

**PELHAM SPRING SOLAR FARM
ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT
TECHNICAL APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 6.3 – EXTRACT FROM ESSEX
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (2003)**

On behalf of Low Carbon Solar Park 6 Limited

Date: December 2022

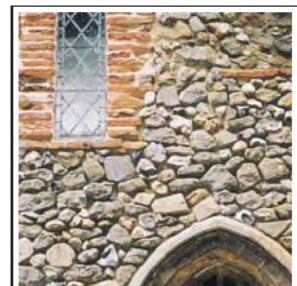


Essex & Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan Review

ESSEX LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Final Report

2003



CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES

Environment Landscape Planning

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- 8. Landscape Character Areas**
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Landscape Character Types	Landscape Character Areas
(A) Chalk Upland Landscapes	North West Essex Chalk Farmlands (A1)
(B) Glacial Till Plateau Landscapes	Central Essex Farmlands (B1) North Essex Farmlands (B2) Blackwater/Stour Farmlands (B3) Gosfield Wooded Farmlands (B4)
(C) River Valley Landscapes	Cam Valley (C1) Stort Valley (C2) Lee Valley (C3) Roding Valley (C4) Chelmer Valley (C5) Blackwater/Brain/Lower Chelmer Valleys (C6) Colne Valley (C7) Stour Valley (C8)
(D) Wooded Hill and Ridge Landscapes	Epping Forest & Ridges (D1) Brentwood Hills (D2) Danbury Hills (D3) Tiptree Ridge (D4)
(E) London Clay Landscapes	South Essex Farmlands (E1) South Colchester Farmlands (E2) Tendring Plain (E3) North Colchester Farmlands (E4)
(F) Coastal Landscapes	Thames Estuary (F1) Crouch & Roach Farmland (F2) Dengie & Foulness Coast (F3) Blackwater Estuary (F4) North Blackwater/Colne Coastal Farmlands (F5) Mersea Island (F6) Brightlingsea-Clacton-Frinton Coast (F7) Hamford Water (F8) Stour Estuary Slopes (F9) Stour Estuary (F10)
(G) Urban Landscapes	Harlow & Environs (G1) Chelmsford & Environs (G2) South Essex Coastal Towns (G3) Colchester & Environs (G4)

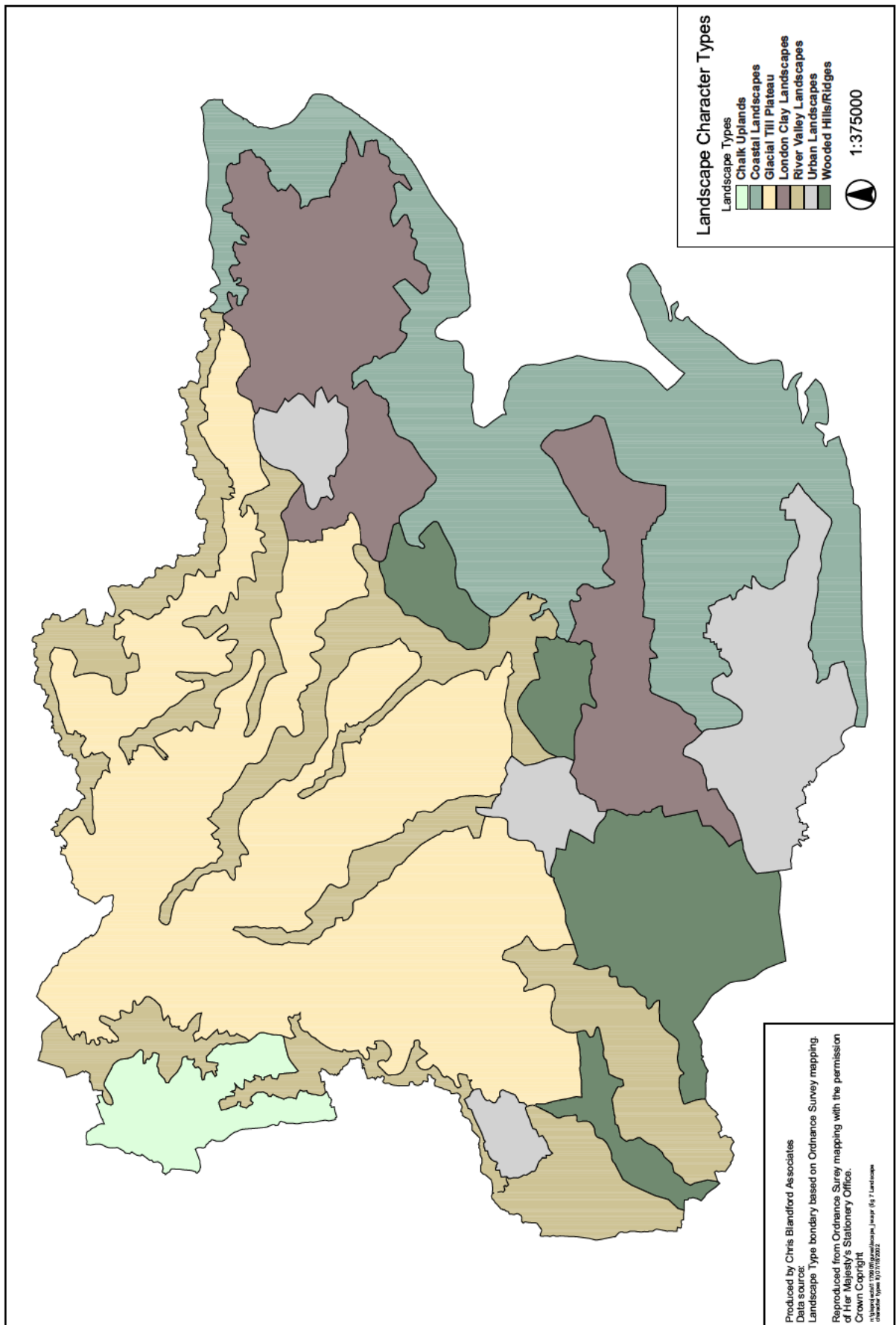


Figure 7 - Landscape Character Types

4.2 Chalk Upland Landscapes (A)

- 4.2.1 The Chalk Uplands in north west Essex are a small part of the more extensive East Anglian Chalk that forms a narrow continuation of the chalk ridge, extending from the Chilterns to south west Norfolk.



- 4.2.2 Typical hedgerow species are Hawthorn and Ash, with occasional Blackthorn, Elderberry, Dogwood, Hazel, Beech, Field Maple, Oak, Dog rose, Spindle, Wayfaring tree.
- 4.2.3 The Chalk Uplands comprises one Landscape Character Area within the study area:

North West Essex Chalk Farmland (A1)

4.2.4 *North West Essex Chalk Farmland (A1)*

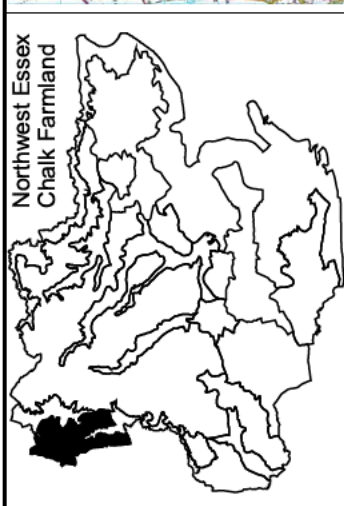
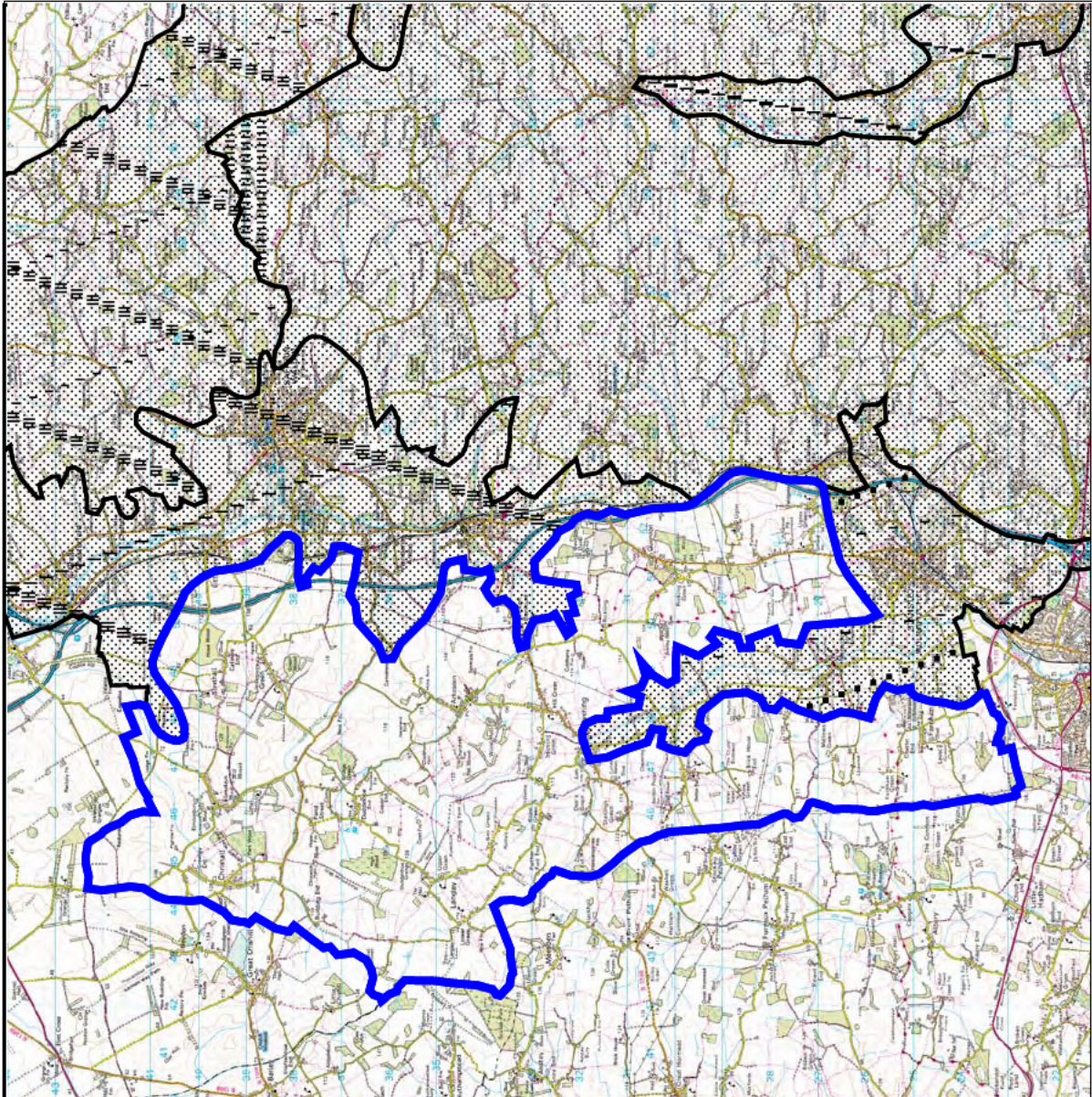


Key Characteristics

- Strongly rolling landform of broad roundbacked ridges.
- Large scale arable farmland.
- Distinctive elevated, expansive and generally open character.
- Panoramic views from ridgetops.
- Dispersed blocks of woodland and isolated copses.
- Sparse settlement pattern, small linear villages alongside stream courses, and hamlets with greens.
- Mostly tranquil and remote character.

Overall Character

The North West Essex Chalk Farmland is a strongly rolling landscape of broad ridges, separated by valleys with small narrow streams. Large to very large arable fields are defined by broken hedgelines, drainage ditches or grassy tracks. Relatively few hedgerows, and widely spaced blocks of woodland and copses result in a generally open character. Sweeping views across the undulating arable farmland are punctuated by dispersed woods and copses, in the south and west partly interrupted by power lines. Panoramic views occur from the higher ground of the broad ridgetops. Villages are widely spaced in the valleys, and smaller



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hamlets are focused around greens on higher ground. A sparse dispersed settlement pattern and narrow lanes with few major roads crossing the area, other than the M11 on the eastern fringes, help to create a largely remote and tranquil character.

Character Profile

Geology

- Upper/Middle Chalk and Glacial Till (chalky boulder clay). The chalk is much overlain by the till, but is exposed on the northerly escarpment, and on some of the valleysides.

Soils

- Heavy clay soils on the broad ridgetops, freer draining chalky soils on the valleysides and on the escarpment.

Landform

- Strongly rolling landform. A moderately sloped escarpment occurs near the northern boundary of the area, but the landform predominantly comprises broad, roundbacked, undulating ridges, divided by valleys with small streams such as Wicken Water and Bourne Brook.

Semi-natural vegetation

- Remnant pockets of chalk grassland associated with road verges/tracks. A few small calcareous meadows.
- Ancient ash/maple/hazel woodland.

Pattern of field enclosure

- A large scale field pattern with straight boundaries, associated with parliamentary enclosure, some more organic in shape to the south. Small-medium size fields in valleys and around settlements. Field boundaries defined by low fragmented hedges, drainage ditches and grass verged tracks.

Farming pattern

- Predominantly arable landuse, with small pockets of pasture around settlements.

Woodland/tree cover

- Deciduous/mixed woodlands, some large widely dispersed, isolated small copses and coniferous plantations. Localised concentrations of woodland around Strethall, Quendon and Elmdon. Bare northern escarpment.
- Hedgerow trees, small and scattered mainly hawthorn and ash.
- Small groups of trees or copses around many of the settlements which contribute to their setting and tree lined narrow streams.

Settlement pattern and built form

- A sparse (relative to many other areas of Essex), and a mixed settlement pattern. Small linear villages in stream valleys. Dispersed hamlets typically with greens on the higher ground. A few isolated farmsteads.
- Typical historic vernacular of clunch and colour washed plastered buildings with thatch roofs, some flint and brick buildings. Limited modern development.

Communications

- Mainly winding lanes, with some straight 'enclosure' roads.
- M11 cuts through parts of the eastern side of the character area.

Other landscape features

- Small historic parks of Quendon (Deer Park), Woodhall and Waterside.
- Windmills at Roast Green, and Castle mound at Clavering.
- Farm ponds/moats.
- Chalk quarry at Ugley.

Landscape Condition

- The relatively small number of farmland hedgerows are in poor condition due to lack of management, and tend to be fragmented. Thicker, better managed hedgerows are locally associated with settlements.
- Woodlands are in moderate condition. There is evidence of neglected coppice in some.
- Streamside vegetation is a strong feature of some valley bottoms, but in others it has been lost or eroded by intensive farming practices.

Past, Present and Future Trends for Change

- Cartographic evidence indicates that unusually in Essex open field systems were the subject of late 'enclosure'.
- Intensification of arable farming since the Second World War, has led to the removal of hedgerows or their fragmentation due to a lack of management. Pylon routes in the south and west of the area are a visual intrusion. 1960s/1970s infill has occurred in the villages and hamlets out of keeping with the vernacular.
- Small scale village infill and expansion if not sensitively sited and designed, could further erode local distinctiveness. Pressure for telecommunication/radio masts, particularly along the M11, may be difficult to absorb in this landscape because of its openness.
- The most significant factor shaping the future of the landscape is likely to continue to be agricultural. Changing subsidy regimes may bring opportunities for landscape restoration of chalk grassland, and for hedgerow and woodland management. Pressure for new features such as irrigation reservoirs and larger farm buildings, will require very sensitive siting and design if they are to be successfully absorbed into this landscape.

**NORTH WEST ESSEX CHALK FARMLAND (A1)
SENSITIVITY EVALUATION**

TYPE/SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT/CHANGE	KEY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION OF CHANGE ISSUES	LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY LEVEL
1. Major urban extensions (>5 ha) and new settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually exposed landscape. • Mostly tranquil. • Distinctive settlement pattern/form/character. 	H
2. Small urban extensions (<5 ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually exposed landscape. • Mostly tranquil. • Distinctive settlement pattern/form/character. 	H
3. Major transportation developments/improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually exposed landscape. • Mostly tranquil. • Landform character. 	H
4. Commercial/warehouse estate/port development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually exposed landscape. • Landform character. • Mostly tranquil. 	H
5. Developments with individual large/bulky buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually exposed landscape. • Landform character. <p><i>Appropriate siting in relation to landform, existing settlement, as well as massing form and colour are critical.</i></p>	M
6. Large scale 'open uses'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally open character. • Visually exposed landscape. • Widely dispersed woodland pattern. <p><i>Important to respond to large scale open character, use of woodlands as focal points on ridgetops. (May be opportunities for habitat restoration of open chalk grassland.)</i></p>	M
7. Mineral extraction/waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landform character. • Visual exposed landscape. • Mostly tranquil. 	H
8. Incremental small scale developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive character and setting of settlements. • Character of the lanes. 	H
9. Utilities development, i.e. masts, pylons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually exposed landscape. • Mostly tranquil. <p><i>Location/route alignment in relation to landform is critical.</i></p>	M
10. Decline in traditional countryside management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgerowed field pattern. • Woodland condition. • Chalk grassland road verges. 	M

Note:

- (a) *Very visually exposed ridgetops/sides in the landscape have a high sensitivity level to categories 5, 9.*
(b) *With regard to Category 3, online improvement of the M11 would be of moderate sensitivity.*

Table to be read in conjunction with paragraphs 1.4.15 – 1.4.17

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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