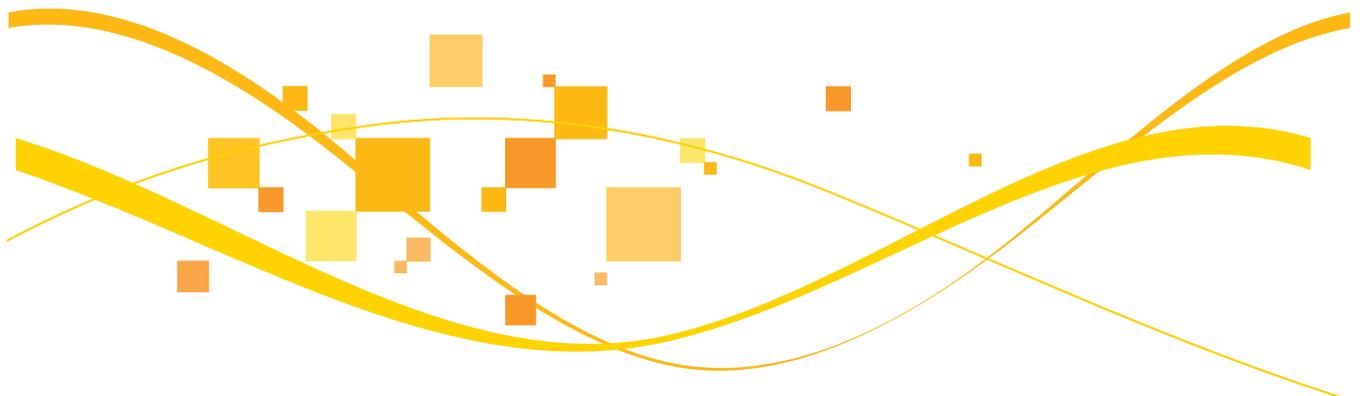


LITTLE BURSTEAD
CONSERVATION AREA

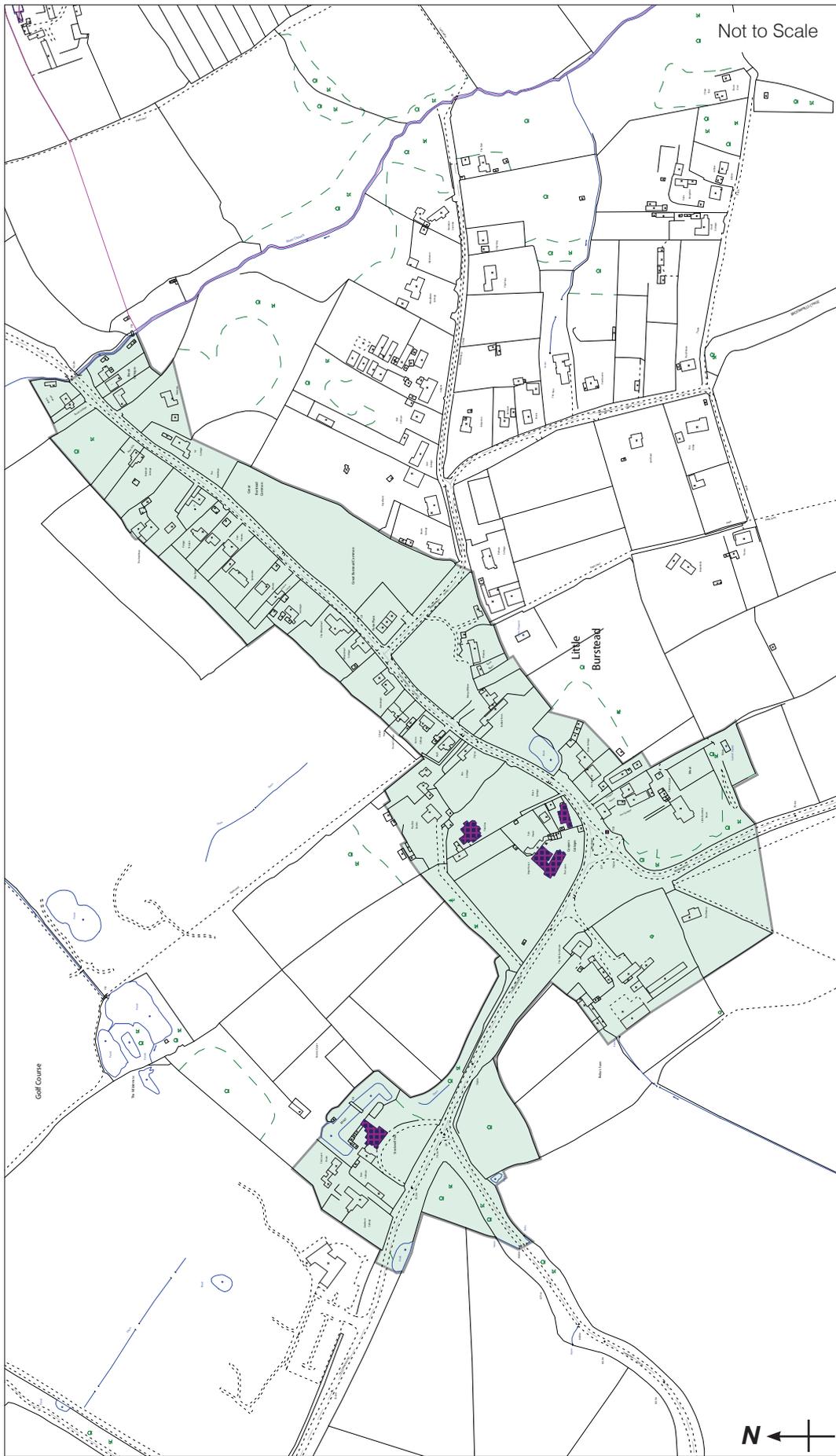
CHARACTER
APPRAISAL

November 2011



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Conservation Area Boundary with Listed Buildings shown hatched

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INTRODUCTION

Little Burstead Conservation Area was first designated in July 1983 and the boundaries have not been reviewed since then.

The Conservation Area encompasses much of the present day village, but excludes the 20th century development along Broomhill Chase. The village's two main roads, Laindon Common Road and Clock House Road converge at the former village green and the properties and spaces enclosing these roads and the green are all within the boundary. The village is within the Green Belt which has constrained development considerably.

This document and the accompanying Management Plan aim to fulfil Basildon Council's duty to 'draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement' of the area as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The survey was undertaken in February and March 2010.

Although all efforts have been made to ensure that this document provides as full and as complete account of the character and appearance of the Little Burstead Conservation Area, no appraisal can ever be completely comprehensive. The omission of any particular building, feature or space should not, therefore, be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Consultation

The draft Character Appraisal and Management Plan were approved for consultation in August 2010. The consultation period ran from the 13th September to 22nd October 2010, and included:

- A staffed consultation exhibition in Billericay Library on Thursday 23rd September and Friday 24th September;
- An unstaffed consultation exhibition in Billericay Library from Monday 13th September until Sunday 25th September;
- A consultation leaflet which included a questionnaire feedback form.
- Respondents were given the option of posting their completed feedback forms at the exhibition, returning them by post, or completing them online;
- A webpage on the Council's website which included details of the exhibition, and enabled copies of the Appraisal and Management Plan to be downloaded;
- The Appraisal and Management Plan were presented using the online consultation tool Limehouse through the Council's webpage. This enabled people to comment on any aspect or section of the documents online;
- A webpage on the Billericay Town Council's website which included details of the exhibition, and enabled copies of the Appraisal and Management Plan to be downloaded;
- Articles in the local press including the Billericay and Wickford Gazette and The Echo;

- Hard copies of the Appraisal and Management Plan were made available to the public at the exhibition, at Billericay Library, at Billericay Town Council Offices and at the reception of The Basildon Centre; and
- Written comments were also invited either via email or post.

In addition to the above, meetings were held with Basildon Council.

The organizations and amenity groups that were consulted on the documents are:

- Basildon Renaissance Partnership
- Billericay Archaeological and Historical Society
- Billericay Chamber of Commerce
- Billericay Design Statement Association
- Billericay District Residents Association
- Billericay Town Council
- English Heritage
- Essex County Council Archeological Section
- Essex County Council Highways and Transportation Service
- Essex County Council Historic Buildings and Conservation Team
- Little Burstead Parish Council
- RIBA
- The Billericay Society
- Ward Councillors

Special Interest

Little Burstead is a small village with agricultural origins in a part of the country that is largely characterized by towns with a large amount of post-war building. The Conservation Area's rural feel is enhanced by its many trees, some quite dramatic, which also lend a sense of enclosure as, although there is open country around, in many places this is screened by trees.

The village is characteristic of Essex villages with a considerable number of timber-framed buildings, many weather-boarded, several of which were once small cottages. It has a typical village mix of building types; a handful of grand houses, a farm and its associated agricultural buildings, a Wealden house, cottages, a Victorian school building, a few Victorian villas and some post-war houses. The church, however, 'stands obscurely'



Laidon Common Road looking north-east



(Morant in Pevsner) some distance from the village and the village has historically had few social facilities save for the village hall and school building.

The two primary routes through Little Burstead broadly divide the Conservation Area into two areas with the Clock House / Rectory Road route containing the higher status development clustered around the junction with Laindon Common Road which is characterized by more modest and 'working' buildings.

Laindon Common Road, as its name suggests, leads eastwards to Laindon Common which has shaped the development of the village. Today, despite some through traffic, the route still retains a country lane character largely due to the lack of buildings along its southeast side and the set back building line of the properties along it. The numerous hedges and trees provide a foil to the houses and provide an attractive setting. Laindon Common Road curves slightly in several places and undulates at the northern end so views are limited.

The openness and flatness of the western green area contrast with Laindon Common Road and create an appropriate setting for the grander houses that are grouped here. The larger houses found in this part of the Conservation Area inevitably display far greater architectural detailing than the smaller properties along Laindon Common Road. Their embellished elevations and position around the main public space means that they have an important visual role in the village as a result.



The Green

The attractive expanse of the western green area forms the focal point of the village as it lies at the node of the routes through Little Burstead and is well defined by trees. It also contains the war memorial.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

When a Conservation Area has been designated it increases the planning controls, with planning applications judged by their impact on the character and appearance of the area. Greater controls over the demolition of buildings and structures are imposed whilst the rights that owners have to do works to their properties without the need to obtain planning permission (known as 'permitted development rights') are reduced or can be taken away. There are also benefits to those who reside in Conservation Areas, and their neighbours, such as raised property values (see Management Plan for further details).

Stricter controls are also exercised over the design of new buildings, and owners must give the Council six weeks' notice of their intention to carry out works to trees. Planning applications affecting a Conservation Area must be advertised on site and in the local press to give people the opportunity to comment.

'Special Architectural or Historic Interest'

Little Burstead's special interest derives from a combination of elements that together form the village's well established character and appearance. These elements include the topography, historical development, density, massing and built development, prevalent building materials, character and hierarchy of spaces, quality and relationship of buildings in the area, and trees, and other green features.

Architectural features, such as distinctive windows, doors and fanlights or other characteristic details are also very important to Little Burstead's distinctive historic character. It is important that these elements are protected to ensure that the qualities that make the Little Burstead Conservation Area appealing are preserved and enhanced.

Conservation Area Appraisals

There is a duty on the Local Planning Authority to determine what parts of their Borough are areas of special architectural or historic interest and then to designate them as Conservation Areas.

Having established a Conservation Area they are also required to regularly review the designation and boundaries of the areas. This is to ensure that the area is still considered to be of value and to consider whether any areas have been overlooked or changes have occurred which require the boundaries to be redrawn.

Any pressures for change can be identified and enhancement opportunities highlighted. These will form the basis of the Conservation Area Management Plan which sets out a strategy to manage change in the Conservation Area.

This appraisal sets out the historical and economic context for the locality and identifies what it is that makes the Conservation Area of special interest. It serves to provide clear guidance on what should be conserved in the area to enhance the character and appearance of the area.

Planning Policy Framework

National planning policy guidance on Conservation Areas is contained within Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS 5): Planning for Historic Environment (March 2010) which groups together all the parts of the historic environment considered to have historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest, and calls them 'heritage assets'. A Conservation Area is therefore a 'heritage asset' and the Development Management Policies (HE6 – HE12) of PPS 5 sets out the Government's requirements for applicants when submitting planning applications affecting a heritage asset. PPS 5 is supported by the 'Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide' which provides further detail on how to implement the requirements of the policies.

Regional planning policy guidance on Conservation Areas is currently contained within The East of England Plan (May 2008) which is the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS 14) for the Eastern Region. Of particular relevance is Policy ENV 6: The Historic Environment which states that local planning authorities should identify, protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment of the region.

The Basildon Borough Local Plan Saved Policies document (as approved by the Secretary of State through a Direction issued on 20th September 2007) sets out the local planning policy background against which development within the Little Burstead Conservation Area will be assessed. Saved Policies are policies that were originally part of the Basildon Borough Local Plan, adopted on March 1998, with Alterations in September 1999.

LOCATION & SETTING

Little Burstead is in a rural area located between the larger built up areas of Billericay and Basildon. As a village, it is a rare survival in this densely populated part of Essex which has been targeted for growth since the Second World War. It is just over 2 miles from Billericay, 4.5 miles from Basildon and 5.5 miles from Brentwood. It is about 30 miles from central London and only 7 miles from Upminster, the nearest tube station. It is only 13 miles from Tilbury where there was a ferry for centuries across the Thames to Gravesend. Thus, although a rural village, it has always had easy access to larger centres of population, the capital, the sea and to the county of Kent across the Thames, with which it shares some architectural features.

Little Burstead is about 70 metres above sea level set in gently rolling countryside within the Brentwood Hills Landscape Character Area (Essex Landscape Assessment 2003). Little



Borough Map



Church spire in the distance

Burstead sits at one end of the slight escarpment that reaches to Childerditch; this plateau delineates the built form from the farmed areas and is particularly significant at the west end of the village where the larger houses, Bullers Farm and church are located. Laindon Common Road, in contrast to the flatter western end of the village, undulates gently, rising slowly from Laindon Common.

The village is strung out along narrow lanes and is encircled by Laindon Common to the north, a golf course to the west and small woods or coppices together with a patchwork of small irregular pasture and arable fields. This green and varied topography softens the impact of the busy A176 which connects the village to Billericay. The routes through the village are narrow and hedged, but accommodate an increasing level of commuter traffic.

The River Crouch rises in The Wilderness, to the north-east of Stockwell Hall, and runs as a culverted stream under the road at the north-eastern boundary of the Conservation Area. At the southern end of the Conservation Area open fields to the south provide a view of the spire of the village's Church.

HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Little is known of the very early history of Little Burstead, although Roman materials have been found in the church fabric and some Roman finds have been made in the Broomhills Chase area, as well as scattered finds of a few Roman coins. There have also been very scant earlier finds in the Broomhills Chase area which suggest earlier occupation. (There is the potential for further below ground deposits in the historic core of the village.)

Before the Norman Conquest, Little Burstead was part of the estates of Earl Godwin, father of King Harold. By the time of the Domesday Book it was held by the Bishop of London and later both Bursteads were given to the Cistercian monks at Stratford. The name 'Burghstede' (Saxon for a fortified place) came from a Saxon settlement nearby, probably near Great Burstead Church.

It appears that the position of the current village was not its original site; three manors were sited between Botney Hill and the Dunton road and it is possible that the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, originating in late Norman times but mainly mediaeval, which sits in isolation 600 metres south of the village, was positioned to overlook the area it served then. White Hall was the dominant manor at this time and it is likely that in the mediaeval period the village was a scattered community of few people.

The earliest surviving buildings in the Conservation Area are Stockwell Hall, the Essex seat of the Earls of Mexborough, and Cooper's Cottages. There is a mediaeval moat at Stockwell Hall, which is a 16th – 17th house re-fronted in the 18th century. There is a local tradition that the oldest part of the house was built reusing materials from an earlier, 13th century house situated to the north, near The Wilderness. Cooper's Cottages date from the late 14th or early 15th centuries and were formerly a Wealden house. There is also a moat in the grounds of Little Burstead House, the north corner of which is thought to be late 16th century. Jackson's Farm, behind The Reddings, is thought to have a mediaeval hall house as part of its now dilapidated buildings.

The 18th and 19th centuries brought expansion. The Elms and Bullers Farm are 18th century buildings – although at Bullers it is likely there was a farmhouse before that – the land was known as Bullers by about 1700. A number of the cottages on Laindon Common Road probably have 18th century origins, or earlier – for example Hope Cottage, Three Bears, Wartons, Wheatsheaf Cottage, Ashleigh, Forge House and Ivy Cottage (originally several almshouses).

This part of Essex was prosperous during this period with local industries including tanning and brick making, but the village appears to have remained largely engaged in agriculture with



The rear of Stockwell Hall



Forge House and the Smithy

A Selection of Photographs Showing Little Burstead in the Early 20th Century



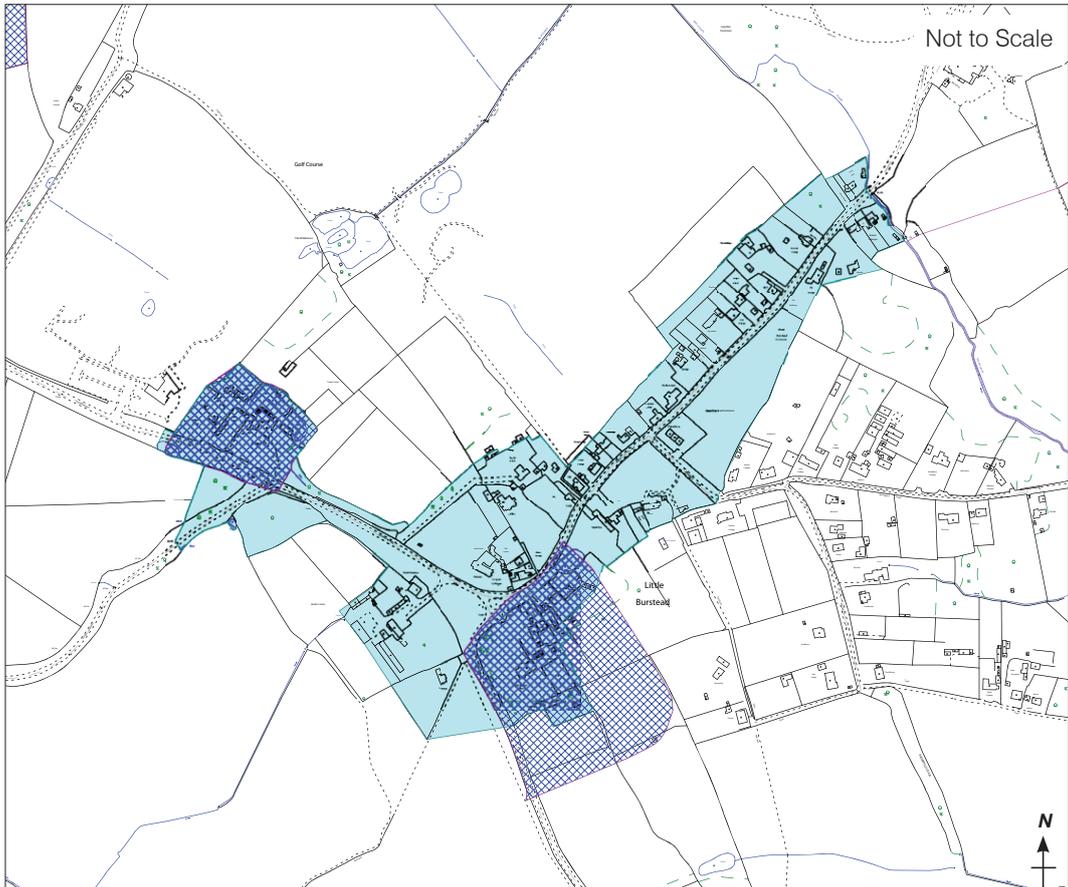
Laindon Common Road 1913



Laindon Common Road 1936

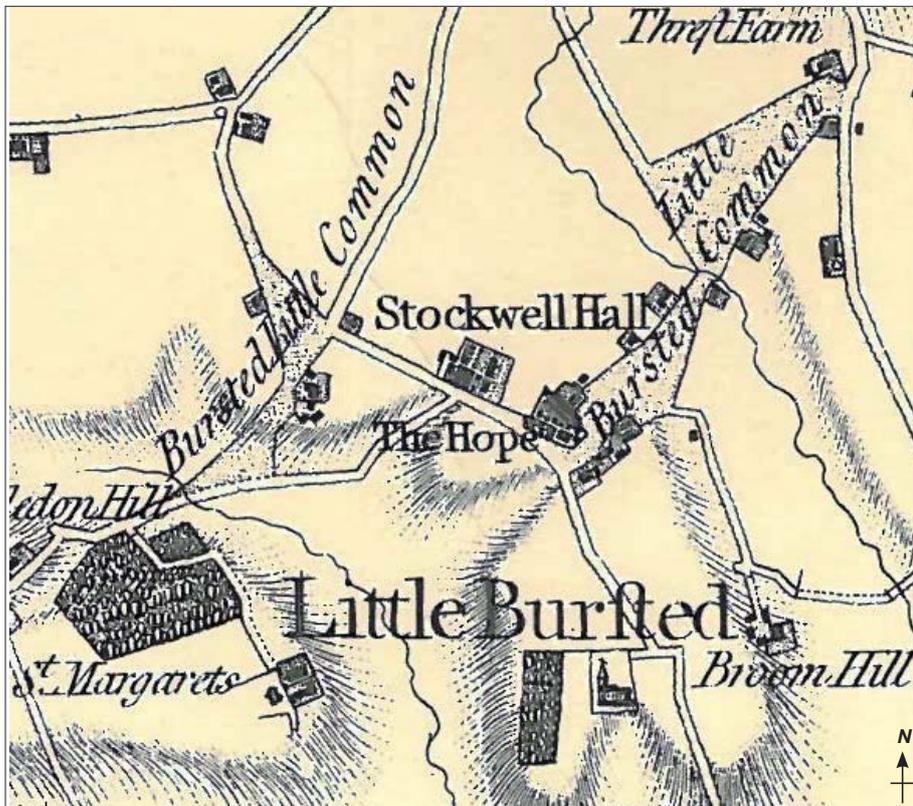


The Wheatsheaf, Laindon Common Road

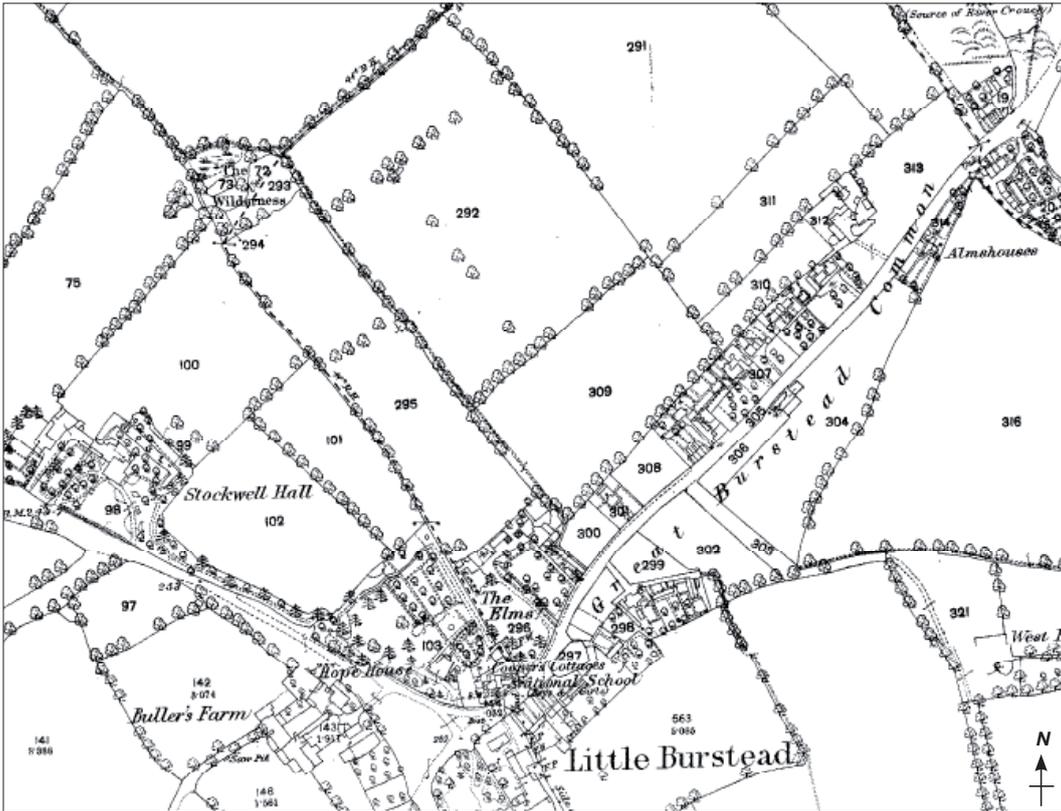


Conservation Area boundary with areas of archaeological finds shown hatched

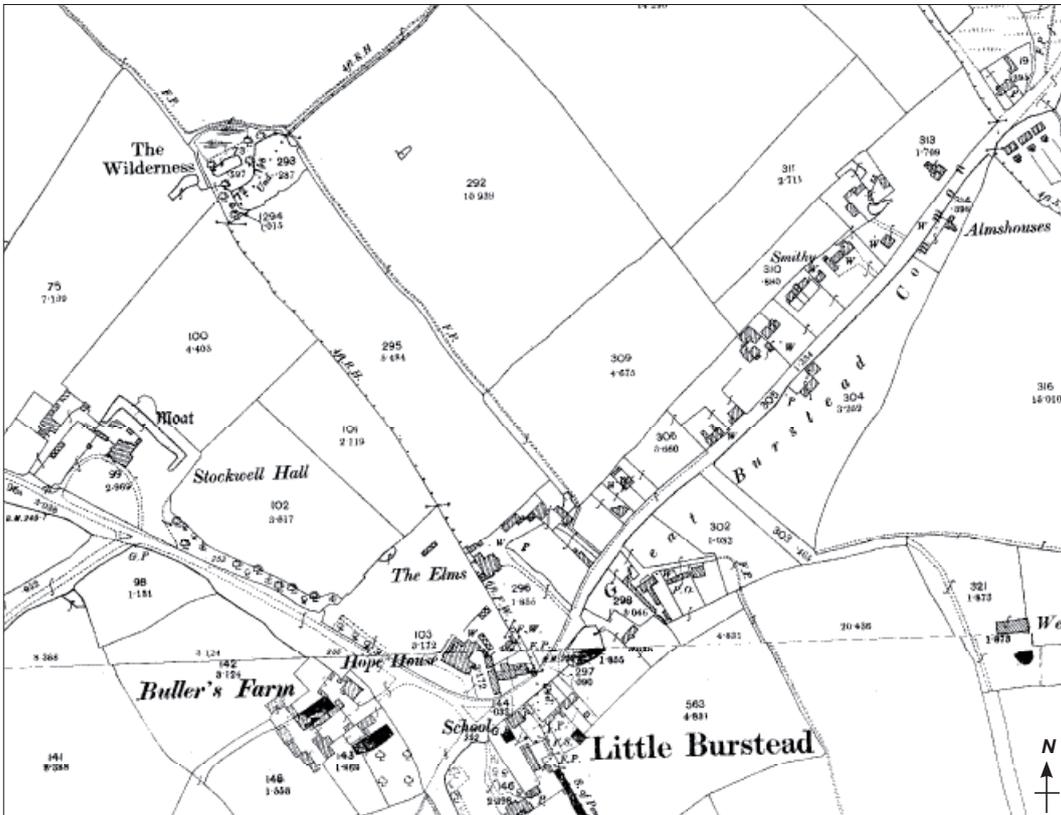
Evolution of the Settlement



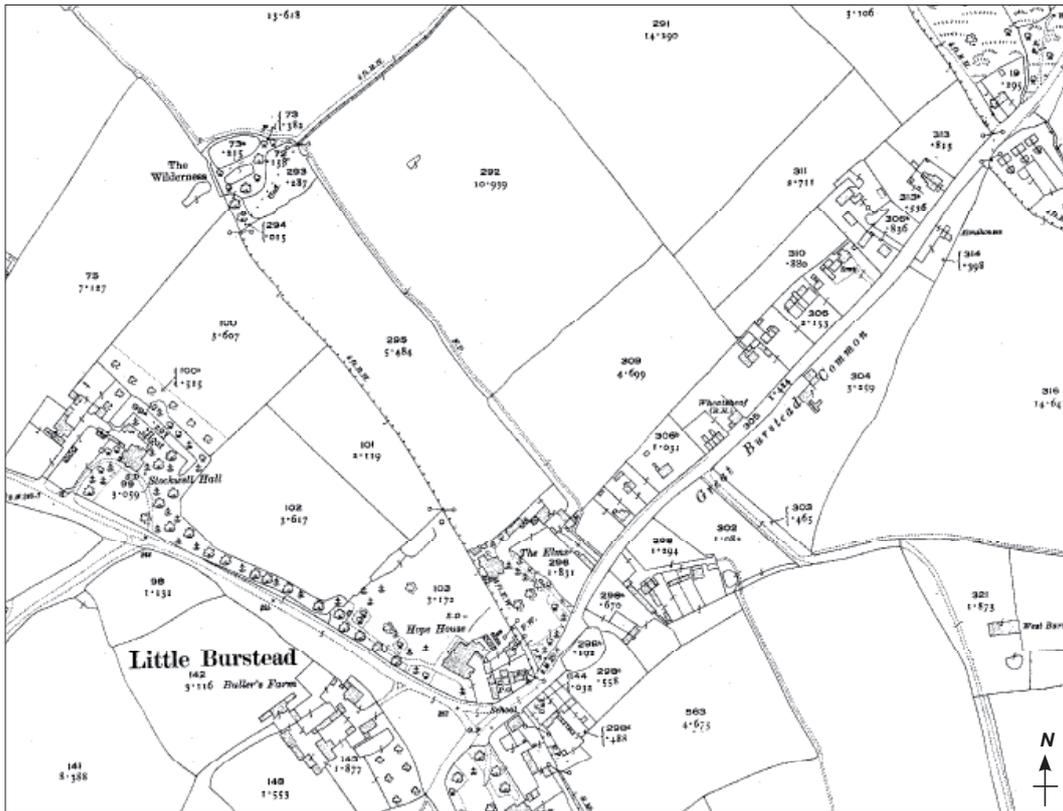
Chapman & Andre Map of 1777 showing Little Burstead



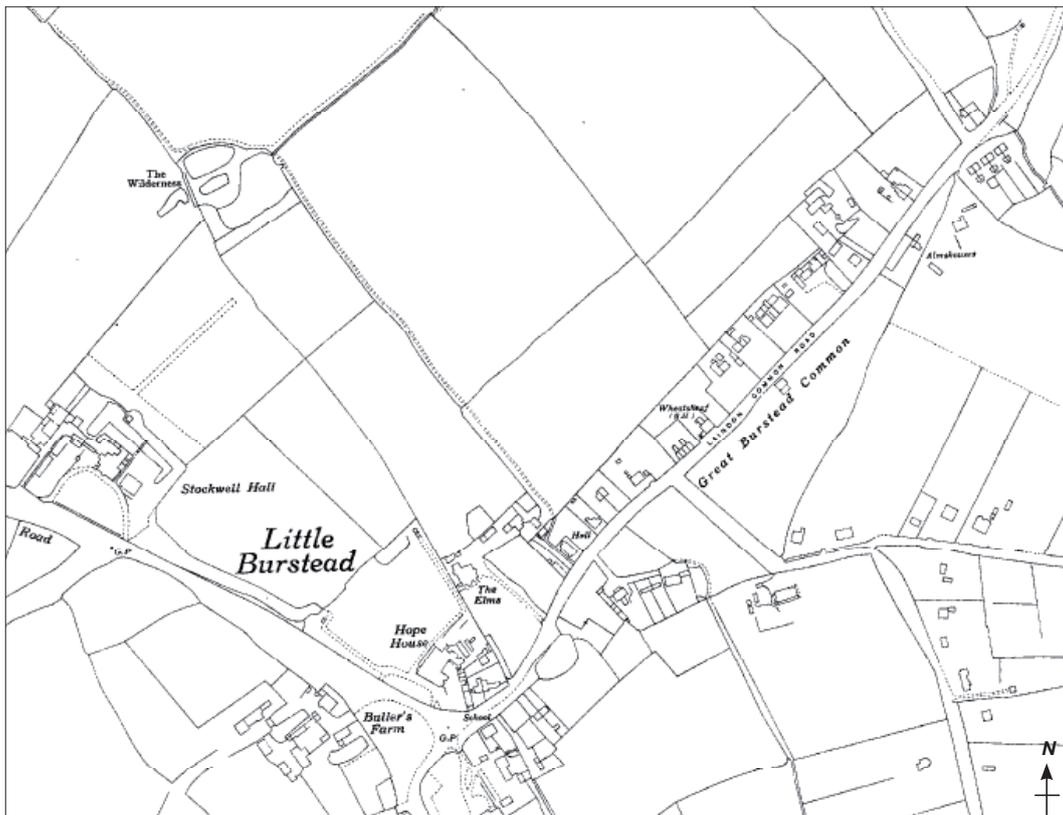
1875 Ordnance Survey Map



1896 Ordnance Survey Map



1921 Ordnance Survey Map



1940 Ordnance Survey Map



a few exceptions. In the church are several monuments of the Herris, Grimston, and Walton families, and one is in memory of Sir George Walton, admiral of the blue, who died in 1739, and distinguished himself at the destruction of the Spanish fleet in 1718. This demonstrates the influence of the nearby sea, the port of Tilbury and the River Thames.

In 1831, the rectory was in the patronage of the Bishop of London and the rector had 35 acres of glebe and the tithes were commuted in 1839 for £350 a year. At this time the rectory building, now Little Burstead House, was described as a 'commodious residence'.

By 1848 Little Burstead had a population of 170, still very small, and covered 1830 acres. Most of the parish still belonged to the lords of the manor. The national school was built in 1891, although a school existed before this in a building behind the village pond since demolished; White's directory for 1848 says the Parish School was built at the expense of four gentlemen and was mainly supported by the rector.

Other services available were the Wheatsheaf pub, now in residential use and known simply as The Wheatsheaf, and the post office which was in a shop on the site where Sleepy Willows is now. The late 19th century and early part of the 20th century saw some new building, including in brick which was unusual in the village, such as Rose Villa, Burstead Cottage and Homeleigh, and some rebuilding – some cottages were knocked down to make way for Brook Cottages and Elm Cottage was transformed from a machine shed into a house.

The railway came to Billericay in 1889 and as a result an area of Plotlands developed in the Broomhills Chase area of Little Burstead. Plotlands originate from the arrival of the railways, which improved the accessibility of the Essex countryside to city dwellers from London. Farmers and other landowners divided their fields into narrow plots and sold them to city dwellers who built small shacks and dwellings that they could visit at weekends and holidays to get away from the City. Most of these properties did not have the benefits of running water, sewage disposal or electricity and were located down unmade tracks, sometimes miles from any services. They are typified by privately maintained roads, varying plot sizes, natural property boundaries and vacant plots.

The post-War expansion of this part of Essex, encouraged by Basildon New Town, has been enormous. Little Burstead too has some post-War infill housing, mainly late 20th century, such as The Forge, Winters and Casa Primera, and some rebuilding such as Sleepy Willows and Orchard End, but it is not dominant. More recently it has become a commuter village where residents are mostly relatively affluent and very proud of their village and their houses and keen to maintain them.



Casa Primera

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

General Character

Laindon Common Road

The Conservation Area is approached from the east through Laindon Common which is heavily treed and forms part of the countryside setting of the village. The Conservation Area begins upon reaching the culveted River Crouch upon which point the arrival into the village is announced by the pair of houses which flank the road here. The road is narrow at this point with trees on both sides and the land rises slightly westwards from the river. Views into the Conservation Area and of the bordering properties are limited as a result.

Brook House is the first building on the north side with a neat hedge and a curved low brick wall at the entrance to the drive which has a timber gate.



No.1 Brook Cottages

Opposite Brook House are Nos. 1, 3 & 4 Brook Cottages. In an attractive setting, No.1 Brook Cottage is just south of the River Crouch and a wooded area. Brook Cottages are nicely positioned, set slightly back from the road but the unity between them is lost.

Between Brook House and Rose Villa there is a rising grass verge to a rough hedge of trees providing a sense of enclosure to the road. A curve in the road ahead prevents a view further down the road. Rose Villa and Burstead Cottage were originally a symmetrical pair of solid red brick Victorian villas and are set back behind a beech hedge; Burstead House has modern gates to the left.

On the southeast side of Laindon Common Road is a modern house, Oaklands, set well back to the south west of Brook Cottages. It has little in common with the predominant building styles of the village. Next along on this side is Ivy Cottage set in a large garden and once the almshouses but much altered. It has what appears to be a railway carriage in the garden, and a new square garage in brick with a tiled pitched roof with bellcote, slightly reminiscent of a stable at a model farm.



Burstead Cottage



Garage at Ivy Cottage

On this side of the road there is now nothing until Petre Place. A dense hedge maintains the sense of enclosure and hides the Common with glimpsed views of houses on Broomhills Chase. The road turns slightly uphill and curves up ahead. The next building along the road, The Reddings, is on the west side, after a tall hedge.

Behind The Reddings are the remains of Jackson's Farm, three extremely dilapidated buildings including a stable and what is believed to be the remains of a hall house. The hall house is to be restored, extended and converted for residential use with the stable block used as a Garden Store. Next along is Forge House which sits to the left of the site of the forge or smithy. There is a low hedge along the road here.

On the site of the original smithy buildings is The Forge, a late 20th century house and between this and The Reddings, is Forge House, a much altered 19th century building. To the west, is Casa Primera, well situated on the site of an earlier building, with trees either side, and then Spinnakers, a substantial brick house with outbuildings which was once four cottages and is now much altered. Two more brick houses, Winters (of the late 20th century) and Red Brick Cottage (Victorian) red brick follow.



Spinnakers

Continuing along the northwest side of Laindon Common Road, after Ashleigh, set back from the road and probably of 18th century date, the road begins to feel more open, with no tall trees or hedges on either side until The Wheatsheaf is reached. This was formerly the Wheatsheaf public house, but was converted to a private dwelling.



Wheatsheaf Cottage



Wheatsheaf Cottages old photo

Upon reaching Wheatsheaf Cottage (originally 4 cottages), the character of the south-eastern side of Laindon Common Road changes with a break for Broomhills Chase going off to the south west. Opposite Wheatsheaf Cottage is Petre Place (a post-War block of four small houses), the first structure on this side for some metres.

Broomhills Chase has an informal feel with no pavements and no buildings within the Conservation Area except for Petre Place. It has a tall hedge on the right and trees to the left after Petre Place. The view out of the Conservation Area here is stopped at the end by a

modern bungalow behind a timber gate, although the Broomhills Chase turns left and continues to the Plotlands area.

On the north-west side of Laindon Common Road the stretch of houses in this residential area continues and the road rises slightly going south. The 19th century houses continue to be mostly set back behind hedges and fences.

The 20th century Village Hall, one of the very few public buildings in the village, is of timber and is clad in black weatherboarding, with its gable end to the street and, despite being single storey, it fits well in the village. After this, the last building before the character of the Conservation Area changes is Elm Cottage. From this point the view south is enclosed by a hedge on one side and a fence on the other, but a curve here gives a good view of the school.



Elm Cottage

South of Laindon Common Road's junction with Broomhills Chase is a collection of buildings that are rather hidden and well set back from the road behind hedges, fences and trees. Old photographs, however, show that this area was much more open and accessible, and the house where Sleepy Willows is now was a shop and post office.

After this building group and the village pond the character of the Conservation Area changes. The village opens up in a few metres, and the narrow enclosed Laindon Common Road gives way to The Green. Here it is much more open and there is a series of large houses set well back; The Elms, Hope House and its additions, and Little Burstead House, which was once the Rectory. This feels like the centre of the village with the school and war memorial, but is also informal and rural with Bullers Farm set right on the edge of The Green.



Coopers Cottages

The school building, opposite Coopers Cottages, is the focal point for views southwest along Laindon Common Road and southeast along Clock House Road, despite being modest. Between the school and the pond, two timber framed houses, Hope Cottage and Orchard End, enhanced the sense of openness at this point because they are set back behind a wide verge and are well visible from the road.

The Green and Clock House Road

The Green is a meeting of three roads – Laindon Common Road, Rectory Road to the south and Clock House Road to the north-west. The corner from Hope House on Laindon Common Road around to Coopers Cottages on The Green is enclosed by a good brick wall, a pavement and some dramatic trees behind the wall. Views across The Green are possible, but views out of the Conservation Area from this point are limited because although The Green is open it is contained

by trees, buildings, walls and fences, except for an opening to the south where open fields and rolling Essex landscape can be seen.

The curve at the southern end of Laindon Common Road blocks a long view around to Clock House Road from The Green, whilst Burrells Farm House and the many trees around it on Clock House Road itself block views southwest. Little Burstead House, in a well treed plot, occupies the south side of The Green.

There is a small triangle of green with the War Memorial at the intersection of the three roads. The Green is flat and the sense of openness continued to some extent up Clock House Road because of the very wide green verge on the south side of the road. This feels like the public centre of the village, with the war memorial, telephone box, the school building and benches amalgamated in this space. The village sign is also visible along Laindon Common Road and Rectory Road, leading to the church is in the southwest corner.

Hope House, to the north of The Green, is rambling and tree-fringed, and has been sub-divided to form two more houses, Eagle House and The Lawns. The height of Hope House, unusual for Little Burstead, helps to give this part of the village a grander feel than Laindon Common Road. The view from the school looking north shows a jumble of roofs including a turret.

Little Burstead House to the south of The Green was The Rectory until around 1930 and is surrounded by a good wall in red brick with buttresses, probably contemporary with the house which retains its moat.



Hope House



Formerly thatched barn at Bullers Farm

Bullers Farm House and the farm buildings, now in separate use for equine purposes, are attractively set to the west of The Green, the various farm buildings being largely screened by trees. The farm buildings are a pleasing jumble behind the trees. In the southwest corner of



Bullers Farm across The Green

The Green is The Rectory, a large new house on the site of the 1930s rectory, in pale brick with stone quoins, of two storeys with attics. The size and height of the building are not inappropriate on The Green but the colour of the brick does not blend in readily with the rest of the village.

The Conservation Area ends a short distance south along Rectory Road which leads to the Common and the Church. The church is a fine small Essex church of Norman origin and is glimpsed from the southern edge

of the Conservation Area. Whilst the church is of obvious importance to the village, it lies at some distance from the main village and does not have a direct visual relationship with the Conservation Area. It is in any case already protected by its statutory listing.

Clock House Road, to the west of the fields of Bullers Farm, gives way to a tree-lined verge and then a left turning where the land falls steeply down Botney Hill Road, towards Herongate. The view out of the Conservation Area here is entirely rural. Opposite the turning to Botney Hill Road, Clock House Road becomes Tye Common Road and the northeast side is fenced, defining the grounds of Stockwell Hall, set back behind evergreens.



Stockwell Hall

The Conservation Area ends a little further west along Tye Common Road, after two modern houses built where Stockwell Hall's stables and cottages once were. The road continues, narrow and edged with trees, without providing a view.

Landscape and Views

Little Burstead has an attractive countryside setting and Laindon Common to the north of the village is an important part of this rural and green character. Laindon common was originally used for grazing, but now that grazing has ceased it has largely been colonised by trees, mainly oak and birch. As is typical of commons it is irregular in shape and criss-crossed by footpaths. It is managed now by the Laindon Common Conservators.

The village has a verdant character as a result of its rural backdrop against which the scattered development form is seen, even though the only true area of public open space within the Conservation Area is the expanse of grass ('The Green') at the junction of the main routes through Little Burstead.

The openness of this space contrasts with the enclosure of the village's roads which are lined by hedges and trees, although trees are important to The Green which is well-defined by the trees around its perimeter.

There is a view south from The Green, between The Rectory and Rectory Road, over attractive farmland with, in the distance, the spire of the church. There is also a longer view, on clear days, of the taller buildings in Central



View of school down Laindon Common Road

London which are just discernable on the southern horizon. Otherwise views in the village are very limited; down Botney Hill Road and along Tye Common Road there are limited views, and down Laindon Common Road there is a view from The Wheatsheaf blocked by

- along Clockhouse Road and down Botney Hill Road; and
- in front of Ivy Cottage and a number of houses on Laindon Common Road.

Boundaries



Fence and gates at Bobtail Barn



Wall on Clock House Road

Boundaries are important to the character of Little Burstead, in particular the hedges. Laindon Common is separated from the road to the south by a rustic hedge for a good length between Ivy Cottage and Petre Place. There is also a good stretch of highly cultivated hedge between Elm Cottage and The Elms, which is matched on the other side of the road for part of its length.

Hedges of varying heights are in use to screen a number of houses from the road and provide a street edge all down Laindon Common Road, for example at Petre Place and at Rose Villa and Burstead Cottage and at Cooper's Cottages. New hedges are also being planted, for example at Orchard End.

There is also some use of timber fences and gates, for example on the road boundary of Three Bears, Spinnaker and Sleepy Willows and used in conjunction with a hedge at The Elms. The Elms has an estate wall into which is built Elm Cottage. A very high black painted fence and double gate in use at Bobtail Barn is rather intimidating.

Around The Green, boundary walls are more in evidence, perhaps reflecting what was traditionally the grander part of the village. There is a low red brick wall in front of Hope House topped with a fence and rounding the corner towards Cooper's Cottages it becomes a high wall, much patched, with brick coping.

Little Burstead House is screened from the road by a partly rebuilt buttressed red brick wall. A stretch of old red brick wall encloses Clock House Road to the west of Stockwell Hall, and was presumably its estate wall. Stockwell Hall is now enclosed from the road by a modern fence. There are modern railings at The Elms with gates, and modern iron gates are found at a number of houses, for example Home Cottage and Burstead Cottage. The Rectory has a brick and stone wall.



Telephone box

Public Realm

Road surfaces are tarmaced and driveways to houses are shingled, tarmaced or have modern block paving, sometimes with a rather urban appearance. There are speed bumps along Clock House Road approaching The Green and on Laindon Common Road.

The Green has white painted timber stakes protecting the adjacent triangle of grass and the war memorial which is of stone with three hexagonal steps and a post topped with a cross. There is also a traditional full height fingerpost on the green with three fingers topped with an open circle and another one at the top of Botney Hill Road. There are timber benches with green painted iron arms on the green and on the war memorial triangle. There is also a modern bus stop and road signs in this area.

Timber cable posts along Laindon Common Road have street lights discreetly fixed to them, whereas in The Green area, street lighting is provided by modern lampposts. Near the school, outside the wall of Little Burstead House is a listed telephone box of the K6 type; there is also a village noticeboard.



CHARACTER

Building Types

The great majority of buildings in Little Burstead are dwelling houses, ranging from semi-detached cottages to large high-status buildings like Stockwell Hall, The Elms and Hope House. Many houses have garages or other outbuildings. There are also a number of farm buildings; in the case of Bobtail Barn a barn has been converted to a house and subsequently extended. Other barns and stables are still in use as such, at Bullers Farm.

Many outbuildings at the larger houses have been converted into houses. There is also a former pub, now a house, the School building and the small Village Hall.

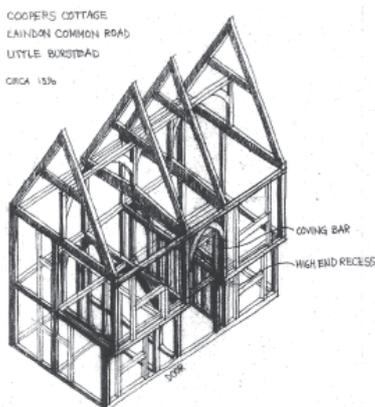
Building Styles & Materials

There is quite a broad range of building styles within the Conservation Area, although all are generally unified by the use of local materials and their residential nature. Perhaps most common is the timber framed and weather-boarded cottage of which there are many examples, such as Brook House, Wheatsheaf Cottage and Ashleigh. Most of these have been converted from two, three or four smaller cottages. They range in date from the 18th century to the present day – Orchard End is a new build in this style – and the style is largely timeless and does not alter significantly over the centuries.

There are also some brick cottages, such as Forge House and the four cottages that made up Spinnakers. The typical Victorian suburban villa is also evident with the red brick Homeleigh and Rose Cottage/Burstead Cottage which appear to have crept in from the town, and Crome Cottage which is rendered. Of similar age but a different style is Elm Cottage which has arts and crafts styling, as does Tile House, a larger house with tile hanging on the façade.



Tile House



Coopers Cottages timber frame



Old photo Stockwell Hall

Coopers Cottages is a rare survival of a Wealden House, now scarcely recognizable, and the rear of Stockwell Hall is late medieval in style. Polite styles of architecture are also represented; Bullers Farm House is the epitome of the Georgian farm house and, on a grander scale, the façade of Stockwell Hall is very much of its time, although with an unusual bone-handed clock in its gable wall. The other grand houses of the village are individual in style; the Elms has a 19th century frontage with its bay windows and coloured brick. Hope House has an early 18th century frontage and its height gives it a certain grandeur, along with the use of stucco not found elsewhere in the village.

The post-War era is well represented by a number of houses on Laindon Common Road, some better than others. The W heatsheaf is a good example, being built of traditional materials, albeit with a 1970s twist.

The vast majority of buildings are two storeys but there are a few bungalows – one behind the school, Casa Primera, Petre Place and one behind Cooper's Cottages. The grander houses are emulated in scale in the new house called The Rectory which, unusually for Little Burstead, uses stone and pale brick.

Non-residential buildings include a number of farm buildings (some now converted), modern garages and outbuildings of various ages. The school is a small, but solidly constructed, brick building, whilst the other public building of note, the village hall is of timber construction.

The building materials within the village are of great importance to its character and are predominantly ones that would have been locally available. Timber and brick account for most of the buildings in this area which is far from natural sources of stone, and their frequent use throughout the village provides unity across the different styles of building. They also provide pleasing colour contrasts within the village, with weatherboarding and render usually painted black or white and the red brick with this.

Timber was readily available in this rural area and brick making was a local industry. The timber-framed and weather-boarded cottages would mostly have originally been thatched but, since the arrival of the railways, Welsh slate was more readily available and there is now no thatch within the Conservation Area.

There are, however, plenty of good quality handmade tiles in evidence, some on modern buildings, as well as machine made tiles. Tiles are seen on



Red and blue brick at The Elms



The Rectory

walls at the appropriately named Tile House and on the front of Hope House. Pantiles are also in evidence, for example at Bobtail Barn.

Various shades of brick are in use, from the mellow red brick at Bullers Farm and in the wall at Stockwell House to the stark Victorian red brick of Homeleigh. There is brown brick at Winters, an unusual pale brick at The Rectory, whilst blue brick is seen at The Elms. Painted render is to be seen both on brick and timber framed buildings, and on Crome Cottage it is pargetted. Brick and render are frequently used together to good effect, such as at The Wheatsheaf.

Listed Buildings

There are 11 listed buildings in Little Burstead but only 5 within the Conservation Area, one of which is the telephone box. They are Stockwell Hall, The Elms, Hope House and Cooper's Cottages and further details are provided in the Appendix.

Unlisted Buildings and their Contribution

Little Burstead has very few listed buildings within the Conservation Area and, therefore, its many unlisted buildings are particularly important to its character and appearance. Most of these are houses, but there is a variety of styles. A large number of the village's buildings are timber-framed, weather-boarded buildings, such as Ashleigh, Brook House, Wartons, Ivy Cottage, Wheatsheaf Cottage, and the Village Hall.



Ashleigh

The best examples of the use of 18th century brick is found at Forge House and the classical Bullers Farm House, as well as the former rectory, Little Burstead House (now rendered). Later brick buildings include the solid Victorian villas, The Reddings (now rendered) and Homeleigh, as well as Spinnakers, much altered from several cottages and the School building.

Elm Cottage is an older building with a turn of the century make over which gives it an arts and crafts style, and 1 Brook Cottages despite being converted from two cottages, is the least altered of the three once identical pairs of cottages in this row built at the turn of the century. The Wheatsheaf is an interesting example of 1970s design in traditional materials, and Orchard End is a brand new rebuild in white weatherboarding that fits well in the village.

Buildings of Local Interest (BLIs)

Four buildings in the Conservation Area are of particular historic and architectural merit and should be considered for local listing – Little Burstead House (the former Rectory), the Old School Building, and the stable and remains of the Hall House behind The Reddings at Jackson's Farm. The Old School Building is a focal point in the village and is of good traditional construction.

Little Burstead House is the former Rectory for the village and sits within a moated site. (Both the house itself and its moated site are listed in Essex County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) – the house is Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) number: 5436 and the moated site is SMR number: 5435.) The SMR describes the building as being of 2-stories with brick walls, but these are now rendered. The north corner is thought to be 17th century and the main building is 18th century although the roof has been largely constructed. The building has undergone significant further alterations recently, but remains an important part of the history of the village and of the character of the conservation area. The moat, although incomplete and now dry, is of medieval origin. The east arm is still in good condition and the south arm is still visible. Further details on the property are provided in the RCHM (1923) Essex, Vol. 4 p85.

The timber structure at Jackson's Farm is thought to be the remains of a medieval in-Line Hall House and its crown-post roof design dates it to no later than 1575 when this design is considered to have gone out of use. Although fragmentary in its survival, it is of significant local interest and a relatively rare example of this type of building. It has a post and truss arrangement with large jowels and added spandrels and is to be restored, extended and converted for residential use. The adjacent stables are a good example of a small, vernacular outbuilding from the mid-19th century; these are to be refurbished and used as a Garden Store.

Designating Buildings of Local Interest furthers Basildon Borough Council's objective of preserving and enhancing the historic fabric and special character of the Borough. Whilst BLI status does not provide statutory protection, in the manner of nationally listed buildings, it indicates that these buildings are of special local interest and should be given protection from unsympathetic alterations and extensions. Their position within the Conservation Area affords them protection from demolition without authorization, but the aim of the Local List is to safeguard the buildings and to ensure that repairs, alterations and extensions are sympathetic to their character.

BLIs are considered to be 'heritage assets' as defined and protected by Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning and the Historic Environment which is the Government's national policy on the conservation of the historic environment. BLI status therefore ensures that the positive contribution of such heritage assets to local character and sense of place is recognised and valued and is a material consideration which must be taken into account in development management decisions. BLIs make a contribution to the Borough because of their architectural merit and, in some cases, their historical associations. They may contribute to and help to define the character of the townscape of an area, or be significant in the historical and architectural development of a settlement. Many alterations and developments require planning permission and proposals relating to these buildings should pay special attention to preserving features that contribute to their character, maintaining proportions, preserving the setting and using appropriate materials.



Photograph of 'The Cottage' behind the school prior to conversion

Key Characteristics

Little Burstead is situated in an affluent area and the village is well-kept as a result with very few buildings in any real state of disrepair. Most 'buildings at risk' such as the empty house behind the school (The Cottage), are being renovated and the school building itself is in occasional use by the church. This gentrification of the village stems from the decline of agriculture in the post war era and inevitably the desire for modern facilities and larger houses has affected the character of the Conservation Area.

There are now many non-traditional styles and forms of buildings mixed in with the historic properties which themselves have been the subject of much rebuilding and extension. The village thus has a rather mixed architectural character, in part historically, but largely because of the recent developments. Many houses also have double garages erected in the front of their plots which, despite usually being of good design and materials, intrude on the traditionally open frontage of the properties along Laindon Common Road in particular.

The village is more enclosed and treed than it was 100 years ago, when compared to old photographs of the area. This is largely due to the preference for greater privacy which has resulted in more trees and shrubs being planted in these formerly open frontages and the erection of some modern boundary walls and gates (sometimes very high) and the use of suburban style paving surfaces. However, this has not changed the overall open character of the Conservation Area and which connects it to the surrounding countryside setting.

Today, the village functions largely as a dormitory settlement with most residents commuting to London or surrounding towns and there are few services within the village itself. As a result, most people have to travel for everything which is evidenced by an abundance of cars and fast moving traffic despite the 30mph speed restriction and speed bumps. However, there remains a sense of community and pride in the village and more positively, the gentrification of properties in the village has meant that on most buildings, external repairs have been well kept up and landscaping is well maintained.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

Extensions and Outbuildings

Many houses in Little Burstead have been extended to provide adequate space for modern living requirements. Most recent extensions have been to the rear of buildings and have used suitable materials; however, some earlier extensions have resulted in an unfortunate alteration to the character of buildings, e.g., the porch extension on No.2 Brook Cottages and Red Brick Cottage.

A number of weather-boarded, timber-framed houses have porch extensions (Brook House, Ashleigh) that significantly alter the form of previously plain fronted buildings, but fortunately, these alterations have been done fairly sympathetically. The challenge is to continue to encourage homeowners who want to expand to do so in a manner that alters the character of the building as little as possible and always using sympathetic materials. However, ultimately there are limits to how much a building can be extended without compromising its character and this should also be considered when extensions are planned. It is not always merely a matter of design and materials; the scale and form of an extension and how it relates to the original building are also important.



Brook Cottages

There are many recent outbuildings in the village, with the double garage, often with a room over, being the most frequently seen. Although these are usually well executed in appropriate materials, a number have been positioned where they are very prominent when viewed from the road. Along Laindon Common Road particularly, this has altered the character of the street frontage – for example at Forge House and Red Brick Cottage. This road, where almost every house has a visible double garage, is in danger of becoming inappropriately suburban in feel, at odds with its rural village nature.



Red Brick Cottage

Another contributing factor to the suburban creep is the use of modern block paving for driveways, sometimes laid in patterns, such as at Winters, Sleepy Willows, Ivy Cottage and Home Cottage. The challenge here is to find ways to educate and encourage homeowners to employ more traditional materials.

In the case of new buildings, some have been done well in traditional materials (e.g. Orchard End). The Rectory, however, a prominent building on a large scale, has used a pale white brick hardly seen locally, as well as stone, and blends in less readily with the traditional Red Brick or Weatherboard materials used elsewhere in the village. Proposals for redevelopment or infill housing need to be carefully considered to ensure only appropriate styles are permitted.

Windows and Doors

Plastic windows and doors do exist in Little Burstead, but mostly on the post-War houses, although they have been inappropriately used on older buildings (e.g., Burstead Cottage) too. On the whole the homeowners of the village appear to have the resources and inclination to maintain their buildings sympathetically, but this is not universal and guidance on appropriate materials would be useful.

The worst case of replacement windows is on Coopers Cottages, its Wealden House origins thoroughly disguised by the later and numerous alterations. The character and appearance of the village would benefit greatly if the owners could be encouraged, perhaps through a grant, to replace these with timber casements.

Roofing Materials

Most new roofing is in slate although there are some new pantiles e.g., on Bobtail Barn. Homeowners should be encouraged to retain and repair old tiled roofs where they exist and should be encouraged to avoid machine made pantiles if possible.

Traffic

Traffic is quite a serious issue both in amount and speed. The residents of Little Burstead need cars to get everywhere as there are no services in the village, and many commute for work, so traffic is relatively heavy for a village and, despite the traffic calming measures in place, the 30 mph limit is frequently ignored. The village would benefit from further monitoring of the speed limit.

Signage

The Green is somewhat overburdened with various bits of street furniture – road narrowing signs, a bus stop, give way signs, a fingerpost sign, 30 mph speed limit sign, etc. – and this should be kept in mind when considering new or replacement signage.

Overhead Cables

These are plentiful and distracting. They run right down the road edge on Laindon Common Road and loop across the green. Any opportunity to reduce their visibility should be encouraged.



Buildings at Risk/Derelict or Empty Buildings

Unused buildings are rare in this sought-after village. However, the buildings of Jackson's Farm, behind The Reddings, are in a poor condition and the site detracts from the Conservation Area in its current state despite the underlying historic importance of two of the buildings. A recently upheld planning appeal (ref: APP/V1505/A/09/2118446) for the



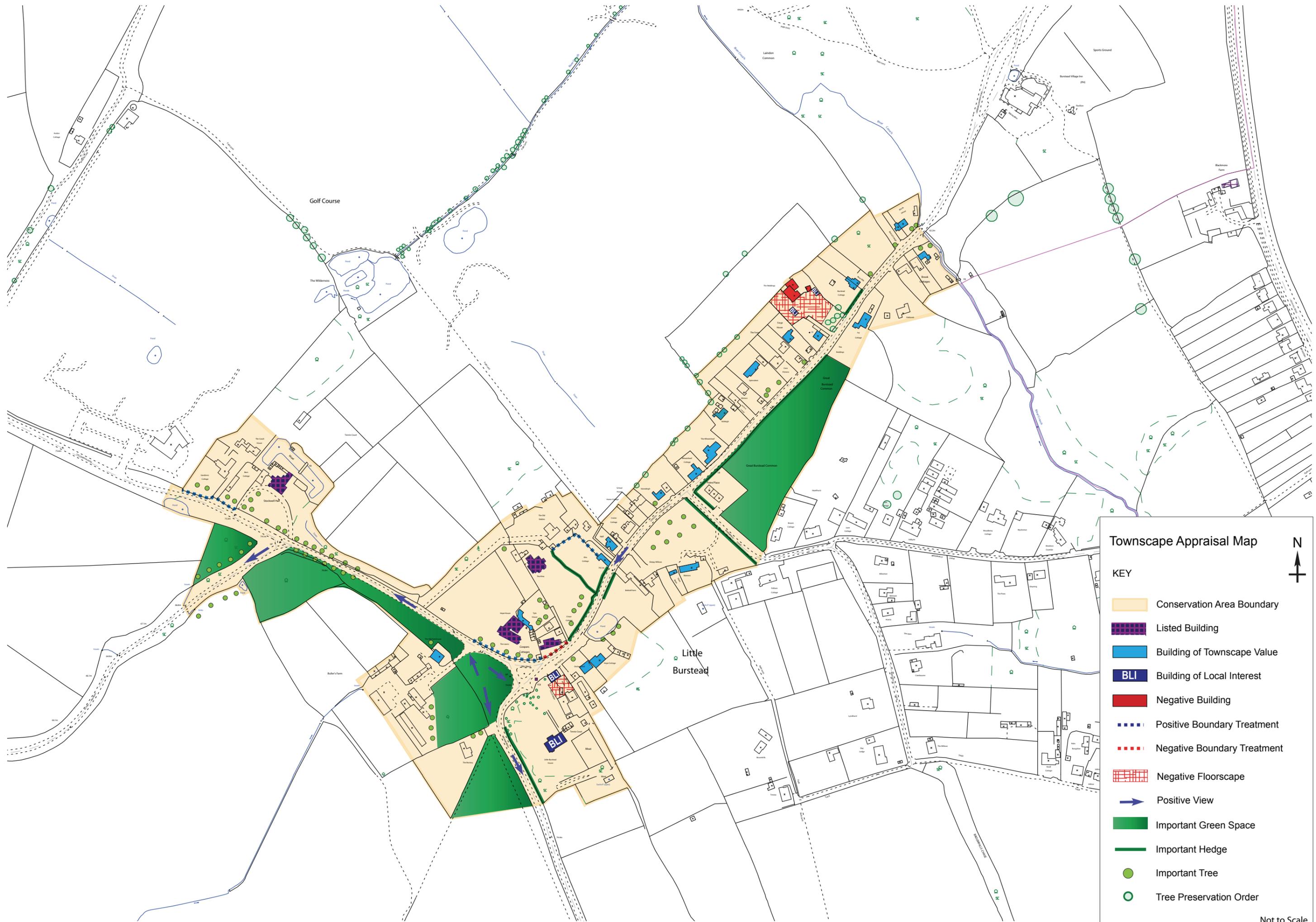
Jacksons' Farm

restoration and conversion of the former medieval hall structure and 19th century stables (SMR number: 40863) for use as a dwelling and garden store respectively should, however, tidy up the site. It also offers the opportunity for the importance of the buildings to be recognized and appreciated more fully. (For more information, see Essex Historic Environment Record (HER): Barry Hillman-Crouch. 2008. Jacksons Farm, Laidon Common Road, Little Burstead.)

Conservation Area Boundary

There are no proposals to alter the boundary of the Conservation Area. The current extent of the Conservation Area is robustly defined and the area's green belt designation will limit further development opportunities that may otherwise harm the setting of the village. In addition, the parish church of St. Mary's, whilst it is intrinsically linked to the history and development of the village, is a listed building in its own right, and is located within an isolated green belt position, where no greater protection would be afforded to the building or its setting through incorporation into the Conservation Area.





Townscape Appraisal Map

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KEY

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Building
-  Building of Townscape Value
-  Building of Local Interest
-  Negative Building
-  Positive Boundary Treatment
-  Negative Boundary Treatment
-  Negative Floorscape
-  Positive View
-  Important Green Space
-  Important Hedge
-  Important Tree
-  Tree Preservation Order

Not to Scale

REFERENCES

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- List of Buildings of Special Interest
- Billericay in Old Picture Postcards, K. Harvey & V.Meecham, 1994
- Billericay – An Historical Tour in Pictures, R.Green, 1997
- Ordnance Survey Maps 1876, 1898, 1921, 1940 and present day
- Tithe Map 1838



APPENDIX A

Listed Buildings

Stockwell Hall, Tye Common Road grade II

Formerly owned by the Earl of Mexborough, a 16th century-17th century timber-framed and plastered house, re-fronted in the 18th century. On the east gable there is a small 18th century bellcote and below, in the gable, a large clock face with the figures originally made of blackened bones, but now largely replaced by wood. The interior has fine 16th century-17th century and 18th century features including 16th century-17th century panelling, doors and richly carved fireplaces. There are the remains of a moat (The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (RCHM) in Essex' Vol. IV provides further details on Stockwell Hall, monument no.2).



Hope House, Clock House Road grade II

An early 19th century red brick house. The centre part is stuccoed with pilasters. Roof slate, hipped, with wide overhanging eaves on paired brackets.



The Elms, Laindon Common Road grade II

A 18th century red and blue brick house with a parapet. Altered in the front in the 19th century and later. Roof tiled, double-pitched, with 3 gabled dormers on the front. There are 19th century additions at the rear.



K6 telephone kiosk (to south east of War Memorial), Rectory Road (east side) grade II

Telephone Kiosk. Type K6. Designed 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. Made by various contractors. Cast iron. Square kiosk with domed roof. Unperforated crowns to top panels and margin glazing to windows and door.



Cooper's Cottages, Laidon Common Road grade II

A pair of cottages, formerly a Wealden house, late 14th century or early 15th century. Two storey, rectangular plan, timber frame with brick facade, rendered, plain tile roof, left gable half-hipped with gablet. 18th century chimney and fireplace. 19th century and 20th century extensions to the right, left and rear. Late 20th century/early C21 enlarged and replaced UPVC windows and doors of no special interest.



Summary of Importance

Wealdens are particularly rare in Essex, there are only about 30 known examples. This building is of special interest as a rare example of a substantially intact late 14th century or early 15th century Wealden House with a single-bay hall, surviving mostly in its original condition. The plan-form of the building maintains its legibility and the carpentry and timber framing is of high quality.

CONTACTS

This document was produced by:

Beacon Planning Ltd

7 Quay Court
Colliers Lane
Stow-cum-Quy
Cambridge
CB25 9AU

T: 01223 810990

F: 01223 810991

E: mail@beaconplanning.co.uk

W: www.beaconplanning.co.uk

For further information, please contact:

Planning Services

Basildon Borough Council

The Basildon Centre
St Martin's Square
Basildon
Essex
SS14 1DL

T: 01268 533333

W : www.basildon.gov.uk

