

Smiths Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

Client:
Takeley Parish Council

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Essex County Council



Smiths Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan Initial Draft

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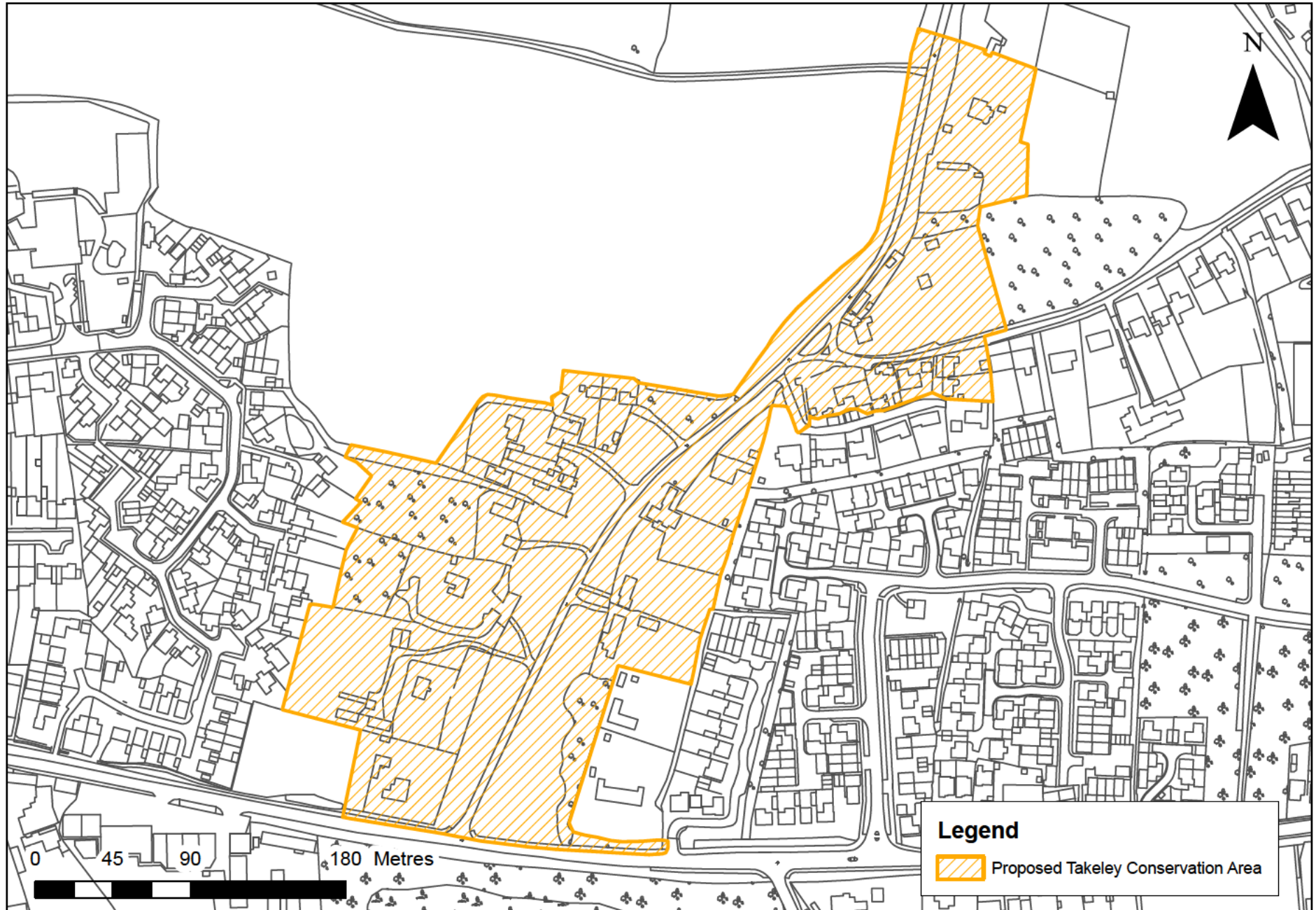
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Contents

1.	Introduction	5	6.	Opportunities for Enhancement	36
1.1	Summary of Special Interest	5	6.1	Overview	36
1.2	Purpose of the Appraisal	5	6.2	Access and Integration	36
1.3	Location	6	6.3	Car Parking	36
			6.4	Inappropriate and Unsympathetic Alterations	36
2.	Planning Policy Context	7	6.5	Maintenance	37
2.1	Planning Policy and Guidance	7	6.6	Neutral Contributors	37
2.2	Designation of the Conservation Area	7	6.7	Public Realm	37
			6.8	Interpretation	38
3.	Heritage Assets	8	7.	Management Proposals	39
3.1	Designated Heritage Assets	8	7.1	Development Management Tools	39
3.2	Non-Designated Heritage Assets	8	7.2	Managing Future Change	40
3.3	Archaeological Potential	9	7.3	Public Realm and Highways	42
3.4	Heritage at Risk	10			
4.	Historical Development	11	8.	Appendices	44
			8.1	Bibliography	44
5.	Assessment of Significance	20	8.2	Legislation, Policy and Guidance	45
5.1	Architectural and Historic Interest	20	8.3	List of All Designated Heritage Assets	46
5.2	Character Analysis	21	8.4	Frequently Asked Questions	47
5.3	Positive, Neutral or Negative Elements	27	8.5	Glossary	50
5.4	Key Views	29			
5.5	Setting of Smiths Green Conservation Area	34			





1. Introduction

1.1 Summary of Special Interest

The Conservation Area can be broadly defined as a concentration of predominantly detached historic structures around a historic green and protected lane. The group around the green form a distinctive collection, typical of a historic agrarian hamlet. The aesthetic is reinforced with some examples of high-quality landscape boundaries of specimen trees and hedges.

Whilst many of the buildings are post medieval in date, the origins of settlement here is earlier, with moated sites located within the Conservation Area and its immediate environs. There has been minimal modern intervention in the Conservation Area and a high number of the buildings are of architectural interest.

Smiths Green has, in recent years, been coalesced to some degree into the growing settlement of Takeley. However, the small hamlet is still very distinct and legible. The open land flanking Smiths Green Lane, the protected lane and the historic structures present a character and appearance of historic and architectural interest. This composition, within its agrarian setting, provides an understanding and experience which enhances an appreciation of the historic environment. The special interest here is importantly found not only in the individual buildings but also all of the open spaces between, the quality of the green, the landscaping and its agrarian setting.

Key characteristics which contribute to special interest include:

- The topography is level within the Conservation Area, and its environs.
- Properties located on the boundary of the green create an enclosed character in the southern part of the Conservation Area.
- Existing buildings are predominantly residential and detached.
- There is a loose grain of built development.
- Buildings are 1-2 storeys in height.
- The general high quality of landscaping and boundary treatments.
- Varied building line.
- Varied permeability of boundary treatments.
- Relationship with agrarian landscape and setting to the north.
- Different character at the north of designation in transition to the open agrarian landscape.

1.2 Purpose of the Appraisal

This document is to be used as a baseline to inform future change, development and design with regard to the sensitivities of the Conservation Area 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 consider how the area developed, and its building styles, forms, materials, scale, density, roads, footpaths, 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 and the character of the Smiths Green Conservation Area. This assessment is based on information derived from documentary research and site analysis of the area. This appraisal will enhance understanding of Smiths Green Conservation Area and its

development, informing future change. 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.

1.3 Location

Smiths Green is located at the east extent of Takeley and to the west of Little Canfield. The Conservation Area is accessed from the B1256 (Dunnmow Road), which forms its southern boundary.

The Conservation Area is dissected by Smiths Green Lane which routes north over the A120 to Bambers Green. Jacks Lane (Byway 25) leads from a road junction, located in the north of the Conservation Area. A footpath from this road provides access to the adjacent Priors Green residential estate. At the junction to Jacks Lane, Smiths Green Lane changes to Warish Hall Road.

The Conservation Area is bounded at the south by the B1256 with the Flich Way country park beyond. The southern portion of the Conservation Area is flanked by modern residential housing development, although this is not connected or accessed from the Conservation Area. The northern portion of the Conservation Area is surrounded by fields which are in agrarian use.



Figure 1 Aerial map showing Smiths Green Conservation Area within its wider setting



2. Planning Policy Context

2.1 Planning Policy and Guidance

National Policy

The national legislative framework for the 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 proposals 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, or NPPF (DCLG 2021). The 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, along with the appreciation of the immediate and larger character of the area in which new development is sited.

Local Policy

The Smiths Green Conservation Area is located within Uttlesford District. Local planning policy is set out in the Uttlesford Local Plan, adopted 2005. Uttlesford is currently working towards a new Local Plan. Saved policies which are relevant to the historic environment include:

ENV1 – Design of Development within Conservation Areas
ENV2 – Development affecting Listed Buildings
ENV3 – Open Spaces and Trees
ENV4 – Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance
ENV9 – Historic Landscapes
GEN2 – Design

2.2 Designation of the Conservation Area

This document, once adopted, establishes the first Conservation Area designation for Smiths Green.

A Heritage Assessment and Audit was commissioned in 2022 by Takeley Parish Council as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. This assessment, completed by Brighter Planning Consultancy, highlighted the potential to designate Smiths Green as a Conservation Area.

Takeley Parish Council commissioned Place Services in 2023 to undertake a Conservation Area Appraisal, this included identifying the extent of the proposed Conservation Area boundary.

The following sections describe the architectural and historic interest of the area which make it worthy of designation. Good practice guidance, outlined in the bibliography, has been followed in this assessment.

No Article 4 Directions have been proposed as part of this appraisal.

It is recommended that this appraisal be updated every 5-10 years or when significant change has occurred.



3. Heritage Assets

3.1 Designated Heritage Assets

There are 10 designated heritage assets located within the Smiths Green Conservation Area boundary. These comprise of residential dwellings with exception of a listed pump.

Listed structures include:

- Hollow Elm, Grade II Listed (List Entry ID: 1112220)
- Cheerups Cottage, Grade II Listed (List Entry ID: 1112207)
- Pump at Pippins. Grade II Listed (List Entry ID: 1112210)
- The Gages, Grade II Listed (List Entry ID: 1168954)
- Goar Lodge, Grade II Listed (List Entry ID: 1168972)
- Beech Cottage, Grade II Listed (List Entry ID: 1112212)
- The Cottage, Grade II Listed (List Entry ID: 1306743)
- Moat Cottage, Grade II* Listed (List Entry ID: 1112211)
- The Croft, Grade II Listed (List Entry ID: 1168964)
- White House, Grade II Listed (List Entry ID: 1322592)

These buildings and structures have been listed due to their special historic and architectural interest under Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Further information about the listing process can be found on the Historic England website, and a link is included in Section 6.3 of this document: Legislation, Policy, and Guidance.

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 maybe possible to alter, extend or demolish a listed building but this requires listed building consent and sometimes planning permission. More details on applying for listed building consent can be found in Historic England's Advice Note 16 Listed Building Consent. A full list of all the designated assets within the Conservation Area is included in Appendix 8.3.

3.2 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

All buildings, features and planned landscapes within a Conservation Area make a contribution to its significance. These can be measured on a sliding scale of positive, to neutral, to negative contributors.

Heritage assets are defined in Planning Policy Legislation 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 designated, yet although a building may not be included on the list, this does not mean it is of no heritage value. Buildings and other smaller features 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. Uttlesford has compiled a Local List, which sets out the criteria for listing within the document dated 2018 (updated 2021). Non-Designated Heritage Assets may also be identified as part of the decision-making process on planning applications, for example, following archaeological investigations.¹

As part of the appraisal of the Conservation Area, this document has identified heritage assets not included within the current Local List, which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and should be considered for local listing in the future, as non-designated heritage assets. These are identified below and a full description of each is given within Section 5:

- Woodside
- The Limes
- The Limes Cottage
- Bull Cottages
- Smiths Cottage/South Cottage

¹ NPPG. Paragraph: 40 Reference ID:18a-040-20190723. July 2019.



The current Uttlesford Local List 2018 and the updated list in 2021 is available here: <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/local-heritage-list>

Warish Hall Road is, in part, a protected lane. This is considered a non-designated heritage asset.

The Essex Design Guide provides a description of protected lanes.²

“The greater part of the road network in the Essex countryside derives from at least as far back as the medieval period. Much of it undoubtedly existed in Saxon times and it is likely that many roads and lanes were formed long before that. These lanes are part of what was once an immense mileage of minor roads and track-ways connecting villages, hamlets and scattered farms and cottages. Many were used for agricultural purposes, linking settlements to arable fields, grazing on pasture, heaths and greens; and other resources such as woodland and coastal marsh. Generally these roads were not deliberately designed and constructed; written records of the establishment of roads during the medieval period are rare (Rackham, 1986, 264). Instead they would have started life as track-ways without a bearing surface, although often with defined boundaries including hedgerows, ditches and banks.”

Warish Hall Road is included in the Uttlesford Protected Lane Assessment as UTTLANE166.³

Whilst not considered a heritage asset, Smiths Green is afforded a Village Green designation. This has been shown on the map as this designation can be useful to inform future management of the Conservation Area.

2

[Redacted]

3 Essex County Council, Uttlesford Protected Lanes Assessment, March 2012

3.3 Archaeological Potential

The following provides a broad indication of the potential for archaeological features within the Conservation area and its immediate area based on the information held in the Historic Environment Record. The Conservation Area comprises the historic Core of the settlement of Smiths Green which has its origins in the medieval period. There has been limited previous archaeological fieldwork within the Conservation Area. However, there have been extensive investigations in the immediate environs of Smiths Green.

Prehistoric

Extensive excavation adjacent to the east of the Conservation Area, in advance of the Prior's Green development, recorded prehistoric water holes dating from the Neolithic through to the Early Iron Age and traces of contemporary settlement and cemetery evidence. It is likely that this form of activity extends into the Conservation Area.

Roman

The southern boundary of the Conservation Area abuts the main Roman road, Stane Street, from Colchester to Braughing (B1256), and it has been postulated that this route is a survival of an earlier Iron Age routeway. There is extensive excavation evidence for Roman settlement and agricultural activity from both sides of the Roman road and it is probable that some form of activity extends into the Conservation Area, particularly along the southern boundary.

Anglo-Saxon

Despite the extensive excavations in and around Takeley and Stansted Airport there has only been limited evidence revealed from this period, except in the vicinity of the Church. It is considered that the potential for evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity being present within the Conservation Area is low.



Medieval

Smiths Green has developed around the junction of the Warish Hall Road with the historic route of Stane Street. The Conservation Area contains two moated sites, at Moat Cottage and Cheerups Cottage. Immediately to the north is the Scheduled late thirteenth century moated site of Warish Hall (List Entry Number: 1007834), formerly the site of the Benedictine St Valery's Priory. To the east of the Conservation Area, along Jacks Lane, there are a further moated sites (now largely encircled by Priors Green development). The moated sites at Warish Hall Road and Jacks Lane all had their origins in the twelfth to thirteenth century. Warish Hall Road had linear greens along both sides which survive well today. All of these moats have the potential to have earlier structures beneath the existing buildings on the site, as well as the potential for waterlogged deposits within the moats. Excavation immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area, to the rear of The White House, recorded a small thirteenth century farmstead, and it is probable that there are other medieval remains bordering Smiths Green. The Conservation Area has a high potential for below-ground archaeology dating to the medieval period.

Post-medieval

The historic settlement pattern in the post medieval period comprises dispersed moated sites and cottages located along the historic routes of Jacks Lane, Warish Hall Road and Stane Street. The areas between the moated sites were gradually infilled during the post medieval period as represented by the many listed buildings which are protected within the modern settlement. The Conservation Area has therefore high potential for both above-ground and below-ground archaeology dating to the post-medieval period.

3.4 Heritage at Risk

Historic England publishes a yearly list of Heritage at Risk. To be included on the list, buildings must be Grade II* listed or above, with the exception of Grade II listed places of worship and Grade II listed buildings in London.

Other designated heritage assets can also be included on Historic England's register, including Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and Wreck Sites. Non-designated heritage assets are not considered by Historic England for inclusion on the Heritage at Risk Register.

At the time of assessment there were no assets within the Conservation Area on the At Risk Register.



4. Historical Development

The following section provides an overview of the history of Smiths Green Conservation Area and its environs.

Smiths Green is located within a landscape that has been extensively studied through archaeological investigations, with excavations associated with Stansted Airport, recent housing developments and the development of the A120 road.

Prehistory (500,000 BC – 43 AD)

There is evidence from excavations of activity beginning in the Early Neolithic Period, with a number of post and stake holes, pits which produced worked flint and Mildenhall Ware pottery.

Flint manufacture, cereal and animal bones indicate that this was an area of agricultural occupation and of a low population density.

During the Bronze Age and Iron Age a number of large waterholes were identified with Middle Iron Age stock enclosures. Settlements of Bronze Age and Iron Age date have been identified during excavations for Stansted Airport and the A120.

Roman (43 – 410 AD)

The Trinovantes Celtic tribe inhabited much of Essex and Suffolk. After the Roman invasion of Britain, the Romans established the first town and their rule in Britain at Colchester (Camulodunum).

The Roman period within Takeley and Smiths Green is represented by the Roman Road from Braughing to Colchester (Stane Street) which runs along the southern edge of Smiths Green. This is thought to have its origins in the Late Iron Age and formed a main communication route.

Early Medieval & Medieval (410 – 1540 AD)

There is currently no known evidence of early medieval activity within the Conservation Area, or its immediate environs.

The Domesday Survey (1086) recorded *Tacheleia* (Takeley) was held by Thorkell before 1066. Following the Norman conquest, Warish Hall moated site and Takeley Priory was founded by William the Conqueror as a Benedictine priory. This was recorded by Charter dated 19 October 1068. William I gave two-and-a-half hides in *Thakeleya* to the monks of the Abbey of St Valery in Picardy. Warish Hall is noted as part of the St Valery possessions, the aisled hall being of late thirteenth century construction. No record of the community's size is given but in the fourteenth century there were two or three monks.

The name Takeley is thought to derive from *teg leah* meaning 'pasture for young sheep'⁴ or from a personal name *Taecca*.⁵

Moated sites were likely the principal medieval settlement type in this area with a number in and around Smiths Green, including Moat Cottage. Moated sites were commonly established during this period as they offered protection to those living within its curtilage. Takeley and Smiths Green during this period would have remained a small rural community, concentrated around the moated sites.

Jacks Lane, partly included within the Conservation Area, leads to 'Jacks Green' medieval moated site, the remains of which are preserved within the modern development of Priors Green. Jacks Lane is of at least medieval origins, and originated as a byway used for farm access. It is now part of the local route network.

4 Ekwall, E., 1960. Dictionary of English Place-names. Oxford

5 Reaney, P.H., 1935. Place-names of Essex. Cambridge



To the north of Smiths Green are three further moats, one no longer visible, the second being the Scheduled Monument of Warish Hall and the third Parkers Farm. Warish Hall has a water filled moat surrounding a thirteenth century aisled Hall House. Many of the moated sites were linked by tracks, some of which likely influenced the existing road alignments. Historically a footpath also connected the site of Warish Hall to Holy Trinity Church when Warish Hall was the site of St Valery's Priory.

The development of Smiths Green during this period would have been that of a few dwellings, of a rural hamlet type arrangement. It is likely that the mid-sixteenth century Moat Cottage, within the Conservation Area, is located upon the foundations of an earlier structure.

Associated archaeological findings from this period include a twelfth century settlement compound containing pits and at least one post-hole building, located to the east of Jacks Green moated site and flanking the south side of Jacks Lane. There is also evidence of a slightly later ditched compound with a later pond cut by a building, to the north of Jacks Lane and the moated site. Surrounding these were a sequence of medieval parallel field systems. Excavations to the west of White House, near to the junction of Smiths Green Lane, found evidence of a thirteenth century building fronting onto Stane Street.

Post-Medieval (1540 – 1901 AD)

Takeley was a dispersed rural settlement, and this is reflected by the earliest detailed historic mapping of the area, the 1777 Chapman and Andre map of Essex (Figure 2). The presence of four country manors in the area illustrate the rural context. Waltham Hall was ruined in the eighteenth century and rebuilt as a farmhouse at Green End. Colchester Hall was demolished in 1987 for Stansted Airport and Bassingbourn Hall was demolished in 1813, the historic later site cleared for the expansion of Stansted Airport. It is notable that the south aisle of the Parish Church Holy Trinity is known as the Bassingbourn Chapel. Warish Hall is the only surviving manorial site and the historic site of St Valery's Priory.

Moated sites

In terms of wider typological context, moated sites or homestead moats were concentrated particularly in the eastern counties of England. There are approximately 850 moated sites recorded on the Essex Historic Environment Record, of which 105 are Scheduled Monuments and 125 are Listed, some are both Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings. Most examples had their origins in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries. It has been suggested that the earliest moats were circular in emulation of the moats of motte and bailey castles, but this has not been proved. The majority of moated sites consist of a rectangular ditch or moat enclosing a raised platform, although circular, triangular, irregular and many partially-moated examples are also known. The platform would have contained a house or range of buildings and while many now appear as cropmarks, they constitute the most common form of earthwork in the county. A number of double-moated enclosures are also recorded, here it is possible that one of the enclosures contained the principal dwelling-house and the second enclosure contained either the farmyard or the garden.⁶ The example at Warish Hall has a double moat, much of which is still filled with water.

⁶ Hunter, J. 1999 The Essex Landscape, Essex Record Office, pp.126-129

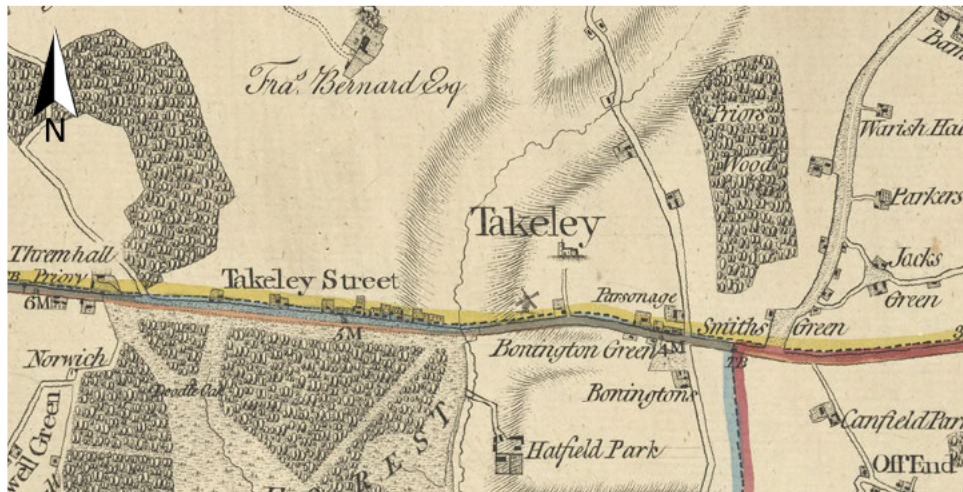


Figure 2 Excerpt of the Chapman and Andre Map 1777

The c.1838 Tithe Map (Figure 3) shows the Conservation Area with almost all the existing historic buildings being constructed by this time, many being late sixteenth or seventeenth century in date. Buildings surveyed on the map include Bull Cottages, Goat Lodge, Smiths/South Cottage, Beech Cottage, The Cottage, Moat Cottage, Gages, Cheerups, Conniston/Lizard Cottage, The Limes/Limes Cottage and Hollow Elm Cottage. A building is visible within the plot of The White House of a different footprint, The White House is thought to date from the seventeenth century.



Figure 3 Excerpt of the Tithe Map 1838

The Tithe Map shows that the Conservation Area is accessed from the south (Stane Street) and the road through Smiths Green legibly connects the historic moated sites of Moat Cottage, Jacks and Warish Hall, the moated sites being the foci of development within the rural landscape. The surrounding land is agricultural and the social importance of agriculture to the development of Smiths Green is apparent, a track from the centre of the Green leading to Plot 570 (Nine Acres) likely served as both access for workers and livestock. The Tithe Apportionment shows the land was in the ownership of a Robert Hilder. The village green is shown as a wide-open space, with no formal pathways. Hollow Elm Cottage is located on the periphery of Smiths Green, the land to the north being agricultural with the moated site of Maggots visible.



Smiths Green presents a typical hamlet arrangement with surrounding agricultural land. The origin of the name Smiths Green is likely in reference to the common belief that the area was the site of an early smithy. The earliest reference to a *Smythesgrene* dates from 1383 within the Court Rolls;⁷ by the time of the Tithe Map this had changed to Smiths Green. The toponomy of name derivations in the local area is similar to land use with Brewers End, within Takeley, deriving from the Brewer family who were brewers.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey (1875) shows Smiths Green as an isolated rural settlement, of a loose linear development. Stane Street to the south is densely tree-lined and the Green itself has no formal pathways however access to Moat Cottage is shown. Interestingly, The Limes is known at this time as Takeley Villa and The White House is noted as Cooks. The historic access to Nine Acres is still visible and domestic curtilages are influenced by the plot boundary of the adjacent field system. The land to the immediate rear of The Gages is agricultural and trees lined the field boundary nearby Cheerups. Overall, little change can be viewed during this period in terms of the building stock, The Croft, as the only visible addition. The mapping illustrates the importance of the moated sites to the development of Smiths Green, with the furthest extent of development within Smiths Green being Hollow Elm Cottage and Conniston/Lizard Cottage to the north and east. Beyond the Conservation Area, three small cottages at Maggots are present.

The Second Edition Ordnance Survey (1890) shows little change, with the exception of a building upon the footprint of Pippins. Smiths Green is that of a small rural community with a close social and functional link to the rural landscape. It is at this time that Takeley Villa changed its name to The Limes and Cooks to the south was now known as Sunnyside. Buildings within the Conservation Area are afforded large defined plots, clearly separate to the open and verdant character of the village green. The only surveyed formal access to a dwelling from the green is to Moat Cottage. Jacks Lane, with its medieval origins, is that of a road rather than a track with the junction to Smiths

Green Lane depicted. It appears that Cheerups was partially moated, the building previously being two separate tenements. Pathways across the fields to the north connected Smiths Green through the rural landscape to the Holy Trinity Church and to the ancient woodland of Prior's Wood, which would have provided opportunities to experience the rural character of the area.

Modern (1902-Present)

The Third Edition OS Map (1923), shows little change within the Conservation Area. Limited infill can be seen, a building within the plot of Homelands is present and The Limes has been subject to extensions. A new access to Goar Lodge leading from the road through Smiths Green is visible however it has otherwise remained unchanged. The greatest change during this period is outside of the Conservation Area with development along Stane Street to the east and Takeley Nursery adjacent to Jacks Green moated site. The dwellings along Broadfield Road, leading from Stane Street, are established with a road and pathway connecting to Jacks Lane. Whilst there had been change to the wider setting, the historic importance and development of Smiths Green can still be legibly traced to the medieval moated sites with development concentrated around them and the important role of agriculture to the social and economic development of Smiths Green.

Aerial photography from the late twentieth century, 1960 onwards, shows that Smiths Green, and the buildings along the lane, are experienced in a rural setting, with open agricultural land to the north along Warish Hall Road. Development along Jacks Lane and the addition of Woodside to the northernmost extent of the Conservation Area is shown. These dwellings are afforded large plots and those along Jacks Lane are mostly single storey bungalows. During this period Warren Close and the two dwellings to the rear of Cheerups were constructed.

⁷ P.H. Reaney., *The Place-Names of Essex*. 1969. Cambridge, P536



Figure 4 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1875)

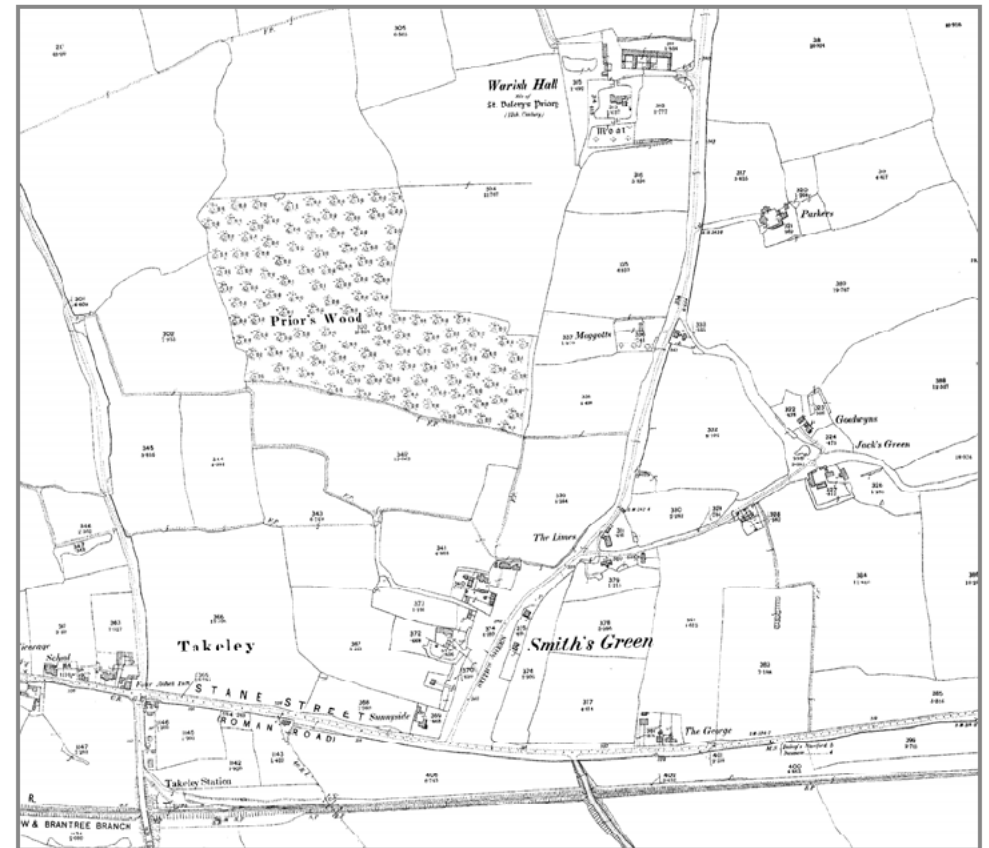


Figure 5 Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1890)



Figure 6 Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1923)



Figure 7 1960 Aerial (© Essex County Council)



Figure 8 1970 Aerial (© Essex County Council)



Figure 9 1980 Aerial (© Essex County Council)

Driveways to dwellings such as The Gages, The Cottage, Bull Cottages and Homelands leading from Smiths Green Lane across the village green are visible, as is an informal pathway to the southeast. To the southeast and outside the Conservation Area boundary, The Foxes and Chadhurst were also built. The series of aerial photographs show the gradual development of residential estates around Smiths Green. By 1980 Warren Close and the development along Jacks Lane had increased in density however Smiths Green remained a well treed area with the boundaries of the properties legibly tracing that of the historic field system and there is a field gap between Smiths Green and the development of wider Takeley.

By 1990 residential development to the west had increased, coalescing the historically isolated rural hamlet of Smiths Green into Takeley. The 2014 aerial photograph shows the most dramatic impact of modern development to the east, which infilled the spacious field gap, the newly constructed dwellings being tall and prominent in views within the Conservation Area. The modern development has had an adverse impact upon the rural character of Smiths Green, with the agricultural land to the north now being of significant import to the rural character and our understanding towards the social and economic development of Smiths Green.

Historic England's Red Boxes contains photographs of listed buildings within the Conservation Area from 1975. The images include The Cottage, Beech Cottage and Goar Lodge. In 1983 Moat Cottage underwent repairs, the exposed timber frame can be seen in the photograph below.



Figure 10 1990 Aerial (© Essex County Council)



Figure 11 2014 Aerial (© Essex County Council)



Figure 12 Moat Cottage 1983 (© Essex County Council)



Figure 13 Beech Cottage 1975 (© Historic England)



Figure 15 Goar Cottage 1975 (© Historic England)



Figure 14 The Cottage 1975 (© Historic England)

5. Assessment of Significance

5.1 Architectural and Historic Interest

Smiths Green is of a typical hamlet type arrangement with dwellings set back from the large central village green. The historic core of the settlement is concentrated around the medieval moated site of Moat Cottage, which connects along the protected lane to the moated sites of Jacks Green and Warish Hall. The Conservation Area boundary encompasses the historic buildings along the green and northwards along the protected lane towards Warish Hall, permitting views across the rural landscape.

Smiths Green Conservation Area's special architectural and historic interest lies in the development of the small rural hamlet around the village green which is relatively unchanged. Smiths Green contains a high proportion of historic buildings, both listed and unlisted within it, which make a contribution to the historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area. The composition of the many historic buildings flanking the village green evokes a strong rural character which is reinforced by the openness and generally loose grain of development throughout Smiths Green. Access is provided from Stane Street with the road orientated in a north to south direction, past the junction to Jacks Lane.

Much of the rural characteristics of the Conservation Area is drawn from the wide-open village green with mature hedgerows and trees throughout. The settlement has been subject to little change over time, its medieval origins and connection to the agricultural landscape remaining appreciable. Unfortunately, late twentieth century development has intruded upon the setting of Smiths Green. However, the small rural hamlet is still very distinct with the open land of the village green and the composition with the many historic structures providing an understanding of its historic significance. To the north, the agricultural land with views across it permits the rural character to be appreciated and understood.



Figure 16 Views north across the Green towards agricultural land



5.2 Character Analysis

Summary of character

Smiths Green is a small, historic settlement and the character of the Conservation Area derives from its hamlet type arrangement, of a loose grain along the historic village green. The settlement has a linear layout, with buildings set back from the village green and road, this is reinforced by its agrarian context and setting.

The significance of the Conservation Area is in its small size and high proportion of historic buildings along the village green which permit an understanding of the observable historic building techniques and architectural forms. Given the scale of the Smiths Green Conservation Area, there are no defined character areas identified. Many of the buildings within the Conservation Area date from the sixteenth to nineteenth century, presenting an evolution of rural settlement in this area.

Designated buildings or structures which make a notable contribution to the Smiths Green Conservation Area are described in the following section, however the omission of any buildings from the description does not mean they make no contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area. An assessment of the significance of relevant heritage assets, and the contribution they make to the special interest of the Conservation Area, should be made when development or alterations are proposed.

Non-designated buildings or features deemed to reflect and enhance the special interest of the Conservation Area are also identified in the following section. Key views have been identified from within Smiths Green Conservation Area, and views from outside the Conservation Area from which its special interest can be recognised are also highlighted where appropriate. There may, nevertheless, be other views of significance within or beyond the Conservation Area's boundary which

contribute to how it is appreciated, experienced and understood. Any proposals for development within the Conservation Area, or its environs, should not only consider the views identified within this document but also any others which may be relevant or highlighted as part of a bespoke assessment of that proposal.

Layout and Land Usage

The Smiths Green Conservation Area is entirely residential in use, with the exception of the village green itself which is designated and forms the majority of the public realm within the Conservation Area.

The layout of the Conservation Area has been subject to little change over time, being reflective of historic field system and the historically important. Access is provided from the centre of the village green to the agricultural fields to the north, reinforcing the historic connection of the settlement to its agrarian context. Two Public Rights of Way are accessed from the Conservation Area, both are to the north and within the field adjacent to Bull Cottages.

There has been limited infill development within the Conservation Area and the grain of development is loose with dwellings which are generally afforded large spacious plots.

Landscaping, Open Spaces and Public Realm

Almost all of the public realm, with the exception of Jacks Lane and the Protected Lane to the north (Warish Hall Road), in the Conservation Area is located within the village green and along Smiths Green Lane. The road is tarmacked and without pavements, with deep ditches and wide verges running along the lane. The lack of formalised footpaths and road markings is positive in the characteristic. Mature trees on the green and hedgerows marking residential curtilages positively contribute to sense of place and rural character.



Figure 17 Grassed triangle at the junction to Jacks Lane

The wide and verdant village green, designated VG117, dominates much of the Conservation Area and stretches along Warish Hall Road to Bambers Green. The village green has informed the layout and development of Smiths Green, being distinct in character to the surrounding agrarian context of the hamlet. The pattern of development here, as shown above in Section 4, is that of dispersed isolated settlements around greens, connected through the rural landscape by historic routes and pathways. There are no formal footpaths across the green which reinforces its verdant character. Dwellings are orientated towards the village green and its open character provides opportunities to appreciate views of the historic buildings flanking the green which form an attractive composition. This contributes to our ability to further understand the architectural and historic interest of the area.

The Protected Lane which is located to the north of the Conservation Area, adjacent to The Limes Cottage, is one such historic route through the rural landscape connecting to other isolated settlements (such as Warish Hall, Jacks and Bambers Green). The Protected Lane also encompasses the verges (which are registered as village green) and the hedgerows, ditches/ponds as they are an intrinsic part of the Protected Lane, as established by the Inspector at Appeal (Ref: APP/C1570/W/22/3291524). The Protected Lane has a strong visual and functional relationship to the surrounding agricultural land and to the small settlements which it connects.

There is no streetlighting and the only areas with street furniture include a bench and bin to the south of the green fronting Stane Street and a bin on the grassed triangle at the junction to Jacks Lane.

Key Buildings

Designated

There is high concentration of statutorily listed buildings within the Smiths Green Conservation Area, which provide architectural and historic evidence and are varied in character and derivation, furthering understanding of the settlement's development.

The oldest building within the Conservation Area is Grade II* **Moat Cottage**, a mid-sixteenth century Wealden House. Wealden Hall Houses are a distinctive medieval type commonly found in the East of England, particularly Kent and Sussex. This building, and many others of this type are reflective of the Yeoman class during this period, as landowners below the class of gentry. The building contributes to the historic interest and our understanding of the development and origins of Smiths Green.

Beech Cottage is a sixteenth or early seventeenth century house of one storey and attics with red plain tile roof. The architectural interest of the asset is primarily expressed as a small rural dwelling within an early phase of development for Smiths Green. **Goar Lodge** to the northwest of Smiths Green Conservation Area is a late sixteenth or early seventeenth building. It is an attractive house within a large plot with ditch to the north, serving as the boundary for the residential curtilage. The use of ditches is observed across Smiths Green, with the settlement itself containing a moated site.

The seventeenth century was a significant phase of development at Smiths Green. The buildings, **Cheerups Cottage** and **Hollow Elm Cottage** are both seventeenth century in derivation. The open and rural setting, with views across the fields to the north, greatly contributes to their individual rural character and the character of the Conservation Area.



Figure 18 Beech Cottage



Figure 19 Goar Lodge



Figure 20 The Cottage



Figure 21 Cheerups

From the seventeenth to eighteenth century, it can be observed that the western side of Smiths Green Lane was more developed with **The Cottage** and **The White House** to the south near Stane Street both present at this time. The Cottage is similar in type to Hollow Elm Cottage, being a small rural thatched structure, which is likely indicative of the status of the original inhabitants.

Almost all of the buildings within Smiths Green are noted upon nineteenth century mapping and this has been subject to little fundamental change. **The Croft** which is an early nineteenth century house of rendered brick and is square in plan, is the latest dwelling to be erected to the western portion of Smiths Green. **The Gages**, a nineteenth century house to the east of Smiths Green Lane with bay and sliding sash windows, overlooks the village green. The residential curtilage remains set back with a mature hedgerow which preserves and contributes to the rural character of the Conservation Area.

A cast iron nineteenth-century pump is present and this would have served the community at the centre of the hamlet.

Non-designated

The following non-designated heritage assets are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area:

Woodside is an interwar building of red brick and clay tile roof, one storey with attic and dormers. There is also a large extension to the rear. It is set within a generous plot with a well. It is set within a rural tranquil character, positioned at the entrance into the Conservation Area. Original early twentieth century windows are present which make a significant contribution to its architectural interest and to the Conservation Area. Whilst there is a large rear extension, the building as an early twentieth century addition makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.



Figure 22 Hollow Elm Cottage



Figure 24 Woodside



Figure 23 The Gages



Figure 25 Limes Cottage



The Limes Cottage is a nineteenth century house of rendered brick with slate roof, rectilinear plan form. Single storey addition to the north. Windows are of an irregular style and are UPVC, there is an opportunity for enhancement through replacement with traditionally detailed windows. The attractive brick boundary wall along Smiths Green Lane (Protected Lane) is prominent in views to the north of the Conservation Area. Despite the unsympathetic windows, the historic and architectural interest of the building results in a positive addition to the Conservation Area.

The Limes is large nineteenth century house, previously known as Takeley Villa, it is of stock brick and render with a slate roof. There are two canted bay windows to the ground and first floor, with a central multi-paned door with fanlight above. There is a small timber balcony above the central doorway upon timber posts. The boundary is formed of an iron railing and iron gate upon a low brick wall. The building, due to its historic and architectural interest, makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and aids our understanding of its development.



Figure 26 The Limes



Figure 27 South and Smiths Cottage

Bull Cottages is a nineteenth century pair of cottages of rendered red brick, with a half hipped slate roof with one large central chimney and a chimney to each gable. Casement windows and a small porch can be viewed upon No.1 Bull Cottage. The cottages were likely a pair of agricultural workers cottages. The cottages are set within a large plot and garden, with views across the agricultural land to the north. The buildings historic interest as a dwelling for agricultural workers contributes to our understanding of the development of Smiths Green and its agrarian context.

Smiths Cottage and **South Cottage** are a nineteenth century pair of rendered and slate cottages, they were previously four tenements and are now two. The windows throughout are modern in style and material, including UPVC. South Cottage has enlarged windows and a flat roofed addition which are unsympathetic additions. The buildings likely housed agricultural workers and their location within the centre of Smiths Green indicates a close functional social history. Whilst there are unsympathetic additions, the cottages are of sufficient historical character to contribute positively to the Conservation Area. The buildings are of group value, being prominent in views from the village green.



Figure 28 Bull Cottages

Building Materials

Traditional building materials are prominent within the Smiths Green Conservation Area, which is indicative of the traditional construction methods and age of the buildings throughout.

Roofs

Thatch, and in particular long straw thatch, is a material commonplace in Essex, often reserved for smaller, lower status, dwellings such as The Cottage and Hollow Elm Cottage. More common traditional materials, such as plain clay tiles and slate, are observed across the Conservation Area. The use of slate is largely observed on nineteenth century buildings due to the expansion of the railways and the ability to transport alternative building materials. Early buildings, such as the sixteenth century Moat Cottage, feature clay tiles and these would have been sourced locally.

Walls

The buildings within the Conservation Area from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries are timber framed and rendered. Moat Cottage presents some of the earliest vernacular construction techniques in the Conservation Area. Later buildings, such as those from the nineteenth century are of brick, which has often been rendered. Both The Gages and The Limes typify the later nineteenth century phase of the Conservation Area and are prominent structures, vernacular in appearance and construction.

Windows and Doors

Windows and doors throughout the Conservation Area are largely timber, either sashes or casement. Many buildings feature windows which have glazing bars, which emphasises the traditional appearance of the area. Where traditionally detailed windows have been replaced with UPVC, or windows of an unsympathetic design or size, this often detracts from the architectural quality of the building and makes a negative contribution to the character of the area.



Figure 29 Materials found within the Conservation Area (clay tiles, brick and flint walls and iron railings)



Boundary Treatments

Brick and flint walling is present within the Conservation Area, observed at Beech Cottage. Flint is a less common material in this area of London Clay geology. As such, it is typically reserved for buildings of higher status as a decorative material. Mature hedgerows are also located throughout the Conservation Area as a boundary treatment. These are prevalent along the village green and contribute to the rural character. Brick walls, with iron railings, can be observed at The Limes and The Limes Cottage. Timber and picket fencing is also present however this is often accompanied with hedging and serves to reinforce hedgerows.

5.3 Positive, Neutral or Negative Elements

The map opposite (Figure 30) should be read in conjunction with the key notes below. These outline the broad descriptions of positive, neutral and negative attributed to buildings within the Conservation Area. It should be noted that just because a building is positive it does not mean it cannot be enhanced. Some positive buildings may have intrusive aspects but these are more widespread across the Conservation Area and are addressed in the management plan. The buildings identified as 'Positive with opportunity for enhancement' tend to have more bespoke or fundamental issues that are not generally observed or widespread across the area.

- **Positive:** these are buildings that have been identified as positive contributors to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Whilst identified as positive there are likely to be enhancements which can be made to better reveal the architectural interest of the building and improve its contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. These general enhancements are noted in the management plan. One example would be the replacement of unsympathetic windows for traditionally detailed windows. Additionally, the majority of the buildings in the Conservation Area feature timber windows with glazing bars, as a general rule the replacement of any UPVC would be an enhancement.
- **Positive with opportunity for enhancement:** these are buildings which have been highlighted as they are positive contributors, however, they have been compromised due to intrusive alterations or additions. These buildings can be enhanced through the removal, replacement or redesign of intrusive or unsympathetic alterations. In the case of Limes Cottage and South Cottage, the buildings have been subject to unsympathetic additions or alterations. There is an opportunity here to enhance the buildings and their contribution to the Conservation Area. Other issues highlighted which require changes that go further than inappropriate windows can include buildings with unsympathetic extensions, aerials, rooflights and other domestic paraphernalia.
- **Neutral:** These buildings make no beneficial or adverse contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- **Negative:** These buildings make an adverse or intrusive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

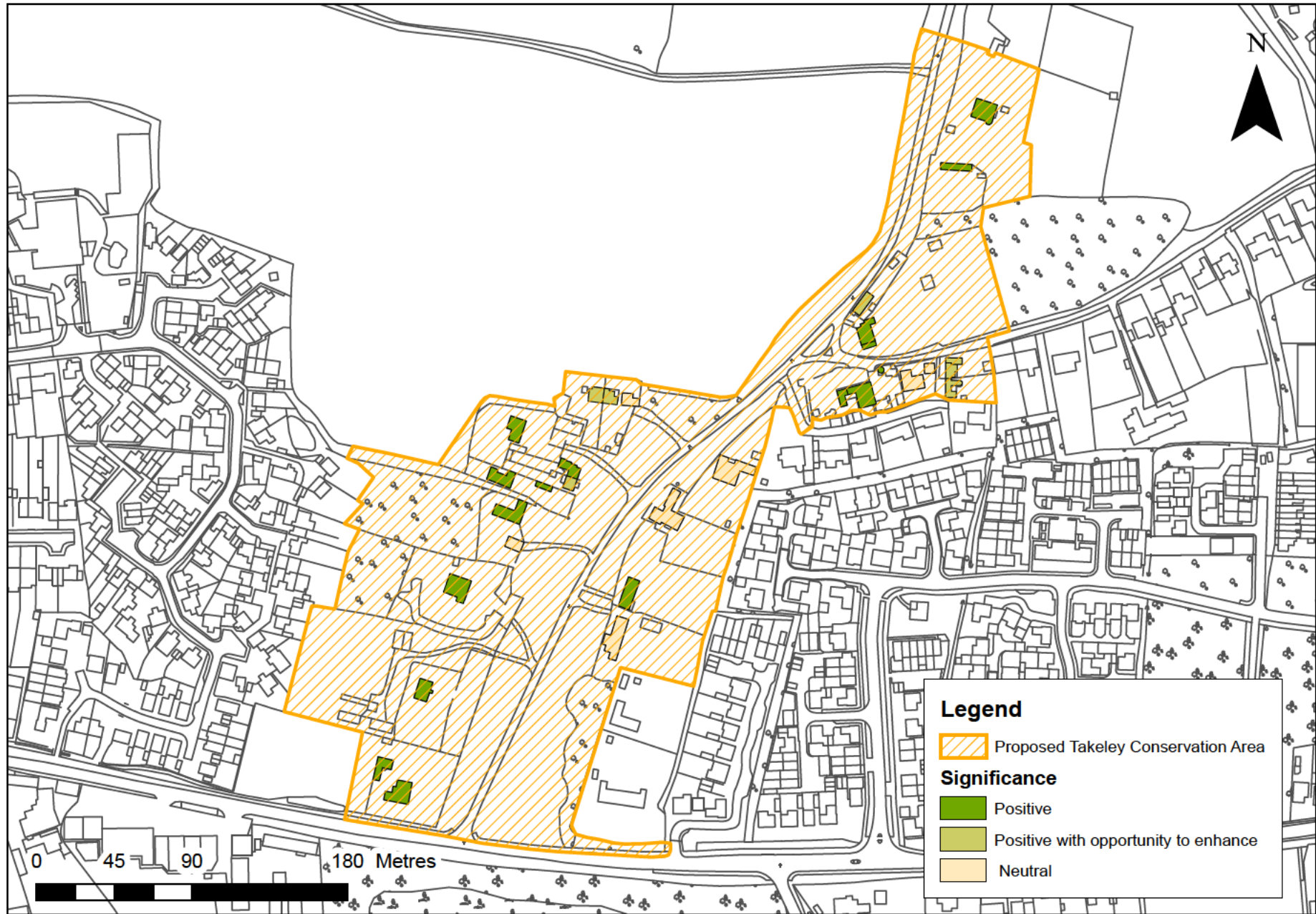


Figure 30 Map showing significance of buildings within the Smiths Green Conservation Area

5.4 Key Views

Key views are identified on Figure 39. The views included are a selection of key views; this list is not exhaustive and there may be 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.

View 1

This view is of the village green looking north from Stane Street. The wide and open village green can be observed within, with mature trees and hedgerows forming the extent of its boundary. Dwellings flanking the green such as The Gages, Smiths/South Cottage and Bull Cottages are the principal buildings observed from this area. This view contributes to our appreciation and understanding of Smiths Green and the verdant and open character of the village green, which informed the development of the hamlet and its contribution to sense of place.

View 2

This view is from Smiths Green Lane looking north. This view contains several historic buildings which form an attractive composition, and they are orientated to the village green. Mature trees, hedgerows and ditches contribute to rural character. The openness of the village green and its relationship to the historic development of Smiths Green is appreciated here.



Figure 31 View 1 - The village green looking north from Stane Street



Figure 32 View 2 - From Smiths Green Lane looking north

View 3

This view is from Smiths Green Lane, looking southwards to Stane Street. The twentieth century building 'Old Orchard' can be seen and the village green is bounded by mature hedgerows. The southern boundary, across Stane Street, is well planted with trees, this preserves the rural characteristics of Smiths Green. The verdant and open character of the village green is appreciable within this view, the lack of road markings and the informality of the lane is a positive and in keeping with the historic route's aesthetic.



Figure 33 View 3 - From Smiths Green Lane, looking southwards to Stane Street

View 4

This view is centrally located within Smiths Green Lane. Several historic buildings can be seen and as a composition aids towards our understanding of the varied architectural forms and the historic interest of the area. Kinetic views as one travels along Smith Green Lane further contribute to our appreciation of the village green and its close social and functional relationship to the area.



Figure 34 View 4 - Smiths Green Lane

View 5

This view is looking west from the junction to Jacks Lane and serves to highlight the development of the hamlet as a whole and its relationship with the surrounding rural landscape, which many buildings have views across including The Limes and Cheerups. The wide verges of the village green contribute to the rural characteristics of the area.



Figure 35 View 5 - Looking west from the junction to Jacks Lane

View 6

This view is from the junction to Jacks Lane, looking across the surrounding agricultural land and northwards along the Protected Lane within the Conservation Area boundary. To the east is The Limes and Limes Cottage. The view illustrates the strong visual and functional relationship of Smiths Green to its agrarian context (the fields to the north) and the Protected Lane which historically has connected the hamlet to nearby settlements. The grassed verges, hedgerows and ditches are important to the rural character of the area, the village green and Protected Lane. Public footpaths cross the field and mature trees compliment the rural character of the area.



Figure 36 View 6 - From the junction to Jacks Lane looking northwards

View 7

This view is from the north extent of the Conservation Area, orientated in a southerly direction towards the rear elevation of Bull Cottages, The Limes and glimpsed views of Goar Lodge are appreciable. Similar to the above, this view permits an understanding towards the close functional and historic relationship of the surrounding agricultural land and the historic development of Smiths Green along the lane.



Figure 37 View 7 - From the north extent of the Conservation Area looking south

View 8

This view is located outside the Conservation Area to the north, looking towards Smiths Green. This is an important view as it is from the north entrance into the Conservation Area and kinetic views across the rural landscape can be experienced. The village green and Protected Lane (including verge and ditch) significantly contribute to the rural characteristics of the area. Views of the historic buildings and their relationship within the rural landscape has been subject to little change over time. The agricultural land and its open character contributes to the historic interest of Smiths Green and the individual buildings within it.



Figure 38 View 8 - North of the Conservation Area looking south towards Smiths Green

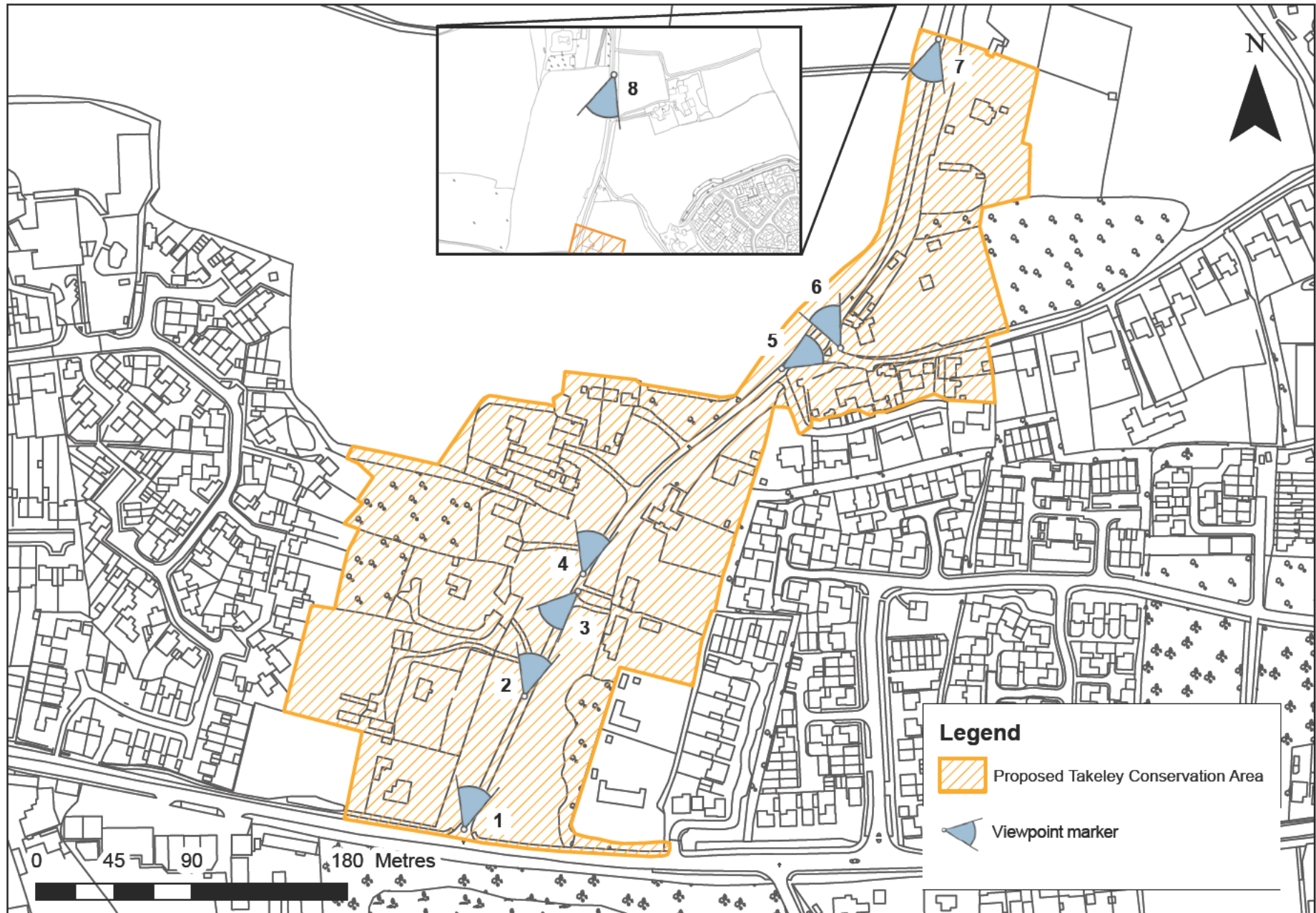


Figure 39 Map showing key views

5.5 Setting of Smiths Green Conservation Area

The setting of the Conservation Area is a contributor to its significance, enhancing how the Conservation Area is understood and appreciated. Setting is defined within the NPPF 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. (NPPF: Annex 2: Glossary).

Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 3: Setting of Heritage Assets (2017) notes that where the experience of a heritage asset ‘...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’s advice note on setting recommends a ‘(non-exhaustive) check-list of potential attributes of a setting that may help to elucidate its contribution to significance’. As the advice note states, ‘only a limited selection of the attributes listed will be of a particular relevance to an asset’. Historic England’s recommendations have been used to inform this assessment.

Setting

The Conservation Area draws significance from its setting, particularly to the north. The flat and open fields permit views when travelling to and from the Conservation Area, here the rural character is prominent and particularly important. The surrounding agricultural land has a close functional relationship to Smiths Green and contributes to our experience of the Conservation Area, including our understanding of the surrounding landscape and tranquillity. Within the views towards the Conservation Area, several buildings can be viewed and the Protected Lane, with grassed verge and ditch, reinforces the rural character.



Figure 40 Setting of the Conservation Area appreciated along pedestrian rights of way

Agriculture has played a vital part in the historic development and the economy of the settlement and continues to do so, with Parkers Farm still in agricultural production today. The fields and Public Footpaths within this setting provide opportunities to appreciate the historic significance of the Conservation Area in its agrarian context.

Kinetic views from the Public Footpaths at the north across the fields towards the Conservation Area contribute to our appreciation and understanding of the close functional relationship and rural character. The open green space contributes to our experience and understanding of Smiths Green and the heritage assets within it, with views across the landscape being subject to little change over time.

In the immediate area to the south of the Conservation Area, along Stane Street, prominent and recent development to the east and west has intruded upon its setting. There is a distinct separation between the modern residential development and the Conservation Area due to the density and scale of the development. The dense treed verge is important to preserving the rural characteristics of the area.



Figure 41 Densely planted rear gardens of properties within the Conservation Area shielding views of modern development

The modern development to the east can be viewed from within the Conservation Area, the new dwellings on the site have had a negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area, due to factors including contrasting size and fenestration. The modern development to the west cannot be readily viewed from within the Conservation Area due to distance and the densely planted rear gardens of properties within the Conservation Area, mitigating impacts such as visual prominence and other environmental effects including noise, movement and activity.

The modern development along Jacks Lane and to the rear of Cheerups Cottage has had a neutral impact, the predominantly one-a-half-storey dwellings has mitigated the visual prominence of these additions within the immediate setting of the Conservation Area.

Positive buildings in the Conservation Area's setting

There are buildings of interest to the north of the Conservation Area which contribute to its setting. Warish Hall Farm and the Scheduled Moated site formed an important part in the development of this landscape and Smiths Green. Warish Hall from its original foundation by William the Conqueror and the development of Takeley Priory is a site of significant archaeological interest and this has been recognised by its designation. Warish Hall and the toponomy of features such as the nearby Priors Woods and the footpaths which lead to the Church indicate functional links to Smiths Green and Takeley. The agrarian landscape surrounding Warish Hall has remained unchanged and has a strong historic functional link to the moated site, moated sites being constructed in the rural landscape (see also Smiths Green and Jacks). The open setting of Warish Hall makes a significant contribution to the moated site and long uninterrupted views to Prior's Wood and Smiths Green are important to understanding the visual and historic functional links. The open agrarian landscape contributes to the tranquillity of the Scheduled Moated site and Smiths Green.

Parkers Farm, along with its historic barns, is also considered to positively contribute to the setting of the Conservation Area. Once a moated site, the close functional relationship to the surrounding agricultural land is appreciable and viewed today by its continued operation as a working farm. The farm has remained isolated, indicative of the wider rural landscape containing several other moated sites connected by historic routes and pathways, this being the Protected Lane. Parkers Farm contributes to our understanding of the historic interest of Smiths Green, the development of the settlement and its social development within the agrarian landscape. The physical separation of the farmstead within the surrounding open landscape positively contributes to the rural characteristics, tranquillity and to the grain of surrounding landscape.



6. Opportunities for Enhancement

6.1 Overview

The following key issues have been identified and are summarised below in brief. The list is in no way exhaustive and neither are the issues identified unique to Smiths Green Conservation Area, with many being shared with other conservation areas.

6.2 Access and Integration

The Smiths Green Conservation Area is easily accessed from Stane Street to the south, with the A120 nearby. Smiths Green Lane runs in a northerly direction across the A120 to Bambers Green. There is scope for enhancement in terms of wayfinding on the approach to and within the settlement such as bespoke signage and the signposting of Public Rights of Way to enhance the link between Smiths Green and its surrounding countryside and landscape.

6.3 Car Parking

Car parking can have an adverse effect on the character of a conservation area and any historic settlement, impacting the street scene and how the area is experienced. Smiths Green is entirely residential with a limited amount of traffic, most using the lane to access Stane Street to the south and wider Takeley.

There are no formal parking spaces on the village green, which preserves the rural character of the Conservation Area. Across the Conservation Area, a pressure is the provision of parking for visitors of residents given the limited driveway space afforded to dwellings. A small area of informal parking is present adjacent to the junction to Jacks Lane however there is evidence for the negative impact of such use, with large unsightly tracks upon the village green. Care must also be taken to avoid the widening or painting of excessive road markings along the lane.

6.4 Inappropriate and Unsympathetic Alterations

As highlighted within the appraisal, some buildings within the Conservation Area have been subject to unsympathetic alterations and additions which has resulted in the gradual loss of architectural detailing which would positively contribute to the character of Smiths Green. Two key examples are the loss of historic and traditionally detailed timber windows with modern UPVC replacements.

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 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.'*

Another issue within the Conservation Area is the addition of unsympathetic extensions and items which can have a cumulative impact such as the installation of TV aerials, alarm boxes and other domestic paraphernalia. When future proposals come forward, these should be approached in a manner which preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



6.5 Maintenance

Routine maintenance is required to prevent further deterioration of historic boundary walls and buildings throughout the Conservation Area. 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, but it will also avoid the loss of original fabric and is cost-effective. Commons areas which benefit from routine and preventative maintenance are that of:

- External walls, windows and doors;
- Fascia boards, eaves or guttering;
- Boundary treatments and fencing;
- Roof slates or tiles;
- Driveways and garden spaces.

Of importance to Smiths Green is the continued appropriate maintenance of the village green and the wide grassed verges of the lane to a high standard.

6.6 Neutral Contributors

A proportion of buildings make a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area as shown on the Figure 30. The dilution of positive buildings amongst those which are neutral leads to an underwhelming and indistinctive overall character. The quality of the Conservation Area and the buildings within it must not be ‘averaged down’ by the neutral or negative elements of the built environment. Future proposals should seek to enhance the built environment, as outlined in the Management Plan Section 7.2.

6.7 Public Realm

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

One of the main characteristics of Smiths Green is that it has remained uncluttered from street furniture and where street furniture is present, this is limited and subtle. This is positive as the lack of lampposts, street furniture and other paraphernalia contributes to the character of the street scene.

There is the opportunity for a limited quantity of additional street furniture by the statutorily listed nineteenth-century pump, as this area would benefit from general enhancement. The Pump is hidden within overgrown hedging and telephone pole lines also obstruct views to the heritage asset. Opening up of this area and the placement of a physical interpretation board of Smiths Green’s history would benefit the Conservation Area.

Hard Landscaping

The road surface is of tarmac, the narrow and secondary nature of Smiths Green Lane from Stane Steet has meant it is without road markings or paving. The underdeveloped road makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and is similar to the historic track/lane that was present.

Open Spaces

The Conservation Area is dominated by the open space of the village green which significantly contributes to the character of the area. Any development upon the village green should be resisted and it should remain an open informal space.

Trees and Planting

Matures trees and hedgerows can be observed throughout the Conservation Area, which positively contribute to its rural character. Invasive foreign species should resisted and there is limited opportunity for planting upon the village green as it should remain an informal and open space.

6.8 Interpretation

There is currently no heritage interpretation in Smiths Green, through either physical interpretation or digital resource. Increased awareness or acknowledgement of the Conservation Area would be beneficial, although this should not be at the detriment of the area's character.

The area adjacent to the Pump would present an opportunity to enhance this space and to provide a physical interpretation board.



Figure 42 Potential for interpretation to enhance awareness and understanding of the history of Smiths Green



7. Management Proposals

There are a wide range of issues facing the Smiths Green Conservation Area, many of which share common themes. This section seeks to recommend management proposals which can address these issues in both the short and long term. The proposals are divided into themes in the sections below and area in no particular order.

7.1 Development Management Tools

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.

Article 4 Directions

An Article 4 Direction removes specified permitted development rights and means that planning permission will be needed for certain works and, in granting or refusing planning permission, consideration will be given to the proposed works to ensure they preserve, or where possible enhance, the special interest of the Conservation Area.

An Article 4 Direction would introduce additional control over the types of development which are potentially the most harmful to the area's significance. It would allow change to be managed to the area's houses, ensuring any alterations or additions are appropriate and sympathetic. Further details on the additional controls within the Uttlesford District can be found on the Council's [website](#).

It is recommended that the appropriateness of an Article 4 Direction to remove specified permitted development rights, particularly under Part 1, Class A of the General Permitted Development Order, is considered by the Local Planning Authority.

Heritage Statements, Heritage Impact Assessments and Archaeological Assessments

In accordance with the NPPF (Para. 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 immediate setting require an appropriately detailed Heritage Statement. Any application which has failed to have assessed any impact upon views, setting and significance 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 (2019).

Local Heritage List

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. Local Lists can be beneficial in ensuring the upkeep and maintenance of historic buildings that contribute to the character of the settlements.



Uttlesford has a Local List which was last updated in 2021, available on the [website](#).

This appraisal has identified several buildings as non-designated heritage assets and recommends that these are included within the updated Local List. The buildings include:

- Woodside
- The Limes
- The Limes Cottage
- Bull Cottages
- Smiths Cottage/South Cottage

Character Appraisal and Management Plan

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan should be reviewed regularly to monitor change and inform management proposals including amendments to the management plan.

Conservation Area Boundary

The Conservation Area 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.

7.2 Managing Future Change

Opportunity Sites

There are no opportunity sites within the Conservation Area or its immediate and adjacent environs for development. The erosion of the surrounding agrarian landscape would be harmful to the character of the Conservation Area.

New Development

There is limited opportunity for residential development in the setting of the Conservation Area. A recent Appeal Decision for the proposed residential development upon the fields adjacent to and north of the Conservation Area established that the loss of the agrarian landscape would be harmful to the significance of several listed buildings within Smiths Green (Ref: APP/C1570/W/22/3291524). The surrounding agrarian landscape is intrinsic to our understanding of Smiths Green development and the historic buildings within it.

It is important that any proposed development give due consideration to the Conservation Area its historic buildings, to ideally result in no harm.

Successful new development will:

- Relate to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land,
- Sit happily 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 materials and building methods which as high in quality of those used in existing buildings, and
- Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of their setting.



Uttlesford 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 medium-large scale development schemes are referred to a Design Review 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.

Views and setting

Some buildings and spaces fall outside the Conservation Area as they do not directly contribute to its historic or architectural interest, however, they will form an important part of the area and contribute to its setting (refer to Section 5.5 for further detail). Redevelopment or alteration to these buildings and spaces outside the conservation area's boundary must carefully consider any potential impacts on the conservation area's character or local distinctiveness, including the uniformity of groups of buildings within the setting of the conservation area. Developments must also be sensitively designed to have no resultant harm.

The key views analysed in Section 5.3 of 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. 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.

Sustainability and Green Infrastructure

Climate change and renewable energy are growing considerations around change in the built environment. Some forms of renewable energy are less compatible with conservation areas, especially if implemented unsympathetically. Solar panels, alternative heat and energy sources and air conditioning units installed in prominent locations would be intrusive to the character and appearance of Smiths Green. Retrofit of houses within the Conservation Area, with triple glazing or external cladding, for example, is likely to be harmful to the significance of the Conservation Area and would not be considered a suitable solution. The Essex Design Guide has been updated (2022) with guidance upon Climate Change and the Historic Environment, [website](#).

Energy efficiency

Historic England are currently undertaking research into the role that cultural heritage and historic buildings can play in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and have produced a suite of guidance documents which support decision making including:

- Historic England Advice Note 14: Energy Efficiency and Traditional Homes (2020)
- Historic England, Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: How to Improve Energy Efficiency (2018)
- Historic England, Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading (2017).

These guidance documents should be used and promoted within the Conservation Area, using a holistic, 'whole building' approach when tackling these issues.



Neutral Elements

The dilution of positive buildings amongst those which are neutral leads to an underwhelming and indistinctive overall character, as noted in Section 6.6.

Uttlesford District Council should 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.

7.3 Public Realm and Highways

Access and Integration

There should be collaboration between the Highways Department and Local Planning Authority to ensure that the maintenance and replacement programme for street furniture and hard surfacing reflects the character and local distinctiveness of the Conservation Area. Excessive street signage and the use of road markings should be avoided along Smiths Green Lane.

There is the potential for a limited quantity of street furniture to the area by the Pump, as it would benefit from enhancement including the removal of the telephone pole lines.

Car Parking

Given the small scale of the Conservation Area which is dominated by the village green, there is no opportunity for additional parking which would not have a negative effect. Parking upon the green should be resisted.

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.

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. A single Good Practice Design Guide on standard alterations such as windows, doors, rainwater goods, boundaries and roof extensions will ensure inappropriate development does not continue to be the accepted norm.



Design guidance for Smiths Green Conservation Area could:

- Provide guidance on appropriate design and materials for windows and doors and encouraging the retention or reinstatement of historic glazing patterns and door designs and the use of appropriate materials.
- Provide guidance on the traditional form of boundary treatments and encourage their reinstatement where they have been removed or compromised.
- Provide guidance on traditional roofing materials and encouraging the reinstatement of good quality slate and the removal of unsympathetic modern materials such as interlocking concrete tiles.

Poor maintenance leads to the deterioration of the fabric of the built environment and results in a loss of architectural details. Improved awareness of simple maintenance and repair would be conducive with the preservation of Smith Greens' built heritage.

7.4. 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 provided in specific circumstances and is often targeted at schemes which preserve, enhance and better reveal the special interest of the area whilst also improving public awareness and understanding.

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 the Conservation Area. 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.



8. Appendices

8.1 Bibliography

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Reaney, P.H., 1935. Place-names of Essex. Cambridge

Hunter, J. 1999. The Essex Landscape, Essex Record Office

Essex County Council. Essex Place Names, Online Archive: [REDACTED]
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Brighter Planning, 2022. Heritage Assessment and Audit. Great Chesterford



8.2 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	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. National Planning Policy Framework. London: UK Government, 2021.	Section 16; Annex 2
National Guidance	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. National Planning Practice Guidance. London: UK Government, 2014.	ID: 18a
National Guidance	Historic England, Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Historic England Advice Note 1. Second Edition. Swindon: Historic England, 2019.	
National Guidance	Historic England, The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3. Second Edition. Swindon: Historic England, 2017.	
Local Supplementary Planning Document	Uttlesford District Local Plan (2005)	ENV1– Design of Development within Conservation Areas ENV2– Development affecting Listed Buildings ENV3– Open Spaces and Trees ENV4– Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance ENV9– Historic Landscapes GEN2– Design



8.3 List of All Designated Heritage Assets within the Conservation Area

List Entry Number	Address	Grade	Date of Designation
1322592	White House, Smiths Green	II	10-Sept-1981
1168964	The Croft	II	10-Sept-1981
1112211	Moat Cottage	II*	10-Sept-1981
1306743	The Cottage	II	10-Sept-1981
1112212	Beech Cottage	II	10-Sept-1981
1168972	Goar Lodge	II	10-Sept-1981
1168954	The Gages	II	10-Sept-1981
1112210	Pump at Pippins	II	10-Sept-1981
1112207	Cheerups Cottage, Jacks Lane	II	10-Sept-1981
1112220	Hollow Elm Cottage, Warish Hall Road	II	10-Sept-1981



8.4 Frequently Asked Questions

A selection of frequently asked questions are below. If you require further advice, please contact Uttlesford District Council's planning department.

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 conservation 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 all conservation areas in the district can be found on Uttlesford District Council's website. The council also has an online interactive map search function, which allows you to search for a specific property. Full details, including contact details for the local authority, can be accessed via this [link](#).

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 authority's Local Plan also typically includes a specific policy on Conservation Areas.

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

Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, certain minor works and alterations are considered



'permitted development' and can be carried out without planning permission. However, some permitted developments rights do not apply in conservation areas, and some buildings may not have any permitted development rights at all, such as blocks of flats. Different rules also apply if a building is listed.

Permission is required for any external alterations which involve cladding, rendering, or adding pebble dash, artificial stone or tiles to the exterior of a dwelling within a conservation area. All alterations to the roof of a dwelling within a conservation area also require planning permission.

Extensions to the side of buildings in conservation areas will need planning permission, as will all two storey rear extensions. Porches, subject to size and relationship to the highway, may need planning permission. In all cases, the Local Planning Authority will be able to provide advice as to how to proceed.

What is an Article 4 Direction?

Some conservation areas are covered by an Article 4 Direction, which brings certain types of permitted 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 written specifically for the area they apply to and are used to control specific works that could threaten the character of an area. As an example, in some conservation areas, an Article 4 direction will remove permitted development rights for the replacement of windows and doors, as these are architectural features which contribute positively to the special interest of the conservation area. The loss of these features would be considered harmful, therefore an Article 4 direction would require that a planning application is required for these works, and the proposals considered by the local planning authority and approved before conducted. Historic

England provides information on Article 4 Directions on their [website](#), and the local planning authority will also publish information regarding any Article 4 directions in their district.

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. Uttlesford District Council 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 six 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 specific Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to protect it.

The legislation relating to trees is included within Part VIII of the Town and Planning Act 1990 which is supplemented by the The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012.

Further information on TPOs and trees in conservation areas 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.

What is Setting?

The NPPF defines within Annex 2: Glossary, the definition of setting 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.'

The PPG also sets out the definition of setting and how it is taken into account including that the local planning authority may need to consider the implications of cumulative change (Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 18a-013-20190723).

The potential impact of future proposals upon setting and the significance of heritage assets should be assessed within any future application, Historic England provides a stepped approach to this assessment (Historic England's Guidance Note 3: Setting of Heritage Assets (2017)).



8.5 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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