

Great Bentley Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

Tendring
District Council



Client:
Tendring District Council

Date:
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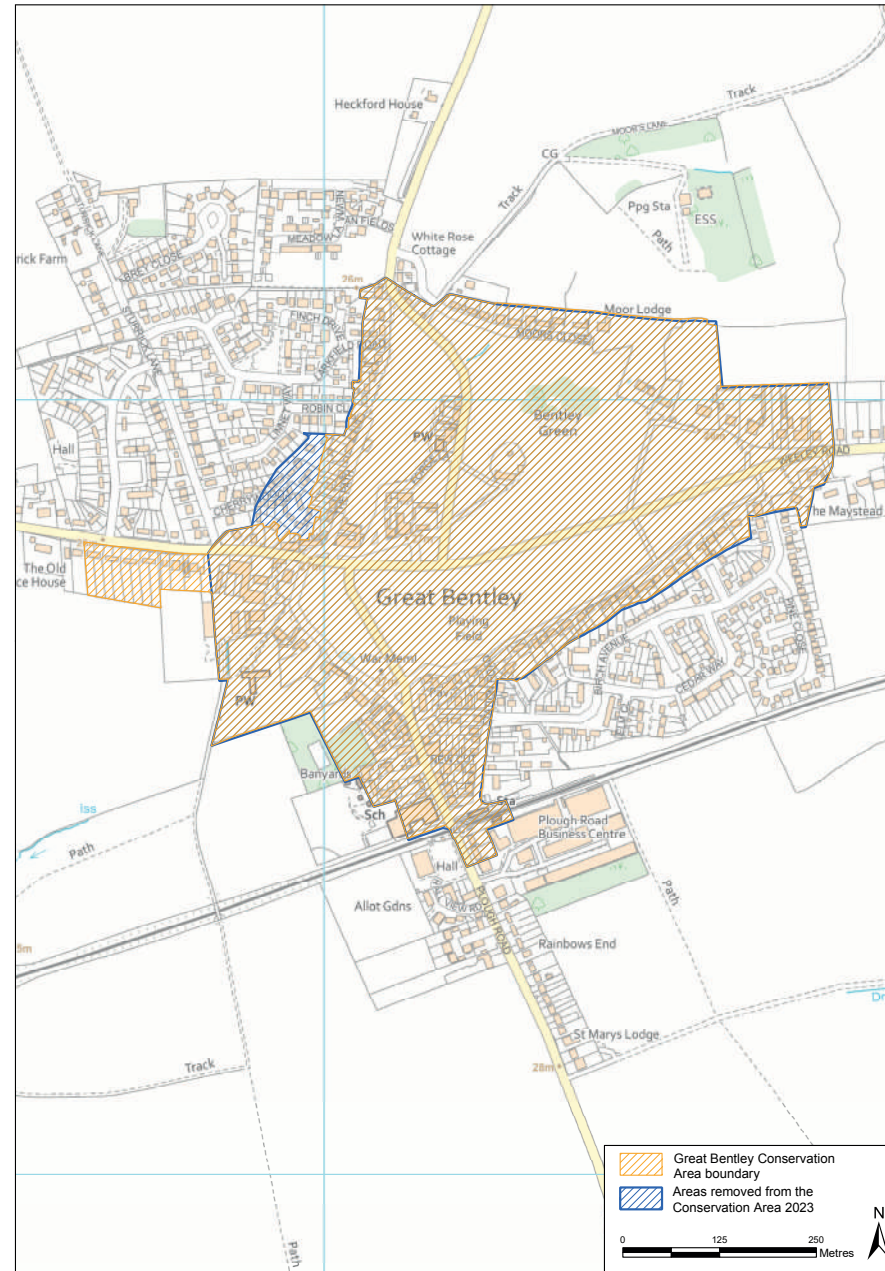


Figure 1 Conservation Area boundary

1. Introduction

1.1 Summary

This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan provides an overview of the Great Bentley Conservation Area, outlining its designation history, alterations to the boundary, and a description of its special interest. The appraisal will also consider buildings, green spaces, and features which contribute to the Conservation Area's character and appearance.

Conservation Area designation provides broader protection than the listing of individual buildings as it recognises all features within the area which form part of its character and appearance and ensures that planning decisions take the enhancement and preservation of the area into consideration.

Great Bentley is a village with a large central green, from which it derives much of its character and special quality. Great Bentley is predominantly residential and is surrounded by agricultural land, it also has a railway station, which is a branch of the Great Eastern Main Line. The significance of the Great Bentley Conservation Area largely derives from its rural character and the expansive village green.

1.2 Conserving Tendring's Heritage

Tendring District Council appointed Place Services to prepare a Conservation Area Appraisal for Great Bentley. The document is provided as baseline information to support in the conservation of Great Bentley's heritage.

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



Figure 2 Photo of the Church of St Mary



1.3 Purpose of Appraisal

This document is to be used as a baseline to inform future change, development and design with regard to the sensitivities of the historic environment and its unique character.

The appraisal recognises designated and non-designated heritage assets within the area which contribute to its special interest, along with their setting.

It will identify the area's building styles, forms, materials, scale, density, roads, footpaths, alleys, streetscapes, open spaces, views, landscape, landmarks, and topography. These qualities will be used to assess the key characteristics of the area, highlighting potential impact future developments may have upon the significance of heritage assets. This assessment is based on information derived from documentary research and analysis of the areas.

This appraisal will enhance understanding of Great Bentley and its development, informing future design. Applications that demonstrate an understanding of the character of a Conservation Area are more likely to produce appropriate design and positive outcomes for agents and their clients.

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

1.4 Frequently Asked Questions

What is a conservation area?

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

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

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



How are conservation areas designated and managed?

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

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

How can I find out if I live in a Conservation Area?

Boundary maps of conservation areas can be found on your Local Planning Authority website. Some authorities have an online interactive map search allowing you to search for a property. You can also contact your local planning authority directly to find out if you reside within a conservation area. Tendring District Council's Conservation Areas can be found within the Planning section under Heritage, conservation & trees.

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

The Local Authority must follow the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). These set out in clear terms how development proposals within Conservation Areas should be considered on the basis of whether they preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area. Applications which fail to preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area are likely to be refused as a result.

An authorities Local Plan also typically includes a specific policy on Conservation Areas.

What is an Article 4 Direction?

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

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

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

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

If routine maintenance works are to be carried out using authentic materials and traditional craft techniques, on a like-for-like basis, it is unlikely that you will need to apply for permission from the local authority. However, it is strongly recommended that you contact the local planning authority for clarification before commencing any works. The use of a contractor with the necessary skills and experience of working on historic buildings is essential. Inappropriate maintenance works and the use of the wrong materials will cause damage to the fabric of a historic building.



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

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

Can I demolish a building in a conservation area?

Demolition or substantial removal of part of a building within a conservation area will usually require permission from the local planning authority. It is important to speak to them before beginning any demolition works, to clarify if permission is required.

Can I remove a tree within a conservation area?

If you are thinking of cutting down a tree or doing any pruning work, the local planning authority must be notified 6 weeks before any work begins. This enables the authority to assess the contribution the tree makes to the character of the conservation area and, if necessary, create a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to protect it. Consent will be required for any works to trees that are protected. Further information on TPOs can be found on Historic England's [website](#).

How do I find out more about a conservation area?

Historic England's website has information on conservation areas and their designation. Further information on the importance of conservation areas, and what it means to live in one, can also be accessed via their [website](#).

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

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



1.5 Planning Policy and Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights good design as one of twelve core principals of sustainable development. Sustainable development relies on sympathetic design, achieved through an understanding of context, the immediate and larger character of the area in which new development is sited.

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

The legislative framework for conservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (HMSO 1990). In particular section 69 of this act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate areas which they consider to be of architectural and historic interest as Conservation Areas, and section 72 requires that special attention should be paid to ensuring that the character and appearance of these areas is preserved or enhanced. Section 71 also requires the Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposal for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.

National planning policy in relation to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets is outlined in chapter 16 of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (DLUHC 2023).

The Conservation Area which is the subject of this report is located within the area covered by Tendring District. Local planning policy is set out in the Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond Section 2 (2022). Policies which are relevant to heritage assets include:

Policy SPL 3 - Sustainable Design

Policy PP 8 - Tourism

Policy PPL 3 - The Rural Landscape

Policy PPL 7 - Archaeology

Policy PPL 8 - Conservation Areas

Policy PPL 9 - Listed Buildings

Policy PPL 10 - Renewable energy generation and energy efficiency

1.6 Designation of the Conservation Area

Great Bentley Conservation Area was first designated in 1969 and was subsequently amended and extended in 1982. Further to this a Conservation Area Character Appraisal was published in 2006.

1.7 Article 4 Directions

The Great Bentley Conservation Area is currently not covered by any Article 4 Directions.

2. Great Bentley Conservation Area

2.1 Context and General Character

Great Bentley is a rural village located in the Tending District of northeast Essex and the parish of Great Bentley. The village comprises of an expansive central village green, being 42 acres, the perimeter of which has been developed and subsequently expanded in modern times.

The village green is the largest in Essex and N. Pevsner describes how 'whatever houses border on it seem small, seen across that great expanse, and there are in any case few of any age that are larger than cottages'.



Figure 3 Aerial Image of Great Bentley

The historic development of Great Bentley and its large village green, shares a close relationship to the surrounding agricultural landscape which imparts a strong rural character upon the Conservation Area. The earliest recorded history of Great Bentley is from a reference within an Anglo-Saxon Will in 1045 and the earliest surviving structure is that of the Parish Church of St Mary, the chancel and nave being built approximately 1130-1140AD and later extended in the fourteenth century.

The village of Great Bentley remained an isolated settlement until the advent of the railways and there was sparse development until this point, see the Chapman and Andre map of 1777 (Figure 5). The listed and historic buildings within Great Bentley are themselves varied, demonstrating the differing phases of development and form distinctive character areas or attractive groups of buildings, which positively contribute to the Conservation Area.



Figure 4 View towards Thorrington Road and Great Bentley Hall front gates.



2.2 Origin and Evolution

The following section provides an overview of the history of Great Bentley and the surrounding settlement.

Prehistory (500,000 BC – AD 43)

The earliest tangible evidence for archaeology within the wider area dates to the Bronze Age period (2200AD – 700 BC). Evidence for Bronze Age occupation is particularly prevalent within the Tendring district. During this period the area was predominantly an arable economy, and although no archaeological evidence has been uncovered within the Conservation Area itself, a series of recent archaeological investigations to the north of the village have revealed evidence of a Bronze Age landscape, including a probable Bronze Age driveway. Aerial photographic evidence suggests elements of an extensive Bronze Age landscape survive in the surrounding areas, including possible burial monuments.

Late Iron Age/Roman (100 BC – AD 410)

Beyond the Conservation Area to the north-east and north-west, recent investigations have identified the periphery of an extensive Late Iron Age-Romano British settlement with evidence for textile manufacturing and metalworking. Aerial photographic evidence to the north and east of this settlement appear to show its continuation within the landscape.

Six Roman coins were found within a layer of gravel at the southern end of Station Road, suggesting a level of Roman activity within the Conservation Area.

Early Medieval (410 – 1066)

Surviving evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement and activity is generally rare within the region, and no Anglo-Saxon material has been recovered from within, or in the vicinity of, the Conservation Area. However, Great Bentley is referenced in a will of 1045 and is recorded in the Domesday book of 1086 as containing 20 households, so it appears to have its origins in the late Saxon period.

Medieval (1066 – 1540)

Settlement at Great Bentley grew up on the periphery of the green, which is likely to be medieval in origin. The triangular green is considered the largest village green in Essex and lies within the Conservation Area. On the western and southern side, there was a scatter of cottages, the hall and the church.

The Grade I listed Parish Church is twelfth century in origin, and previous archaeological excavations within the churchyard uncovered the foundations of puddingstone conglomerate. The church tower is reported to have been used as a Home Guard lookout post during World War Two.

To the north-west of the church, immediately outside the Conservation Area, is a rectangular cropmark, identified through aerial photography, which is interpreted as a medieval moated enclosure, and is likely to have contained a manorial complex associated with the church. To the south of the church, again directly outside the Conservation Area, are further cropmarks (of possible moats and a fish pond) associated with this postulated church/manor complex. Great Bentley Hall, to the north of the Church, is seventeenth century in date and the historic site contains an eighteenth century barn, 60 metres west of Great Bentley Hall.

The Primary School to the south of the Conservation Area was built in 1897 by J.W. Start. The 1893-1900s Ordnance Survey map (Figure 7) illustrates the expansion and development to the south of the Conservation Area by Plough and Station Road. There is also some development northwards, however the village remains concentrated around its historic core of the Parish Church.



Figure 7 1893-1900s Ordnance Survey Map

Modern (1901 – now)

Great Bentley during the early twentieth century continues to be steadily developed. From the 1920s, there is infill development and the group of semi-detached buildings south of Thorington Road is established. This development was a response to the national housing shortage following the First World War, resulting in a boom in local authority housing. 'Homes fit for heroes' as a movement intended to provide good quality houses with gardens and affordable rents. It was then Prime Minister David Lloyd George who began the ideology 'Homes fit for Heroes' at a speech delivered in Wolverhampton in 1918. The later Housing Act of 1923 enabled similar housing programmes across the country that continued until the 1930s.

A home guard ammunition shelter is recorded as having been located on the green during World War II, but its exact location has yet to be identified. From the early-mid twentieth century, the land to the west of the village green, south of Sturrick Farm, begins to be steadily developed. From the mid-late twentieth century, there is continued gradual development and some infill, with the larger estates being constructed to the northwest and southeast.



Figure 8 View of Thorington Road, ECC Archive c.1986

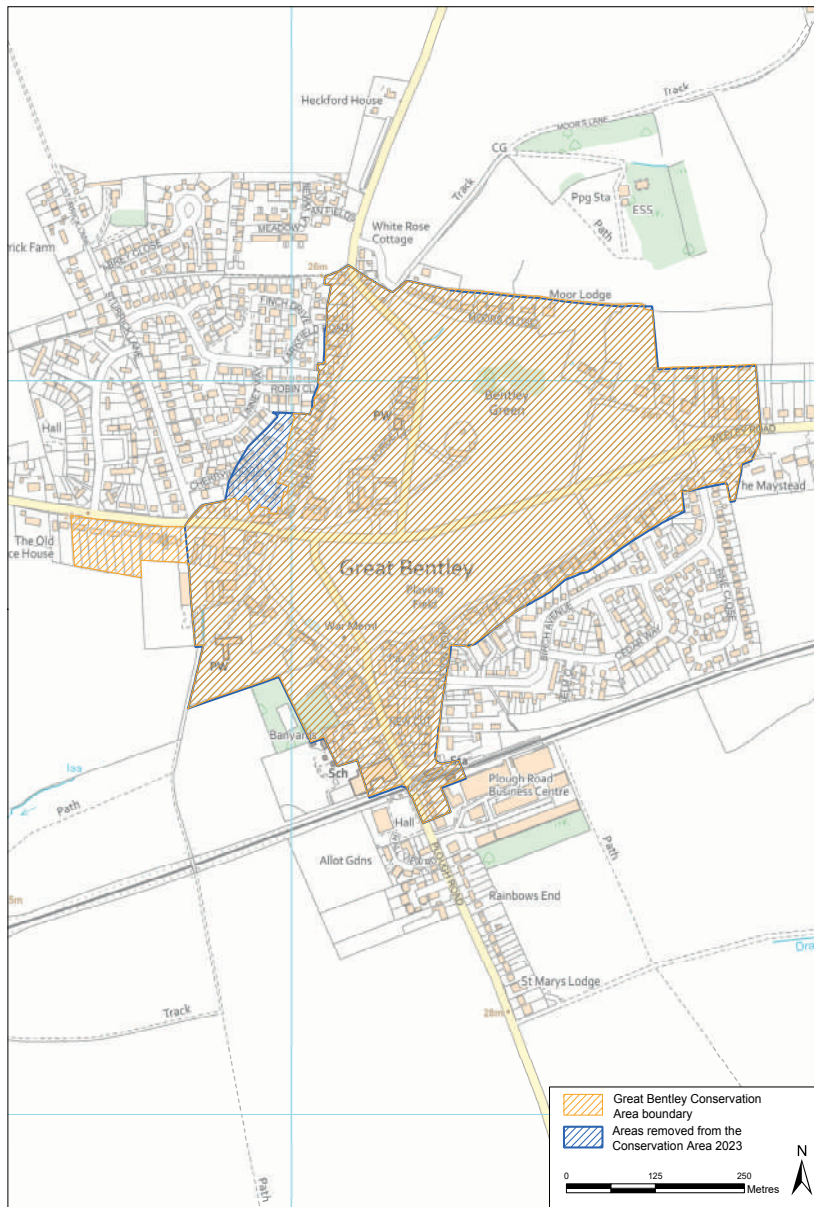


Figure 9 Boundary Revisions

2.3 Revisions to the Boundary

As part of this review, the Conservation Area boundary has been revised to reflect changing methodologies of good practice and provide a clearer strategy which acknowledges the practicalities of Great Bentley’s unique built environment. This review is in line with the NPPF guidance on Conservation Areas (paragraph 191).

Additions

Additions to the Conservation Area includes early twentieth century housing with some later infill development.

The boundary of the Conservation Area has been expanded westward along Thorington Road to include the row of buildings (Nos. 1-8) south of the road, up to Police House. Together these buildings form a pleasing and uniform group with generous plots on the approach to the village green and centre of Great Bentley. The buildings are of special historic interest and some architectural interest, representing a period of time when social housing was expanded in response to a national housing crisis post-war.

Reductions

The boundary of the Conservation Area has been rationalised by a reduction in the area to the northwest.

The boundary has been revised to exclude the modern development of Cherrywoods, as the buildings are not considered to be of special architectural or historic interest contributing to the character or appearance of the area or contribute the significance of the Conservation Area.



2.4 Designated Heritage Assets

There are 11 designated heritage assets within Great Bentley Conservation Area, including the Grade I listed Parish Church of St Mary, a historic barn and residential buildings. A full list of all the designated assets within the Conservation Area is included in Appendix 6.1. They are also listed in the description for each Character Area, outlined in Section 3 of this document.

These buildings, structures and features have been listed due to their special historic and architectural interest as defined by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings, 2018). Further information about the listing process can be found on the Historic England website.

Listed Buildings

The rarer and older a building is, the more likely it is to be listed. As a general principle, all buildings that pre-date 1700 and are in a relatively intact condition will be listed, as will all buildings that date between 1750 and 1850. There is a strict criterion for buildings built after 1945; buildings less than thirty years old are unlikely to be listed unless they have been deemed as exceptional examples of their type.

Listed buildings are considered under three grades in England. Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest and make up approximately 2.5% of all listings; Grade II* are of more than special interest; Grade II are of special interest and most common, making up 91.7% of all listings.

Listed buildings are protected by government legislation and there are policies in place to ensure that any alterations to a listed building will not affect its special interest. It is possible to alter, extend or demolish a listed building but this requires listed building consent and sometimes planning permission.

The Great Bentley Conservation Area contains relatively few listed buildings, however the variety is important, highlighting how the village has developed and altered over time and acknowledging the multiple phases of Great Bentley's development.

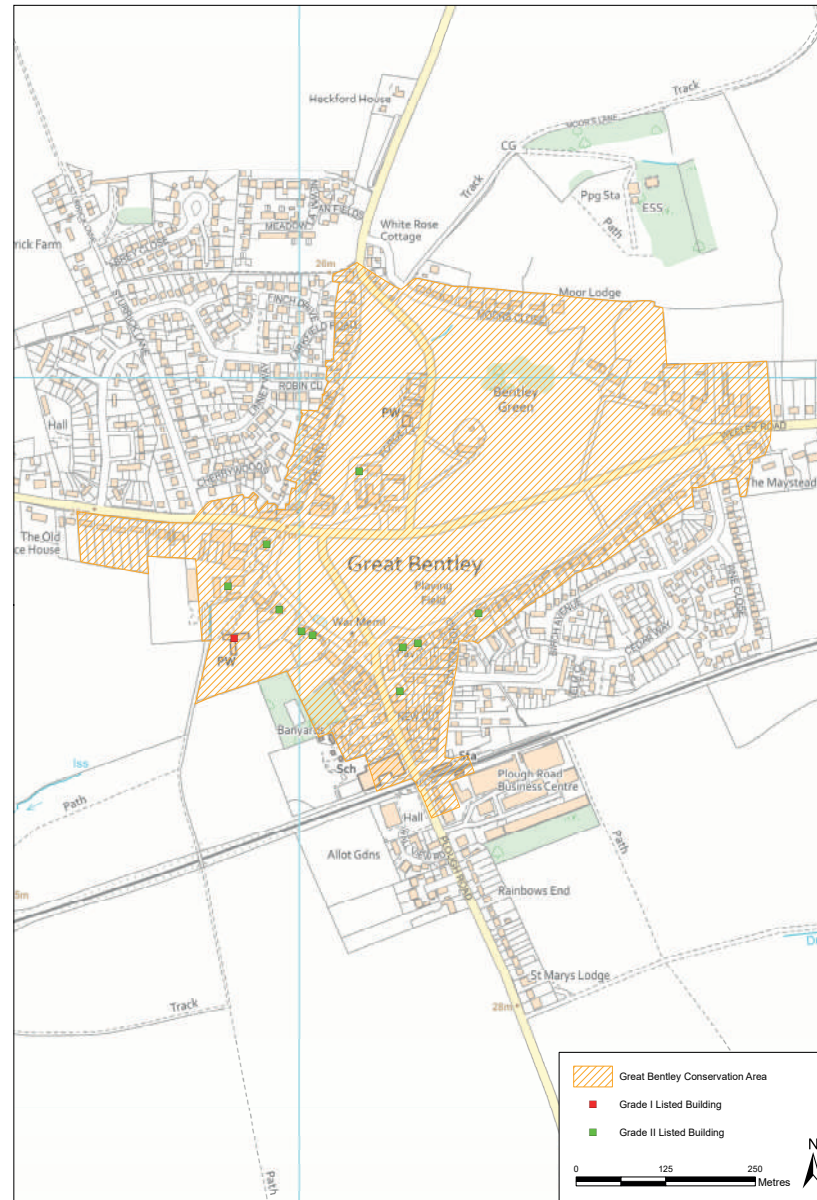


Figure 10 Map of Designated Heritage Assets

2.5 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Every building, space and feature within a Conservation Area makes a contribution to its character and special interest, be it positive, neutral or negative.

Heritage assets are defined in Planning Policy as ‘A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.’

Not all heritage assets are listed, and just because a building is not included on the list does not mean it is of no heritage value. Buildings and other smaller features of the built environment such as fountains, railings, signs and landscaping can make a positive contribution to the appreciation of an area’s historic interest and its general appearance.

Local listing is an important tool for local planning authorities to identify non-listed buildings and heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the locality. At present there is not an approved Local List for Tendring District Council however this document has identified heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and could be considered for Local Listing in the future. These are also identified in the descriptions of the Conservation Area and each character area as outlined in Section 3.



Figure 11 The Methodist Church



The buildings and structures proposed for local listing are identified below:

- The Methodist Church
- The Old Mill House
- Nos. 1-6 The Green
- No.6 Chapel Terrace
- The Red Lion Inn
- The Old Mill House
- Moorlands
- Newmays House

It should be noted that conservation area appraisals are not binary documents and there remains the potential for additional non-designated heritage assets or positive contributors to the Conservation Area to be identified in the future.

2.6 Heritage at Risk

Tendring District Council published a Heritage Strategy in 2019 using data from the Heritage at Risk Programme (HAR) by Historic England, however there is not a separately published Heritage at Risk Register by Tendring District Council.

2.7 Archaeological Potential

Although archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken around Great Bentley, little has been carried out in the Conservation Area itself. The Bronze Age droveway and cropmarks of ring-ditches and enclosures surrounding the village indicate a potential for multi-phase Prehistoric archaeology within the area. The Romano-British settlement identified nearby seems to extend away from the Conservation Area, but isolated archaeological remains related to its hinterland may survive within the village. A collection of Roman coins previously discovered within the Conservation Area also suggests some level of Roman activity.

The majority of the archaeological remains surviving within the Conservation Area are likely to comprise medieval and post-medieval features, structures and finds, related to the establishment and growth of the village from the Late Saxon period onwards. Specifically, remains of buildings may survive on the green, including the windmill recorded on later mapping.

Soil-conditions are variable, the London Clay allows for the preservation of faunal remains whilst the sands and gravels partially overlaying it are acidic and faunal survival is poor. Artefacts such as ceramics, building materials and metal survive on both soil-types, albeit in better condition within the clay. Within clayey soils waterlogged deposits can survive, and should be anticipated in deeper features such as wells and cess-pits.

3. Assessment of Significance

3.1 Summary

The special interest and the significance of the Great Bentley Conservation Area is primarily drawn from its legibility as a small historic rural settlement with an expansive village green at its centre, containing a variety of buildings, mostly cottages, upon its fringe.

The Conservation Area contains relatively few listed buildings, however the development of Great Bentley and the shared relationship of its historic building stock contributes to the understanding of the settlement's character and special interest.

Two Character Areas have been identified within this appraisal as they mark differing phases of Great Bentley's development, the nineteenth century development to the south being of a greater density and visual contrast to the development around the village green.

Despite development and expansion of the village in the twentieth century, including large modern developments to the northwest and southeast, the character and understanding of the Great Bentley Conservation Area is still dictated by its historic core, centred upon the Church, and its gradual development around the village green.



Figure 12 Character Area One

3.2 Character Area One: The Green

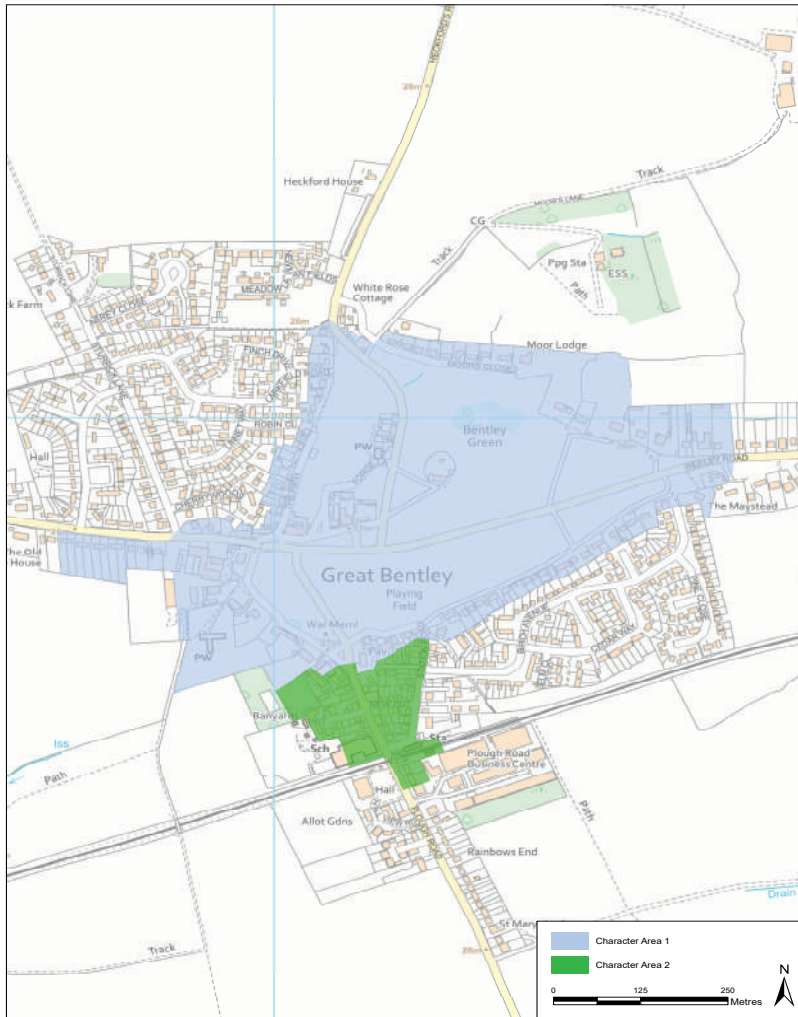


Figure 13 Map of Character Area

Summary of Character Area One

Character Area One encompasses the large village green, on which Great Bentley is centred upon and where roads to the village meet at a crossroads. The four main roads to and from Great Bentley are located within this Character Area, Thorrington Road, Heckford's Road, Weeley Road and Plough Road. The variety of buildings which flank the green are largely sympathetic to the character of the area and contribute to the streetscape. Identified key views within the Character Area typically include wide views of the village green and focusses upon the prominent historic building stock.

There are ten designated heritage assets within Character Area One, as shown on Figure 10.

The southwestern corner of the village green can be viewed as the historic core of Great Bentley as this contains the earliest surviving structures and the highest concentration of listed buildings. Views of the historic building stock can be appreciated from across the village green.

Great Bentley Hall is an impressive building, fronted in the Georgian period in red brick with fine Victorian gates and ironwork. It occupies a plot on the western boundary of the village green and can be prominently viewed across the green. To the rear of the building, there are several agricultural buildings associated to Hall Farm including the Grade II listed historic barn 60 metres west of Great Bentley Hall. The historic farmstead with its mature trees positively contributes the understanding of the historic development of Great Bentley, its close functional relationship to the surrounding agrarian landscape and the rural character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

To the south of the historic farmstead of Hall Farm, is the Grade I listed Church of St Mary, this being the earliest surviving structure within the Conservation Area and the only one designated at Grade I. The Parish Church of St Mary historically and archaeologically is of great importance being the earliest surviving structure but also its societal role for the community and how this in turn has informed the development around it. Views of the Church tower can be appreciated from the village green and outside of the Conservation Area, it is an important landmark that is visible across the countryside. Many mature trees and hedgerows are present within the churchyard, having a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

Adjacent to the Parish Church is the attractive Red Lion Inn and the Grade II listed building, The Old Rectory. This being a fine eighteenth century red brick house which looks out across the village green, with fine architectural features. It has a good front garden space and an attractive low brick wall with twin gates supported on octagonal cast iron piers.

The collection of buildings within this southwestern corner of the Character Area form a pleasing group which is continued eastward to include Palfryman's Cottage and Pond House. Palfryman's Cottage is seventeenth century in date and more modestly proportion, being one storey and attics, and Pond House, the larger eighteenth century dwelling which was once three cottages, overlooks the green and pond.

The southwestern corner is closed by a building that is considered neutral in its appearance, Golfe House, which fronts the War Memorial. However, in long views it sympathetically merges with the historic building stock that forms this highly attractive group of buildings, that contributes to the understanding of the historic development of Great Bentley and its special interest.



Figure 14 Photograph of Great Bentley Hall



Figure 15 Photograph of The Old Rectory

The development north of Weeley Road through the village green and to the west was predominantly built during the nineteenth century, with some earlier development and instances of later infill.

Nos. 1-6 The Green is an attractive row of one-and-a-half storey cottages with front gardens overlooking the green. A smithy (now demolished) was present at this location and a pair of blacksmiths cottages are adjacent to the row fronting the green. This group of buildings are of historic and architectural interest, positively contributing to the Great Bentley Conservation Area and should be considered worthy of inclusion within the Local List.

The only listed building northwards of Thorrington/Weeley Road through the village green is that of Peacehaven/Pond Cottages, which was located in an isolated position until the nineteenth century with later additions, such as the The Hollies (now a surgery), located to the south. The Hollies features prominently in views and has been much extended however its vernacular origins remain legible. To the north of The Hollies is a rather unattractive group of buildings including, the football club and Bentley House.

Northwards and upon the second island sits the red brick Methodist Church of 1843 and other later brick buildings. The Methodist Church is an attractive building of historic and architectural interest. A short row of cottages is present to the rear which form an attractive group. Nikolaus Pevsner states that *'the best houses are on the SW side, towards the church'*. In particular, No.6 Chapel Terrace is considered to be of special architectural and historic interest, worthy of consideration for the Local List.

The Old Mill House is a large Victorian Villa with white render and slate roofs, located in an isolated position on an island upon the green. The site used to contain a mill however, little trace of this remains. The Old Mill House is considered to positively contribute to the special interest of the Conservation Area and features prominently within key views.



Figure 16 Photograph of Mill House.



Figure 17 Photo of The Pond, Great Bentley



Figure 18 Photograph of Moorlands

To the northeast is a large building, Moorlands. This being a large nineteenth century building once closely associated to the agrarian landscape of Great Bentley. It was under the ownership of John Sizer Junior, who owned several properties within the village. Moorland's scale and grandeur reflects properties found across the village green by the Church. Newmays House, located on the eastern end of the Conservation Area was also owned and occupied by John Sizer and is also considered an attractive historic building in its vernacular origins.

South of Weeley Road and along the village green are three Grade II listed buildings, the earliest being Goodwyns and Monsey, which formerly occupied an isolated position upon the southern fringe of the village green. Both Jasmine Cottage and Jasmine Place are modestly proportioned cottages part of the eighteenth-century phase of development within the settlement.

Land Usage

Character Area One is focussed upon the expansive village green and the predominantly residential development upon its fringe. The historic core and the earliest surviving structures of Great Bentley are within this character area, with later development and instances of infill taking place.

Traditional/Local Building Materials and Boundary Treatments

There is a concentration of traditional buildings in this section of the Conservation Area, although diluted by twentieth century infill housing in other areas. The design of the buildings in the Character Area is predominantly vernacular, reflecting the age and development of the settlement. There are instances of unusual forms and some of the twentieth century development does not reflect the character of Conservation Area, such as Dominica, to the north. Buildings throughout this area are typically two storeys in height with central or flanking chimneys.

Brick and render predominantly features in this part of the Conservation Area, with differences in brick colour tone and bond providing a material differentiation between modern and older properties. Weatherboarding is also present in a number of instances with some buildings only part weatherboarded.

Roofs are predominantly tiled. Tiles are typically plain red clay and handmade on older properties with a few examples of natural slate. Concrete can be found on the more recent twentieth century development and detracts from the character and appearance of the area. Thatch is present in the area, as seen upon Catkin cottage.

Where present, uPVC windows and doors detract from the traditional appearance of the Conservation Area, as do satellite dishes and aerials.

In this part of the Conservation Area, most properties front the green and are set behind front gardens, which are demarked by low walls or hedgerows. Old walling and historic boundary treatments positively contribute to the streetscene of the Conservation Area, as viewed by The Vicarage and Great Bentley Hall. There are some instances of unsympathetic fencing and walling, however its presence is not dominant.



Figure 19 Materials and Boundary Treatments in Character Area One



Landscaping and Open Spaces

The central village green dominates this part of the Conservation Area, it being present in all key views and framing the buildings on its fringe. The verdant nature of the green with some planting to the north contributes to the rural character of the Conservation Area. In other parts of this area, mature planting, such as by the Parish Church, also positively contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Contribution of Key Un-Listed Buildings

There are numerous buildings within the Conservation Area that positively contribute to its significance. The buildings that reflect local character and distinctiveness collectively define the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The following buildings within Character Area One have been identified as key unlisted buildings by virtue of their derivation, scale, form and appearance.

- The Red Lion Inn
- 1-6 The Green
- The Methodist Church
- No.6 Chapel Terrace
- The Plough Public House
- The Old Mill House
- Moorlands
- Newmays House

In addition to the above, Nos. 1-8 Thorrington Road also make a positive contribution to the Character Area.

The western approach unto the Conservation Area and the village green is along Thorrington Road and located to the south are four semi-detached residential buildings from the 1920s. As mentioned above in Section 2.2, these were erected in a period when there was a drive for better living conditions and greater social housing. The four semi-detached buildings are uniform by design and are afforded large spacious plots with front gardens, which contributes to the rural character of the Conservation Area and permits incidental views behind to the agrarian landscape.

3.3 Character Area Two: The Station and Plough Road

Summary of Character Area Two

The Station and Plough Road Character Area encompasses the Victorian expansion of Great Bentley, to the south of the village green. Station Road and Plough Road mark the eastern and western boundary with the southern boundary of the Conservation Area terminating at Plough Farm. This area is suburban in character, being of a greater density to the rest of the Conservation Area. The presence of the Station and commercial premises gives the area a distinctly busier, and less visually residential appearance comparative to Area One.

There is one statutory listed building located within this area, this being Rambler Cottage. Rambler Cottage is a seventeenth century timber framed building with thatch, orientated towards Plough Road. It features twentieth century alterations and poor modern boundary treatments. Nevertheless, Rambler Cottage serves as a good example of vernacular architecture and contributes positively to the Character Area, as well as the significance of Great Bentley Conservation Area.

Southwards along Plough Road, Victorian and Edwardian buildings enliven the streetscene where there are instances of poor quality twentieth century infill, such as China Palace. Southwards along Plough Road, Great Bentley Primary School (c.1897) built by J.W. Start in the modern Queen Ann style is a prominent building and is architecturally striking against the residential and few commercial buildings.



Figure 20 Photograph of Rambler Cottage



Figure 21 Photograph of Great Bentley Primary School



Figure 22 Photograph of Appletrees

Additionally, there is a small enclave of attractive buildings from the late nineteenth century in this part of the Character Area, closely associated with the coming of the railways. Adjacent to the Primary School and south of the attractive Old Hall Cottage, is Apple Trees and Hollie House. Apple Trees is a grand building in appearance with a hipped roof and central doorway with a large transom window flanked by sash windows. This group of buildings positively contributes to the Conservation Area, Apple Trees being a fine Victorian residence.

The connecting road through to Station Road, New Cut, contains residential buildings, their nineteenth century vernacular origins being legible however there are instances of poor twentieth century infill and the monolithic appearance of the commercial building at the corner to Plough Road detracts from the appearance and character of the Conservation Area. Station Road contains residential buildings with few being of notable quality however the western side is of more interest than the east. The station itself is of a typical form however the presence of cementitious render detracts from its appearance, and this contrasts strongly with the well detailed cast-iron footbridge.

The southern boundary of Character Area Two is closed by Plough Farmhouse, the adjacent development not being of any contribution or interest to the Conservation Area.

Land Usage

The layout of this area is defined by Station Road and Plough Road which run parallel to one another, with the Conservation Area boundary extending southwards to Plough Farm. The land use in this area is predominantly residential with some mixed use including commercial premises, the Local Primary School and the station. The development within this character area is of a greater density to Character Area One.

Local Building Materials and Details

Buildings are predominantly of two storeys with red brick and rendered in this part of the Conservation Area. Where brickwork is left exposed decorative features, such as quoining, can be seen and contrasting yellow brick lintels. Some modern infill residential buildings are of red brick, the variation in brick tone from the historic building stock provide a visual indication of the mixture of building ages present in the Character Area.

Some buildings have been painted, the colours are typically sympathetic, reflecting the age and architectural style of the buildings. Pastel colours, creams and white provide variation across the Character Area. The few instances of vibrant, dark and stark colours appears incongruous and detract from the character of the area.

Weatherboarding is also a prominent external material within this Character Area, and there are instances of some part weatherboarding. The weatherboarding is typically hardwood and featheredged. White is used for residential dwellings and black weatherboarding is typologically used to denote buildings of lesser status, such as ancillary buildings.



Figure 23 Materials and Boundary Treatments in Character Area Two



Figure 24 Boundary Treatments in Character Area Two

Roofs are clad in plain clay tiles and natural slate upon older properties, twentieth century buildings typically feature concrete pantiles. The concrete tiles detract from the traditional character of the area. Roofs are a mix of gable and hipped, the Primary School being an interesting example of a part hipped roof form. Some buildings also feature decorate barge boards, which adds further visual variety to the streetscene.

Boundary treatments vary throughout the Character Area dependant on location and function. The few commercial units open straight onto the pavement, some with iron railings. Homes are typically fronted by a small garden, demarked by brick walls, fencing or hedgerow. Red brick walling is predominantly found, however there is an inconsistency across this Character Area in boundary treatments. This inconsistency results in a discordant appearance to the overall character of the Conservation Area, with the potential to adversely impact the special interest of the Conservation Area.

Street signage and furniture is restrained owing to the few commercial buildings however, there are few instances of inappropriate signage or where improvements could be realised, as viewed along Plough Road. The use of timber fascia boards rather than acrylic should be encouraged.

Landscaping and Open Spaces

Landscaping and areas of open space are limited within Character Area Two due to the density of the development. The greener character of the Conservation Area can be viewed to the north, towards the village green. The green frontages of Appletrees and the adjacent buildings along Plough Road, including the Primary School positively contribute to the appearance of the area



Figure 25 Great Bentley Station



Figure 26 Photograph of Old Hall Cottage

Contribution of Key Un-listed buildings

There are few buildings within this area which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. Many other buildings are also of interest however these may feature unsympathetic additions or alterations. The following buildings within Character Area Two have been identified as key unlisted buildings.

- Great Bentley Primary School
- Apple Trees
- Holly House

In addition to the above, Old Hall Cottage is considered to positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is a fine red brick building with gothic style windows and decorative brick surrounds. To the west and across Plough Road, is The Old School House of 1896. This being of the modern Queen Ann style.

Within Station Road there are few buildings of note however to the north the semi-detached building including, Ivanhoe, features decorative brickwork and contrasting yellow brick lintels and quoins. To the south of Station Road, Nos. 1 and 2 Station Cottages also feature decorative yellow brick quoining, lintels and are of red brick. However, one is now rendered, and intrusive satellite dishes are present.

3.4 Views

Key views are identified on Figure 28. The views included in this assessment are a selection of key views; this list is not exhaustive and there may be numerous other views of significance. Any proposals for development within the Conservation Area, or its environs, should consider the views below and any others which may be relevant or highlighted as part of a bespoke assessment of that proposal.

Key views are largely limited to those across the village green. Views out across to the wider rural landscape are limited due to the grain of the surrounding development.

View 1:

This view allows for an appreciation of the village green, containing the tower of the Grade I listed Church and the attractive historic group of buildings in this area. The visibility of the church tower emphasises the history of Great Bentley and its development



Figure 27 View 1

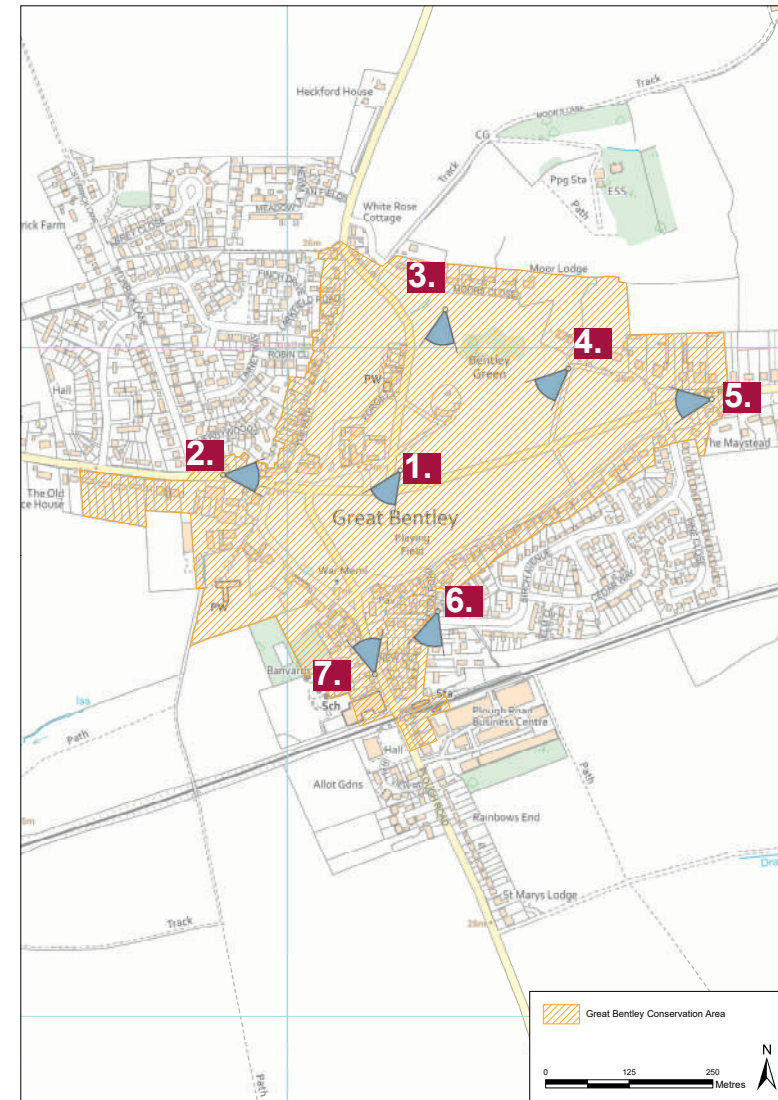


Figure 28 Key Views Map

View 2:

This view affords uninterrupted views across the green when entering from Thorrington Road.

View 3:

This view allows for an appreciation of the expansive nature of the village green, the planting to the north contributing to the verdant nature of the Conservation Area.

View 4:

This view emphasises the rural character of the village green and looks back upon the historic core of the settlement, the tower of the Church being visible thereby emphasising its role as a landmark for the settlement.

View 5:

This view permits an appreciation of the large open space of the green and the development upon its fringe when entering from the east along Weeley Road.

View 6:

This view emphasis the suburban character of the development to the south as part of the nineteenth century extension, offering a visually contrasting viewpoint to those within green.

View 7:

This view northwards from Plough Road draws its significance from the characteristically verdant nature of the village green, incorporating an aesthetic view of the War Memorial.



Figure 29 View 2



Figure 30 View 3



Figure 31 View 3

Figure 32 View 5



Figure 33 View 6



Figure 34 View 7



3.5 Setting of the Conservation Area

The NPPF describes the setting of a heritage asset as:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Historic England Good Practice Advice 3: Setting of Heritage Assets (2017) indicates that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which the asset is experienced. It goes on to note *'Where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way) then the proposed development can be said to affect the setting of that asset'*.

Historic England provides detailed guidance on the setting of heritage assets, stating that all heritage assets have a setting, whether they are designated or not, irrespective of the form in which they survive¹. In the analysis of setting, the important contribution of views to the significance of heritage assets and the ability to appreciate that significance is often a primary consideration. Yet the contribution a setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset, such as the Great Bentley Conservation Area, is not limited to views alone. Setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses. The detrimental alteration of the character of a setting may reduce our ability to understand the historic relationship between places. The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access, view or experience that setting². Therefore, any application for development within the setting of a heritage asset is subject to constraints.

1 Historic England. 2017 *The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)*

2 Ibid

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

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

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

Surrounding Landscape

The Conservation Area draws significance from the surrounding, undeveloped, rural landscape and the 'grain' of the surrounding built environment. The Conservation Area's setting within a historically agrarian landscape permits an understanding and appreciation of the historic development of Great Bentley, as a largely isolated rural settlement until the nineteenth century. The quality of the surrounding rural landscape therefore, makes an important contribution to the historic setting and significance of the Great Bentley Conservation Area.

As demonstrated in the above section upon key viewpoints, there are also strong visual links between the Conservation Area and views from outside the Conservation Area towards heritage assets, such as the church tower.

The approach towards Great Bentley, the Conservation Area and its surrounding setting is characterised by open fields. The approach from the south, Plough Road, is more developed however the agricultural character of the setting remains evident with incidental views permitted to the agrarian landscape. The approach unto the Conservation Area from the west and east, Thorrington Road/Weeley Road, is characterised by large residential buildings on verdant plots, of a loose grain, with views across the rural landscape which contributes to the rural character of the area.

The northern approach, along Heckford's Road, is also predominantly experienced from travel through the rural landscape with some new development to the north of the Conservation Area boundary. Within the settlement of Great Bentley, twentieth century development is present to the northwest and southeast. Much of the existing development, modern and historic, is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Great Bentley Conservation Area, of note is the attractive pair of buildings along Station Road, including Hollydene, which features decorative brickwork and barge boards.



Figure 35 Photograph of Hollydene



4. Opportunities for Enhancement

The following opportunities for enhancement have been identified and are summarised below in brief. The list is in no way exhaustive, and neither are the issues identified unique to Great Bentley, with many being shared with other conservation areas.

4.1 Access and Integration

Great Bentley is fortunate in being served by the branch lines to Walton-on-the-Naze from Colchester and to Clacton-on-Sea from London as well as being close to the A133. There is scope for enhancement in terms of wayfinding within the village, to signpost key features such as the Parish Church and wider public rights of way to enhance the link between the village and its surrounding countryside.

4.2 Car Parking

Car parking is an inevitable concern within any historic village settlement, and the same is true of Great Bentley Conservation Area. Car Parking can have an adverse effect upon the character of a conservation area, impacting the streetscene and how it is experienced. There is a limited quantity of on-street parking, adjacent to The Hollies (Health Centre). The overall impact of this is neutral however parking upon the village green is a detracting factor.

Plough Road does narrow to the south of the Conservation Area, along where car parking is problematic.

4.3 Inappropriate Alterations

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

Windows

Historic England's *Traditional Windows: Their Care, Repair and Upgrading* (2017) advises that:

'The loss of traditional windows from our older buildings poses one of the major threats to our heritage. Traditional windows and their glazing make an important contribution to the significance of historic areas. They are an integral part of the design of older buildings and can be important artefacts in their own right.... The distinctive appearance of historic hand-made glass is not easily imitated in modern glazing.'

The loss of historic joinery such as sash and casement windows and panelled doors results in a degree of harm to the significance of an historic building, and the loss of crown or other early glass can also cause harm to the significance of the buildings. Historic England's 2017 advice recommends that *'Surviving historic fenestration is an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved and repaired whenever possible.'*

Where draughts are causing an issue, the repair and refurbishment of windows can improve the thermal performance of historic windows in the first instance, along with the use of shutters and heavy curtains. Alternatively, modern technology allows for well-designed secondary glazing; special timber casements that can be constructed and fixed to the interior of the frame using sections and mouldings to match the primary glazing. These less intrusive methods are advisable within the Conservation Area; however, it is recommended that advice is sought from the Council before any changes to windows or doors are made to ensure the optimum solution.

Throughout the Conservation Area, there are examples of inappropriate and unsympathetic additions which can result in a cumulative impact on the area. The addition of uncharacteristic porches, the installation of TV aerials, extraction flues and air conditioning units to street facades, sides and rear of buildings harm the historic character of the area and appearance. Care should be taken that unsympathetic additions do not impact key views and the character of groups of historic buildings is preserved.

Rainwater Goods

Throughout the Conservation Area, there are examples of the loss of historic rainwater goods for modern uPVC replacements. This has a harmful effect to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. There exists the opportunity to enhance the appearance of the Great Bentley Conservation Area by reinstating or installing metal rainwater goods and encouraging their use within the Conservation Area.



Figure 36 UPVC window



Render

The rendering of facades and upon decorative brickwork is also evident, often with cementitious render. This results in the loss of original architectural features and the use of cementitious render should be avoided as this is known to result in further longer-term issues. The removal of cementitious render would be beneficial to the long-term health of the historic building stock and reinstatement of original architectural features would be an enhancement.

Boundary Treatments

There has also been the loss of original boundary treatments for poor modern replacements which negatively impact the streetscene. Examples of this can widely viewed within the Conservation Area, with materials such as poor-quality brickwork or concrete being used. Where appropriate, plain red brickwork, picket fencing and tradition brick bonding should be employed. There are also instances of existing boundary treatments and garden spaces being removed for additional car parking space. This has a harmful effect upon the character and appearance of the Great Bentley Conservation Area and would not be supported.

4.4 Inappropriate Modern Development

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

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

- The Tesco building, on the corner of New Cut and Plough Road.
- Great Bentley Football Club, a predominately single storey building with an unsympathetic modern addition.
- Bentley House, single storey building which makes a negative contribution due to its inappropriate materials.

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



4.5 Neutral Contributors

A number of buildings are considered to make a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The buildings that fall within the category still contribute to the area's character and appearance, their contribution should not be considered negative. The majority of these buildings have the potential to make a positive contribution to the area's character but due to the loss of original architectural features and unsympathetic additions are considered neutral. Small scale improvements such as reinstating boundary treatments, appropriate windows, traditional signage and appropriate use of colour would enhance these buildings, potentially permitting their positive contribution to be realised.

4.6 Colour Palette

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

4.7 Maintenance

Many of the buildings and spaces across the Conservation Area have been impacted by a gradual decline in their condition due to lack of ongoing maintenance. Historic England defines maintenance within *Conservation Principles* as "routine work necessary to keep the fabric of a place in good order". The importance of preventative maintenance cannot be over-emphasised, as ongoing maintenance can not only limit, or even prevent, the need for repairs later, it will avoid the loss of original fabric and is cost-effective.³

There are examples of maintenance issues across the area, which are common to historic buildings and Conservation Areas, such as the deterioration of paintwork, timber rot, and loss of historic features. Throughout the Conservation Area a large proportion of buildings have had original features and fittings removed, particularly windows and doors. This impacts the historic significance of the buildings and detracts from the aesthetic and character of the Conservation Area and, therefore, its special interest. There are very few buildings which have retained their historic windows.

The introduction of uPVC windows is a particular concern within the Conservation Area. To preserve the special interest of the Conservation Area, historic windows should be retained. Any proposals for the replacement of windows should avoid the loss of any historic fabric and should be appropriate to the host building. The application of uPVC windows will not be supported.

There is an opportunity to monitor ongoing condition and maintenance issues across the Conservation Area by means of a regular baseline photographic survey. Going forward, this could be an opportunity for local groups and individuals to lead in, and there is scope for the Council to work in partnership with the community to undertake ongoing assessments such as this.

3 [Preventative Maintenance \(spab.org.uk\)](https://www.spab.org.uk)



4.8 Public Realm

Street Furniture (including lampposts, benches, signage, bins, bike stands, bollards etc.)

Street furniture is generally of good quality and sympathetic in character, particularly with regard to benches and the village sign along Plough Road. However, bins and streetlights are inconsistent and modern in design. It would be an enhancement were replacements of more traditional appearance where installed.

Hard Landscaping

Road surfacing is generally of good quality however there are areas of inconsistencies and that would benefit from maintenance. The gravel road south of the green whilst sympathetic to the rural character of the area could do with improvement.

Hard landscaping can have a harmful effect upon the character of the area and the loss of front garden space, particularly for buildings fronting the green would be unsympathetic.

Open Spaces

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

Trees and Planting

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

4.9 Shop Frontages

There are a few commercial buildings within the Conservation Area, in general shop frontages should be sympathetic to the host building and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Shop frontages should utilise traditional and high-quality materials such as timber windows, doors and signage. Signage should be restricted to the fascia and overly vibrant or contrasting colours should be avoided. Lighting should be external only, internally illuminated signage would not be supported.



5. Management Proposals

There are a wide range of issues facing the Great Bentley Conservation Area, many of which share common themes. This chapter seeks to recommend management proposals which address these issues in both the short and long term.

5.1 Positive Management: Short term

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

Enforcement

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

General Maintenance: Public Realm and Highways

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

Heritage Statements, Heritage Impact Assessments and Archaeological Assessments

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

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

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



Local Heritage List

Great Bentley would benefit from the local planning authority adopting and maintaining a comprehensive Local List in order to preserve its historic environment from further deterioration. A Local List identifies buildings and structures of local architectural and/or historic interest, and these are considered to be 'non-designated heritage assets' under the provisions of the NPPF. A Local List may be beneficial to ensure the upkeep of buildings which are significant to the history and character of Great Bentley. The exercise would also facilitate a greater understanding of the area and could be utilised as a public engagement strategy to improve awareness and understanding. There are a number of buildings within the Conservation Area which are of sufficient quality to be considered for local list status, as highlighted in Section 1.5.

Neutral Elements

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

Tendring District Council must not allow for the quality of design to be 'averaged down' by the neutral and negative elements of the built environment. Officers must where possible seek schemes which enhance the built environment and look to conserve and reinstate historic features. It is also considered that poor-quality or unsympathetic schemes should not be allowed, both within the Conservation Area and its setting.

New Development

There are opportunities within Great Bentley and its setting for development which makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. To be successful, any future development needs to be mindful of the local character of the Conservation Area, while at the same time addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability.

Successful new development will:

- Relate to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land;
- Sit sympathetically in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it (including public footpaths);
- Respect important views;
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings;
- Use traditional materials and building methods which are as high in quality of those used in the existing buildings;



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

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

Public resources

The preservation and enhancement of private properties can be improved through the publishing of resources aimed to inform property owners and members of the public. An introductory summary of the Conservation Area Appraisal in the form of a leaflet or factsheet(s) is a simple way to communicate the significance of the area and ensure members of the public are aware of the implications of owning a property within a conservation area. In addition, a maintenance guide would assist property owners in caring for their property in an appropriate manner. Poor maintenance leads to the deterioration of the fabric of the built environment and the loss of architectural details. Improved awareness of simple maintenance and repair would be conducive with the preservation of Great Bentley's built heritage.

Shop Frontages

There is potential to raise awareness of the importance of historic shopfronts and traditional signage and the contribution they make to the special interest of the Conservation Area through the production of information leaflets or web pages which provide guidance for shop owners on upkeep and maintenance of historic frontages. Article 4 Directions could also be used to prevent loss of historic shop frontages.

Tree Management

In line with the Town and Country Planning Act, all trees in conservation areas are afforded the same protection as a Tree Preservation Order. Trees which have a trunk diameter of more than 75mm, at a height of 1.5m from the ground, may not be felled or lopped unless six weeks written notice has been given to the Council. Six weeks notice has to be given to the council under S211 of the Act.

It is also considered that any prominent trees, street trees, and trees with amenity value on private land throughout the Conservation Area should be monitored and maintained appropriately. This will ensure the symmetry along tree lined streets and visual rhythm, as well as maintain the green character of the area. Any tree that makes a positive contribution to the area should be retained, maintained and, if felled (only if dead, dying or dangerous) replaced with an appropriate new tree.



5.2 Positive Management: Longer Term

The second set of proposals are also focussed around positive management but are better suited to a longer time frame.

Character Appraisal and Management Plan

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan should be reviewed every five years to monitor change and inform management proposals.

Conservation Area Boundary

The Conservation Area boundary has been revised within this appraisal in accordance with the NPPF (2021) and Historic England Advice Note 1: *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management* (2018). The boundary now excludes twentieth century development to the northwest and the boundary now includes early-twentieth century development along Thorrington Road. The boundary should continue to be assessed as part of future reviews of the Management Plan to ensure it is robust and adequately protects the significance of the area.

Interpretation: Improved Understanding and Awareness

At present there is no interpretation (information boards, signage, interactive QR Codes) within the Conservation Area aimed at improving understanding and awareness. This would be an effective way to improve the awareness and re-establish the identity of Great Bentley as a historic settlement. One key area which may benefit from this would be Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin. This is a highly significance assets within the Conservation Area, and therefore would benefit from interpretation.

Public Realm and Highways

The first opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area is through investment to improve the wider public realm. This can be achieved through continuing to improve and rationalise existing street furniture such as bins and benches. Improved signage such as for Public Footpaths would also be an enhancement to the Conservation Area.

The Highways Department should be engaged to conduct an assessment of existing signage within the Conservation Area with the view to 'de-clutter' and enhance the historic environment. Collaboration between the Highways Department and the Local Planning Authority should ensure the maintenance and replacement programmed for street furniture and hard surfacing.



5.3 Funding Opportunities

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

National Heritage Lottery Fund

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

Section 106 Agreements

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

Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (Historic England)

Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas is a programme run by Historic England to target funding for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. As the name suggests, the scheme forms partnerships with local authorities (along with any additional funding partners) to facilitate the regeneration of an area through the conservation of its built heritage. The scheme makes funds available to individuals to enable them to carry out repairs or improvement works to their property to enhance the area. This would be suitable to preserve and enhance either the shop frontages or the architectural detailing.



6. Appendices

6.1 Designated Heritage Assets

Great Bentley Hall, Grade II listed. List Entry Number: 1337210

List Description: House. C17 rear range, C18 front range with later alterations and additions. Timber framed, red brick faced, plastered return and rear wing. Red plain tiled roof. Left and right red brick chimney stacks, parapet verges and parapet. 2 storeys and attics. 3 gabled dormers. Symmetrically placed 2 storey angled bays to right and left. 3 window range of vertically sliding sashes, gauged brick arches. Central 6 panelled door, pilasters with capitals and bases, moulded flat canopy. Stop chamfered bridging joists and exposed ceiling beams to rear range, also vertically boarded doors with original hinges.

Barn to rear approximately 60 metres west of Great Bentley Hall, Grade II listed. List Entry Number: 1169206

List Description: Barn. C18. Timber framed and weatherboarded. Corrugated asbestos roof. 2 gabled midstreys facing east. A large barn of probably 8 bays, the southern bays with first floor granary. Through bracing to walls, arched braces and hanging knees to tie beams.



Church of St Mary, Grade I listed. List Entry Number: 1306652

List Description: Parish Church. Chancel and Nave circa 1130-40, the Chancel was extended eastwards C14. West tower C14. North Porch C14/C15 heavily restored C19/C20. C19 and C20 restorations. Walls of regularly coursed and herringboned puddingstone, small stones and septaria. Quoins and doorways of Barnack stone, puddingstone dressings to original windows. The West Tower is of the same materials with bricks, volcanic and igneous stone. Red plain tiled roofs. The church is a complete example of C12 building. Chancel, east window C19 of 3 trefoiled lights under a 2-centred head, label with headstops. There are 2 oval and one rectangular stone memorial plaques attached to the wall. North wall, a stone plaque to east, central C13 lancet and a western early C12 round headed window of puddingstone. South wall, eastern small C15 cinquefoiled light, square head and label. Central and western C19 restored trefoiled lancets, traces of a C12 window above the western window. Between these two windows is a C19 2 centred arch doorway under a square label. Nave. North wall C15 eastern window of 3 cinquefoil lights with vertical tracery, 2 centred head, label with headstops. C12 north doorway, plain jambs round headed arch, each voussoir with axe-worked diapering. Imposts with projecting volutes to inner faces, C19/C20 low walls to gabled North Porch of re-used medieval timbers. South Wall, eastern C15 window of 3 cinquefoil lights, vertical tracery, 4 centred head. Central and western C12 round headed windows. Between these windows is the C12 South doorway, round headed arch covered with chevrons and the label with cable ornament, the inner arch has a segmental arch supporting a tympanum and each voussoir carved with 2 surflowers. Each jamb has a shaft with cushion capitals carved with leaf ornament moulded bases and abaci continued round the plain inner order. C12 door, simple vertically boarded. West Tower. Crenellated of 3 stages with a band between stages. West window, mainly C19/C20 of 3 cinquefoiled lights, tracery over 2 centred head. North, south and east walls of second stage have chamfered brick 2 centred arch windows. Each wall of the bell chamber has a window of 2 cinquefoil lights with a quatrefoil in a 2 centred head, moulded labels and stops. There are small square lights to first and second stages of west wall. The west doorway has double hollow chamfered jambs carved with square flowers around the 2 centred head, moulded label. Interior. Chancel. C15 7 cant roof, moulded wall plates. C19 multi-coloured tiles to Sanctuary floor. C14 niches to right and left of east window, hollow chamfered jambs carved with flowers, ogee crocketed heads and finials, carved spandrels, side pinnacles, crenellated heads. Piscina C14, chamfered jambs, 2 centred head, now contains a brass box, C20 memorial shelf on brackets under. North wall C19 memorials to Peter and Michala Thompson of Brook House and Frderick Heckford Thompson of Montego Bay, Jamaica. C19/C20 round headed chancel arch. Nave. C15 7 cant, arched braced roof of 4 bays, moulded wallplates and wallposts. North wall, in the splay of the eastern window in the 4 centred arch doorway to the rood loft staircase, the 2 lowest steps are cut into the cill. By the north east wall the remains of a C13 coffin lid is set into the floor, tapering lid, roundel enclosing 4 small roundels and a roundel below. C15 octagonal font, alternate panels of double trefoils and shields, moulded soffit with carved flowers, stem with 2 centred arches, moulded base. Circa 1874 octagonal pulpit, panels with round headed arches, jamb shafts with carved capitals, stem similar. South wall C15 Piscina, chamfered jambs, trefoiled head. In the east wall of the West Tower is a red brick window/ doorway. There are 2 chests, one small and oblong, the other larger with cambered lid and iron hinges. Carved wood Eagle Lectern C19/C20. 2 centred Tower Arch of uncertain date. C19/C20 west organ gallery. Said to be 8 bells, one by Miles Gray 1683 and one by Henry Pleasant 1703. RCHM 1



The Old Rectory, Grade II listed. List Entry Number: 1111406

List Description: House. C18 or earlier. Timber framed, red brick faced, plastered returns and rear. Double range, half hipped and gambrelled red plain tiled roofs. 3 rear red brick chimney stacks. 2 storeys and attics. Central dormer window. Stone coping to parapet, brick band under and central band. 3 window range of vertically sliding sashes with glazing bars, painted gauged arches. Central 6 panelled door, fluted pilasters, frieze, flat canopy.

Palfryman's Cottage, Grade II listed. List Entry Number: 1169216

List Description: Cottage. C17 or earlier with C18 and later alterations and additions. Timber framed. C18 red brick faced, plastered returns. Off centre left red brick chimney stack. One storey and attics. 3 gabled dormers. 4 C20 3 light diamond leaded casements. C20 outshot porch with matching 2 light window and vertically boarded door. Bridging and flat section ceiling beams visible internally. Included for group value

Pond House, Grade II listed. List Entry Number: 1337211

List Description: House, now 3 dwellings. C17 or earlier with later alterations and additions. Timber framed, painted brick faced, parapet verges. Red plain tiled roof. 4 red brick chimney stacks. 2 storeys. Central band. A long building standing back from a small pond. 7 window range of small paned vertically sliding sashes with glazing bars, ground floor windows alternate with three 6 panelled doors, that to right with simple fluted surround. Central and left doors with reveal panels, fluted surrounds, moulded friezes, patera and flat canopies. Probably RCHM 6

Rambler Cottage, Grade II listed. List Entry Number: 1111411

List Description: Cottage. C17 with later alterations and rear extension. Timber framed, thatched roof with 2 eyebrow dormers, off set right and rear left red brick chimney stacks. Right and left C20 small paned oriels. Central C20 half glazed porch and vertically boarded door. Interior features include exposed bridging and ceiling joists to one room, moulded bridging joist and moulded cornice with corner patera, some double and some single roses.



Jasmine Place, Grade II listed. List Entry Number: 1111407

List Description: Cottage. C17/C18 or earlier with later alterations and additions. Timber framed and plastered. Red plain tiled roofs, right and rear centre range gambrelled. Of 4 ranges, left and centre front one storey, right crosswing one storey and attics. Chimney stacks to each range. 1:1:2 C20 small paned casements with similar window to right attic. C20 glazed porch and vertically boarded door to left range.

Jasmine Cottage, Grade II listed. List Entry Number: 1306629

List Description: Small cottage. Probably C18 with later alterations. Timber framed and plastered. Red plain tiled roof. End red brick chimney stack. One storey and attics. The cottage with gable to road is set forward left of Jasmine Place q.v. 4/89 and has a ground floor and attic window to gable, a window and vertically boarded door to right return, all windows diamond leaded casements.

Goodwyns Monsey, Grade II listed. List Entry Number: 1111408

List Description: House and attached cottage. C16 or earlier with later additions and alterations. Timber framed, part plastered, part weatherboarded, painted brick to left. Red plain tiled roofs. Left and right external red brick chimney stacks and off centre right stack. 2 storeys. Lower range to left of main build and right gabled crosswing, "Monsey" is the right crosswing, C20 extension with entrance door and garage door to right. 2:1 C20 vari-light small paned casements. 6 panelled door, moulded surround, flat canopy between the 2 left windows. No entry to Goodwyns at Lime of re-survey, but there appears to be an inserted chimney stack and ceiling to the original hall. The crosswing "Monsey" has part of the frame visible with moulded bridging joist to ground floor, segmental head to service door, jowled storey posts, halved and bridled top plate scarf and 2 armed crown post roof construction.

Peacehaven Pond Cottages, Grade II listed. List Entry Number: 1306636

List Description: Two cottages. C18 with later alterations and additions. Timber framed and weatherboarded. Thatched roof of 2 levels. Left and right external red brick chimney stacks. One storey and attics. Single storey left lean-to. Left gabled, right flat headed dormers. 1:3 window range of various vertically sliding sashes, those to right with moulded surrounds. Right vertically boarded door, left door with top light.



6.2 Bibliography

N.Pevsner and J, Bettley. The Buildings of England: Essex. Yale University Press (2007)

'Great Bentley', in An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Essex, Volume 3, North East (London, 1922), pp. 107-108. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/essex/vol3/pp107-108>

Tendring District Historic Environment Characterisation Project, Essex County Council (2008)

Tendring Geodiversity Characterisation Report, Essex County Council (2009)

Archives

Essex Record Office (ERO)

Historic Environment Record (Essex County Council)

6.3 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

LEGISLATION/POLICY/ GUIDANCE	DOCUMENT	SECTION/POLICY
Primary Legislation	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	66: General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions. 72: General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.
National Planning Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (2021) DCLG	Section 16; Annex 2
National Guidance	National Planning Practice Guidance (2014) DCLG	ID: 18a
National Guidance	Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1 (2015) The Historic Environment in Local Plans	
National Guidance	Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 (2015) Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment	
National Guidance	Historic England (2017) Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets	
National Guidance	Historic England Advice Note 1 (2019) Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management	
National Guidance	Historic England (2017) Traditional Windows	
National Guidance	Historic England, High Streets for All (2018) Advice for Highway and Public Realm Works in Historic Places	
National Guidance	Historic England (2017) Repointing Brick and Stone Walls Guide for Best Practice	

6.4 Glossary

Term	Description
Archaeological interest	There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.
Conservation (for heritage policy)	The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.
Designated heritage asset	A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.
Heritage asset	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
Historic environment	All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.
Historic Environment Record	Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.
Local List	Local listing is a concept that is designed to ensure that the historic and architectural interest of buildings that are of local importance but do not meet the criteria for being nationally listed is taken account of during the planning process. Local lists can be used to identify significant local heritage assets to support the development of Local Plans.
Non-Designated heritage asset	Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets. Only a minority of buildings have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.
Setting of a heritage asset	The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
Significance (for heritage policy)	The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

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