Long Melford, Lavenham, Thaxted, Halstead and Coggeshall also contain remarkable buildings, demonstrating the wealth founded in wool, and frequently retain their medieval street patterns. Thaxted also prospered from its cutlery trade and Saffron Walden enjoyed the rewards of both cloth and *Crocus sativus* (used to dye cloth) until the 19th century, when artificial substitutes destroyed this latter trade.

The Anglo-Saxon origins and medieval character of Ipswich, which lies at the point where the Gipping becomes the Orwell, have been replaced by Victorian neo-Italianate Gothic buildings (Norman Scarfe) and 20th century car parks. It does, however, contain one of the few post-1970s buildings to be listed by English Heritage, a curving black glass structure with a lawned roof, designed by Sir Norman Foster and used as offices.

**Land Cover**

This is wooded arable countryside, where hedgerows, copses and woodland blocks combine to give a wooded horizon and sense of distant enclosure, despite the sometimes huge size of the intervening fields. It is primarily agricultural, except on parts of the river valley floors, where pasture and willow pollards contribute to a pastoral quality that is uncommon elsewhere in East Anglia. Oak, ash and field maple are the main species with some cherry while, around Highham and Stoke-by-Nayland, holly is a dominant hedgerow tree or shrub.

The remnants of small-scale irregular medieval enclosure are still visible despite some rationalization of field sizes and many examples of ancient woodland survive. The dominant hedgerow tree in Essex was elm, and Dutch Elm disease has had a profound effect on hedgerow and field boundaries which are now lost, gappy or decrepit. In the Suffolk part of the area hedgerow oaks and dense hedgerows continue to give a more treed and hedged character.

Although huge areas of cereals or oil-seed rape can appear to dominate the landscape, especially in early summer, this area also provides dairy products and sugar beet, with peas, fruit farms and market gardening on areas of lighter land.

**The Changing Countryside**

- Development relating to the possible expansion of Stansted airport, expansion of local settlements and development of the road transport infrastructure (A14) and associated retail and commercial outlets.
- Agricultural change. Field rationalization and change to arable is now regarded as largely complete although there are still some isolated examples. Within the Stour valley, areas of pasture have increased although, in other valleys, there have been losses of pasture.
- Neglect of ancient woodland and other woodland planting, and increase in poplar and willow plantations.
- Predominance of winter cereals has resulted in a loss of winter field stubble which has seasonal landscape and ecological implications.
Conversion of historic farm buildings to residential use has been found to lead to a change of character, but change of use may not be the only way to prevent these buildings becoming derelict. Gentrification is perceived as a threat to local character.

Proliferation of mobile telephone transmitter masts and National Grid power lines particularly near the Gipping Valley and in parts of Essex.

Visitor congestion at honey-pot sites, with pressure to accommodate cars and coaches.

The conservation and management of hedgerows is important to the area. This should include the encouragement of trees from existing hedgerow stocks and managing and replanting hedgerows.

Tree planting would help maintain the traditional wooded appearance and character of this landscape. Planting on pastures and greens needs careful consideration.

The maintainence and extention of river valley pasture should be considered.

Planning and design guidelines would encourage alternative uses for redundant farm buildings to respect the character of this agricultural area.

The conservation of ancient sunken lanes and botanically-rich and historic grass verges should be addressed.

Visitor pressures and car parking in popular areas such as Dedham Vale would benefit from management.

Moated sites are an important characteristic of the area.

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Selected References


Essex County Council, County Planning Department (1992), *The Essex Environment*, Essex C.C., Chelmsford.


Tennyson, J (1939), *Suffolk Scene*, Blackie, London.


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Dedham Vale is one of the smallest AONBs in England but it contains a great variety of all the features that combine to produce the classic English lowland landscape. Rolling hills and gentle valleys, trees, riverbank willows, floodplain meadows, ancient lanes, traditional villages and farm buildings and the meandering river have together inspired writers and painters such as Constable to capture the beauty and peace of the Vale, illustrated here at Stratford St Mary.
APPENDICES

Appendix B  Copy of the relevant extracts taken from the ‘East Herts Landscape Character Assessment’ 2007.
Area 84

High Wych Slopes

LOCATION
Bounded by Sawbridgeworth to the east, the Hunsdon plateau to the west and the Stort valley to the south, with an open arable plateau to the north.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
A south-facing slope of mixed farming within a small irregular field pattern, usually ditched rather than hedged. An area of transition, showing increasing urban influence in the southern part and with links to the parkland area to the west. Around High Wych there are wide stretches of open farmland with old houses nestling in small coppices. The flint church is surrounded by the school, ancient houses and thatched cottages.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS
• isolated farms and houses
• small-scale open farmed landscape
• gently undulating south-facing slope
• discrete blocks of woodland
• tight network of narrow, winding, sunken lanes, usually ditched
• small areas of parkland on the western edge

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES
• High Wych retains village character despite links to Sawbridgeworth
• golf course and hotel add suburban character to generally rural area
• High Wych Road is a commuter-run, therefore not tranquil

Allens Green
(P. Shears)
PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Hanslope series).

Topography. Gently undulating south-facing slope with slight dip to Fiddlers’ Brook in west.

Degree of slope. 1 in 70 to 1 in 130.

Altitude range. 60m to 80m.

Hydrology. Fiddlers’ Brook meanders southwards through Gilston Park (where it is dammed to form a lake) to the Stort. There are other minor streams flowing into the Stort.

Land cover and land use. Open arable farmland, small areas of parkland and suburban development, in a confusing mix. Few hedgerows and little pasture. Around the urban edge development is dense enough to completely mask the local topography.

Vegetation and wildlife. This uniform area of boulder clay farmland contains rather species-poor remnants of semi-natural woodland, mostly ash/maple but formerly with frequent elm. The former hazel/maple/elm hedges have largely been removed and almost no natural grassland remains. Poplar, lime and horse chestnut have all been planted within the area.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

This is arable farmland with a pattern of dispersed settlement.

Field pattern. Irregular, with a gradual increase in size away from settlements, varying from very small to very large. Generally unhedged and divided by ditches.

Transport pattern. A tight network of small lanes, with a rectangular pattern west of Sawbridgeworth, often enclosing small areas.

Settlements and built form. ‘G.E.Pritchett’s High Wych [church] of 1861 deserves to be specially mentioned as an eminently typical example of High Victorian design at its most revolting’ (Pevsner).

• There are no settlements other than the village of High Wych. Elsewhere the built form is of isolated houses or farms, often using black weatherboard and red brick.

• The hotel at The Manor of Groves, with its golf course, is almost an extension of the urban character of Sawbridgeworth, despite its geographical links to the former deer park and parkland of Gilston. Although screened, it is hedged with non-indigenous species, and the rear of the hotel backs directly onto the lane.

• Allen’s Green is the only hamlet within the area, with its own tiny flint church.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

HIGH WYCH SLOPES - Area 84

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION
From outside this area is largely concealed from view by its topography, while from within it offers extensive views over the Stort valley to the industrial edge of Harlow and mineral workings. The scale of landscape elements is mixed and there is little visual unity, giving an appearance of incoherence, despite the openness. This is not a tranquil area, with commuter through-routes and the constant noise of traffic.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The change within this area from north to south provides a good indication of the effect of creeping urbanisation.

VISUAL IMPACT
There is a widespread and significant visual impact on this area from the transport corridor and urban development to the south and east. Farmland is being lost to the spread of suburban housing and the balance of the landscape is changing. This is particularly noticeable along Gangies Hill and West Road. West of the junction with Beaufield Road isolated farmhouses are strung along the lane with indigenous vegetation associated with them. East of the junction the development is cramped suburban with ‘golf course’ vegetation - laurels and cherry trees - set in the still predominantly agricultural landscape. On the western edge of this area there are links to the parkland beyond, at High Wych Park and The Manor of Groves, but these give the appearance of being relic rather than maintained historic elements.

ACCESSIBILITY
Frequency/density of footpaths: network along former field boundaries. Condition: not known.

CONDITION
Land cover change: localised
Age structure of tree cover: mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmented
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: declining
Impact of built development: high
Impact of land-use change: high

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER
Impact of landform: apparent
Impact of land cover: apparent
Impact of historic pattern: relic
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: open
Visual unity: incoherent
Distinctiveness/rarity: frequent

CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITION</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>MODERATE</th>
<th>POOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strengthen and reinforce</td>
<td>Improve and conserve</td>
<td>Reconstruct and restore</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conserve and strengthen</td>
<td>Conserve and restore</td>
<td>Restore condition to maintain character</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Safeguard and manage</td>
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Page 175 - East Herts District Landscape Character Assessment
STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND RESTORE

- encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available
- discourage the use of non-native species for woodland and hedgerow planting
- encourage the use of native species of local provenance for all new planting
- encourage the replanting of former hedges along historic boundaries, ensuring that historic features such as ditches and banks are not destroyed
- encourage the reduction of urban impact by dense woodland planting around settlements. Over time this could become a valuable local amenity; public participation in its establishment should be encouraged
- reinforce the small parklands by planting additional woodlands adjacent to their boundaries, using locally indigenous species, of local provenance if possible
- encourage a reversion of arable to pasture and the management of new and existing grasslands to maximise their biodiversity potential, using low-density stock grazing where possible
THORLEY UPLANDS

LOCATION
Arable upland between the western edge of Bishop’s Stortford and the upper Ash valley, bounded by the western Stort Valley to the east and smaller-scale settled areas to the west and south, including both plateau and sloping farmland.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
The western half of this area is an extensive area of monotonous flat arable farmland, lacking vertical elements except for infrequent large blocks of woodland, young roadside trees and the occasional large barn. Very large fields with no hedges are locally characteristic, while isolated farms with associated groups of farm buildings add incident and a sense of productivity. Cattle in meadows around the farms add occasional movement to what is otherwise a static landscape. The eastern half of this area consists of sloping arable farmland around a tributary stream on the west bank of the river Stort. It too is arable land, with some pasture and isolated farms with the occasional group of three or four cottages. The area is remote but lacks tranquillity, due to the aircraft overhead coming and going from Stansted.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS
• almost flat upland plateau and east-facing slope
• extremely open, with no hedges but infrequent large blocks of woodland
• young hedgerow trees planted in threes are a local feature
• roadsides have wide mown verges with ditches
• few settlements or buildings
• distinctive isolated farms, often with very large historic barns
• mainly arable production, with pasture for pedigree cattle around farms
• very rural, almost isolated, with negligible impact from southern edge of Bishop’s Stortford
• constant noise of aircraft from Stansted airport, plus visual impact

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES
• outstanding medieval ailed barn with crown-post roof at Shingle Hall
• river valley is screened by linear development and vegetation, so little awareness of topographical change
• farm buildings; fenced paddocks
• Matham’s Wood has a significant local impact
PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (glacial drift) (Hanslope series).

Topography. Flat to gently undulating uplands, with minor valley of Spell Brook in east.

Degree of slope. 1 in 75.

Altitude range. 60m to 95m.

Hydrology. Several springs feed into Spell Brook off the high land, and there are many ditches and ponds throughout the area.

Land cover and land use. This area is dominated and has been simplified by intensive arable production and has very little woodland and few hedges. Locally there is limited pasture for horse and cattle grazing (pedigree Limousin herd) near farmhouses. There is a 20th-century industrial edge to the village of Spellbrook.

Vegetation and wildlife. There is one large (24ha) wood within this area, and a few scattered woodland fragments. There are very few hedges - this is one of the distinctive features of the area - but some young planting of hedgerow trees, occasionally in groups of three across a ditch. There is no grassland of any ecological importance. Matham’s Wood is ancient woodland, wet boulder-clay woodland dominated by ash/maple/hazel, diversified by wartime disturbance and with some young plantations within. The sloping farmland to the east is species-poor, with relic woodlands of the ash/maple/hazel type and virtually no old grassland.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The historic pattern of this area is masked by current land use and agricultural intensification. Shingle Hall is the site of a medieval park, of which perhaps only the curving footpath around Matham’s Wood and the moat and other earthworks within it are relics. The earliest record of a deer park at Shingle Hall/Matham’s Park is 1477; it is shown on many of the historic maps of the county, with a certain lack of precision in its location. It is now a planned landscape of huge regular and irregular fields without hedges and very dispersed settlement. The remains of a WWII airfield are still apparent around Matham’s Wood.

Field pattern. Although the field pattern varies between regular and semi-regular, this is not apparent, due to the large scale and lack of hedges.

Transport pattern. There is a curiously regular pattern of lanes through the middle of this area which, with the footpaths, creates a geometric network linking the valleys of the Ash and Stort. Although the lanes themselves are often sinuous, they create an angular pattern. They are unhedged, usually with a medium to wide verge and ditch.

Settlements and built form

- Spellbrook is a small settlement on the edge of the Stort, intermediate between Bishop’s Stortford and Sawbridgeworth and characteristic of neither river valley nor upland
- Thorley is now subsumed into the edge of Bishop’s Stortford
- Thorley Hall is an 18th-century modernisation around a 14th-century aisled hall, just outside the ring road. It’s associated village shifted to Thorley Street, mile east, which is now a prelude to Bishop’s Stortford
- Houses and farms are long-established, infrequent and isolated, often with an associated cluster of farm buildings. Large barns are a local feature, with an outstanding medieval aisled barn with crown-post roof at Shingle Hall
- Bishop’s Stortford itself is screened by new development and extensive planting along the A1184 ring road, including a new vernacular housing development at Brook Farm, complete with country park

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

THORLEY UPLANDS - Area 85

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION
Views of the area from outside are very limited. It is visible from the A120, but otherwise screened by topography and vegetation within adjoining areas. Views within the area are extensive, with views from the eastern edge and Trims Green into the shallow wooded middle Stort valley, out to the notable treed edge to the west and, to the north, the wooded edge of Bishop’s Stortford. The scale of landscape elements varies between large and vast but it is unified. There is no sense of enclosure. This would be a tranquil area, with little road noise, were it not for the constant noise from Stansted air traffic.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is a most unusual area, elemental and simple and of a scale undreamed of in the cluttered south west of the county. No doubt it is also bleak in the winter.

VISUAL IMPACT
There is a minor impact of new built development (St Michael’s Mead) on the urban edge of Bishop’s Stortford, which is mainly screened by vegetation. Some farms have prominent large tin roofs. Pylons cross the area and there is a development of a sports field complex on the B1004 north of Exnalls Farm.

ACCESSIBILITY
Frequency/density of waymarked routes - localised; Herts Way along western edge.
Condition: not known. Well signed but frequently narrow track through arable crop. Near Matham’s Wood is a wide former concrete/tarmac track. There is a link route between Perry Green/Spellbrook but few north/south routes.

COMMUNITY VIEWS
This area includes some distinctive and valued elements, e.g. around Trims Green (D).

CONDITION
Land cover change: insignificant
Age structure of tree cover: mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: relic
Management of semi-natural habitat: not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
Impact of built development: low
Impact of land-use change: low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER
Impact of landform: prominent
Impact of land cover: insignificant
Impact of historic pattern: interrupted
Visibility from outside: concealed
Sense of enclosure: open
Visual unity: unified
Distinctiveness/rarity: unusual

CONDITION GOOD
Improve and reinforce
Conserve and strengthen
Safeguard and manage

CONDITION MODERATE
Improve and reinforce
Improve and conserve
Conserve and restore

CONDITION POOR
Reconstruct
Improve and restore
Restore condition to maintain character

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER
WEAK MODERATE STRONG
STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: CONSERVE AND STRENGTHEN

• encourage landowners to create permanent grass strips around field margins and on verges to increase nature conservation interest

• where the loss of ponds and ditches is unavoidable, ensure that they are replaced by new features of at least equivalent nature conservation potential

• encourage the planting of individual trees along ditches and roadsides

• any woodland planting in this area should be of an appropriate scale, i.e. large, and should focus on or link to existing woodlands. All planting should be of locally indigenous species, using stock of local provenance if possible

• encourage the management of woodlands and plantation to achieve good age diversity and a species-rich ground flora, with an emphasis on locally indigenous species

• resist development proposals that would permanently damage the character of this area by altering its scale and landscape pattern

• encourage more planting of hedgerow trees

• promote recognition of roadside/field ditches as potential ecological corridors; discourage use of herbicides, fertiliser run-off, over-zealous management

• encourage woodland planting, but not new hedges, as this would not reflect local landscape character

• encourage the retention of mixed farming, with pasture around farms and hamlets

• resist conversion of pasture to arable and encourage management of grassland to increase biodiversity
APPENDICES

Appendix C  Copy of the relevant Listed Building descriptions for buildings at Claylane Farm and Chalks Farm taken from the English Heritage website.
List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: SMALL BARN AT CLAYLANE FARM AN NORTH SIDE OF YARD NEXT ROAD

List Entry Number: 1177720

Location

SMALL BARN AT CLAYLANE FARM AN NORTH SIDE OF YARD NEXT ROAD, WEST ROAD

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Hertfordshire
District: East Hertfordshire
District Type: District Authority
Parish: Sawbridgeworth

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 02-Oct-1981

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 160888

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.
History
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details
WEST ROAD
1.
5253
(South Side)
Small Barn at
Claylane Farm
on N side of
yard next road
TL 474 153:4/14
II GV
2.
C18. Small 5-bay barn. Timber frame weatherboarded and roofed in
corrugated iron. Central through passage with double doors. Clasped
purlin roof with small knee braces to tie beams. Evidence of inserted
floor lodged on rails, and cattle troughs remain. Picturesque farm
building on roadside.

Listing NGR: TL474015384

Selected Sources
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Map
National Grid Reference: TL 47404 15384

The below map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale
map, please see the attached PDF - 1177720.pdf
List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: LARGE BARN AT CLAYLANE FARM ON WEST SIDE OF YARD

List Entry Number: 1307297

Location

LARGE BARN AT CLAYLANE FARM ON WEST SIDE OF YARD, WEST ROAD

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Hertfordshire
District: East Hertfordshire
District Type: District Authority
Parish: Sawbridgeworth

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II
Date first listed: 02-Oct-1981
Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS
UID: 160887

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

WEST ROAD
1.
5253
(South Side)
Large Barn at
Claylane Farm
on W side of yard
TL 473 153:4/13
I G V
2.
C16, S end extended in C18. Tall 7 bay timberframed weatherboarded barn at right angles to road and facing E. Roof covered in corrugated iron.
Brick base. 2 projecting gabled porches on W in 3rd and 6th bays from N.
Double doors opposite on E side. Heavy C16 timbering at higher S end with massive jowled posts; tension bracing halved over outside of studs, and long curved braces to cambered tie beam. Grooves for wattle infill between wall studs. Queen strut purlin roof reconstructed. C18,5 bay extension to N with unjowled posts, staggered-rails, curved braces to flat tie beams. Interior shows laths fixed over wall studs before weatherboards were fixed and plaster applied from inside. Of special
structural interest combining early and late framing systems in one building.

Listing NGR: TL4738415370

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Map

National Grid Reference: TL 47384 15370

The below map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - 1307297.pdf

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List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.
Name: FARMBUILDINGS AT CHALKS FARM ON WEST, NORTH AND EAST SIDES OF YARD

List Entry Number: 1307959

Location

FARMBUILDINGS AT CHALKS FARM ON WEST, NORTH AND EAST SIDES OF YARD, CONEY GREE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Hertfordshire
District: East Hertfordshire
District Type: District Authority
Parish: Sawbridgeworth

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 02-Oct-1981

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 160762

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.
Details

CONEY GREE
(South End)
Farmbuildings at Chalks
Farm on W, N and E sides
of yard
TL 478 150:4/20
II GV
2.

2.
Early/mid C19. Complete farm building group running round 3 sides of yard.
On N side 6-bay Barn; Timberframe weatherboarded with asymmetrical gabled
roof now covered in old corrugated asbestos sheeting. High plinth of
brick and flint walling on N side. 2 pairs of large double doors to yard on
S. High brick plinth with honeycomb brick diamond to ventilate barn's
W end. Here a 3-bay lean-to open fronted Implement Shed with slate roof
and weatherboarded timberframe sides. Attached and on W side of yard a
brick and flint Stable with gabled red pantile roof and weatherboarded
gables. Attached to barn and enclosing the E side of the yard a lower
timberframed and weatherboarded Storage Range with gabled red pantiled roof
and two square metal ridge ventilators. A picturesque and complete farm
building group. Listed for group value.

Listing NGR: TL4783015049

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Map

National Grid Reference: TL 47830 15049

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map, please see the attached PDF - 1307959.pdf
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