

LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

Land at Rayleigh Road, Hutton

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1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Terms of Reference

- 1.1.1 This report has been prepared to provide an outline landscape and visual appraisal of the site in question, in the context of a potential planning application for residential development.
- 1.1.2 It considers the landscape and visual character of the site and its relationship with its setting, and identifies constraints and opportunities associated with future residential development.

1.2 Site Location

- 1.2.1 The site is located on the eastern edge of Hutton, Brentwood. It is roughly triangular in shape and contained on two sides by the A129 Rayleigh Road which runs between Brentwood and Billericay, and a road named Hutton Village.
- 1.2.2 The site centroid is TQ 635 950.

1.3 Report Limitations

- 1.3.1 This is an outline appraisal report and as such does not constitute a formal Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- 1.3.2 The comments made within this report are based upon the general concept of residential development and not upon any specific form of layout or architectural style.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

2.1 Site Boundaries

- 2.1.1 The northern part of the site is broadly triangular in shape, with a rectangular extension to the south. A site location plan is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.1.2 The northern boundary of the site adjoins the A129 Rayleigh Road for the majority of its length. The boundary with this public highway is delineated by a conspicuous row of mature Corsican pine trees which also occur on the northern side of the public highway to form an avenue feature (Photograph 11¹). Beneath the high canopies of the pines, the boundary comprises dilapidated metal 'parkland' fencing and an unmanaged hedgerow of largely hawthorn, which permits a degree of visual penetration (Photograph 12).
- 2.1.3 The remainder of the northern boundary is a narrow belt of broadleaved trees behind which sits the rear gardens and driveway of the existing dwellings on the junction between Rayleigh Road and Hutton Village (Photograph 1).
- 2.1.4 The northern part of the western boundary lies adjacent to the minor road named Hutton Village. In a similar manner to Rayleigh Road, it comprises a mature tree belt with dilapidated metal fencing and overgrown hedge underneath, although in this case the species mix is lime, plane and horse chestnut (Photographs 5 and 7). The site entrance is located to the south of this section (Photograph 6).
- 2.1.5 The southern part of the western boundary comprises the side and rear boundaries of a Nos. 36-64 Hutton Village. A pond is located on this boundary adjacent to the rear garden of No. 36 and appears to be used by the occupiers.
- 2.1.6 The southern site boundary is generally open and is not permanently delineated, although it generally follows the southern boundary of two treed areas within the site. Beyond this boundary is an open pastoral field which also falls within the landowner's holding (Photograph 4).
- 2.1.7 The eastern site boundary is a common boundary with No. 433 Rayleigh Road and is delineated with closeboard fencing (Photograph 3). The southern part of this boundary runs through a scrubby treed area whilst the northern part is adjacent to open paddock.

2.2 Site Features

- 2.2.1 The site is currently in use as paddocks and as such, principally comprises open pastoral grassland with conspicuous white electrified fencing dividing the site into a number of smaller units.
- 2.2.2 There are two treed areas in the south of the site. The western area comprises mainly aspen with no understorey and is bisected by an informal access track, whilst the eastern area is scrubbier in appearance with a dense understorey and strong eye level screening even in winter.
- 2.2.3 The only structures currently present within the site are a timber stable blocks and feeding and water troughs.

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¹ Photographic record attached at **Appendix 2**.

2.3 Designations

- 2.3.1 The only landscape designation that applies to the site is the Hutton Village Conservation Area, in which the site is entirely located. A detailed description of the Conservation Area is offered in Section 3 below.
- 2.3.2 In planning terms, the site is also located within the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 2.3.3 In the immediate setting of the site there are a number of Grade II Listed buildings, namely several residential dwellings on Hutton Village, the former Hutton Village School (now a nursing home) and a summerhouse in the garden of Hutton Lodge.
- 2.3.4 These designations represent constraints upon the proposed development of the site and in particular, the design and layout of the proposed dwellings and their associated landscaping will need to positively respond to the character and appearance of the Hutton Conservation Area and the nearby Grade II Listed Buildings.

2.4 Landscape Context

- 2.4.1 The Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment was produced in September 2006. It provides local level landscape character information for these areas, dividing them into broad and non-geographically specific Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and then sub-dividing them into geographically specific Landscape Character Areas (LCAs).
- 2.4.2 The site sits within a landscape associated with the Wooded Farmlands LCT, which is identified by the following key characteristics:
 - 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.
- 2.4.3 At a more local level, the site sits on the boundary of the Heybridge Wooded Farmland LCA to the north of the A129 Rayleigh Road corridor and the Ingrave and Herongate Wooded Farmland LCA to the south, and exhibits characteristics of both Character Areas. It is also important to note that the LCA descriptions reflect the local rural countryside, whilst the site has a strong landscape association with the urban edge of Brentwood.
- 2.4.4 The key characteristics of the Heybridge Wooded Farmland LCA are as follows:
 - Mature, undulating wooded farmland lining the B1002 road and railway corridor.

- Mixture of medium to large scale predominantly arable fields with mature treed field boundaries.
- Single mature trees and vegetation-lined ditches.
- Strong linear settlement pattern though the centre of the area, becoming more scattered at distance from the road/railway corridor.
- Landmark halls and churches.
- Narrow, often tree-lined rural lanes.
- 2.4.5 The key characteristics of the Ingrave and Herongate Wooded Farmland LCA are as follows:
 - Gently sloping wooded farmland.
 - Medium to large-scale field pattern.
 - Field delineated by mature hedged field boundaries.
 - Patches of mature deciduous woodland dotted across the landscape.
 - Small-scale linear and dispersed settlement pattern.
 - Sense of tranquillity disturbed by noise and movement associated with the A127 and A128 road corridors.
- 2.4.6 Whilst it is recognised that the residential development of the site would result in a fundamental change in its character, care should be taken in the development design to retain those character elements which influence the wider landscape. Most notable on this site are the mature treed boundaries and care should be taken to preserve these and, where possible, to enhance them through positive management.

2.5 Visual Context

- 2.5.1 The visual envelope of the site is relatively narrow on account of a combination of existing built development, vegetation and topography.
- 2.5.2 Views to the north are filtered by the avenue of roadside trees along the A127 Rayleigh Road (Photograph 1), and beyond this are largely screened by the rising topography, although distant views to the opposite side of the Wid Valley are available between the eastern edge of Brentwood and the rising land.
- 2.5.3 Views to the east are contained by Nos. 433-437 Rayleigh Road and their associated vegetation, as well as the area of scrubby woodland through which the site's eastern boundary passes (Photograph 3).
- 2.5.4 Views to the south from the eastern and western extremities of the site are screened by the scrubby woodland area and dwellings on Hutton Village respectively, whilst open views, filtered by the existing trees, are available from the central part of the site and its southern extension over the open pastoral land to the south, terminating as the land rises to the south towards Church Lane (Photograph 4).
- 2.5.5 Views to the west are filtered by the avenue of roadside trees along Hutton Village, and beyond this terminate in the existing built edge of Brentwood (Photograph 5).

2.5.6 This narrow visual envelope and strong boundary vegetation means that there are likely to be a limited number of visual receptors to the proposed development of the site, the most sensitive being the occupants of the residential properties which overlook the site.

3. HUTTON CONSERVATION AREA

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The interaction of the proposed development with the character and appearance of the Hutton Village Conservation Area is the most important consideration in landscape terms.
- 3.1.2 The extent of the Conservation Area is clearly defined within the Brentwood Replacement Local Plan 1995, having been adopted in 1986. Whilst Conservation Area Appraisals have been written for a number of Conservation Areas within Brentwood Borough, no published description information exists for Hutton Village Conservation Area.
- 3.1.3 This section therefore proposes a description of the Conservation Area, and in particular the aspects which will need to be taken into account in development design, based upon the author's impressions when undertaking the field inspection.

3.2 Extent and Land Use

- 3.2.1 A plan produced by Brentwood Borough Council showing the extent of the Conservation Area is reproduced at **Appendix 3**.
- 3.2.2 The Conservation Area is mostly contained within the triangle formed by Rayleigh Road, Church Lane and Hutton Village, although there are a number of boundary extensions to encompass properties of historic value, including:
 - Hutton Manor and immediate grounds.
 - Humes Farmhouse.
 - All Saints' Church.
 - Nos. 35-47, Hutton Village.
 - An area of paddock to the west of Hutton Village, south of properties on Hutton Village and Lodge Close.
- 3.2.3 The most common land use within the Conservation Area is grazed pasture, including paddocks, which are conspicuous in their use of white ribbon electric fencing. This is concentrated in the northern part of the area, whilst the southern part is a combination of woodland, scrub and the formal grounds associated with Hutton Hall. Built development is currently sparse within the Conservation Area boundary, and largely comprises scattered clusters of large residential buildings, although the semi-detached dwellings along Hutton Village are of a greater concentration.

3.3 Built Elements

- 3.3.1 The Conservation Area is architecturally distinctive, in that there are overall common themes of materials and finishes which occur throughout the Conservation Area, although there remains a diversity of scale and detail between the structures.
- 3.3.2 In terms of common thematic elements, the use of white render as an exterior finish is common amongst many structures, as is weatherboarding, exterior timber framing, peg tile roofs and sash windows. These serve to unify this area in spite of the dispersed nature of the built elements, and to distinguish them from the remainder of Brentwood.

- 3.3.3 Distinctive buildings which strongly exhibit these common themes include the 'estate cottage' dwellings on Hutton Village (Photographs 27 and 29), Hutton Court and associated dwellings (Photograph 13), and the entrance lodge to Hutton Hall (Photograph 22).
- 3.3.4 Another recognisable style which occurs within the Conservation Area is large red brick exterior dwellings with circular upper windows, which is expressed in Hutton Hall and The Willows (Photograph 15). Hutton Manor also exhibits a brick exterior and peg tile roof, albeit with gabled sash upper windows. The old Hutton Village School building is also constructed of red brick, with slate roof and characteristic timber fascia boarding (Photograph 25).
- 3.3.5 The 'estate cottage' dwellings on Hutton Village are distinctive in that they are all semi-detached symmetrical dwellings with white rendered exteriors, peg tile roofs and sash windows, although small groups of dwellings exhibit subtle architectural variations from the other groups. This is demonstrated in Photographs 27 and 29, in the detailing of window and doorway lintels.
- 3.3.6 All Saints' Church is distinctive within the Conservation Area on account of its individual appearance. (Photograph 20). This highly characteristic building, located on the southern boundary of the Conservation Area, has a flint and limestone exterior finish with peg tile roof and a low spire.

3.4 Natural Elements

- 3.4.1 Roadside trees are a strongly characteristic feature of this Conservation Area, although the four public highways are variable in species and individual appearance, as follows:
 - Rayleigh Road is initially bordered with an avenue of mature Corsican pine trees upon the exit from Brentwood (Photograph 11), although this develops into lime pollards with oak to the north at the boundary of Hutton Court (Photograph 13), then into more mixed species at the eastern extremity of the Conservation Area.
 - Church Lane has a deeply rural character (Photograph 16), with oak trees over a managed hawthorn hedgerow and woodland on its northern side and a combination of expansive open views over arable farmland and occasional oak trees to the south developing into a managed sycamore hedgerow to the west of All Saints' Church.
 - Hall Green Lane again has a deeply rural appearance (Photograph 21), with filtered views through oak trees to arable land to the west and the wooded grounds of Hutton Hall to the east.
 - Hutton Village changes in character from south to north. In the south it has a
 rural character (Photograph 24), with heavy tree cover of sycamore and beech
 where the two public footpaths emerge, the historic entrance to Hutton Hall
 (Photograph 22) and occasional high quality dwellings. To the north it develops
 a distinctly suburban character (Photograph 26) with large and diverse street
 trees and a strong border of mature broadleaved trees adjacent to the site.
- 3.4.2 The southern part of the Conservation Area is heavily wooded, principally with oak trees. The grounds of Hutton Hall have strong wooded boundary belts, whilst the area of scrubland to the east (Photographs 17 and 18) is well populated with trees, including prolific self-regenerating oak trees.

- 3.4.3 Large mature oak trees within pasture are also a characterising feature of this Conservation Area, in particular in the large pastoral field that forms much of the central area.
- 3.4.4 Another notable and characteristic feature is the presence of tall feature conifers in the grounds of the large dwellings on Rayleigh Road. The most distinctive of these is the mature cedar tree that rises above Hutton Court, as can be seen in the background of Photographs 3 and 14.

3.5 Setting

- 3.5.1 The setting of the Conservation Area is very much characterised by its urban edge location.
- 3.5.2 To the west, the setting has a suburban appearance, with largely semi-detached dwellings with well-tended front gardens, driveways and mature street trees.
- 3.5.3 To the north, east and south, the landscape is rural, with expansive views across arable land to the south, and more limited views across pastoral land to the north with occasional more distant views across the Wid Valley. These views all terminate in trees, emphasising the local 'wooded farmlands' landscape character.

3.6 Key Characteristics

- 3.6.1 In summary, the key characteristics of the Conservation Area are as follows:
 - Heavily treed character, arising from woodland, scrub and strong roadside and field boundaries.
 - Strong mature roadside tree planting, mostly Corsican pine, oak and lime.
 - Range of architectural styles utilising a combination of white render, weatherboarding, red brick, sash windows, peg tiles and slate.
 - Pastoral character to the north, including electric fenced paddocks, with a more treed character to the south.
 - Distinctive flint parish church on the southern boundary.
 - Expansive views to the south over open arable land to treed horizons.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Key Findings

- 4.1.1 Having considered the landscape and visual aspects of the site in outline, it can be concluded that the greatest constraint upon the development of the site is the Hutton Village Conservation Area. Whilst this does not preclude development of the site, it will be critical for the development design to pay careful attention to and appropriately reflect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.1.2 In terms of landscape character, the site sits within a 'wooded farmlands' landscape, although its setting is strongly influenced by the existing urban edge of Brentwood. It is likely that key characterising elements can be retained and therefore landscape impact minimised through careful masterplanning.
- 4.1.3 In visual terms, the visual envelope of the site is largely restricted to its immediate setting and therefore the greatest constraint will be the impact upon the occupants of those residential dwellings which overlook the site and the adjacent public highways.

4.2 Development Design Response

- 4.2.1 In order to effectively integrate with its setting, to reduce landscape and visual impacts and to respect the character and appearance of the Hutton Village Conservation Area, it is recommended that the following aspects be included in the development design:
 - Retention of roadside tree belts.
 - Retention of treed area to the south of the site.
 - Planting of a small number of tall feature conifers, in particular pine and cedar, within open space areas or in the grounds of key buildings.
 - Adoption of locally distinctive architectural styles and materials in new dwellings.
 - Use of a variety of street tree species to create individual street character.
 - Use of landscape planting and dwelling layout and alignment to reduce visual impacts upon surrounding dwellings.

APPENDIX 1: SITE LOCATION PLAN

Ref:2015-543-SC01



APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

Ref: 14-2277



1. View to north across site including distant view to opposite valley side to north.



4. View to southern boundary including open views across pasture to south.

Title:	Site Inspection
Client:	Elizabeth Finn Care Trust
Reference:	14-2277 v2
Date:	30th January 2014
Produced by:	Victoria Sherbourne
Checked by:	lan Dudley



2. Group of aspen in site - slightly separate from boundary trees.



5. View to western boundary and existing urban edge.



3. Clear intervisibility with properties to east.



6. Existing site entrance.





7. Remnant parkland fencing on western boundary.



10. Pine avenue along Rayleigh Road.

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Produced by:	Victoria Sherbourne
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8. Distinctive historic signpost.



11. Pine avenue along Rayleigh Road - strong tree lines on both sides.



 Corner cottages on Rayleigh Road/Hutton Village junction distinctive theme of white render & slate with white picket fences



12. View to site through northern boundary hedgerow





13. Hutton Court through roadside pollards.



16. Church Lane - rural character, site is largely screened. Frequent mature oak roadside trees with trimmed thorn hedge underneath.

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Client:	Elizabeth Finn Care Trust
Reference:	14-2277 v2
Date:	30th January 2014
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14. Modern high quality half-timbered dwellings, including tall feature conifers.



17. View south over scrubby land east of Hutton Hall.



15. The Willows - brick & slate farmhouse type dwelling with extensions. Note damaged cedar - would have been a feature tree.



18. View north along public footpath south of site. Site is not visible.





19. Parking area next to public footpath entrance.



20. All Saints' Church - northern aspect.



21. View to north along Hall Green Lane near to Hutton Hall.



22. Hutton Hall Lodge.



23. Hutton Hall via pond.



24. Public footpath entrances onto Hutton Village.







25. Hutton Village School (now nursing home).



28. Single dwelling on Hutton Village.

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Checked by:	lan Dudley



26. View to north along Hutton Village at entrance to built-up area.



29. Estate cottages on Hutton Village.



27. Estate cottages on Hutton Village.




30. Estate cottages and roadside trees on Hutton Village.



APPENDIX 3: HUTTON VILLAGE CONSERVATION AREA MAP

Ref: 5th September 2012





Title Hutton Village Conservation Area

Scale 1:5000

Date 5th September 2012

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