



Hallam Land Management Limited

**Calcott Hall Farm, Brentwood**

**Landscape and Visual Statement**

13<sup>th</sup> March 2019

**FPCR Environment and Design Ltd**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This landscape and visual statement has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (FPCR) on behalf of Hallam Land Management Limited. It considers land at Calcott Hall Farm, Brentwood (see Figure 1), hereafter this land is referred to as 'The Site' and the potential development arrangement is referred to as the 'Development Proposals'.
- 1.2 FPCR is a multi-disciplinary environmental and design consultancy with over 60 years' experience of architecture, landscape, ecology, urban design, masterplanning and environmental impact assessment. The practice is a member of the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and is frequently called upon to provide expert evidence on landscape and visual issues at Public and Local Plan Inquiries.

### The Site

- 1.3 The site is located to the east of the A12 and Ongar Road, it is broadly bounded by Sandpit Lane to the west and Weald Road to the south.
- 1.4 The site boundary discussed within this statement and proposed to Brentwood Borough Council (BBC) during the call for sites, differs from the landscape parcels assessed in the Brentwood Local Plan Pre-Submission Document (Feb 2019), Sustainability Appraisal (SA), HELAA and Green Belt Review. It should be noted that compared to BBC documents the proposed site boundary:
- Excludes Calcott Hall Farm (including business units, farm shop and café) and fields to the immediate north, south and west;
  - Excludes two listed buildings to the east of Sandpit Lane, including pastoral fields falling within their immediate context, and;
  - Includes arable land to the south of site 302C, up to the boundary with Weald Road, is included within the proposed site.
- 1.5 The site is private land and is not publicly accessible. Despite this, High Wood - an area of Ancient Woodland, which is also classified as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) - has evidence of unlawful use for recreation purposes, including dog walking.

### Purpose of this Document

- 1.6 The purpose of this statement is to separately provide a high-level analysis of landscape and visual effects and to set out a landscape strategy for the site and any future development. The discussion is based on a desk-based analysis and survey in the field. As part of the desk-based analysis, this statement considers the evidence base for the Brentwood Local Plan Pre-Submission Document (Feb 2019) and relevant planning policy.
- 1.7 Although this document is not a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), where it discusses the potential for landscape and visual effects, it has been prepared based upon the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, third edition (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, in 2013.

### Proposed Development

- 1.8 Representations have previously been made to Brentwood Borough Council (BBC) and discussions are based on the proposed site area and indicative development arrangement, as set out in the capacity plan (see Figure 2).
- 1.9 The development proposals for the Site are a residential scheme with land provided for a new Primary School if required. The masterplan strategy is landscape led with woodland, trees, hedgerows and water features retained and provided suitable offsets and opportunities for improvement and reinforcement. These existing features define the basis of a containing network of connected green infrastructure.
- 1.10 A new north-south link road is included as part of the proposals, offering a new vehicular route between Ongar Road and Weald Road. The intention is that this route will completely alleviate vehicular pressure on Sandpit Lane, allowing it to be downgraded and returned to a quiet Rural Lane for pedestrians, cyclists and essential access only.
- 1.11 In addition to downgrading Sandpit Lane, the proposals show deep landscaped buffers to Weald Country Park and the Scheduled Monument along the western edge of the site. Sandpit Lane falls broadly on a ridge between the Site and Weald Country Park. Built development avoids the higher contours in proximity to Sandpit Lane, Weald Country Park and the Scheduled Monument.
- 1.12 High Wood is included within the red line of the site with the intention of bringing this Ancient Woodland and LWS under closer management and to control access, which is presently unchecked. The result of this will be to improve the ecological and arboricultural value of this area.
- 1.13 The green infrastructure of the site identifies looped recreational walking routes to help alleviate pressure on existing natural resources, furthermore it shows new, traffic-free connecting routes through the site, providing a safe route from Brentwood and Pilgrim's Hatch to Weald Country Park for the first time.

## 2.0 LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

2.1 The landscape analysis included within this section is supported by Figure 3 and landscape character extracts included at Appendix A.

### Landscape Character

#### National

2.2 The site falls centrally within NCA 111 Northern Thames Basin, which is described as a, “*large and diverse landscape with a similar overarching character of agricultural land, interspersed with woodland, dissected by rivers and influenced by the urban areas of North London*”. Indeed, the NCA comprising 251,000 hectares of land and wraps around the northern edge of London stretching north towards Stevenage and east to the Greater Thames Estuary and the edge of the Suffolk Coast.

2.3 Key characteristics for this area include:

- *“The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. The prominent hills and ridges of the ‘Bagshot Hills’ are notable to the north-west and extensive tracts of flat land are found in the south.*
- *Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy, acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.*
- *Areas capped by glacial sands and gravels have resulted in nutrient-poor, free-draining soils which support remnant lowland heathlands, although these are now small. Areas that have alluvial deposits present are well drained and fertile.*
- *The water bearing underlying Chalk beds are a main source of recharge for the principal London Basin Chalk aquifer.*
- *A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, and slightly steeper valleys of the rivers Stour, Colne and Roman. Numerous springs rise at the base of the Bagshot Beds and several reservoirs are dotted throughout the area*
- *The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. Hertfordshire is heavily wooded in some areas as are parts of Essex, while other areas within Essex are more open in character. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present.*
- *The field pattern is very varied across the basin reflecting historical activity. Informal patterns of 18th-century or earlier enclosure reflect medieval colonisation of the heaths. Regular planned enclosures dating from the Romano-British period are a subtle but nationally important feature on the flat land to the south-east of the area. In the Essex heathlands 18th- and 19th-century enclosure of heathlands and commons followed by extensive 20th-century field enlargement is dominant.*
- *Mixed farming, with arable land predominating in the Hertfordshire plateaux, parts of the London Clay lowlands and Essex heathlands. Grasslands are characteristic of the river valleys throughout. Horticulture and market gardening are found on the light, sandy soils*

*of former heaths in Essex, particularly around Colchester, along with orchards, meadow pasture and leys following numerous narrow rivers and streams.*

- *The diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse and otter.*
- *Rich archaeology including sites related to Roman occupation, with the Roman capital at Colchester and City of St Albans (Verulamium) and links to London. Landscape parklands surrounding 16th- and 17th-century rural estates and country houses built for London merchants are a particular feature in Hertfordshire.*
- *The medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlement remains central to the character of parts of Hertfordshire and Essex. Market towns have expanded over time as have the London suburbs and commuter settlements, with the creation of new settlements such as the pioneering garden city at Welwyn and the planned town at Basildon.*
- *Brick-built dwellings are characteristic from the late 17th century onwards. Prior to this dwellings and farm buildings tended to be timber built with weatherboarding, now mainly painted white but traditionally black or tarred, and whitewashed plaster walls”.*

2.4 The site represents a minor component of this wider NCA. Indeed, in area terms it represents less than 0.02% of NCA 111 and experiences limited intervisibility with wider areas on account of containment by the existing settlement of Brentwood and a robust structure of woodland to the west of the site.

## **Regional**

### Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003)

2.5 The Site falls within the Wooded Hill and Ridge Landscape Type (D) and sub-area ‘Brentwood Hills’ (D2) as set out at p118 to p123 of the assessment. D2 is a large landscape area extending to cover land to the north east and east of Brentwood more than the west and south. The site falls to the western edge of the character area, adjacent to existing settlement edge.

2.6 Key Characteristics of D2 are set out as:

- *“Gently to strongly undulating hills/ridges.*
- *Semi enclosed character due to presence of numerous small woods, large interlocking blocks of woodland and frequent hedgerow trees.*
- *Patchwork of small irregular pasture and arable fields, opening out to medium to large regular arable fields in the centre of the area.*
- *Dense linear settlement pattern along major south west to north east road/rail routes”.*

2.7 The Overall Character of the area is described as follows:

*“The Brentwood Hills have a varied topography comprising a series of ridges and rounded hills. The landform is strongly rolling towards the edges of the character area, flattening out towards the centre on high ground. To the south a slight escarpment occurs between Childerditch and Little Burstead. It is a wooded landscape with many small scattered woods, some large blocks of*

woodland, tree belts of historic parkland and hedgerow trees. As a result, views are often quite confined, but in parts long views are possible over more open farmland and from high ground. Small unenclosed greens, commons and scattered ponds add interest and variety of the area. A number of isolated churches on hilltops are also a distinctive feature. Villages, hamlets, cottages and farmsteads are typically strung out along the narrow lanes, with a dense urban settlement concentrated along the main road and rail routes running through the centre of the area”.

2.8 The Character Assessment offers an evaluation of landscape sensitivity. Under ‘Major urban extensions (>5ha) and new settlements’ it sets out the key sensitivities and change issues as being:

- *“Low to moderate intervisibility*
- *Some ridges, hillsides are more visually exposed*
- *Integrity of woodland, hedgerow field pattern*
- *Coalescence*
- *Islands of tranquillity in the north.”*

Area D2 is of Moderate sensitivity and it is one of ten character areas (out of 35 in total) identified within the study area as having Moderate sensitivity to Major Urban Extensions, the rest all being of High sensitivity. Supporting text suggests that; *“Any new development should include strong new woodland/hedgerow framework planting particularly where arable farmland is in poor condition”*.

2.9 A desk-based review and survey in the field confirms that:

- the site and study area exhibit characteristics identified for D2;
- there is limited intervisibility between the site and wider area of D2 due to the presence of existing settlement, woodland and tree cover within the site and its context; and
- intervisibility is confined to the immediate context, except to the south where falling landform offers some intervisibility with taller buildings within the existing settlement of Brentwood.

2.10 The development proposals are landscape led and retain structural landscape features, which limits the potential for adverse landscape effects.

## **District**

### Mid Essex Landscape Character Assessments (September 2006)

2.11 This landscape character study was commissioned jointly by Braintree District Council, Brentwood Borough Council, Chelmsford Borough Council, Maldon District Council and Uttlesford District Council. Chapter 4 sets out the ‘Landscape Character of Brentwood Borough’.

2.12 The site is situated on the eastern edge of character area F15 ‘Weald Wooded Farmlands’, as identified by the ‘Landscape Character of Brentwood Borough’ assessment at p131 to p133.

2.13 The character of the site is generally consistent with the descriptions offered but it does lie adjacent to existing urbanising influences. The key characteristics are identified as:

- *“Swathe of relatively open commons.*
- *Wooded rolling hills and slopes.*



- *Narrow, tree-lined roads.*
- *Intricate network of woodland and grassland within Weald Country Park.*
- *Sense of tranquillity away from main road corridors”.*

2.14 Under ‘Overall Character’ the assessment notes:

*“Situated to the northwest of Brentwood urban area, a long relatively open swathe of common land (Navestock Common and South Weald Common) dominates the character of the central belt of this area. The rolling hills and slopes within the area facilitate views across adjacent wooded slopes. A network of narrow lanes cross the area and are sometimes tree-lined, with canopies covering the road, providing a sense of enclosure. An intricate network of grassland, speckled with single mature parkland trees and woodland within Weald Country Park contributes to localised sense of place within the area. Settlement pattern consists of a small number of linear hamlets and scattered farmsteads peppered within the landscape. There is a sense of tranquillity away within woodland clearings and along several of the narrow rural lanes, however this is disturbed in close proximity to the M25, A12, A128 and A1023 road corridors, which border the area”.*

2.15 In response to the characteristics identified, a desk-based review and survey in the field confirms that:

- the site has limited scope for views across rolling hills due to the enclosed nature of its surrounding context;
- where views are more open to the south of the site, intervisibility is with the settlement of Brentwood, rather than with adjacent landscape character areas, such as F13;
- the A12 exerts an influence over the south-eastern portion of the site;
- where the site is presently farmed, it is in arable use, rather than contributing to the *‘intricate network of grassland’* noted in the overall characteristics for area F15; and
- the development proposals are landscape led and retain structural landscape features, which limits the potential for adverse landscape effects.

2.16 The development proposals present an opportunity to downgrade Sandpit Lane, both enhancing the tranquillity of this narrow lane and the eastern edge of Weald Country Park. The site falls on the eastern edge of this character area and the potential for landscape effects is minimised by a lack of intervisibility and a landscape led masterplanning approach.

### **Site and Immediate Context**

2.17 As shown at Figure 4, the site itself comprises a number of large arable fields, areas of amenity grassland, two notable areas of semi-natural broadleaved woodland, an area of recently planted coniferous plantation woodland and a series of ponds. Field boundaries vary in condition but most feature intact hedgerows that have been left to grow to a mature size and are interspersed with mature hedgerow trees.

2.18 The A12 exerts an influence over the southern field parcels of the site, which also experience views to the south-east towards Brentwood. The northern field parcels have a visual relationship with the existing settlement edge, allotments and the Sow and Grow nursery/ garden centre, which has planning consent for housing. The central portions of the site experience visual containment from surrounding tree cover and woodland, combined with undulating topography.

## Topography

- 2.19 The following descriptions are supported by Figure 5.
- 2.20 The context of the site features rolling hills, slopes and (to the south west) river valleys. Topography ranges between 25m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) along the Ingrebourne River up to 115m AOD to the south of Brentwood. Generally, within the study area, mounded high points reach 100m AOD.
- 2.21 Existing settlement at Brentwood and Pilgrims Hatch falls on higher land and at a similar elevation to the majority of the site. To the west of the site, wooded landform associated with Weald Country Park quickly falls away. Land to the south of the site also drops away.
- 2.22 The topography of the site varies with the highest point at c.102m AOD falling along the western edge, close to the Scheduled Monument (Hillfort). The northern portion of the site relatively flat and exhibits a gradual fall to the north east to around 95m AOD. Landform within the central portion of the site falls away from c.100m AOD to the east and south east reaching c.92m AOD. The southern portion of the site is more intricate and features a number of undulations and steeper gradients. One of the valley 'undulations' has been dammed to form three cascading ponds. The south-eastern corner of the site (adjacent to the A12) is the lowest point sitting at less than 75m AOD.

## Designations

- 2.23 The following analysis is supported by Figure 6.
- 2.24 The site itself is not subject to landscape designation, such as National Park or AONB.
- 2.25 The south western corner of the site falls within Brentwood saved Policy C8 'Special Landscape Areas', however SLA is not carried forward within the Brentwood Local Plan Pre-Submission Document (Feb 2019).
- 2.26 To the west of the site, and beyond Sandpit Lane, is Weald Country Park, which is a Grade II Registered Park & Gardens, Country Park and Conservation Area. Weald Park is wooded, where it falls in the context of the site, and features topography that falls away from Sandpit Lane thereby limiting intervisibility and the degree of influence that development proposals may have.
- 2.27 High Wood, which falls within the site boundary, is Ancient Woodland and a Local Wildlife Site (LWS). This woodland would be both retained and improved under development proposals and a green buffer of at least 15m provided between the woodland and any development. Ecological and arboricultural matters are considered in detail within separate reports but the analysis has informed the development proposals to date and arrangement of green infrastructure.
- 2.28 Heritage features within the immediate context of the site require careful consideration. Heritage and archaeological matters are considered in detail within the Heritage DBA, however, the following provides a brief summary:

Within the immediate context of the site there are a number of historic designations including:

- South Weald Camp Iron Age Hillfort (scheduled monument)
- Weald Park Conservation Area
- Langtons (grade II listed building)
- Langtons Forge (grade II listed building)

- Rose & Crown Inn (grade II listed building)
  - Halfway House Farm (grade II listed building)
- 2.29 These heritage designations fall outside of the site boundary and beyond landscape buffers that are identified in the development proposals. The landscape buffers along the western edge of the site are between 80m and 130m in width and would be publicly accessible. This landscaped green space, along with use of interpretation signage, will provide increased opportunities for appreciation and understanding of the hillfort and Weald Park.

### **Townscape**

- 2.30 The settlement of Pilgrims Hatch originated around the junction of Ongar Road, Coxtie Green Road and Orchard Lane. By the time of the 1921 OS survey the settlement around this junction remained mostly unchanged in extent, however a large area of new, isolated settlement to the south east (around Bishop's Hall) was emerging based on a grid-like street pattern.
- 2.31 By 1938 development along Ongar Road and off Larchwood and Broomwood Gardens was beginning to merge this once isolated area of settlement with the established and now expanding Pilgrims Hatch. In a similar vein, Brentwood had also spread north along Ongar Road and Doddinghurst Road to a point where the two settlements of Brentwood and Pilgrims Hatch coalesce with two arms of Hurstwood Avenue separated only by a narrow gap of land (to feature the A12 at some point in the future).
- 2.32 The 1961 OS survey showed consolidation of the two settlements with areas of linear settlement reinforced by large areas of new housing. By the early 1960s Pilgrims Hatch had a similar form to the settlement we see today. Indeed, although infill has occurred in the following 55 years, it has not been on the scale of expansion seen in the 1938 to 1961 timeframe. By 1990, infill development, particularly in the context of the A12 had effectively merged Brentwood with Pilgrims Hatch. This is illustrated by photo viewpoints A to C at Figures 18 to 20.
- 2.33 Road users travelling along Ongar Road towards the A12 experience urbanising influences in either direction. Ongar Road itself has a wide carriageway, equivalent to three lanes with the central portion chevroned out of use. Footways and shared footway/cycle ways feature either side of the highway, frequently beyond grass verges with a varying presence of trees. The architectural vernacular along Ongar Road does not change considerably when crossing between Brentwood and Pilgrims Hatch, indeed it is mirrored either side of the A12 where Hurstwood Avenue addresses Brentwood to the south (see figure 19). Along Ongar Road (in the context of the site) urbanising influences vary in their degree, but are unbroken. The A12 acts as a punctuation in the experience but not to the degree that Brentwood and Pilgrims Hatch feel distinct. There is no perception of leaving one settlement and arriving in another. Furthermore, there is no signage to this effect
- 2.34 The site area is set back from existing sports pitches and farmland around Calcott Hall Farm. The site and proposed development south of High Wood is screened by vegetation for users of Ongar Road. Part of the southern portion of the site is visible from a short section of the A12, close to Weald Road. Despite this, all existing development in the context of these views is screened from the A12 by existing vegetation that flanks the road cutting, See photo viewpoints D and E at Figure 21.
- 2.35 Development of the site would not contribute to an increased sense of settlements merging for users of Ongar Road, Weald Road or the A12.

### 3.0 VISUAL ANALYSIS

- 3.1 As noted within the Landscape Analysis section, in broad terms the site experiences visual containment from surrounding vegetation and settlement. As such, the visual envelope of the site is limited and visual receptors with a likelihood of experience visual effects as a result of built development on the site are limited to those that fringe the site boundaries. Where views open up to the south of the site due to falling topography, there is some distant intervisibility between the site and the upper elevations of taller, commercial scale buildings within Brentwood.
- 3.2 The site is under consideration for residential development with associated highway infrastructure and green infrastructure. There is potential for the site to deliver a primary school, but this would be built within similar height parameters to the residential component of the scheme. Vegetation around the boundaries of the site (including High Wood) and in the immediate site context has historic origins and so is frequently of a mature size, notably taller than the ridgelines of residential dwellings. The landscape led capacity plan retains these structural features, thereby providing a mature setting to any new built form and helping to contain and soften views.
- 3.3 Photo viewpoints support the descriptions within this section and are set at Figure 1. The photo viewpoints are shown at Figures 7 to 17. Descriptions of the visual envelope and experience of specific receptors can be read in conjunction with the aerial photograph at Figure 4.

#### Likely Visual Receptors

##### Residential

- 3.4 Two dwellings to the north of Sandpit Lane back on to the site but feature open boundaries and narrow gardens that fall to the side elevations of each building in a slender, linear arrangement. The open nature of the plot boundaries and presence of large glazed conservatories on both dwellings mean that they experience a strong visual relationship with the northern portion of the site.
- 3.5 Approximately 19 dwellings, to the north of the site, present rear elevations beyond deep garden and boundaries defined by close board fencing and mature trees defining former field boundaries. Visibility of the site is partly filtered by these existing features.
- 3.6 Dwellings along Ongar Road, beyond those mentioned above, experience limited intervisibility with the site due to allotments, hedgerows and High Wood. The site boundary only meets Ongar Road for a very short (c.60 metre) section, and at this point dwellings fronting Ongar Road are set back on a parallel road separated by a landscape strip featuring mature tree and shrub planting. A dwelling to the west of Ongar Road is included within land allocated for housing redevelopment. Visibility of the site would be filtered.
- 3.7 Dwellings to the west of the site, including Langtons and Langtons Forge (both grade II listed), have limited to no views of the site due to deep private gardens, retained pasture and mature tree lined hedgerows and conifer shelter belts.
- 3.8 Halfway House Farm (grade II listed building) and outbuildings are located to the south of the site, beyond Weld Road. Halfway House fronts retained hedgerows along the site boundary and a retained barn, which falls outside of the site boundary. The development proposals show a 40m landscape buffer to the site boundary which could be planted to lessen the visual effects of development in the longer term.

- 3.9 Settlement on the north-eastern edge of Brentwood will have limited opportunity for views and only from upper floor windows due to screening provided by intervening vegetation, particularly in the context of the A12.

#### Public Rights of Way

- 3.10 The site itself is not publicly accessible and no public rights of way lead to the site boundary.
- 3.11 Weald Country Park features a number of public rights of way and permissive walking routes. Of these only Bridleway (ref: 193) has the potential to offer views in to the site. To the south west of the site this route runs parallel to Sandpit Lane for approximately 280m. Although Bridleway 192 falls at a lower elevation, relative to the site, and features intervening vegetation and the influence of Sandpit Lane, there is the potential for partial to glimpsed views in to the site – primarily in winter when vegetation is not in leaf. In overall terms opportunities for views are limited to a short section of this route and development is drawn back from the western edge of the site where landform is highest.

#### Roads

- 3.12 Ongar Road is tree lined along much of its length in the context of the site, it is also fringed by High Wood which limits the potential for views. A direct vehicular access point with the site is identified along Ongar Road. Where access is proposed visual changes would be notable, however, Ongar Road only shares a 60m boundary with the site and so visual effects would be limited in extent.
- 3.13 Sandpit Lane offers road users views in to the site from its northern extent (north of Langtons Forge) and its southern extent (south of the Scheduled Monument). Where views are possible, they are typically filtered by roadside vegetation including hedgerow planting and trees. In summer the degree of screening would be increased. In places Sandpit Lane passes at a lower elevation, relative to the site, further limiting the potential for views. The experience for road users is not consistent and development as currently proposed would largely be screened from view beyond broad landscape buffers.
- 3.14 Eastern sections of Weald Road effectively pass the site ‘at grade’. As the highway passes west along the site boundary the route is cut in to the landform and sits at a slightly lower elevation relative to the site. Around Halfway House Farm the road is once again at grade before falling away once again leading all the way to Sandpit Lane. The embankment between the site and Weald Road is varied in profile but features an unbroken arrangement of hedgerows and trees along its complete length. In places the hedgerows have become outgrown, forming an arched canopy with trees on the opposite carriageway. Glimpsed to partial views in to the site will be possible for road users, particularly in winter, however they will tend to be fleeting and mostly filtered. The development capacity plan for the site proposes landscape buffers of no less than 20m in depth.
- 3.15 Users of the A12 typically pass to the east of the site within a deep cutting. The cutting reduces in height and landform levels out to the south close to the road bridge for Weald Road. At this point the south-eastern corner of the site sits level with the A12 before site landform rises gradually to the west. The A12 features vegetation along its boundary to the west, which is gappy in places but does provide some visual containment when in leaf. Higher landform within the southern-most portion of the site experiences views of the A12. Development proposals provide a landscape buffer to the A12 that is 40m in depth, this could enable the creation of a planted bund.

### Other Receptors

- 3.16 The South Weald Cricket Club sits on the site of the Scheduled Monument, a former Hill Fort. As such, it occupies a slightly elevated position relative to the site. The boundary of the cricket pitch is defined by mature trees and scattered scrub. Vegetation is gappy and allows views through to the south-western portions of the site. The capacity plan proposes a buffer of no less than 100m to the site boundary allowing opportunities for a significant swathe of landscaped open space to filter views and provide a sensitive green setting.
- 3.17 The proposed development would be mostly screened from view for users of the farm shop and surrounding businesses due to the inward facing nature of buildings arranged around courtyards. There are few windows in the direction of the site, however, where views would be possible, for example from the farm shop café, the play area and access road leading from Ongar Road, then these would be clear and uninterrupted, although only a small part of the overall development would be visible.
- 3.18 Users of the allotments, to the north-east of the site, will have potential for localised views of housing through gaps in the existing vegetation defining the boundary. This will be particularly true in winter. Users already experience urbanising influences from adjacent commercial land uses.

### Likely Visual Envelope

- 3.19 Vegetation, landform and existing built form, often interacting together, act to limit views to within a short distance. Although the parameters for development are not set, the strong visual containment that the site experiences will limit the potential for visual effects.
- 3.20 The visual envelope of the potential development is primarily limited to receptors that fall along the boundaries of the site. This includes residents with dwellings that back on to the site, users of roads passing the site boundaries and users of the allotments and cricket pitch. The landform of the site allows for longer distance views to the south-east, in the direction of Brentwood, however, these are distant in nature and limited to taller, multi-storey buildings around the town centre.
- 3.21 Where the opportunity for views has been identified, the capacity plan proposes landscape buffers with appropriate treatment and vegetation reinforcement to mitigate potential effects.

## 5.0 ANALYSIS OF EMERGING LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE

### Brentwood Local Plan Pre-Submission Document (Feb 2019)<sup>1</sup>

- 5.1 The publication draft version of the Brentwood Local Plan includes a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) where the site and others considered as part of the allocation process are appraised.

### Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Brentwood Local Plan (January 2019)<sup>2</sup>

- 5.2 Sustainability Appraisal, Appendix IV, Table A, Pilgrims Hatch (p.115).

*“To the west/south west, the parcel of land between the A12, A128 and Sandpit Lane mostly comprises a preferred allocation (HELAA 010; 1.2ha) and large shortlisted omission site (302c; 53ha), which is being promoted for 800 homes (with the scheme comprising most of the HELAA site plus a small additional area of land directly to the south, stretching down to Weald Lane). The site contributes to Green Belt purposes to a ‘moderate-high’ extent, and the site is significantly constrained in heritage, biodiversity and potentially landscape terms; however, the scheme promoters are offering to make land available for a primary school.”*

On the basis of this appraisal the site is deemed suitable to progress to final shortlist (Table 5.2).

- 5.3 The site comprises approximately 48ha of land, not 53ha as set out in the SA. To the north-west of the site some of the omitted land forms an additional buffer to Weald Country Park. The contribution to Green Belt purposes was stated as being to a Moderate extent in the October 2018 version of the SA.

- 5.4 Within the Appendix V, Table 5.2 (p.120 to p134) section of the SA the site placed in site option clusters which are then tested against the SA topics. Under the ‘Landscape’ Sustainability Topic the SA (p.113) notes:

*“West of Ongar Road -as discussed, is heavily constrained in landscape terms. It is visible from locations along the existing Pilgrims Hatch settlement edge (although screening vegetation -i.e. trees and hedgerows -appears to be fairly strong), from Weald Road (which links Brentwood to the village of South Weald, and along which screening vegetation appears less strong) and from along the length of Sandpit Lane, which is a narrow lane with a rural character(with a mature hedgerow, but with at least one notable gap providing a view across the site uphill to the built-up area of Brentwood). There might be views of the site from within Weald Country Park, although this is uncertain.”*

- 5.5 The visual envelope of the site is described in detail in section 3 of this statement, in response to the findings of the SA ‘Landscape’ Topic, the following can be summarised from this Statement:

- There is only one publicly accessible opportunity for views of the site from Ongar Road (and therefore Pilgrims Hatch) – this is where the site fronts on to the junction between Ongar Road and Dounsell Court. Other locations are either private and/ or limited by vegetation or intervening land falling outside of the site boundary. This Statement would concur that along the eastern edge of the site screening by vegetation ‘appears to be fairly strong’;
- Views from Weald Road are filtered at present by existing vegetation comprising hedgerows and trees and varying topography caused by road cuttings. Glimpsed view in to the site will be

<sup>1</sup> Brentwood Local Plan, Pre-Submission Document, Brentwood Borough Council (February 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Brentwood Local Plan, SA Report DRAFT version for Elected Councillors. Produced by AECOM for Brentwood Borough Council (January 2019).

possible for road users, particularly in winter, however views will tend to be fleeting, mostly filtered and can be addressed through sensitive masterplanning;

- Views are not possible ‘*along the length*’ of Sandpit Lane, instead they are limited both in extent and nature by existing vegetation, dwellings and land that fall outside of the site boundary. Views in to the site are possible north of Langtons Forge and south of the Scheduled Monument but not from sections of road falling between. Where views are possible, they are typically filtered by roadside vegetation including hedgerow planting and trees and steep banks formed by localised road cutting. The development proposes the downgrade of Sandpit Lane to pedestrian, cycle and access traffic only and offers significant landscape buffers, which would protect and enhance this ‘*narrow lane with a rural character*’;
- Topography on the eastern edge of Weald County Park falls away quickly, limiting the potential for views beyond all but the eastern-most edge. This edge is wooded in character and is accessible via a bridleway which passes parallel to Sandpit Lane at points. Where views are not screened by vegetation, there will be potential for glimpsed views of the western edges of the site.

5.6 Under landscape conclusions, the SA noted that:

5.7 “*Taking a precautionary approach, and in the absence of detailed evidence, it is appropriate to conclude that all alternatives would lead to significant negative effects. Brentwood Borough, as a whole, is sensitive from a landscape perspective*”.

5.8 There are always variations when viewing at a high level and in respect of the proposed development at Calcott Hall Farm, the following points and benefits should be noted:

- The site has urbanising influences including, but not limited to, road infrastructure such as the A12, existing settlement edge to the north and adjacent commercial land uses at Calcott Hall Farm;
- The site is capable of delivering a scheme that is landscape led and retains structural landscape features of merit that contribute positively to character. It also has the potential to positively reinforce landscape character;
- Where intervisibility between landscape and visual receptors has been identified, the masterplan can deliver appropriate landscape buffers; and
- There is potential for beneficial effects to come from development of the site, for example as a result of downgrading of Sandpit Lane and restoring it to a quiet rural lane and by delivering more than 50% of the site as green infrastructure that directly contributes to borough wide aims (as set out later in this statement).

5.9 The SA also notes in its landscape conclusions that the proposed site is ‘*notably constrained*’. It is worth reiterating that the site has a tightly contained visual envelope relative to its size. Limited intervisibility, particularly in the direction of Weald Country Park, minimises the potential extent over which landscape and visual effects may be experienced and also their significance. A sensitive masterplanning approach, as proposed, will limit the potential for negative landscape and visual effects. The beneficial effects that development would bring should also weigh in the balance and include: enhanced accessibility and connectivity between existing recreational sites; improved woodland and existing on-site habitat management; enhancements to Sandpit Lane and increased opportunities for appreciation and understanding of the hillfort and Weald Country Park.



### Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity Study: Potential and Strategic Allocation Options (October 2018)<sup>3</sup>

- 5.10 This study forms part of the evidence base for the draft Brentwood Local Plan. It assesses the Landscape Sensitivity and the Landscape Capacity of potential development sites brought to the attention of Brentwood Borough Council as part of the SHLAA process.
- 5.11 The site is partly covered by area 302C within the study. The differences between the assessed area and proposed site are set out at Appendix B and described below:
- Pastoral fields to the north of Langtons and east of Langton's Forge (both listed buildings) are excluded from the proposed site boundary. This reduces the western spread of the site and pulls a portion of the site away from Weald Country Park and the two listed buildings;
  - Arable land east of study area 302C, including fields to the north, west and south of the farm shop and businesses at Calcott Hall Farm are excluded from the site boundary. This pulls the site area back from the farm and A12, and;
  - Arable land to the south of site 302C, up to the boundary with Weald Road, is included within the proposed site.
- 5.12 The study presents its findings at Table 11 (p.30). These are caveated by noting that:
- "A small number of Sites were assessed to have 'split' criteria's, whereby the site could be considered to fall under multiple criteria for either Landscape and Visual Sensitivity and Landscape Value. Therefore, this is reflected in a 'split' assessment of Landscape Capacity. Equally, a small number of sites, by virtue of their scale and a range of characteristics, may contain smaller areas that are of a differing Landscape Capacity. These considerations are reflected in the assessment results. Refer to the individual assessment sheets in Appendix L3 for further details".*

#### Appendix L2 – Summary of Assessment Results

- 5.13 At appendix L2<sup>4</sup> the study noted that Landscape Capacity 'Varies Across Site' and at paras 4.3.8 and 4.3.9 it offers more detail on this point, noting that:
- "Site 302C is a relatively large Site considered to be of High Landscape Sensitivity and a Medium - High Landscape Value. The Site is located west of the Ongar Road and beyond the existing settlement extents of Pilgrim's Hatch. The Site is adjacent to and partially overlaps an existing SLA and the western extents of the Site are in fairly close proximity to the Weald Country Park Registered Park and Garden, with the potential to influence setting. Whilst, overall, the Site has a Low or Low-Medium Landscape Capacity to be entirely developed, some smaller areas may have a slightly higher capacity where landscape value and sensitivity are potentially lower and/or where development is in closer to proximity to nearby urban areas (i.e. areas around and adjacent to existing ribbon development along the Ongar Road, at the eastern extents of the Site).*
- This being said, where the western extents of the Site overlap the SLA and are in closest proximity to the Registered Park and Garden, the land may be considered important to the assets setting. As such, the western extents of the Site have a higher Landscape Value resulting in a further reduced Landscape Capacity (i.e. **Low** Landscape Capacity at western extents of Site). Revisions to the boundary of 302C may result in a higher overall Landscape Capacity".*

<sup>3</sup> Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity Study: Potential and Strategic Allocation Options, Brentwood Borough Council, Reg 19 Pre-Submission Report Reference: CE-BW-0585-RP02 – FINAL. 29 October 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Appendix L2 - Brentwood Potential and Strategic Allocations Sites - Summary of Assessment of Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity, Brentwood Borough Council, 29 October 2018.

- 5.14 Under General Recommendations the study notes:

*“Consideration of development of any of the Sites should be informed in the first instance at the master planning stage with reference to the published landscape character assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006). A site-specific assessment on landscape and visual effects should inform an iterative design process and a landscape and visual impact assessment is likely to be required to accompany any planning applications for individual Sites and in particular the Strategic Site Options. Consideration of landscape aspects should be integrated with consideration of good design, open space strategies, green infrastructure plans, biodiversity targets etc. to provide sustainable development at any site. Any development should also reflect and seek to improve retained or important landscape characteristics, with reference to the design guidance contained in any Local Character Assessments of the time”.*

- 5.15 The 2006 Landscape Assessment, along with detailed analysis set out in this note has informed the development proposals as set out in the Capacity Plan. Despite its relative size the site has a tightly contained visual envelope, thereby limiting the potential extent over which effects may be experienced. The capacity plan for the site is landscape led and retains structural landscape features of merit. Where the opportunity for views has been identified or the setting of important landscape or heritage asset is important, then the capacity plan proposes landscape buffers at appropriate depths ranging from 20m up to 140m. Development areas within the capacity plan are focused within areas of the site that are of lower sensitivity and built form is contained by a connected green infrastructure framework that comprises more than 50% of the site area, see Figure 2.

#### Appendix L3 – Detailed Site Assessment Sheets

- 5.16 Release sometime after the wider study was published, the assessment sheets provided a detailed analysis for site 302C (and others) and relevant extracts are included at Appendix D. Page 76 of the appendix provides an assessment commentary across five sections as follows.

- Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity – High

In response to the reasoning text provided, development would replace arable land and distinctive features would be retained and reinforced *not* replaced. As noted in the assessment, the site is not designated in landscape terms and furthermore Pilgrims Hatch is not designated as a Conservation Area or similar. The High sensitivity assessment is contrary to these points. The site and development would provide the opportunity to deliver a more sensitive transition between built environment and countryside than is presently evident.

- Visual Sensitivity – Medium/High

It can be agreed that visual sensitivity does vary across the site and not all parts of the site are visually important. The site has a limited role in providing a setting to the settlement and where it has limited intervisibility to the west, for example with Weald Country Park, the Capacity Plan proposes significant landscape buffers and mitigation.

- Resultant Overall Landscape Sensitivity – High

No comments are provided within the assessment. The methodology and matrix used to determine overall Landscape Sensitivity is heavily skewed towards a ‘High’ outcome. With 5 potential boxes for a high effect, versus 3 for a medium effect and only 1 box for a low effect.

- Landscape Value - Medium/High

The SLA local designation has not been carried through to the emerging Local Plan and Weald Country Park is wooded where it falls in proximity of the site with landform falling swiftly away. Intervisibility is limited. It can be agreed that Landscape Value varies across the site, which is why the Capacity Plan proposes significant landscape buffers and mitigation, particularly to the west of the site.

- Landscape Capacity – Low-Medium/Low

The assessment comments that '*Eastern areas of the Site likely to have slightly higher capacity, but still limited with a number of landscape characteristics requiring consideration and protection*'. In-line with this the Capacity Plan shows development areas located to the east of the site and appropriate buffers provided to environmental features, as identified within detailed ecological and arboricultural surveys and reporting.

### **Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (October 2018)<sup>5</sup>**

- 5.17 Within this document the site (ref 302C) is deemed to be '*suitable, available and achievable*' for housing (p.56).

### **Green Belt Study Part III<sup>6</sup>**

- 5.18 Under Brentwood's Green Belt Studies Part II the site and its immediate context falls within a broader parcel numbered 34. At a more detailed level within the Part III study the site is referenced as 302C, in-line with the emerging Local Plan. The differences between the proposed site and parcel 302C are set out earlier and shown graphically at Appendix C.
- 5.19 The analysis within the part III study is comprehensive and draws in aspects of landscape and visual analysis as part of the overall process.
- 5.20 The site (302C) would require release from the green belt, however the site offers a clear, strong, permanent boundary in the form of Sandpit Lane and Weald Country Park which would prevent unrestricted sprawl to the west and Weald Road to the south which is a strong physical feature reinforced by tree planting. The A12 exerts an influence over the southern field parcels of the site and the northern field parcels have a visual relationship with the existing settlement edge and Sow and Grow nursery/ garden centre, which has planning consent for housing.
- 5.21 Purpose 2 of the green belt prevents neighbouring towns merging in to each other. Irrespective of whether Pilgrims Hatch constitutes a distinct town, an analysis of townscape in this document highlights that Pilgrims Hatch and Brentwood have already merged along Ongar Road with development effectively straddling the A12, see Figures 4 and 18 to 20. This finding is reinforced by Brentwood's proposed housing allocations R16 and R17, which also straddle the A12 and extend this interface, see figure 22.
- 5.22 In comparison, the proposed site boundary is pulled back from the existing sports pitches and farmland around Calcott Hall Farm and Ongar Road and the A12 is features dense vegetation along the embankment sides. As such, development of the site would not reinforce or contribute to this perception on the ground. A small part of the southern portion of the site is visible from the

<sup>5</sup> Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HEELA), Brentwood Borough Council, (October 2018). Available online.

<sup>6</sup> Green Belt Study Part III: Assessment of Potential Housing, Employment and Mixed Use Sites in the Green Belt and their Relative Contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt Designation, Reg 19 Pre-Submission, produced by Crestwood Environmental Ltd for Brentwood Borough Council, (31 Jan 2019). Available online.

A12, but all existing settlement at Brentwood is screened by existing vegetation flanking the road cutting, see photo viewpoints at Figure 21.

- 5.23 The site has a restricted visual envelope that is limited to views within a short distance. The site is not publicly accessible. As noted earlier, development of the site would not contribute to an increased sense of settlements merging for users of Ongar Road, Weald Road or the A12.

#### **Green Infrastructure Strategy (Sept 2015)<sup>7</sup>**

- 5.24 Development would support some of the aims of the GIS, specifically it could:
- Deliver of one of the Greenways identified by Brentwood by downgrading Sandpit Lane and preventing traffic use by redirecting traffic through the site. This would allow it be returned to a quiet Rural Lane for pedestrians, cyclists and essential access only. Its setting could be improved through new planting within landscape buffers along the western edge of the proposed development site (p29 & 30 of the GIS);
  - Help to improve pedestrian and cycle linkages along Weald Road, connecting Brentwood with Weald Country Park more successfully. In turn this would link Weald Country Park with St Faith's Park (p30);
  - Deliver multiple natural, informal and equipped areas for play to the north of Brentwood (Pilgrims Hatch) in-line with recommendation 4.1 (p22) and adjacent to a locality identified need (map on p30).

#### **Sport, Leisure and Open Space Assessment Final Report (2016)<sup>8</sup>**

- 5.25 The capacity plan sets out the principles for a connected framework of green infrastructure that comprises more than 50% of the site area. This includes formal and informal open space, areas for play, allotments, new habitat and structural planting. The site has the potential to contribute positively to the aims and recommendations of this assessment, thereby bringing benefits to the wider area.

<sup>7</sup> Green Infrastructure Strategy, produced by Groundwork for Brentwood Borough Council, (Sept 2015). Available online.

<sup>8</sup> Sport, Leisure and Open Space Assessment Final Report, produced by Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Ltd on behalf of Brentwood Borough Council, (August 2016).

## 6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### Landscape and Visual Summary

- 6.1 The proposed site boundary differs slightly, and is of a smaller scale, compared to the site assessed in the Brentwood Publication Draft Local Plan, SA, HELAA and Green Belt Review. This, in-part, mitigates for direct environmental effects identified within the emerging Local Plan evidence base. To mitigate for indirect effects, the development proposals are landscape led, retain structural landscape features and propose appropriate landscape buffers where necessary. This approach limits the potential for adverse landscape and visual effects.

#### Landscape

- 6.2 The site itself is not subject to landscape designation, such as National Park or AONB.
- 6.3 The site and study area exhibit characteristics identified for Landscape Character Areas NCA111, D2 and F15, which it falls within. There is limited intervisibility between the site and the wider landscape due to the presence of existing settlement, woodland and tree cover within the site and its context. As such, intervisibility is confined to the immediate context, except to the south where falling landform offers some intervisibility with taller buildings within the existing settlement of Brentwood.
- 6.4 The development proposals are landscape led and retain structural landscape features, which limits the potential for adverse landscape effects.

#### Visual

- 6.5 Vegetation, landform and existing built form, often interacting together, act to limit views to within a short distance. The visual envelope of the potential development is primarily limited to receptors that fall along the boundaries of the site.
- 6.6 Where the opportunity for views has been identified, the capacity plan proposes landscape buffers with appropriate treatment and vegetation reinforcement to mitigate potential effects.

#### Conclusions

- 6.7 A collaborative approach has been taken between landscape, urban design, ecological, highway, drainage, heritage and other professionals as part of the ongoing planning and design process. This has facilitated a considered scheme of which the landscape components are an integral part.
- 6.8 A sensitive, landscape-led masterplanning approach will effectively embed mitigation within the evolving scheme, thereby limiting the potential for negative landscape and visual effects and reducing their significance. Development of the site has the potential to deliver beneficial effects and, whilst there is scope to refine proposals on the basis of further technical work, there is no overriding constraint that cannot be overcome or barrier to delivering a sensitive scheme.
- 6.9 From a landscape and visual perspective, the key benefits for the scheme are the opportunities to:
- positively address policy requirements, supporting guidelines and to meet higher level objectives for green infrastructure within the borough;
  - downgrade Sandpit Lane and provide an alternative vehicular route between Ongar Road and Weald Road that integrates within a wider development masterplan;

- carefully consider the setting of heritage, ecological and arboricultural assets and provide appropriate landscape buffers that are sensitive and publicly accessible, offering interpretation where beneficial;
- define a new, logical, robust and defensible boundary to the green belt using a downgraded Sandpit Lane and the wider area of Weald Country Park;
- respond to the landscape and visual baseline situation, retaining the landscape structure through a landscape led masterplanning approach and locating development within the least sensitive parts of the site;
- bring High Wood under closer management and control access;
- allow for direct, traffic-free pedestrian/ cycle movement between the existing settlement areas to the east of the site and Weald Country Park to the west.

6.10 Having regard to the high-level landscape and visual analysis, the effect of the proposed development as illustrated on the capacity plan would be limited.

## Appendix A – Landscape Character Extracts





## Summary

The Northern Thames Basin is a diverse area which extends from Hertfordshire in the west to the Essex coast in the east. It is separated from the North Sea and Thames Estuary by a narrow band of land that makes up the Greater Thames Estuary National Character Area (NCA). Included within this NCA are the suburbs of North London and also historic towns and cities including St. Albans and Colchester, as well as new and planned towns such as Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and Basildon. Although arable agriculture is a large industry in the area the soil quality ranges from good to poor quality. The London Clay provides a poor quality soil that becomes waterlogged in winter and cracks and shrinks in summer. Better quality soil is found in areas that contain alluvial deposits from the Thames and other rivers in the area as they formed and changed position over time.

The Northern Thames Basin is an area rich in geodiversity, archaeology and history and diverse landscapes ranging from the wooded Hertfordshire plateaux and river valleys, to the open landscape and predominantly arable area of the Essex heathlands, with areas of urbanisation mixed in throughout. Urban expansion has been a feature of this area since the 16th century when wealthy merchants who were conducting business in London built homes on its outskirts, mainly in the Hertfordshire area. This trend increased dramatically from the mid-19th century as infrastructure improved and people could travel to work in London from the surrounding areas in an hour or less. This has put increased pressure on the area in terms of extra housing developments, schools and other necessities for expanding populations, with a consequential reduction in tranquillity. Tranquil areas can still be found in parts of Hertfordshire and Essex in areas that have a more dispersed settlement pattern broken up by arable land and semi-natural habitats.

There are a wide variety of semi-natural habitats in the area and these support many important species. However, the habitats have become fragmented over time and a landscape-scale approach is needed to connect them so that they can be sustained and provide beneficial functions including; increasing pollinating insects, acting as flood defences and water storage areas, preventing soil erosion and helping to improve soil and water quality as well as maintaining the area's sense of place and history. This NCA includes many internationally and nationally designated sites including 72 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (20 of which are designated wholly or in part for their national geological importance), 6 Ramsar sites, 6 Special Protection Areas, 3 Special Areas of Conservation and 2 National Nature Reserves. The majority of these sites are estuaries and woodlands. The estuaries support migrating and overwintering birds as well as rare or locally important plants and invertebrates. The selected woodlands are ancient and have a long history of management through coppicing and pollarding, which has allowed rich ground flora to develop and also supports rare mosses and deadwood invertebrates.

[Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce.](#)

The main changes to the area have resulted from increased construction and commercial-scale farming. Both of these have increased pressures on water availability, water flow, soil quality, biodiversity and sense of place. Although housing, other construction and agriculture are significant for the area it is important that these are developed in a sustainable way so that predicted changes in climate and the effects on the area's character are considered and sense of place and history are preserved.

The main opportunities available to this area are the continuation of the agricultural tradition, but within this land management should consider methods that are more sustainable in terms of water use and soil quality in order for it to continue to be a viable industry in the future. The areas of various semi-natural habitats also present opportunities to improve water storage and soil quality for surrounding agricultural land as well as to increase advantageous species that will aid pollination and reduce pest species. In addition to this the woodlands in the area could be an important resource to supply timber and fuel to the local area if they were managed effectively.



Farmland next to the River Colne in Essex.

## Statements of Environmental Opportunity

**SEO 1:** Manage rivers and river valleys to protect and improve water quality and help to alleviate flooding in the downstream urban areas, while also helping to improve aquifer recharge and provide a sufficient store of water to meet future need, especially with predicted climatic changes. Conserve the riparian landscapes and habitats, for their recreational and educational amenity for their internationally significant ecological value.

**SEO 2:** Manage the agricultural landscape and diverse range of soils which allow the Northern Thames Basin to be a major food provider, using methods and crops that retain and improve soil quality, water availability and biodiversity.

**SEO 3:** Protect and appropriately manage the historic environment for its contribution to local character and sense of identity and as a framework for habitat restoration and sustainable development, ensuring high design standards (particularly in the London Green Belt) which respect the open and built character of the Thames Basin. Enhance and increase access between rural and urban areas through good green infrastructure links to allow local communities recreational, health and wellbeing benefits.

**SEO 4:** Manage and expand the significant areas of broadleaf woodland and wood pasture, and increase tree cover within urban areas, for the green infrastructure links and important habitats that they provide, for the sense of tranquillity they bring, their ability to screen urban influences and their role in reducing heat island effect and sequestering and storing carbon.



Ancient woodland at Pound Wood in Benfleet, Essex.

## Description

### Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

The Northern Thames Basin forms the rising land above the low-lying marshy landscapes adjoining the coast and estuaries of the Greater Thames Estuary and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths National Character Areas (NCAs) to its east and south-east extent and enjoys associated views of these areas. Chalk geology commonly underpins this NCA and the neighbouring Chilterns and South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands NCAs to the west and north; The Chilterns, a formation of chalk hills and plateaux with a prominent escarpment, offers views across to this similarly elevated NCA. To the south-west the Thames Valley NCA forms a wedge-shaped area containing the open Thames flood plain surrounded by rolling clay farmland. Directly south is the Inner London NCA on the banks of the Thames where the river valley widens out into a broad flood plain.

The London Basin Chalk aquifer, which underlies much of the western section of the Northern Thames Basin NCA, is the principal aquifer supplying water to Inner London. The Chalk is confined in the basin by the overlying Tertiary formations of London Clay, which means recharge largely occurs in the extensive Chalk outcrop of the Northern Thames Basin and into the Chilterns NCA to the north and the North Downs to the south.

A small part of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) straddles the eastern edge of this NCA, the more northerly South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands and the south- western tip of the Suffolk Coast and



Major transport links include the M25 motorway.

Heaths NCA. The urban character in the south of the Northern Thames Basin continues into the Thames Valley and Greater Thames Estuary NCAs.

The landscape becomes extensively urbanised towards the Inner London NCA and includes major transport links from outside the area such as the East Coast mainline railway, M11 which connects to London and Cambridgeshire, the M1 which passes north-west through the Chilterns to the Midlands beyond, and

the M25 which provides circular access to all parts of London and the south. Important A roads providing wide physical links include the A12 and A120 and the A1(M), which has a similar route to the M1 but diverts towards the East Anglian Chalk and Bedfordshire Claylands NCAs.

Many watercourses feed in or flow from surrounding areas, often along courses incised into boulder clays or tills, for instance the Blackwater and Colne flowing from the South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands and the Ver and Lea from the westerly Chilterns NCA which flow into Hertfordshire before joining the Thames in inner London. These, along with others, form a series of river valleys draining south to the Thames and east to the North Sea and Thames Estuary, including the Roding, Wid, Chelmer, Roach and Crouch. Also notable is the Grand Union Canal, which runs from here through several other NCAs northwards to Birmingham.

## Distinct areas

- Hertfordshire plateaux and river valleys
- Essex wooded hills and ridges
- London Clay lowlands
- Essex heathlands



River Mimram valley flood plain, Hertfordshire.

## Key characteristics

- The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. The prominent hills and ridges of the 'Bagshot Hills' are notable to the north-west and extensive tracts of flat land are found in the south.
- Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy, acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.
- Areas capped by glacial sands and gravels have resulted in nutrient-poor, free-draining soils which support remnant lowland heathlands, although these are now small. Areas that have alluvial deposits present are well drained and fertile.
- The water bearing underlying Chalk beds are a main source of recharge for the principal London Basin Chalk aquifer.
- A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, and slightly steeper valleys of the rivers Stour, Colne and Roman. Numerous springs rise at the base of the Bagshot Beds and several reservoirs are dotted throughout the area
- The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. Hertfordshire is heavily wooded in some areas as are parts of Essex, while other areas within Essex are more open in character. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present.
- The field pattern is very varied across the basin reflecting historical activity. Informal patterns of 18th-century or earlier enclosure reflect medieval colonisation of the heaths. Regular planned enclosures dating from the Romano-British period are a subtle but nationally important feature on the flat land to the south-east of the area. In the Essex heathlands 18th- and 19th-century enclosure of heathlands and commons followed by extensive 20th-century field enlargement is dominant.
- Mixed farming, with arable land predominating in the Hertfordshire plateaux, parts of the London Clay lowlands and Essex heathlands. Grasslands are characteristic of the river valleys throughout. Horticulture and market gardening are found on the light, sandy soils of former heaths in Essex, particularly around Colchester, along with orchards, meadow pasture and leys following numerous narrow rivers and streams.
- The diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse and otter.
- Rich archaeology including sites related to Roman occupation, with the Roman capital at Colchester and City of St Albans (Verulamium) and links to London. Landscape parklands surrounding 16th- and 17th-century rural estates and country houses built for London merchants are a particular feature in Hertfordshire.
- The medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlement remains central to the character of parts of Hertfordshire and Essex. Market towns have expanded over time as have the London suburbs and commuter settlements, with the creation of new settlements such as the pioneering garden city at Welwyn and the planned town at Basildon.
- Brick-built dwellings are characteristic from the late 17th century onwards. Prior to this dwellings and farm buildings tended to be timber built with weatherboarding, now mainly painted white but traditionally black or tarred, and whitewashed plaster walls.



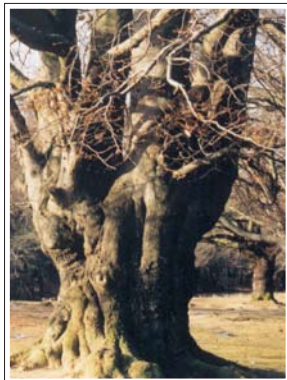
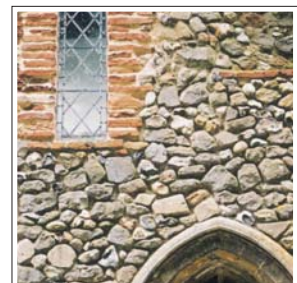
# Essex & Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan Review

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## ESSEX LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Final Report

2003



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**CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES**

*Environment Landscape Planning*

#### 4.5.6 *Brentwood Hills (D2)*



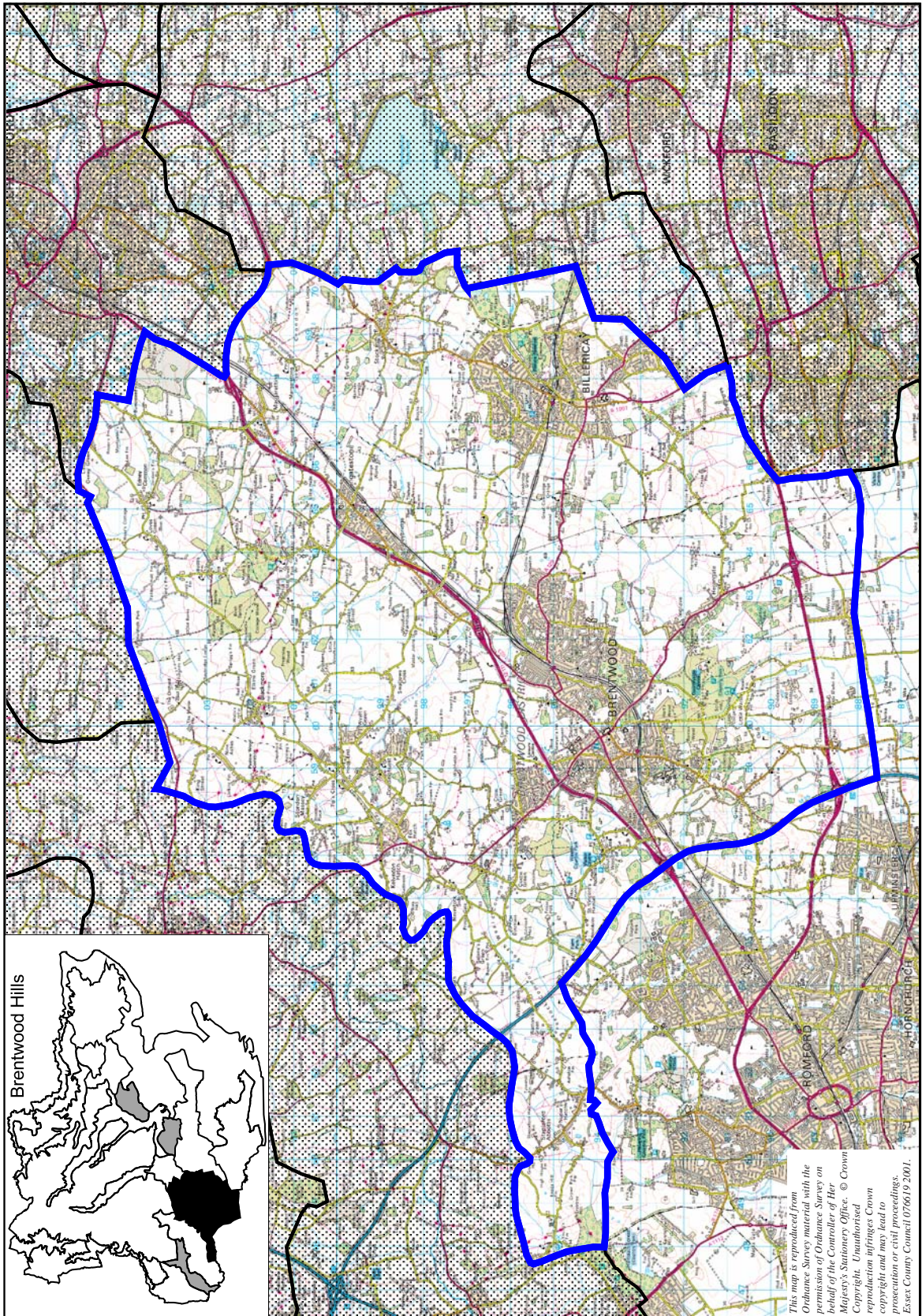
##### *Key Characteristics*

- Gently to strongly undulating hills/ridges.
- Semi enclosed character due to presence of numerous small woods, large interlocking blocks of woodland and frequent hedgerow trees.
- Patchwork of small irregular pasture and arable fields, opening out to medium to large regular arable fields in the centre of the area.
- Dense linear settlement pattern along major south west to north east road/rail routes.

##### *Overall Character*

The Brentwood Hills have a varied topography comprising a series of ridges and rounded hills. The landform is strongly rolling towards the edges of the character area, flattening out towards the centre on high ground. To the south a slight escarpment occurs between Childerditch and Little Burstead. It is a wooded landscape with many small scattered woods, some large blocks of woodland, tree belts of historic parkland and hedgerow trees. As a result, views are often quite confined, but in parts long views are possible over more open farmland and from high ground. Small unenclosed greens, commons and scattered ponds add interest and variety of the area. A number of isolated churches on hilltops are also a distinctive feature. Villages, hamlets, cottages and farmsteads are typically strung out along the narrow lanes, with a dense urban settlement concentrated along the main road and rail routes running through the centre of the area.





## *Character Profile*

### *Geology*

- Claygate and Bagshot Beds, London Clay, and a small area of Glacial Till.

### *Soils*

- Complex mosaic of soils including well drained fine loamy soils, seasonally waterlogged slowly permeable clayey, fine and coarse loamy soils.

### *Landform*

- Gently to strongly undulating low hills/ridges.
- South facing escarpment between Gt Warley and Gt Burshead incised by small narrow valleys.
- Gentle, very shallow valley of the River Wid.

### *Semi-natural vegetation*

- Ancient oak-hornbeam and mixed deciduous woodland, e.g. Hordon, Norsey, Thorndon Woods. Sweet chestnut coppice. Springline alder woodland.
- Unimproved neutral/acid grassland and relict pockets of heathland.

### *Pattern of field enclosure*

- Predominantly small scale irregular hedged field pattern.
- Some parts in the centre of the area have medium to large scale field pattern with straight boundaries, defined by tree belts or fragmented hedgelines.

### *Farming pattern*

- Mix of arable and pasture farmland.

### *Woodland/tree cover*

- Relatively high tree/woodland cover.
- Very large blocks of woodland south of Brentwood, east of Billericay and north of Ingatestone.
- Many small woodlands and copses scattered throughout the area.
- Frequent hedgerow trees, shaws.
- Mixed or conifer shelterbelts around some farms, fields.

### *Settlement pattern and built form*

- Many small linear hamlets along lanes interspersed with farmsteads and cottages.
- Some medium-large villages along major road routes.
- Brentwood and Billericay are historic market towns, much expanded by modern commuter development.
- Mixed vernacular including red brick, colour washed plaster and weatherboarding.

### *Communications*

- Complex pattern of narrow sinuous lanes.
- M25 forms the eastern boundary of the character area.
- A12(T) cuts through the centre.
- A pylon route runs close to the M25, and another cuts across farmland between Brentwood and Billericay.

### *Other landscape features*

- Some greens associated with settlement, and a few surviving commons, e.g. Galleywood Common.
- High frequency of ponds.
- Large historic park at Hylands and a number of small estates.
- Country Parks of Weald/Thorndon include remnant wood pasture and historic parkland.
- Local landmarks include isolated churches, e.g. Little Burstead, and windmills at Mountnessing and Stock.
- Golf courses are a fairly common feature.

### *Landscape Condition*

- The condition of woodlands and hedgerows is moderate to good. However, parts of the arable farmland have a fragmented hedgerow pattern in poor condition.
- Major roads, some industrial development and large farm buildings are visually intrusive/detract from character in localised areas.

### *Past, Present and Future Trends for Change*

- The character of much of the landscape has not changed significantly for long periods of time apart from enclosure of large commons in the 19th Century, and erosion of typical small irregular field patterns due to expansion of arable farming since the Second World War.

- The development of major road/rail routes through the area and pressure from the expansion of London has led to considerable expansion of the market towns of Brentwood and Billericay, and partial urbanisation of some of the larger villages.
- As well as urban development pressure, there are likely to be continuing pressures for major road improvements which, if not sensitively aligned and designed, could be damaging to character. Also, the character of narrow hedged/banked lanes are vulnerable both to erosion and to minor highway improvements to accommodate increasing levels of commuter traffic.

**BRENTWOOD HILLS (D2)  
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

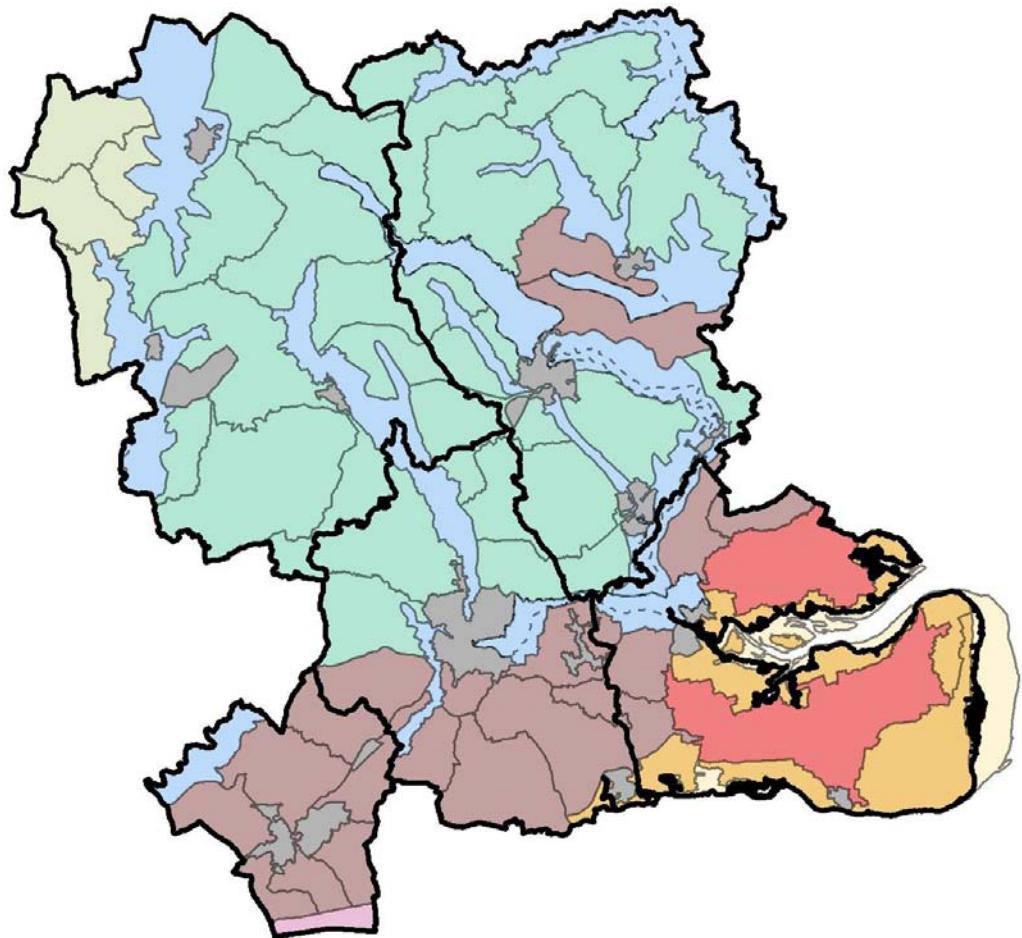
TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low to moderate intervisibility.</li> <li>• Some ridges, hillsides are more visually exposed.</li> <li>• Integrity of woodland, hedgerow field pattern.</li> <li>• Coalescence.</li> <li>• Islands of tranquillity in the north.</li> </ul> <p><i>Any new development should include strong new woodland/hedgerow framework planting particularly where arable farmland is in poor condition.</i></p>	M
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low to moderate intervisibility.</li> <li>• Some ridges, hillsides are visually exposed.</li> </ul>	M
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low to moderate intervisibility.</li> <li>• Irregular grain of the landscape.</li> <li>• Landform character.</li> <li>• Islands of tranquillity.</li> </ul> <p><i>Route alignment and appropriate mitigation is critical.</i></p>	M
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low to moderate intervisibility.</li> <li>• Some ridges, hillsides are visually exposed.</li> <li>• Landform character.</li> <li>• Islands of tranquillity.</li> </ul> <p><i>Siting, massing, form and colour and landscape framework that respond to character are critical.</i></p>	M
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low to moderate intervisibility but some ridges, hilltops are visually exposed.</li> <li>• Landform character.</li> </ul> <p><i>Siting, massing, form and colour are critical.</i></p>	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low to moderate intervisibility.</li> <li>• Integrity of woodland, hedgerow field pattern.</li> </ul>	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low to moderate intervisibility.</li> <li>• Some ridges, hillsides are visually exposed.</li> <li>• Integrity of woodland, hedgerow field pattern.</li> <li>• Islands of tranquillity.</li> </ul>	M
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Character of the narrow lanes.</li> <li>• Distinctive character/form of some settlements.</li> <li>• Integrity of hedgerow field pattern.</li> </ul>	H
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low to moderate intervisibility.</li> <li>• Some ridges, hillsides are visually exposed.</li> <li>• Islands of tranquillity.</li> </ul>	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woodland condition.</li> <li>• Integrity of small scale hedgerowed field pattern.</li> </ul>	H

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17



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**BRAINTREE, BRENTWOOD, CHELMSFORD,  
MALDON AND UTTLESFORD  
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS**



**September 2006**

***CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES***

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*Environment Landscape Planning*

## **4.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF BRENTWOOD BOROUGH**

### **4.3 Wooded Farmland Landscapes**

4.3.1 The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Type are:

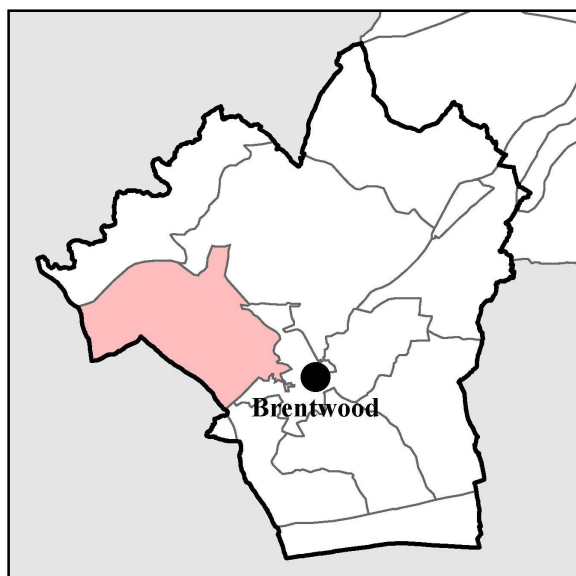
- Elevated undulating hills or ridges and slopes
- Mixture of arable and pasture farmland
- Pockets of common and pasture
- Views to wooded horizons
- Well wooded with blocks of mature mixed and deciduous woodland (including areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland); copses, hedges and mature single trees
- Mature field boundaries
- Framed views to adjacent character areas
- Enclosed character in places
- Network of quiet, often tree-lined narrow lanes

4.3.2 The Landscape Character Type contains the following Landscape Character Areas:

- F7 - Blackmore Wooded Farmland
- F8 - Doddinghurst Wooded Farmland
- F9 - Little Warley Wooded Farmland
- F10 - Heybridge Wooded Farmland
- F13 - Great Warley Wooded Farmland
- F14 - Ingrave and Herongate Wooded Farmland
- F15 - Weald Wooded Farmland



## F15 WEALD WOODED FARMLAND

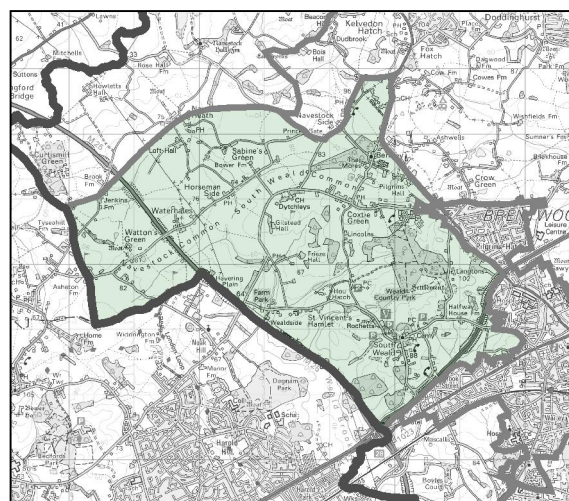


### Key Characteristics

- Swathe of relatively open commons.
- Wooded rolling hills and slopes.
- Narrow, tree-lined roads.
- Intricate network of woodland and grassland within Weald Country Park.
- Sense of tranquillity away from main road corridors.

### Overall Character

Situated to the northwest of Brentwood urban area, a long relatively open swathe of common land (Navestock Common and South Weald Common) dominates the character of the central belt of this area. The rolling hills and slopes within the area facilitate views across adjacent wooded slopes. A network of narrow lanes cross the area and are sometimes tree-lined, with canopies covering the road, providing a sense of enclosure. An intricate network of grassland, speckled with single mature parkland trees and woodland within Weald Country Park contributes to localised sense of place within the area. Settlement pattern consists of a small number of linear hamlets and scattered farmsteads peppered within the landscape. There is a sense of tranquillity away within woodland clearings and along several of the narrow rural lanes, however this is disturbed in close proximity to the M25, A12, A128 and A1023 road corridors, which border the area.



### Visual Characteristics

- Open views to wooded horizons, both within the character area and also within adjacent LCA.
- Long-distance views across farmland enclosed by patches of woodland.
- Unfolding views, moving through the undulating landscape and patches of woodland.

## Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by a complex landform of undulating hills and ridges with panoramic views over the Thames and North Kent possible in good weather. This Character Area contains the northern (and only surviving) portion of the medieval Royal Forest of Hainault. It is heavily wooded, and contains within its bounds the extensive historic parklands of Weald Park. Where fields exist between the parks and copses, they are small and regular, and appear to have their origins as assarts into the woodland. The historic settlement pattern was dispersed around commons and the edges of the forest, including linear commons, and along roads. To a large extent this pattern survives, although there has been a tendency for settlement to coalesce creating linear villages along roads modern development has infilled many of the gaps making it now largely linear in plan. The main historic landscape features include:

- Hainault Forest, which was disafforested in 1851 and in 1858 the Hainault Forest Allotment of Commons Act provided that 317 acres (128 hectares) in Chigwell, Lambourne and Dagenham should be allotted as common to the parish of Lambourne.
- The medieval Weald Park, which was extensively re-landscaped in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- Smaller areas of ancient origin woodland, copses and shaws scattered across the landscape.
- Several small lakes, including dammed minor valleys.
- A strong linear grain to the landscape, running SE-NW, reflecting the historic functional integration of this area with the low-lying areas to the south.
- Fields probably of medieval origin and maybe even earlier.

## Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture with pockets of woodland. The area contains Curtismill Green SSSI (part of) with woodland and grassland habitats, plus 3 small areas of ancient woodland.

## Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Pressure of increased traffic on major roads, rural and minor lanes.
- Potential for visually intrusive development around the edges of Brentwood.
- Noise and visual intrusion associated with the M25, A12, A1023 and A128 road corridors.
- Potential major road improvements (M25, A12 and A128).
- Potential visually intrusive development of new farm buildings.
- Deterioration and eventual loss of mature treed hedgerows and single mature trees through lack of appropriate management.

## Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include relatively open commons, narrow tree-lined roads, and an intricate network of woodland and grassland within Weald Country Park (including several single mature parkland trees), which are sensitive to changes in land management. Open views to wooded horizons and long distance views across adjacent farmland are sensitive to potential new development, which may interrupt or block such views. There is a sense of historic integrity, with the northern (and only surviving) heavily wooded portion of the medieval Royal Forest of Hainault within the area, bounding extensive historic parklands of Weald Park, several small lakes and areas of ancient woodland and historic fields (of medieval or earlier origin). Overall, this character area has relatively- high sensitivity to change.

## Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

**Conserve** - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

**Enhance** - seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.

#### **Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines**

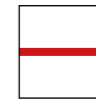
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of small settlements.
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.
- Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.
- Conserve and enhance Weald Country Park.
- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Brentwood urban area.

#### **Suggested Land Management Guidelines**

- Conserve and manage the existing mature hedgerow network.
- Conserve, manage and enhance patches of woodland (consider the use of traditional methods, such as coppicing and pollarding where appropriate to locality and local landscape character).
- Conserve historic lanes and unimproved roadside verges.
- Plant half-standard trees within field hedgerow boundaries to succeed over mature trees.
- Introduce arable field margins as a means of ensuring that mature trees within hedgerows are not disturbed by ploughing.
- Conserve and enhance areas of semi-natural and ancient woodland as important heritage, nature conservation and landscape features.

Appendix B – Site Boundary and Area 302C from Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity Study: Potential and Strategic Allocation Options Oct 2018

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Site Boundary



Area 302C

(Taken from Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity Study: Potential and Strategic Allocation Options Oct 2018)



client  
Hallam Land Management

project  
Calcott Hall Farm,  
Brentwood

drawing title  
SITE BOUNDARY AND AREA 302C

scale  
NTS @ A3  
drawing / figure number

drawn  
CC

issue date  
22 February 2019  
rev



# Appendix B

Appendix C – Site Boundary and Area 302C from Green Belt Study Part III

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Site Boundary



Area 302C

(Taken from Green Belt Study Part III)



client  
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project  
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issue date  
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# Appendix C

Appendix D – Extract from Appendix L3 of the Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity Study



Photograph:	270° - 360°	90° - 270°	< 90°	Single (forward)	Single (backward)	Zoom		
Views Out (distance):	N: S	S: M	E: S	W: S	Short (<250m)	Med (250m - 1km)	Long (>1km)	
Views in:	Viewer Types	N: Pub   Priv	S: Pub   Priv	E: Pub   Priv	W: Pub   Priv			
	Numbers	N: Pub: H Priv: L	S: Pub: M Priv:	E: Pub: M/H Priv: M	W: Pub: M/H Priv:	0	Low (1 - 10)	Med (10-20)
Seasonal visibility:	Yes due to boundary deciduous tree cover							
Site visual amenity:	Good			Locality visual amenity:	OK - Good			
Scope to mitigate views:	Short term: Good (retention existing boundary trees)		Medium term: Good (trees)		Long term: Good (trees)			

Gradients:	V. Gentle - Flat (<1:50)		Gentle (c.1:25)		Fairly Steep (c.1:10)		Steep (c.1:5)		Very Steep (c.1:2)		Sheer (>1:1)			
			Y		Y									
Geomorphology:	Plain	Plateau	Rolling lowland	Hills	Ridge	Cliff	Scarp	Gorge	V shaped Valley	U shaped Valley	Floodplain	Estuary	Mountains	Other
			S											
Prominent landmarks:	Site:	Positive: Lake/pond within Site						Negative: None						
	Visible nearby:	Positive: None						Negative: A12 close by to SE in cutting						
Boundary types:	Site: Tree / Shrub lines, woodland and local roads.						Locality: Woodland, hedges / trees and roads							
Boundary pattern:	Rectilinear	Organic	Other/comment:						Land parcel size:	Large (>5ha)	Med (1-5ha)	Small (<1ha)		

Settlement Pattern:	Linear	Nucleated	Disperse	Planned	Organic	Open	Hamlet	Village	Town	City	Suburbia	Urban fringe
Site-settlement relationship:	Immediately adjacent   natural extension			Very close   minimal separation			Near but clear separation		Limited association to settlements		Distant association (visual) only	
Building Types/Styles/Age:	Commercial/Offices:		Industrial:		Retail:	Farmstead: C20th	Barns:		Religious:		Other:	
	Detached: Mod/Old Style		Semi-Det: Mod		Terraced:		Bungalow:		Flats:		Skyscraper:	
Transport:	Motorways	Dual Carriage	Major road	Minor road	Small Lane	Rail	Other/comment: A12 and A128					

State of Repair:	Good / Intact / Well maintained: S L		OK / Fairly intact / Some maintenance: S L		Poor / Disrepair / Minimal maintenance: S   L									
Maturity:	Full maturity: S L		Middle-aged: S L		Young - established: S   L		Very young: S   L							
Scale:	Intimate		Small		Medium		Large		Expansive					
Enclosure/openness:	Very confined		Quite enclosed		Partial enclosure/openness		Quite open		Exposed					
Diversity:	Uniform		Simple		Quite Diverse		Complex		Comments: A12 – noisy Varies across Site due to scale					
Texture:	Smooth		Textured		Rough		Very rough							
Colour:	Monochrome		Muted		Colourful		Garish							
Balance:	Harmonious		Fairly balanced		Discordant		Chaotic							
Security:	Comfortable		Safe		Unsettling		Threatening							
Stimulus:	Boring		Bland		Interesting		Invigorating							
Noise (positive):	Birds	Water	Other/comment:			Noise (negative):	Transport							
Lighting:	None nearby		Some nearby		Some within site		Site & area lit				Heavily lit			
Wild/remoteness:	Remote / no people		Minor disturbance		Some on-site disturbance		Heavy disturbance / people presence							
Tranquillity:	High		Medium		Low									
Access in site area:	Promoted open recreation		Open general access		Permissive general access		PRoW route access		Permissive paths		Informal access		No access	
Characteristics:	Desirable:	Locality: Fields, tree/hedges					Site:	Fields, tree/hedges, 'country park'						
	Non-desirable:	Locality: Urban fringe elements and large commercial structure					Site:	None						
Landscape Quality	Highly representative S L		Mainly representative / minor detractors: S L		Equal representative / non-rep: S   L		Weakly representative/ degraded: S   L							

## Site Reference:

302C

## Location:

Land off Ongar Road

## Comments

## Visual:

No PRoW. Adjacent A12 in cutting and screening by adjacent tree cover. A128 well tree lined.

## Comments

## Landscape:

Fields subdivided by woodland and tree lines with a central lake. Large expansive site. Scattered farmsteads

Western half of Site falls in SLA. Adjacent to Registered Park and Garden to west

Land Use / Cover:

	Level 1:	Level 2:	Level 3:				Level 4:			
Site - Primary:	E	3	1	3	9	11	7	11		
Site - Secondary:	A	1	1	3	4					
Locality - Primary:	E	3	1	3	11		7	11		
Locality -Secondary:	A	1	1	3	4					
	F	2	1	5			2	3		

Desk study:

Local Character Area:	F14 Weald Wooded Farmland			
Green Belt:	Y	Assessed Effect on Green Belt:		Moderate
Statutory landscape designation:	N			
Local Landscape designation:	Within:	Y (Partly to West)	Adjacent to?	SLA/Registered Park and Garden
Previous Use:	Brownfield		Greenfield	
Other:				

Assessment:

<b>Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity:</b>	High	
Reasoning: Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced readily and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place. Important to the setting of the settlement by providing a desirable and distinctive transition between built environment and countryside. Site lies outside clear and important boundary features defining settlement extent.		
<b>Visual Sensitivity:</b>	Medium	High
Reasoning: Varies across Site. On whole Site as a whole is considered important to the setting of the settlement where development would create unacceptable visual effects on the countryside: mitigation unlikely. Potentially uncharacteristically conspicuous. However, some areas of Site are such that there is scope for mitigation and due to restricted visibility, not all parts of Site are important visually.		
<b>Resultant Overall Landscape Sensitivity:</b>	High	
Additional comments:		

<b>Landscape Value:</b>	Medium	High
Reasoning: Varies across Site. Western half of Site in SLA and adjacent to Registered Park and Garden and its setting. Eastern extents of Site, fall outside the SLA and have some locally distinctive characteristics of scenic value. No promoted or public access within Site.		
<b>Landscape Capacity:</b>	Low - Medium	Low
Additional comments: Split assessment but varies across Site. As a whole, Site has Low Capacity due to High landscape value and sensitivity. Eastern areas of the Site likely to have slightly higher capacity, but still limited with a number of landscape characteristics requiring consideration and protection.		

Overall Landscape Sensitivity Categories

Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	High	High	High	High
	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
	Low	Low	Medium	High
	Low	Medium	High	
Visual Sensitivity				

Landscape Capacity Categories

Overall Landscape Sensitivity	High	Medium	Low - Medium	Low
	Medium	Medium - High	Medium	Low - Medium
	Low	High	Medium - High	Medium
	Low	Medium	High	
Landscape Value				

**A – Woodland (>5m tall)**

<b>Level 2 options –</b> 1. Broadleaved – Dry 2. Coniferous – Dry 3. Mixed – Dry 4. Broadleaved – Wet 5. Parkland (scattered trees and grassy areas)	<b>Level 3 options –</b> 1. Mixed-aged or semi-natural 2. Coppice with standards 3. Mature Plantation (taller than 10m, with closed canopy) 4. Young Plantation (5-10m, open canopy)	<b>Level 4 options –</b> 1. Dense shrub layer 2. Moderate shrub layer 3. Sparse shrub layer 4. Dense field layer 5. Moderate field layer 6. Sparse field layer 7. Grazed (moderate to heavy) 8. Lightly grazed 9. Dead wood present 10. Dead wood absent
---	--	--

**F – Human Sites**

<b>Level 2 options:</b> 1. Urban 2. Suburban / urban fringe 3. Rural	<b>Level 3 options –</b> 1. Building 2. Gardens 3. Municipal parks/grass/golf courses/recreational areas 4. Sewage works 'urban' 5. Roads 6. Railways 7. Other 8. Rubbish tip/scrap	<b>Level 4 options –</b> 1. Industrial/commercial 2. Residential 3. Well-wooded 4. Not well-wooded 5. Area of large gardens 6. Area of medium gardens 7. Area of small gardens 8. Retail 9. Disused/derelict 10. Other
---	---	--

**B – Scrubland (include young woodland <5m tall)**

<b>Level 2 options –</b> 1. Regenerating natural or semi-natural woodland 2. Downland (chalk) 3. Heath scrub 4. Coppice (<3m) 5. New plantation 6. Clear-felled 7. Other	<b>Level 3 options –</b> 1. Broadleaved 2. Coniferous 3. Mixed 4. Broadleaved swamp scrub 5. Coniferous swamp scrub 6. Mixed swamp scrub	<b>Level 4 options –</b> 1. Predominantly tall (3-5m) 2. Predominantly low (1-3m) 3. Dense shrub layer 4. Moderate shrub layer 5. Sparse shrub layer 6. Extensive bracken 7. Dense field layer 8. Moderate field layer 9. Sparse field layer 10. Grazed (moderate to heavy)
---	--	---

**G – Waterbodies (freshwater)**

<b>Level 2 options –</b> 1. Pond (less than 50m <sup>2</sup> ) 2. Small waterbody (50-450m <sup>2</sup> ) 3. Lake/unlined reservoir 4. Lined reservoir 5. Gravel/sand pit 6. Stream (<3m wide) 7. River (>3m wide) 8. Ditch with water (<2m wide) 9. Small canal (2-5m wide) 10. Large canal (>5m wide)	<b>Level 3 options –</b> 1. Undisturbed/disused 2. Water sports (sailing, etc.) 3. Angling (coarse/game) 4. Coarse angling 5. Game fishing 6. Industrial activity 7. Sewage processing 'rural'	<b>Level 4 options –</b> 1. Eutropic (green water) 2. Oligotrophic clear (water, few weeds) 3. Dystrophic (black water) 4. Marl (clear water, large water-weeds) 5. Slow-medium running 6. Fast-running
---	---	---

**C – Semi-natural grassland/marsh**

<b>Level 2 options –</b> 1. Chalk downland 2. Grass moor (unenclosed) 3. Grass moor mixed with heather (unenclosed) 4. Machair 5. Other dry grassland 6. Water-meadow/grazing marsh 7. Reed swamp 8. Other open marsh 9. Saltmarsh	<b>Level 3 options –</b> 1. Hedgerow with trees 2. Hedgerow without trees 3. Tree-line without hedge 4. Other field boundary (wall, ditch, etc.) 5. Isolated group of trees 6. No field boundary 7. Montane	<b>Level 4 options –</b> 11. Ungrazed 12. Cattle 13. Sheep 14. Horses 15. Rabbits 16. Deer 17. Others grazers 18. Extensive bracken 19. Hay
---	--	--

**H – Coastal**

<b>Level 2 options –</b> 1. Marine – open shore 2. Marine shore – inlet/cove/loch 3. Estuarine 4. Brackish lagoon 5. Open sea	<b>Level 3 options –</b> 1. Mud/silt 2. Sand 3. Shingle 4. Rocky 5. Fully vegetated 6. Sparse/medium vegetation 7. Inter-tidal 8. Below low-water mark	<b>Level 4 options –</b> 1. Cliff – vertical/steeply sloping 2. Dune 3. Flat/gently sloping 4. Small island 5. Spit 6. Dune slack 7. Sloping ground
--	--	--

**D – Heathland and Bogs**

<b>Level 2 options –</b> 1. Dry heath 2. Wet heath 3. Mixed heath 4. Bog 5. Breckland 6. Drained bog 7. Bare peat	<b>Level 3 options –</b> 1. Montane 2. Raised bog 3. Valley/basin bog 4. Blanket bog 5. Heath mixed with rough grass 6. Heath without grass 7. Heath with extensive bracken 8. Undetermined bog 9. Isolated group of trees	<b>Level 4 options –</b> 1. Ungrazed 2. Cattle 3. Sheep 4. Horses 5. Rabbits 6. Deer 7. Others grazers 8. Ploughed 9. Burned 10. Planted with saplings <0.5m tall
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**I – Inland Rock**

<b>Level 2 options –</b> 1. Cliff 2. Scree/boulder slope 3. Limestone 4. Other rock outcrop 5. Quarry 6. Mine/spoil/slag heap 7. Cave	<b>Level 3 options –</b> 1. Active 2. Disused 3. Montane 4. Non-montane 5. Climbers/walkers etc.	<b>Level 4 options –</b> 1. Bare rock 2. Low vegetation (mosses, liverworts, etc.) 3. Grasses present 4. Scrub present
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**E – Farmland**

<b>Level 2 options –</b> 1. Improved grassland 2. Unimproved 3. Mixed grass/tilled land 4. Tilled land 5. Orchard 6. Other farming 7. Market garden	<b>Level 3 options –</b> 1. Hedgerow with trees 2. Hedgerow without trees 3. Tree-line without hedge 4. Other field boundary 5. Isolated group of trees 6. Farmyard (active) 7. No field boundary 8. Wall 9. Ditch/water 10. Fencing 11. Woodland boundary	<b>Level 4 options –</b> 1. Ungrazed 2. Cattle 3. Sheep 4. Horses 5. Other stock/unknown 6. Bare earth/plough 7. Arable crop 8. Stubble 9. Unsown/fallow 10. Recently cut grass 11. Farm Building 12. Recently sown
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**J – Miscellaneous**