

WEST BERGHOLT - VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT



Village Design Statements are intended to provide design guidance to people who are thinking about proposed developments such as an alteration to an existing property, the construction of new dwellings or commercial premises, or even the provision of street furniture.



WEST BERGHOLT PARISH COUNCIL

CONTENTS

What is a Village Design Statement?	Page 3
Findings of the Parish Plan	Page 4
Process of producing the Village Design Statement	Page 6
Use of the Village Design Statement	Page 7
Map of West Bergholt	Page 8
History and Development of West Bergholt	Page 9
Industry and Commerce in West Bergholt	Page 12
The VDS and its Planning Status	Page 13
Landscape Character and Setting	Page 15
Design Guidance: <i>for New Developments and House Extensions</i>	Page 17
Transport, Highways, Footpaths and Village Streets	Page 23
Plan of Village : <i>Showing Village Envelope, TPOs, Listed Buildings, Open Spaces and Restricted Development areas</i>	Page 26
CBC Planning Policy and Design Guidance	Page 29
VDS Members	Page 33



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WHAT IS A VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT?

A Village Design Statement (VDS) gives a detailed description of the existing character and main features of design in the village and guidelines for how this should be respected in any new development. The VDS is a result of consultation and the conclusion of the Village Plan. This statement describes how the residents of West Bergholt would like new development - including new buildings, changes of use, alterations or improvements to buildings or the landscape - to contribute to the unique character of the village.

Approach

The VDS follows the guidance produced by the Rural Community Council for Essex (RCCE), including the setting up of a workshop to look at village character. More detail of the process is given in the appendices. As West Bergholt has already produced a Parish Plan in 2009 the VDS also draws on background material and community needs assessment carried out through the parish planning process as well as additional consultation specific to the VDS.



The Old Brewery



St Mary's Old Church



Bergholt Hall



FINDINGS OF THE PARISH PLAN

Introduction

A Parish Plan covering the village was produced in 2009. The plan was the subject of extensive consultations and engagement with residents and businesses. The Plan has a number of component parts comprising:

- Social and Community
- Environment
- Village Amenities
- Shops and Facilities
- Housing and Planning
- Community Safety
- Transport
- Democracy

The Housing and Planning component of the plan explored the housing type and level of development in the village and whether residents feel that further expansion is desirable. Although increased levels of housing are not proposed on a significant scale, residents were able to express their concern about the nature and type of any housing which may be permitted in the future. The village has a variety of housing types ranging from the traditional heartland of the village with its distinctive and individualistic housing stock to the newer estates of the 1960's and 1970's which significantly changed the scale of the settlement. The local housing association Colne Valley Housing has provided some housing for rent in recent times, but overall provision of social housing is a declining feature of dwelling provision in the village.

Survey Questions

The most relevant surveys to this part of the plan are the household survey and the survey issued to clubs and organisations. All had questions relating to these areas of interest and the response was sufficient to have statistical significance.

Main findings from the surveys

Future Village Expansion

Residents overwhelmingly rejected any prospect of increased level of housing with 91% of households not wishing to see increased levels of housing. Clubs and organisations also felt that larger scale development was not desirable.



Type of future housing provision

If new development is permitted in the future households favoured the provision of warden controlled homes for the elderly, small family homes and retirement homes. Organisations mirrored this response and added that there is also a shortage of affordable housing for younger people and families who are inevitably forced to move elsewhere for housing.

Top issues to take forward

The top five areas to take forward from this area of the plan were established through the survey of priorities held in spring 2008

- Poor quality planning in the village
- No additional significant levels of new housing for the village, especially estate type development
- Some controls over infilling
- Need for small family housing
- Provide housing for older residents
- Affordable housing

The VDS addresses poor quality design the remaining points will be addressed in subsequent forward planning type documents which the Parish Council intends to produce where these are not already covered by Colchester Borough Council's general planning documents.

Other concerns

Concerns raised in the surveys were mainly centred on the degree of infilling which has occurred, the pressure that additional housing places on infrastructure such as the school and transport services. Other comments were received relating to the poor unsympathetic type of housing which infilling can result in and an overall lack of quality planning.



PROCESS OF PRODUCING THE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

The VDS was produced following the guidelines published by the Rural Community Council for Essex (RCCE). These guidelines suggest that the planning and design stages of undertaking a VDS follow the following steps:

1. Stage 1: Planning: form a design team; arrange planning input; review existing information
2. Stage 2: Proceeding: organise workshop; complete character assessment; hold exhibition; draw up proposals
3. Stage 3: Production: consultation; seek approval for SPG; publication and launch of the document
4. Stage 4: Partnership: use of the VDS and review

The VDS was prepared over a period of 18 months and the team overseeing the work comprised members of the Planning and Development Committee from the Parish Council together with members of the Parish Plan Group. Advice and support was provided by both Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council, whilst the historic record and evolution of the village was sourced from a village character appraisal originally produced in the 1980's. This work was supplemented by a village walkabout and photographic record was undertaken to supplement the earlier sourced information.

Consultation activities were undertaken in a number of ways. A village workshop was held in December 2009 whilst the draft findings were exhibited at the Annual Parish Meeting held in May 2010. The Village Bulletin was used to advertise the activities and reported progress on the plan's evolution during 2009 and 2010.

The final draft plan has been sent to Colchester Borough Council (CBC) for adoption as supplemental planning guidance (or equivalent) as part of the Local Development Framework suite of documents.



WEST BERGHOLT PARISH COUNCIL

USE OF THE VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

The VDS once accepted by CBC as a guidance document will be a publicly available document and its contents will carry weight when planning applications are determined by the local authority. Naturally the Parish Council will use the document in reviewing planning applications sent to it by Colchester Borough Council. When applications are recommended for refusal the VDS policies will be quoted as material reasons for objections to applications.

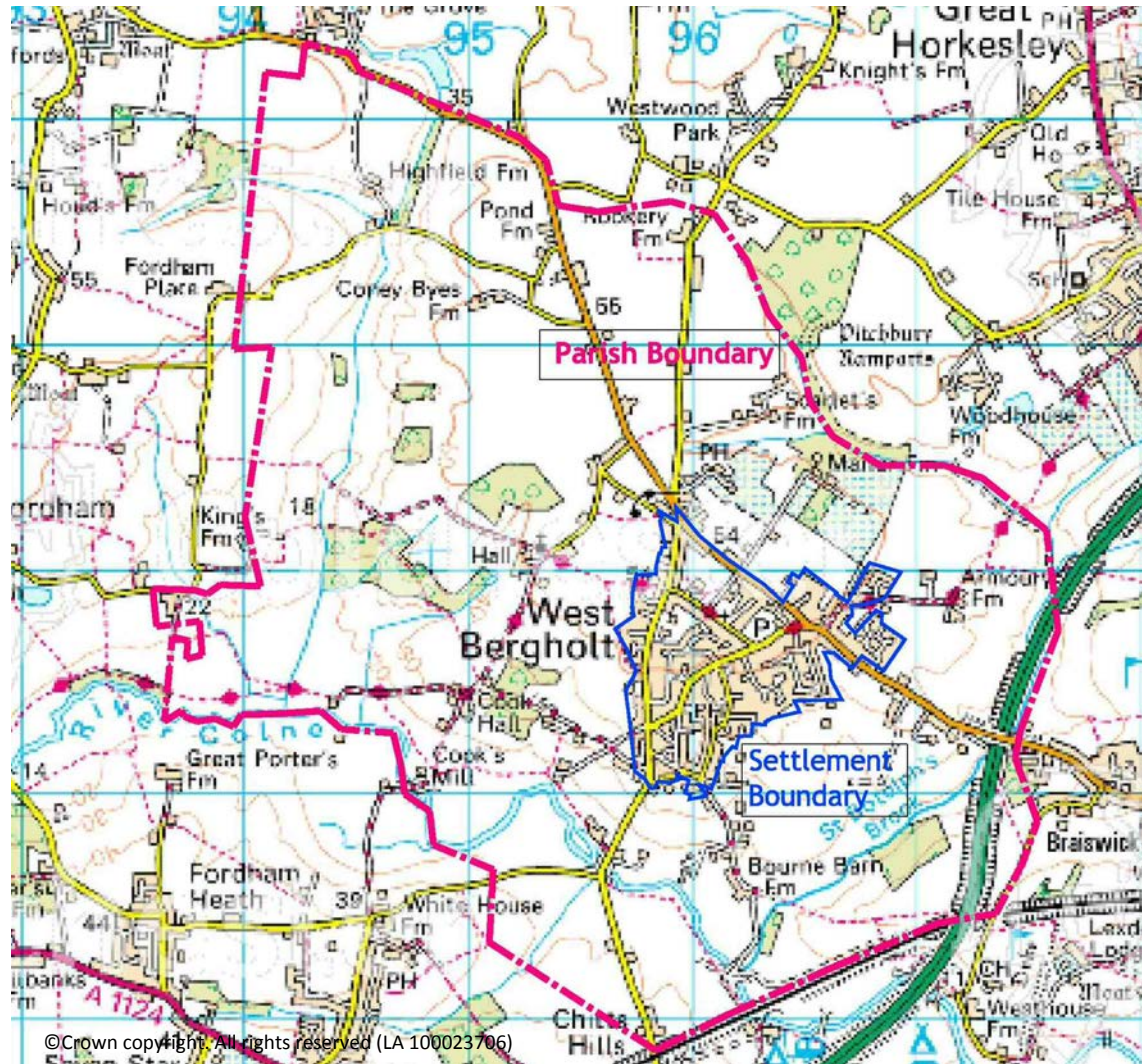
Planning applications stand a greater chance of success if they adhere to the guidelines set out in this document. The Planning and Development Committee meets regularly every month, and it is intended that the VDS be made available to those seeking planning permission by the Parish Council. The Parish Council welcomes pre-application discussions and is happy to give advice at any stage of a planning application.



Parish consultation



MAP OF WEST BERGHOLT



Ordnance Survey Plan showing Parish Boundary and Settlement Boundary



HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF WEST BERGHOLT

The parish of West Bergholt comprises 929 ha. immediately north-west of Colchester. The land rises gently from under 20 m. along the Colne and St. Botolph's brook to 50 m. on a broad plateau stretching northwards towards Great and Little Horkesley. On the west the land falls to under 20 m. in the valley of the Pulton or Polton brook, a tributary of the Colne.



West Bergholt School



Queen's Head Pond



Westwood House

West Bergholt's name can be traced right back to the 11th Century. The name Bergholt means 'hill-wood' and derives from beorg (hill) and holt (wood). The "West" was added to distinguish it from the Suffolk village of East Bergholt.

West Bergholt rises out of the Colne Valley which lies to the south of the village. People have long settled here, as evidenced by prehistoric remains including flints and axes having been found in the parish as well as later bronze-age and iron-age remains. Coins, pottery fragments and building material show that the parish was also inhabited during Roman times.

Bergholt Hall occupies the site of the main manor in the parish. After the Sackville family sold the manor it passed through the hands of many families until inherited by the Round family. The current building is a Georgian house of three storeys with an attractive facade. There were several other manors in the parish in the early medieval period, but they were apparently amalgamated in the 14th and 15th centuries to form the combined manor of Cooks Hall with Beaumonds. Cooks Hall is located south south-west of the church. The back wing is late 16th or early 17th century whilst the main block was built in the 18th century.



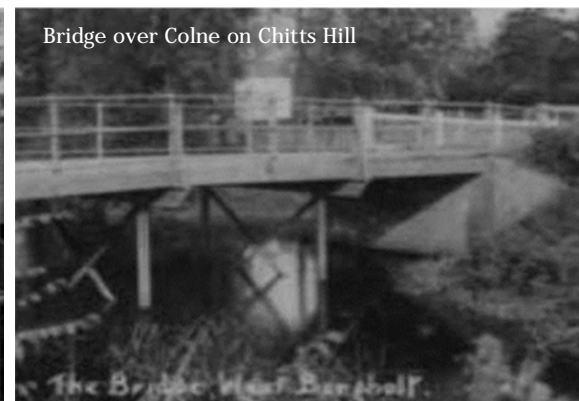
WEST BERGHOLT PARISH COUNCIL

Village Design Statement

The oldest building in West Bergholt is St Mary's Old Church which is Saxon in origin and was heavily re-modelled in the late 13th and 14th centuries, with the addition of the squared chancel and south aisle. The church was declared redundant in 1976 following a gradual transfer to a new church (St Mary the Virgin) built in the village and consecrated in 1904. In 1977 the Redundant Churches Fund decided to restore the building and hold occasional services. Whilst the area around St Mary's Old Church and Bergholt Hall would have originally constituted the heart of the local community, it is now isolated physically from the nucleus of the village.

In the middle ages a large area in the centre of the parish was a heath. Much settlement was scattered around the roads and greens facing the heath which was mainly used for common grazing. From the 16th century onwards parts of the heath began to be enclosed in a piecemeal fashion and used for other activities such as farming, brick making, and residential development.

A brewery became established in the early 19th century and expanded under the ownership of the Daniell family. The brewery built and owned many houses for its workers and the settlement began to coalesce into a larger nucleated village. When the nearby heath was finally enclosed in 1865 parts of it quickly became built up in order to house workers from the expanding brewery and other workers from Colchester. Brewing operations ended in 1959 but the site was used for new offices and a bottling plant and did not finally close until 1982. Many of the old Brewery buildings have since been converted to flats, houses and offices, whilst additional housing has been built to the rear. Long standing residents of the parish can probably remember a busy Truman Brewery employing many local people and providing homes on Colchester Road for them. Their roles were as varied as administration, assembly line and draymen whose job included attending fine shire horses which were often used to deliver beer to the three pubs in the village. There are also memories of a small off sales 'snug' to the left hand side of the Queen's Head for workers as well as of the original post office in Chapel Road where you could buy sweets from one side and stamps from the other. As you would expect, times have changed, Truman's has long since closed and we have a well-stocked good sized Co-op which includes the post office. We also have a pharmacist, a second general store and newsagent and a doctors' surgery.





WEST BERGHOLT PARISH COUNCIL

Village Design Statement

West Bergholt also is the home for Armoury Farm which houses several small industrial units and offices which include accountants, vehicle repairs, marquee hire and upholsterers to name a few. Other businesses in the village include children’s day nursery, car sales and service, B&B, Hairdressers, local and national taxi service, finance and numerous other small operations providing services to the public and much needed local employment. Other village businesses at one time included seven retail village stores. The original butchers (Elmer’s), Mascalls (Later VG Stores and now the pharmacist), the paper shop (Now Ash’s) Browns on Colchester Road, The home and garden Store on Chapel Road for DIY enthusiasts, Lazaros on Lexden Rd and Cuckoo’s store in Queens Road where one could take an empty bottle and get it refilled with draft vinegar! Some may remember the Doctors’ surgery on Lexden Road which was actually part of Dr Henderson’s house and prior to the hairdressers opening, the Walls ice cream depot in Chapel Road, which is where several Wall’s ice cream vans were stored and their drivers would report.



High Road (now 10 Colchester Road)



INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE IN WEST BERGHOLT.

Within the village we have two general stores, including a post office in the Co-op. There is also a hairdresser, three public houses and the mobile library visits once a fortnight and stops at several key positions round the village. 52 businesses were identified as operating from the village as part of our “Business Questionnaire” and we wanted to find out how well these local trades were being used.

Other than the agricultural and associated activities around the fringes of the village, there are no medium to large industries following the closure of the Truman Brewery. Compact clusters of small commercial units occur at a few locations such as Armoury Farm and Bourne Road. Due to the nature of the roads that serve such places, and for other associated reasons, their significant expansion would be resisted. Similarly, there would generally be strong resistance to any proposals to cease the use of commercial premises in favour of residential use. In addition, the introduction of a large retailer, or similar concern, which would seriously affect the viability of many of the existing businesses, would also be resisted.

Many of the small businesses, including those working from home, are adversely affected by the poor broadband speeds currently being provided. There is therefore a propensity to favour proposals to achieve a solution although this must be balanced with a policy of resisting proposals for inappropriately sited telecommunication masts.





THE VDS AND ITS PLANNING STATUS

Introduction

All significant development requires planning permission and each submission is considered against the Borough Council's main statutory planning instrument, the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is a development plan comprising a series of planning documents setting out Colchester Borough Council's vision about how the Borough should develop up to 2021. It includes various specific policies, land-use allocations and maps in order to guide development to the right places and avoid inappropriate development from taking place. It is itself governed by regional and national government policies regarding issues like housing numbers, sustainability, environmental protection and transport. The Core Strategy sets out the strategic policies to guide development while land use allocations are discussed in detail in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and shown graphically on the Proposals Map. Detailed policies to guide development are set out in the Development Policies DPD. They also produce very detailed Development Briefs to guide development at a site level. The production of all the LDF documents is governed by national planning guidance covering issues like housing provision, sustainability, environmental protection and transport. A new National Planning Policy Framework is currently being prepared and it will be important that the VDS conforms to this national guidance as well as local planning policies.

Once accepted as guidance by Colchester Borough Council, the VDS will be a public document and, although unlike the LDF it is not a statutory planning tool, once adopted as guidance it will carry weight in their determination of planning applications. Therefore anyone can increase the likelihood that their proposals will receive support from the Parish Council if they follow the guidance within the Village Design Statement.

Background

In December 2008 Colchester Borough Council adopted the Core Strategy document which provides the overarching strategy and policy direction for the growth of the Borough up to 2021. Additional policies and documents supporting the Core Strategy have been adopted. CBC prepared new Site Allocations and Development Policies Development Plan Documents following the adoption of the Core Strategy. These two documents were examined by an independent planning inspector and were adopted in October 2010.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

One such development has been the adoption of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) such as 'Affordable Housing'. Some of this guidance is starting to be superseded by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) as part of the Local Development Framework.

CBC has now adopted Supplementary Planning Documents to complement the LDF. There are planning documents for: Backland and Infill, Community Facilities, Vehicle Parking Standards, Sustainable Construction Open Space, Sport and Recreation, Extending your House.



The allocation of residential development in West Bergholt over the plan period of 2001-21 is for an additional 50 dwellings, with currently around 35 having already been built.



Examples of recent new housing built since 2001

Core Strategy policy H4 Affordable Housing, provides that in the villages, affordable housing will be required on housing developments for 3 or more dwellings. *'Affordable housing development in the villages of rural Colchester Borough will be supported on rural exception sites contiguous with village settlement boundaries, provided a local need is demonstrated by the Parish Council on behalf of their residents.'*

Sustainable development

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out for the first time the duty of planning authorities towards sustainability. National policy guidance PPS1 'Delivering sustainable development', PPS22 and the Code for Sustainable Homes set out further detail and national policy (such as PPS22 'Renewable Energy').



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND SETTING

West Bergholt is on the perimeter of the Colne Valley character area (as defined in the County Council's Landscape Character Assessment). This character area includes the landscape of the tributary, St Botolph's Brook, which runs to the south east of the village.

The landform of the Colne is a shallow valley, with gentle to moderate sloping valley sides and a narrow valley floor. The soils tend to be loamy with arable farming dominating the valley sides but occasional pasture still occurring on the valley bottom. The field sizes are generally larger on the valley sides than on the valley floor. Hedgerow loss has occurred but where these remain, especially along the lanes, and coupled with occasional small mixed woodlands, it gives the setting of West Bergholt a surprisingly woody feel, especially when viewed across the valley from the lanes to Chitts Hill, Fordham Heath and Eight Ash Green. The views are more suburban when seen across the A12 from Braiswick, and when walking on public rights of way close to the village itself. The condition of the landscape (hedgerow network, small woodlands etc.) is generally moderately good.

The valley landscape is highly sensitive to most development because of the long views across the Colne River from the opposite valley side. As West Bergholt sits on the edge of this landscape in a prominent position overlooking the valley, any development at its margins is likely to have an effect on the valley. Any development that would cause a negative impact on the valley sides (DG1), or result in loss of traditional hedgerows, small woodlands and copses, or other landscape features should be resisted.



Pictures showing long views from village



The Village Settlement Boundary of West Bergholt excludes Scarletts, Hall Road cottages, the Crescent and White Hart Lane at the north of the village. Manor Road and Manor Farm are also outside the boundary to the east, but The Lodge development, Bradbrook Cottages on Armoury Road and Maltings Park Road development are within it. The boundary then wraps round the south of the village, hugging the built up area and runs up the west side at the back of the houses in Lexden Road up to Hall Road.



Pictures showing long views in the vicinity of the village

The landscape to the north and east of the village forms part of the North Colchester Farmlands. This is a more flat, open, farmed landscape with regular fields and wide views due to more isolated woodlands and a lack of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. It is a substantially arable landscape but with remnant orchards providing variety at Manor Farm. Horse-grazing close to the village can cause a cluttered appearance to the rural landscape due to the subdivision of fields by varied fencing. The more open character of this landscape makes it susceptible to significant impacts from large-scale or inappropriate development at the village margins. Remaining hedgerows, native trees and small copses should be retained in the landscape (DG2) and landowners encouraged to enhance these where possible close to the village boundaries in order to conserve its rural character.



DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND HOUSE EXTENSIONS

STATEMENT/GUIDANCE

Much recent new housing development has concentrated on producing houses as consumer products with little or no attention paid to the quality of the environment that results. The Parish Council wishes to maintain our community, based on local services and good design, therefore this Guide demonstrates how, by employing best practice it is possible to improve and create West Bergholt as a place of quality and identity. New buildings should contribute to the diversity and individuality of the village, while reflecting local heritage and character. Some recent new developments of unsympathetic design scale and materials should not set a precedent for future development.

General Design - All proposed new build and extensions must enhance the area and make a positive architectural contribution (DG3)

When considering garden amenity, *The Essex Design Guide* and the *Core Strategy* set out minimum sizes for gardens. The Development Policies DPD also contains a policy covering minimum garden sizes. Backland and infill proposals will be strongly resisted (DG4); garden sizes may need to be substantially larger than these minimum standards in order that garden sizes reflect the size and shape of gardens in the area (DG5). Gardens must provide useable private space. Gardens provide other functions that the Council considers important; they allow the infiltration of water into the ground reducing the amount of surface water run off a site produces. Trees, shrubs and hedges can add to the biodiversity of an area. Where a garden is rich in biodiversity an assessment will be required to assess its value. If there are protected species on or adjacent to the site an ecological survey will be required.

Sustainable Construction. The incorporation of new technologies and energy saving techniques into a new building can dramatically reduce CO2 emissions and the carbon footprint of a dwelling. Initiatives include grey water recycling systems, solar panels, home recycling and ground water heating systems. Full details can be found on the CBC web site Sustainable Construction SPD (DG6) see link for further information - www.colchester.gov.uk/servedoc.asp?doc_id=15864

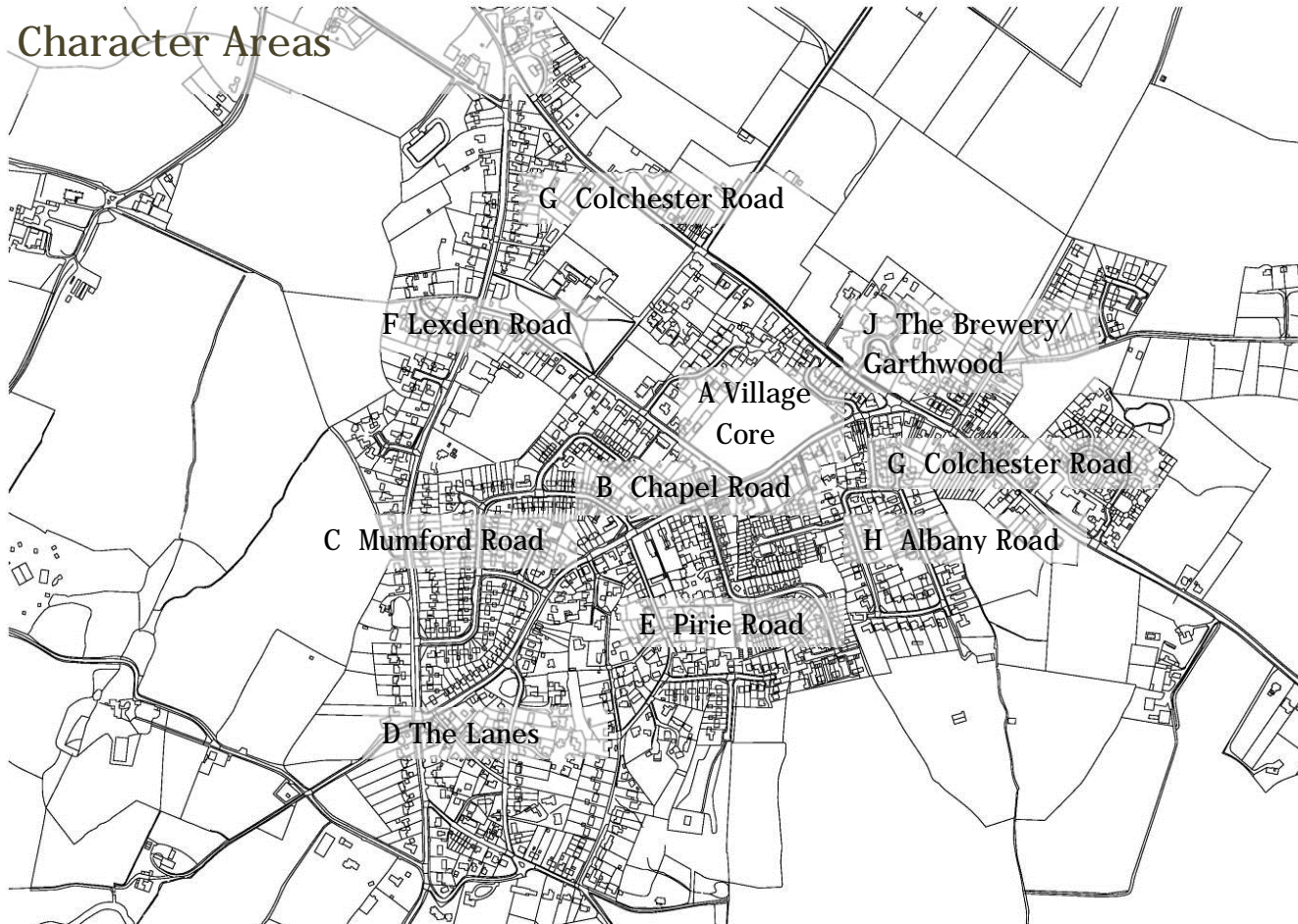
Protecting Local Distinctiveness

Why should new housing look the same whether it's in the Cotswolds, Cumbria, or Essex? The answer of course is that it shouldn't. Settlements and buildings in Essex are distinctive from village to village and certainly have a definite Essex look through the use of local materials and design. Built local distinctiveness is a part of Essex's heritage that is greatly valued by residents and visitors. So how should we protect it? The scope of the VDS includes the whole of the parish of West Bergholt (see map on page 8). West Bergholt lies in an attractive rural setting situated 3 miles north-west of Colchester. The generally flat landscape is bounded to the south and east by the



sloping valleys of the River Colne and St Botolph's Brook. To the north and east are arable farmlands interspersed with small woodlands. The village is a largely compact settlement with a population of about 3300 persons.

Character Areas



As part of the community engagement to develop the Village Design Statement the workshop identified different zones or character areas within the village.

The zones identified were:

- A Village Core (New Church Road, Lorkin Daniell Field, The school, The Heath and Poor's Land, the allotments, St Mary's)
- B Chapel Road (retail/commercial)
- C Mumford Road (C20th planned residential)
- D The 'Lanes' (Spring Lane, The Avenue, Bourne Road, Queen's Road, Chapel Lane, Valley View (organic residential)
- E Pirie Road, Valley Crescent (C20th planned residential)
- F Lexden Road (linear residential on village edge mainly individual houses)
- G Colchester Road (mixed residential on village edge)
- H Albany Road (mixed residential on village edge mainly individual properties)
- J The Brewery/ Garthwood (planned development of 1980)

There are several designated Open Spaces within the parish including the Lorkin Daniell Field, the allotments and the Poor's Field. Local Wildlife Sites include the heath, the redundant St Mary's churchyard, St Mary the Virgin's Churchyard, Hillhouse Wood, Spring Wood and



WEST BERGHOLT PARISH COUNCIL

Grove Wood. The village has 34 buildings listed for their architectural merit. The only Grade 1 listed building is the Church of St Mary in Hall Road (the building was originally Saxon in origin). Other listed buildings of note are Cooks Hall (grade 2*) in Cooks Hall Road, Horsepits Farmhouse (Grade 2*) in Cooks Hall Road and The White Hart Public House, Nayland Road (Grade 2).

The majority of housing development in Colchester will be located within regeneration or growth areas in and around Colchester Town, but broad greenfield locations have also been identified for additional housing provision. The North Growth Area lies just on the other side of the A12 from the parish. It will accommodate a total of 6,200 homes, including an extension of 2,200 new houses on greenfield land north of the golf club in Braiswick. The Core Strategy identifies that “Separation will be maintained between Colchester and adjoining settlements in order to protect village identity.”

Design Guidelines

Buildings must be in harmony with the surroundings in respect of materials, colour, texture, proportion and scale (DG7). There is a fine balance between preservation and progress. Planning applications must show contextually the impact of their proposals on adjacent building by means of adequately detailed plans with accurate street elevations (DG8).

Building materials - All materials should be selected from those traditionally used within the village (DG9) for both maintenance and new build (extensions and new properties). Clay peg tiles, soft Essex red bricks and soft wood window-framing are more harmonious than harsh modern materials. Account must be taken of any surrounding or adjacent buildings when selecting materials. This includes ironmongery, meter boxes and rainwater fittings. Areas of impervious asphalt should be rejected in favour of free draining and aesthetically more pleasing blocks or cobbles.

Infill Development - should conform to the adopted Backland and Infill Development SPD available from CBC. It should reinforce the uniformity of the street by reflecting the scale, mass, height, form, materials, fenestration and architectural details of its neighbours (DG10). This is important in reinforcing local character and ensuring the context of the street scene is not adversely affected. Where existing development is of a poor design /materials new infill development will be expected to improve the character of the area.

Plot Width - Plots must be of sufficient width to allow buildings to be sited with adequate separation between dwellings. The width of the remaining and the new plot should be similar to that prevailing in the immediate area (DG11). New dwellings must have similar spacing between buildings to that commonly found on the street frontage. Where houses are terraced the new development should normally adjoin the adjacent property(s).

Building line - where the prevailing depth of existing dwellings is a feature of the area new development should respect that building line (DG12)



Building height - new buildings should reflect the height of existing buildings. Where existing buildings are of a uniform height, new buildings should respect that height. (DG13)

Dormers - in new and existing housing often result from an attempt to provide habitable accommodation within the roof space; this makes them over-dominant in composition. Dormers should be used sparingly and be subservient in nature. (DG14)



General Design Guidance for new buildings

- DG15 Infill developments should be modest in proportions and in scale with surrounding properties. They should not dominate their surroundings. Their architectural style and finishes should be compatible and vernacular any infill should comply with Infill SPD
- DG16 Roof-scape is an important aspect of the village especially in the centre. New or replaced roofs should retain the existing height and pitch
- DG17 External finishes should be in keeping with the traditional colours and materials in the village.
- DG18 Development undertaken should be in keeping with the planned nature of existing buildings
- DG19 Careful consideration should be given to the impact of construction on views across the village
- DG20 Rainwater goods shall be black and indicated on submitted elevations. All new service intakes to dwellings apart from gas and electricity to be run internally and not visible on the exterior All soil and waste plumbing shall be run internally and shall not be visible to the exterior
- DG21 Balanced flue outlets from central heating boilers and other gas appliances shall not be positioned on street elevations



- DG22 Eaves to all roofs shall be open with exposed rafter feet rather than boxed
- DG23 Details of all boundary walls, fences and gates around the site shall be as submitted drawing
- DG24 Any new agricultural buildings should be designed and sited to minimise the effect on the landscape.

General Design Guidance for extensions, alterations and change of use to existing buildings

- DG25 Original materials or materials which are sympathetic to the existing buildings should be used
- DG26 Details such as windows, doors and roof pitches should reflect those of the original building
- DG27 Careful consideration should be given to the visual impact of extensions and particularly conservatories, when they are visible either from the street or from public thoroughfares such as footpaths, bridleways etc.
- DG28 There should be no unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of adjoining residential properties. Wherever possible mature trees and shrubs should be conserved
- DG29 New buildings, in any area, should respect the scale and design of adjacent buildings. Extensions should be subservient to the original building
- DG30 Building details such as doors, windows and roof pitches should be designed with regard to buildings existing in the vicinity
- DG31 Highly reflective solar panels shouldn't be installed if they have a visual impact on neighbouring properties or the roof-scape of the village
- DG32 Modern additions such as satellite dishes, wind turbines and flues should be concealed from public view
- DG 33 Alternative use of agricultural buildings must not have any adverse effect or cause any disturbance to any adjacent property. Buildings must be suitable for conversion



New contemporary dwelling



Former Truman's Brewery, now apartments

Conclusion

This document tries to identify what is special, unique and distinctive about the character of the parish. It aims to provide design guidance to influence change and improve the physical qualities. West Bergholt is a diverse village, it has a special character that could so easily be destroyed by gradual erosion of its key features. The village is an eclectic mix of properties from the old to the brand new, spanning nearly a thousand years and contains a pleasing mix of open spaces and beautiful views. The Parish Council will challenge any overtly incongruous development which changes this equilibrium. (DG34)



TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS, FOOTPATHS AND VILLAGE STREETS

Wider Transport Links and Access

West Bergholt is easily accessible from the main urban area of Colchester being situated on the B1508 which connects the main routes in the town at Colchester North Station roundabout with the village from the south-west and leads north-west towards Sudbury. Various lower standard minor roads connect the village to Eight Ash Green, Great Horkesley and Stanway. The A12 lies on the outskirts of the village. Various bus services connect the village with Colchester and Sudbury. The village is totally covered by a 30mph speed restriction.

Entrances to the Village and Village Distributor Roads

The village lies in the main to the west of the main B class road (Colchester Road) although important development areas lie on its south-eastern approach, including the sympathetically redeveloped former brewery complex, now a mixed development of flats and housing. Two of the approaches to the village are uphill and present the most interesting prospects, namely from Colchester and Lexden. The approach from the north-west is unremarkable and fairly anonymous. All approaches have recently benefitted from the introduction of distinctive village entrance signing.

The main entrance to the village is via the mini-roundabout at Chapel Road; here an attractive area of open space provides the backdrop for the village sign. A further access point is the Lexden Road, junction with Colchester Road, although this area is presented as a slightly nondescript staggered crossroads.

The main distributor roads in the village are Lexden Road and Chapel Road. These roads serve the school, village shops and connect with routes leading away from the village. Chapel Road is the main community road and contains a zebra crossing and parking areas for the village shops.

All road and additional points of access to new development within the Parish Boundary must be low key and in keeping with Essex Design Guide and be of the highest quality materials

Village Streets

Away from main and distributor roads, the streets in the village are a mixture of modern residential roads (often with concrete surfaces and adjacent areas of verge and pavement) and older original village streets generally lacking adjacent pavements; some of these are unmade private streets. The village has a number of feature trees some with Tree Preservation Orders protecting them from removal or severe pruning.



Parking

Parking in the village is generally off-road in drives and garages, off-road communal parking is provided at the Village pubs and shops; occasional lay-bys have been provided in newer areas of development. For residential uses specifically, a minimum of 1 car parking space should be provided for each 1-bedroom dwelling or 2.25 car parking spaces for each dwelling of 2 or more bedrooms to allow for visitors. Cycle parking will be required for all developments. Provision must also be made for disabled and motorcycle parking. New garages must be in accordance with ECC policy, a single garage must be minimum of 3.00m x 7.00m clear internal. New parking in directly front of property should be avoided unless existing (DG35). Car parking standards to comply with ECC standards 2010 (DG36).

Utilities

Street lighting is at a minimum in the village helping to preserve vistas of the night sky and also the rural character. Utility plant is mainly provided underground although the main routes have overground cabling for telecommunications.

Footpaths

Numerous footpaths and alleyways feature in the village street scene and link the village to adjacent villages and the open countryside. Prominent amongst these is the Essex Way, an 81 mile long distance way-marked footpath, extending from Epping to Harwich.

Appraisal

The street scene in the village is in the main unremarkable, particularly in the newer areas of development which present a bland prospect of homogenous concrete roads with front garden herbage and generally off road parking. The older streets however are more attractive and have an abundance of trees and hedges and generally present a pleasing aspect. Good examples are found in New Church Road with its towering lime trees, and in the unplanned pattern of meandering streets between Queen's Road, Chapel Lane and Lexden Road. Village entrances are understated and the main route through the village does little to reduce speeding traffic, and emphasises the through nature of the road at the expense of the village access points.

Design Matters

Opportunities for improving the streetscape lie in a mixture of hard and soft landscaping. Desirable improvements and maintenance and enhancement matters are presented below:

General Streetscape Guidance(DG37)

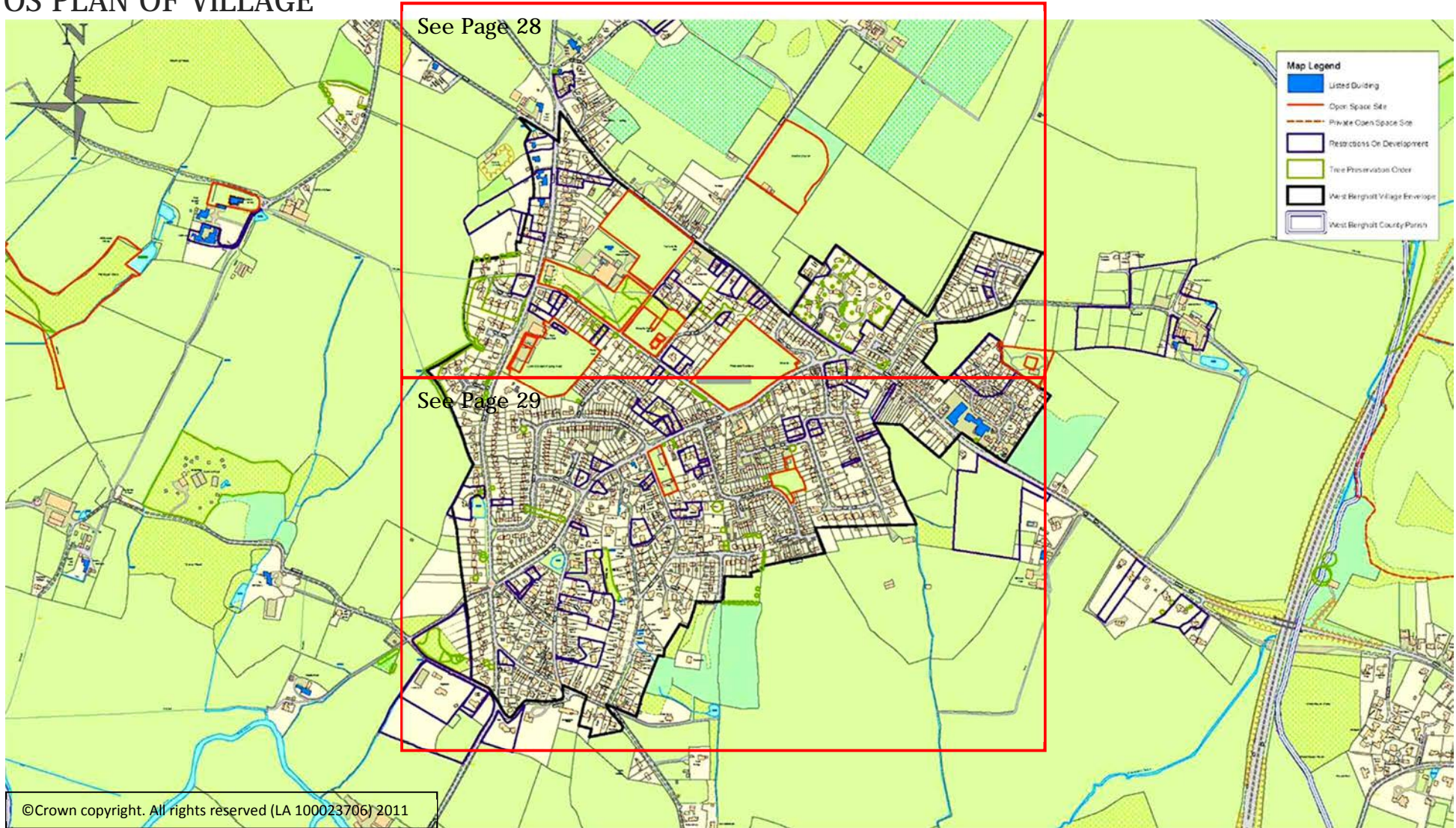
- The main road entrances to the village should be carefully designed to make them more distinctive as well as helping to slow traffic; they should continue to incorporate 'gating', with appropriate planting; In particular the entrance to the village from the north west should be made more distinctive incorporating a change to the junction design if applicable;
- Planting trees in more modern roads where opportunities allow should be undertaken;

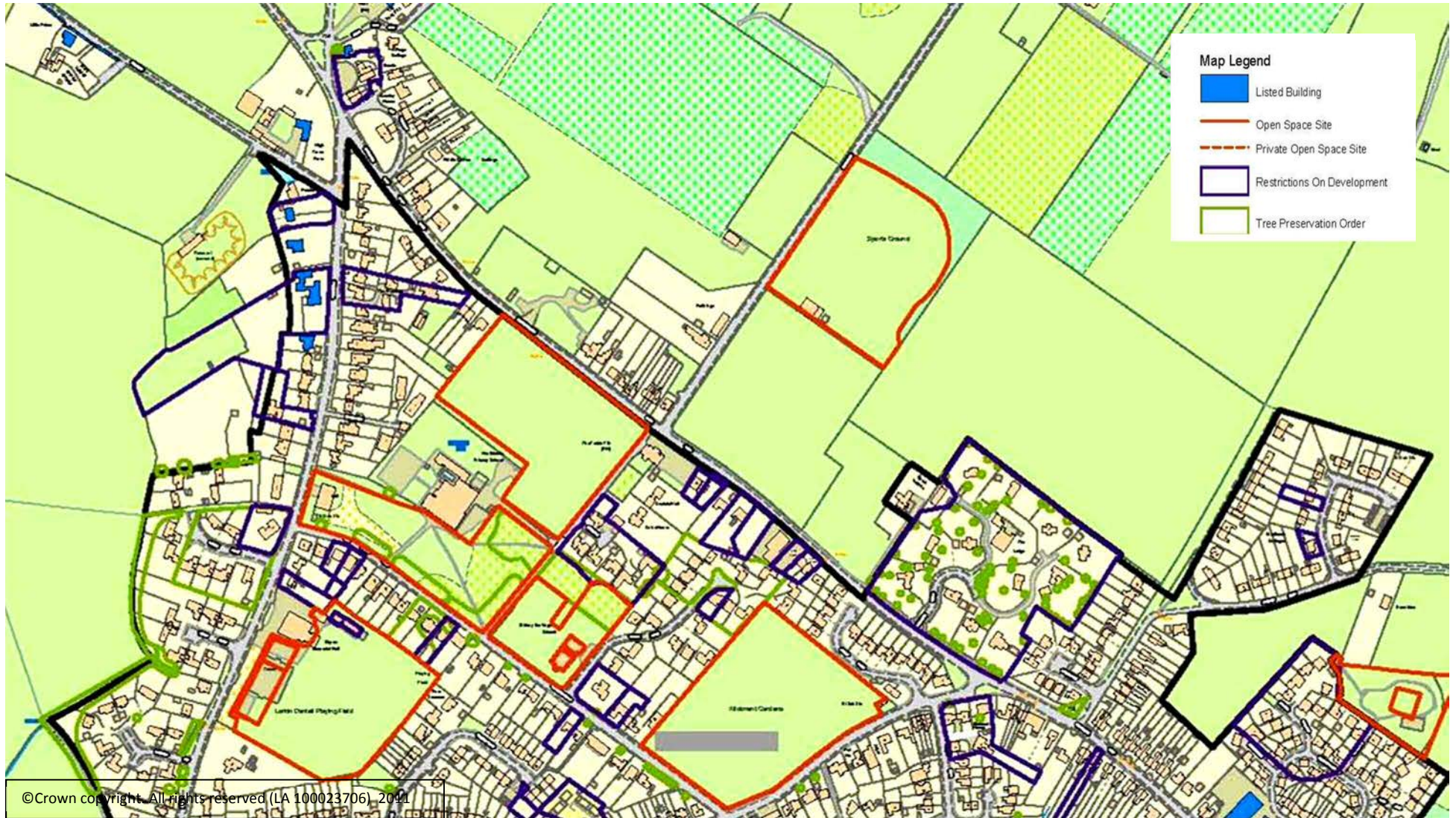


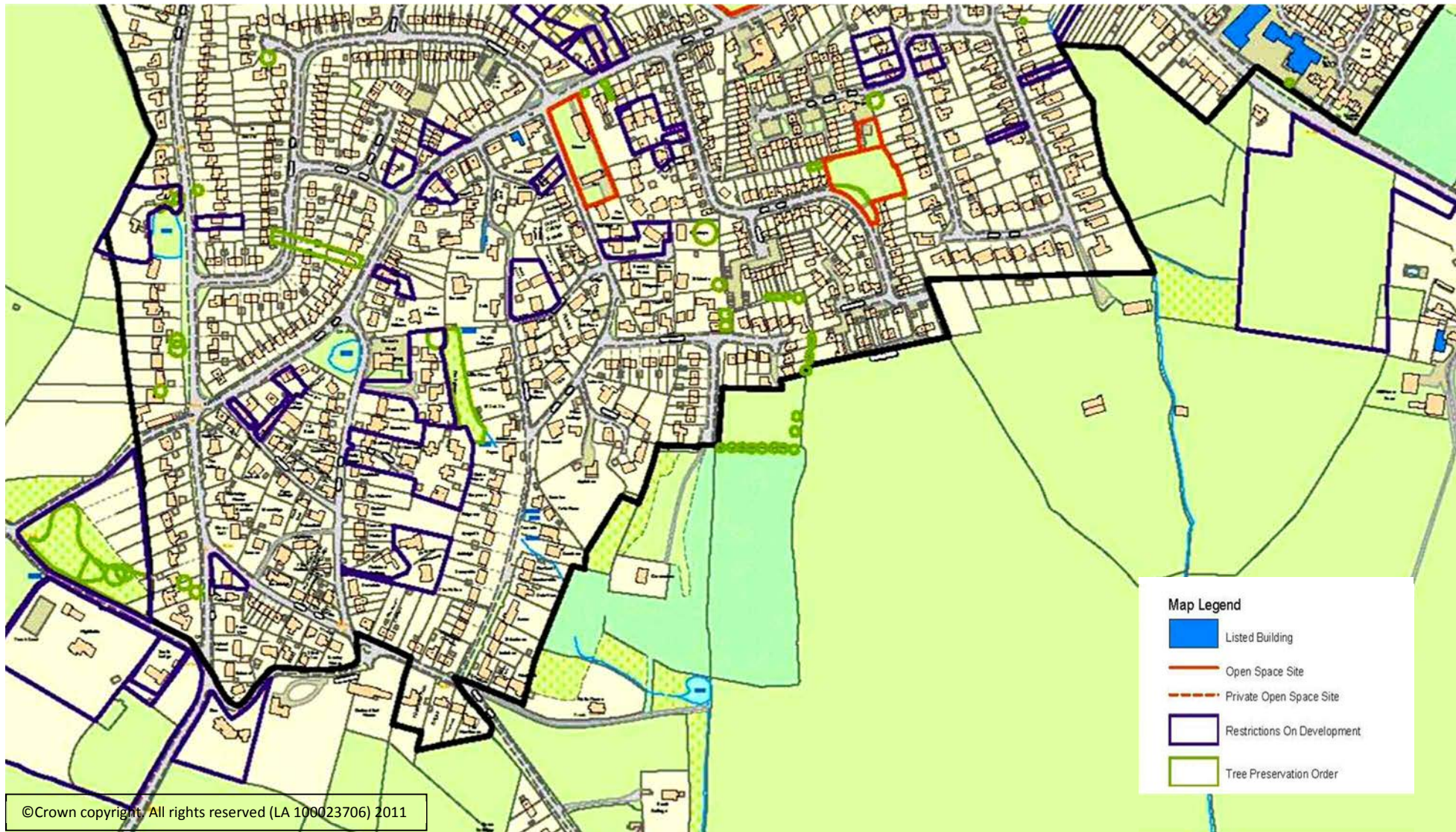
- Sympathetic traffic calming and pedestrian priority areas to emphasise the importance of local places particularly where the community congregates;
- Provision of seating should be undertaken at prominent areas;
- Replacement of ubiquitous street furniture and signing with materials more sympathetic to the village scene;
- A 20mph zone should be provided to incorporate the area of Lexden Road from the Orpen Hall approaches to the Scout Hut; in School Lane, New Church Road and that part of Chapel Lane from Albany Road to Mumford Road;
- Colchester Road as the through main route should be systematically altered at its village junction points to reduce speed and create opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists to negotiate crossing and turning into the road;
- Maintenance of 1960's concrete roads is gradually giving rise for concern. A high quality standard of maintenance would be provided to avoid the hotchpotch of repairs which may result otherwise;
- Lighting should be limited to the minimum required for security and working purposes and should minimise pollution from glow and spillage;
- Utility companies should be obliged to inter their equipment and services underground and communication masts must be sited sympathetically in conjunction with the Parish Council;
- Maintenance of hedges and trees should be carried out to an agreed regime with care taken to preserve historic features;
- TPOs should be respected and opportunities to add to this stock investigated;
- Bus stop areas should be encouraged to provide shelter, seating, passenger information, a vehicle clearway order and a litter bin;
- Diversion or extinguishment of public rights of way, where it would adversely affect the use and appearance of the countryside, should be strongly discouraged;
- The Parish Council in conjunction with the Highway Authority and conservation societies should be encouraged to maintain footpaths and keep them clear of obstruction, signing treatments should be improved.



OS PLAN OF VILLAGE









CBC RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Sustainable Development

DP1 Design and Amenity

DP4 Community Facilities

Centres and Employment

DP5 Appropriate Employment Uses and Protection of Employment Land and Existing Businesses

DP7 Local Centres and Individual Shops

DP8 Agricultural Development and Diversification

DP9 Employment Uses in the Countryside

DP10 Tourism, Leisure and Culture

Housing

DP11 Flat Conversions

DP12 Dwelling Standards

DP13 Dwelling Alterations, Extensions and Replacement Dwellings

Public Realm

DP15 Retention of Open Space and Indoor Sports Facilities

DP16 Private Amenity Space and Open Space Provision for New Residential Development

Transport and Accessibility

DP17 Accessibility and Access

DP19 Parking Standards

Environment and Rural Communities

DP20 Management of Surface Water Drainage

DP21 Nature Conservation and Protected Lanes

DP24 Equestrian Activities

Energy, Resources, Waste, Water and Recycling

DP25 Renewable Energy

PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) provides guidance on the ways of supporting the changing nature of agriculture



WEST BERGHOLT PARISH COUNCIL

CBC RELEVANT CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

SD3 Community Facilities,

H1- H4 which covers housing provision, housing density, housing diversity and Affordable Housing

CE1 & table CE1a- Centres and Employment Classification and Hierarchy

PR1 - Open Space

TA 3 Public Transport

TA 4 - Roads and Traffic

TA 5 - Parking

Env1 - Environment

ENV2 - Rural Communities

ER1 - Energy, Resources, Waste, Water and Recycling



Summary of Planning Guidance in the document and as approved by the Parish Council

DG1	Any development that would cause a negative impact on the valley sides will be resisted by the Parish council	March 2011
DG2	Where it is a planning issue any remaining hedgerows, native trees and small copses should be retained in the new landscape plans	March 2011
DG3	General Design - all proposed new build and extensions must enhance the area and make a positive architectural contribution	March 2011
DG4	Back land and infill proposals will be resisted except in exceptional cases, nuisance of adjacent dwellings will be considered	March 2011
DG5	Garden sizes may need to be substantially larger than these minimum standards in order that garden sizes reflect the size and shape of gardens in the area	March 2011
DG6	CBC Sustainable Construction SPD	March 2011
DG7	Buildings must be in harmony with the surroundings in respect of materials, colour, texture, proportion and scale	March 2011
DG8	Planning applications must show contextually the impact of their proposals on adjacent building by means of adequately detailed plans with accurate street elevations	March 2011
DG9	Building materials - all materials should be selected from those traditionally used within the village.	March 2011
DG10	Any infill development should reflect the character of the surrounding area and protect the amenity of neighbours. It should reinforce the uniformity of the street by reflecting the scale, mass, height, form, materials, fenestration and architectural details of its neighbours	March 2011
DG11	The width of new building plots should be similar to that prevailing in the immediate area	March 2011
DG12	New development should respect existing building lines of adjacent properties	March 2011
DG13	New buildings should respect the height of buildings immediately adjacent	March 2011
DG14	Dormers should be used sparingly and be subservient in nature	March 2011
DG15	Infill - developments should be modest in proportion and in scale with surrounding properties. They should not dominate. Their architectural style and finishes should be compatible and vernacular. Any infill should comply with Infill SPD	March 2011
DG16	Roof scape is an important aspect of the village especially in the centre. New or replaced roofs should retain the existing height and pitch	March 2011
DG17	External finishes should be in keeping with the traditional colours and materials in the village	March 2011
DG18	Development undertaken should be in keeping with the planned nature of existing buildings	March 2011
DG19	Careful consideration should be given to the impact of construction on views across the village	March 2011
DG20	Rainwater goods shall be black and indicated on submitted elevations. All new service intakes to dwellings apart from gas and electricity to be run internally and not visible on the exterior. All soil and waste plumbing shall be run internally and shall not be visible to the exterior	March 2011
DG21	Balanced flue outlets from central heating boilers and other gas appliances shall not be positioned on street elevations	March 2011
DG22	Eaves to all roofs shall be open with exposed rafter feet rather than boxed	March 2011



DG23	Details of all boundary walls, fences and gates around the site shall be as submitted drawing but should not lead to urbanisation	March 2011
DG24	Any new agricultural buildings should be designed and sited to minimise the effect on the landscape	March 2011
DG25	Original materials or materials which are sympathetic to the existing buildings should be used	March 2011
DG26	Details such as windows, doors and roof pitches should reflect those of the original building	March 2011
DG27	Careful consideration should be given to the visual impact of extensions and particularly conservatories, when they are visible either from the street or from public thoroughfares such as footpaths, bridleways etc.	March 2011
DG28	There should be no unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of adjoining residential properties. Wherever possible mature trees and shrubs should be conserved	March 2011
DG29	New buildings, in any area, should respect the scale and design of adjacent buildings. Extensions should be subservient to the original building.	March 2011
DG30	Building details such as doors, windows and roof pitches should be designed with regard to buildings existing in the vicinity	March 2011
DG31	Highly reflective solar panels should not be installed if they have a visual impact on neighbouring properties or the roof scape of the village	March 2011
DG32	Modern additions such as satellite dishes, wind turbines and flues should be concealed from public view	March 2011
DG33	Alternative use of agricultural buildings must not have any adverse effect or cause any disturbance to any adjacent property. Buildings must be suitable for conversion	March 2011
DG34	The village is an eclectic mix of properties from the old to the brand new, spanning nearly a thousand years and contains a pleasing mix of open spaces and beautiful views. The Parish Council will challenge any overtly incongruous development which changes this equilibrium	March 2011
DG35	New parking directly in front of property should be avoided	March 2011
DG36	Car parking standards to comply with ECC standards 2010	March 2011
DG 37	General street-scape Guidance	March 2011



WEST BERGHOLT PARISH COUNCIL

VDS COMMITTEE

Bob Tyrrell Parish Councillor and Chair of VDS Committee

I wish to thank the following members of the VDS Committee and Parish Plan for all their assistance in preparing this document

Andrew Savage	Parish Councillor
Chris Stevenson	Parish Councillor and Parish Plan
Harry Stone	Parish Councillor and Parish Plan
Gunter Klaphake	Parish Plan
Catherine Bailey	Parish Plan
Peter Sleight	Parish Councillor



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Village Design Statement

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