

# Bentfield Green Conservation Area Appraisal and Draft Management Proposals, 2014



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## Part 1: Appraisal 1

### Introduction

**1.1** This appraisal has been produced by Officers of Uttlesford District Council to assess the current condition of the Bentfield Green Conservation Area, to identify where improvements can be made and to advise of any boundary changes that are appropriate. The document is in draft form and will be subject to public consultation and agreement by District Council Members.

**1.2** The historic environment cannot be replaced and is a resource that is both fragile and finite. Particularly in an age when society and its needs change with rapidity, the various historic and architectural elements of Conservation Areas can be perceived to interact in a complex manner and create a 'unique sense of place' that is appreciated by those lucky enough to reside in such special places and the many interested persons who appreciate and visit them.

**1.3** Uttlesford has a particularly rich built heritage, with 36 Conservation Areas and approximately 3,700 listed buildings displaying a variety of styles representative of the best of architectural and historic designs from many centuries. Generally and very importantly the clear distinction between built form and open countryside has been maintained. This is the case at Benfield Green which is still mostly contained within its historic envelope centred around a number of small greens, and with the Conservation Area abutting the open landscape.

**1.4** The District is situated in an economically buoyant region where an attractive environment, employment opportunities and excellent transport links by road, rail and air, make it a popular destination to live and work. Key drivers are the presence of Stansted Airport within the locality and the relatively easy commuting distance to both Cambridge and London. Additionally, there are other towns of substance such as Harlow, Bishops Stortford and Braintree that provide employment opportunities nearby. With such dynamics the historic environment of the District is a popular destination for in-migration. The associated pressures accompanying such in-migration make it more important to protect the high quality of both built and natural environments.

**1.5** The Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in 2005 recognises these facts and commits the Council to prepare Conservation Area Statements and Supplementary Planning Documents and the production of this document is part of this process.

**1.6** Conservation Areas are environments which are considered worthy of protection as a result of a combination of factors such as the quality of design and setting of the buildings or their historic significance. In addition to the individual qualities of the buildings themselves, there are other factors such as the relationship of the buildings with each other, the quality of the spaces between them and the vistas and views that unite or disrupt them. The interaction with adjoining areas and landscape, the quality of trees, boundary treatments, advertisements, road signage, street furniture and hard surfaces, are also important features which can add to or detract from the Conservation Area.

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**1.7** This Appraisal will consider these factors carefully. Once it has been approved by the District Council it will be regarded as a 'material consideration' when determining planning applications. The document also puts forward simple practical management proposals to improve the character of the Conservation Area and that are capable of being implemented as and when resources permit.

**1.8** The recommendations in this Appraisal concerning non listed buildings and structures are generally formed by the field worker's observations made from the public realm and rarely involve internal inspection of buildings or their structural condition. Therefore such recommendations as set out in this Appraisal might be subject to reconsideration through the planning application process, where that is necessary, and which would involve the submission of additional relevant information.

**1.9** This Conservation Appraisal will:

- Identify the special character of Bentfield Green
- Identify elements that should be retained or enhanced
- Identify detracting elements
- Review the existing boundary
- Put forward practical enhancement proposals

**1.10** The document has been prepared in partnership with the local community and the Council would like to record its thanks to the Parish Council and to the members of the local community who provided useful information to officers when the survey was being undertaken.

**1.11** The Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council produced a Parish Plan in 2011<sup>(1)</sup>. This document noted the local support for maintaining the unique character of the village and acknowledged the nearby countryside and open spaces as contributing to the quality of life. As with many similar settlements there are pressures for development, though opportunities for house building within the historic core are



1 *Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Plan 2011*, The Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council, 2011

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necessarily limited to a few infilling opportunities. The Parish Plan concludes that future development should be dispersed and that any building that encroaches on greenbelt should be avoided. Any future focus should be on small family homes and properties for first time buyers. Great concern was also expressed in the parish as a whole regarding the speed and volume of traffic, particularly HGVs, through the village, the lack of swimming pool facilities and the impact of aircraft noise on the quality of the local environment. These issues will be dealt with in the relevant sections of this document, but it should be noted that the plan was aligned to Stansted as a whole, rather than Bentfield Green specifically. A Village Design Statement was also produced and has proved useful in identifying the physical qualities and characteristics of the village and its surroundings.

**1.12** In undertaking an exercise such as this, one aspect that is too easily forgotten is the community itself and the people who live locally and contribute to its cohesion and social success. Stansted Mountfitchet is a vibrant village with a wide range of shops and services including a rail station and, on the outskirts, an internationally renowned auction house. Although geographically not very distant from the centre of the village, Bentfield Green has its own character. The Rose and Crown pub is at the centre of the local community and the green plays host to a number of events including a biennial charity fun run.

**1.13** This document is written in three parts: Legal and Policy Framework; Appraisal; Management Proposals.

### Planning Legislative Framework

**1.14** The legal background for designating a Conservation Area is set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This states that the Council shall from time to time designate Conservation Areas, which are defined as being '*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance*'. The same section of the Act also requires that Councils undertake periodic reviews.

**1.15** Section 71 of the Act requires Councils to '*formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement*' of Conservation Areas and hold a public meeting to consider them.

**1.16** Within Conservation Areas there are additional planning controls and if these are to be supported it is important that the designated areas accord with the statutory definition and are not devalued by including land or buildings that lack special interest.

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**1.17** Planning permission is required for the demolition of a building in a Conservation Area but is subject to certain exceptions. For example, it does not apply to Listed Buildings which are protected by their own legislation but is relevant to other non listed buildings in the Conservation Area above a threshold size as set out in the legislation<sup>(2)</sup>. Looking for and identifying such buildings is therefore a priority of this Appraisal.

**1.18** Another exception relates to certain ecclesiastical buildings which are not subject to local authority administration provided an equivalent approved system of control is operated by the church authority. This is known as the 'ecclesiastical exemption'. Importantly in such circumstances, church authorities still need to obtain any other necessary planning permissions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

**1.19** The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 (as amended), defines the range of minor developments for which planning permission is not required and this range is more restricted in Conservation Areas. For example, the Order currently requires that the addition of dormer windows to all roof slopes, various types of cladding, satellite dishes fronting a highway and a reduced size of extensions, all require planning permission in a Conservation Area.

**1.20** However, even within Conservation Areas there are other minor developments that do not require planning permission. So as to provide further protection the law allows Councils to introduce additional controls if appropriate. Examples of such controls can include some developments fronting a highway or open space, such as an external porch, the painting of a house or the demolition of some gates, fences or walls. The removal of important architectural features that are important to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area or individual buildings within it such as distinctive porches, windows or walls or railings to non-listed properties can be subject to a more detailed assessment and if appropriate made subject to protection by a legal process known as an 'Article 4 Direction'. The use of such Directions can be made in justified circumstances where a clear assessment of each Conservation Area has been made. In conducting this appraisal, consideration will be given as to whether or not such additional controls are necessary.

**1.21 Trees.** Another additional planning control relates to trees located within Conservation Areas. Setting aside various exceptions principally relating to size and condition, any proposal to fell or carry out works to trees has to be 'notified' to the Council. The Council may then decide to make the tree/s subject to a Tree Preservation Order. This Appraisal diagrammatically identifies only the most significant trees or groups of trees that make a particularly important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Other trees not specifically identified may still be suitable for statutory protection.

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2 The demolition of a building not exceeding 50 cubic metres is not development and can be demolished without planning permission. Demolition of other buildings below 115 cubic metres are regarded as 'Permitted Development' granted by the General Permitted Development Order, subject to conditions that may require the Council's 'prior approval' regarding methods of proposed demolition and restoration.

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**1.22 Hedgerows.** Some hedges may be protected by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. This legislation is extremely complicated and only applies in certain situations that are determined by the location of the hedge, its age and or its historical importance, the wildlife it supports and its number of woody species.

### Planning Policy Framework

**1.23 National Planning Policy Framework.** Published in March 2012, this document replaces previous advice, including PPS 5, Planning for the Historic Environment. The principle emphasis of the new framework is to promote sustainable development.

**1.24** Economic, social and environmental roles should not be considered in isolation because they are mutually dependent and positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment should be sought, including replacing poor design with better design. Whilst architectural styles should not be imposed it is considered proper to reinforce local distinctiveness.

**1.25** In relation to the historic environment the new National Planning Policy Framework advises as follows:

- There should be a positive strategy in the Local Plan for the conservation of the historic environment and up-to-date evidence used to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make.
- Conservation Areas. Such areas must justify such a status virtue of being of 'special architectural or historic interest'.
- Heritage assets. A Heritage asset is defined 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. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listings)'.
- Considerable weight should be given to conserving such heritage assets and the more important they are the greater the weight. For example the effect of an application affecting a non- designated heritage asset should be taken into account and a balanced judgement reached. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II Listed Building should be exceptional whilst harm to heritage assets of higher status, e.g. a Grade I or II\* Listed Building should be wholly exceptional.
- Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal their significance and proposals that preserve such elements should be approved.

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- The use of Article 4 Directions to remove national permitted development rights should be limited to situations ‘where this is necessary to protect local amenity or the well being of the area...’
- Green Areas. Such areas of particular importance can properly be identified for special protection as Local Green Spaces in selected situations.

**1.26 Uttlesford Adopted Local Plan.** Uttlesford District Council has a commitment to the environment and its Local Plan Policies. Uttlesford’s policies protect Conservation Areas by only permitting development that preserves or enhances their quality and by preventing the demolition of structures that positively contribute to their character and appearance. The Council’s Conservation Officer can provide appropriate advice.

**1.27** The Uttlesford Local Plan was adopted in 2005 and can be viewed on the Council’s website or a copy can be obtained from the Council. In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council is currently preparing a replacement Local Plan that will, in due course, contain the relevant Council planning policies.

**1.28** Bentfield Green is included as part of the Stansted Village Inset of the Uttlesford Local Plan and shows the existing Conservation Area and the Development Limits. Also shown is the Metropolitan Green Belt which encroaches on the southern part of the Conservation Area and extends well beyond it towards the outskirts of Bishop’s Stortford.

**1.29 Essex County Council Buildings at Risk Register.** The County Council has a ‘Buildings at Risk Register’<sup>(3)</sup>. In relation to Bentfield Green no such buildings have been identified and neither has this Appraisal identified any.

**1.30 Assets of Community Value.** There are no Assets of Community Value registered in relation to Bentfield Green.

**1.31 Bentfield Green Conservation Area date of designation.** The Bentfield Green Conservation Area was first designated in 2008.

### General Influences

**1.32** Bentfield Green is situated on the western side of Stansted Mountfitchet village some 28 miles south of Cambridge and 10 miles south west of Saffron Walden and 4 miles north of Bishop’s Stortford. It is the settlement’s proximity to both the M11 and to Stansted Airport, that exerts the greatest influences offering opportunities for employment and enhanced communications with Cambridge, Bishop’s Stortford, Harlow, London and beyond. The main Cambridge to London railway line can be accessed from Stansted Mountfitchet station just under a mile distant. There are no direct buses although many services do stop in the centre of the village some ten minutes walk away. There is no



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Post Office or local shop but there remains a lively public house, the Rose and Crown, to serve the needs of the community. A popular children's play area provides a wide variety of activities and nearby is the picturesque village pond.

**1.33** Because of the lack of local opportunities and the ease of access to good communication routes, out-commuting is high and has led in the past fifty years to a change in the residential make up of the village. There are few opportunities for immediate local employment now that the small industrial estate - Bentfield Close - has been developed as housing. In recent years a growing proportion of residents have been able to work from home reflecting the increasing availability of fast and reliable Internet access<sup>(4)</sup>.

**1.34** Historically, the main sources of local employment were either agriculture or local services in Stansted Village proper although the nearby Hargrave Park estate must have provided work for a number of people. Although many of the surrounding fields remain, agriculture is no longer a main employer and the rural past is now only remembered in house names such as the Tithe Barn and Low Barn. The Hargrave Park estate has also been developed with a number of the service buildings including the laundry and the electricity generating station now converted to residential use.

**1.35** The 2011 Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Plan highlighted the need for future limited sympathetic housing development, particularly providing affordable accommodation for young people and families in a style commensurate with the rest of the village<sup>(5)</sup>. At the same time, the Plan acknowledged the lack of local employment opportunities and available sites in the parish noting that a substantial proportion of parishioners commute to work, with London being the major destination followed by Bishop's Stortford, Saffron Walden and Harlow. Protection of the green belt and environmental features, including open farmland, fields, woods, hedges, water courses and farm buildings was also noted as being of high importance to the local residents. Due to its location the village will continue to be subjected to development pressures and so now is an appropriate moment to be considering how to best protect its built and open space environment.

### The General Character and Setting of Bentfield Green

**1.36 Setting.** Bentfield Green is situated at the western extent of Stansted Mountfitchet village proper surrounded on two sides by gently sloping open farmland. To the east it abuts Bentfield End and nearby the large open space of the sports ground and Hargrave Park. This Landscape Character Type is classified as 'Stort River Valley'<sup>(6)</sup>, which in this locality is predominantly characterised by smaller greens, generous verges and compact streets up against which a mixture of ancient and modern properties nestle. The tree cover is mainly deciduous, with blocks of trees and hedgerows framing

4 *Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Plan 2011*, Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council, 2011

5 *ibid* p. 13 noting the Bentfield Road commercial site, where an application for 9 dwellings was approved in 2011

6 *Landscape Character Assessment of Uttlesford* Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006, Fig. 7.1

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channelled views out to the broad regular fields beyond the village. Traditional buildings are primarily cream or white colour-washed plaster with thatched roofs or tiled roofs, although weather boarding, generally painted black and applied at ground floor level only, is a feature of a number of houses. Mellow red brick, or occasionally Cambridge gault brick is often found on smaller terraced housing of the 19th and early 20th centuries where slate is the preferred roofing material. Modern buildings are generally discrete or partly screened behind hedges and in Bentfield Green itself there are two old outstanding barns in flint with weather board sections now converted to living space. The notable triangular green is of some antiquity and provides a focus point in the settlement. Major roads bypass the area leading to a sense of tranquillity that is particularly special given its proximity to the bustling heart of the main village. To the east lies the old Hargrave Park estate, now home to Stansted cricket and football clubs.

**1.37** The wider topography is characterised by scattered farmsteads, moats, small lanes and historic buildings that demonstrate the river's longstanding importance as a site for settlement and industry. The location of Stansted Airport within this Character Area has brought rapid growth to the surrounding villages, and the effects of heavy traffic and aircraft noise are sometimes evident. This is a medium to large scale landscape, with a fairly regular field pattern. Stansted Mountfitchet village has a historic core with a large number of vernacular buildings, although it is surrounded by a number of modern infill developments.

**1.38** In 1874 Kelly described the local geology as "the soil is mixed, some heavy, with some good loamy soil; subsoil clay, gravel and chalk"<sup>(7)</sup>. The quality of this landscape has now led to it being included in an Area of Special Landscape Value where it is classified as 'Stort [River] Valley' <sup>(8)</sup>.

**1.39** In the nineteenth century the crops were "wheat, barley, beans and roots"<sup>(9)</sup>. Additionally Kelly notes that "there is some good grazing land"<sup>(10)</sup>. Today, wheat, beans and rape are most frequently grown and, the land is classified as being of Grade 2 and 3a quality (very good and good)<sup>(11)</sup>.

**1.40** The local landscape is dominated by a network of twisting lanes, often sunken, with irregular fields of pre-18th century origin interspersed with linear greens and a number of former common fields. Hedgerows, tree belts, woodland blocks and copses frame several views across and out of the area. Strong historic integrity is visible within the settlement pattern in the form of village greens and former commons, isolated farms, many moated sites, smaller hamlets and historic cores contain many vernacular buildings in and around the village of Stansted Mountfitchet. The *Uttlesford District Historic*

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7 *Post Office Directory of Essex*, London: Printed and Published by Kelly and Co., 1874, p.206

8 *Strategic Environmental Assessment Consultation Environmental Report Annex B: Baseline Information*, Essex County Council, March 2012, Parra. 5.3.3-5.3.4

9 *Post Office Directory of Essex*, London: Printed and Published by Kelly and Co. 1874 p.206

10 *ibid*

11 *Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales: Revised Guidelines and Criteria for Grading the Quality of Land*, Defra Publications, 1988

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*Environment Characterisation Report*, 2009, notes that "On the First Edition OS map, three distinct historic areas are identified which is mirrored by the present conservation areas. In the 20th century, all three areas were linked by modern residential development. In the 21st century, large-scale development is taking place to the south of the town."<sup>(12)</sup>. Ancient lanes are sometimes sunken and often winding between wide grassy banks. Pennington Lane which traverses the Bentfield Green Conservation Area together with Bentfield End Road and Limekiln Lane which run to the west are all of sufficient quality to warrant Protected Lane Status <sup>(13)</sup>.

**1.41 General character and plan form.** The developments that have occurred in Bentfield Green over the past century reflect the social and economic changes that the settlement has undergone. Later 20th century housing development at Wetherfield has seen the open fields and orchards built upon whilst the infill properties along the northern expanse of Pennington Lane and 21st Century conversion/development of the former Hargraves industrial area - now Bentfield Close - has expanded the area's stock of family homes. Other development has been of a more piecemeal nature in the form extensions and the conversion of former agricultural buildings.

**1.42** With these developments Bentfield Green has changed significantly over the last century. The existing Conservation Area reflects the varied developments of estate buildings, domestic dwellings and agricultural buildings centred around the two small triangular greens as it existed in the late 19th century and as shown on the 1877 Ordnance survey map (see Figure 1). Within the settlement the scale is intimate, with channelled views out through gaps in the buildings and over open spaces and trees to the ascending countryside. Throughout the village there are wide verges, many the remnants of the original green. The old pond at the junction of Pennington Lane and Bentfield End Causeway and the large triangular open space adjacent to the pub form the dual foci of the settlement, each surrounded by a scattering of historic buildings.

**1.43** To the west former agricultural buildings of Low Barn and Tithe Bran have been converted to residential and office use. On the other side of the road the open fields still run away into the distance. Nearer the green neat runs of small terraced houses in red, or Cambridge gault brick are an indication of the close association that this semi-rural part of Stansted has with the more urban core. Elsewhere, individual properties are countrified by sitting back from the road behind neat front gardens, low hedges or fences or take their cue from the estate architecture of the nearby former Hargerave House. In the village core, colour-washed plaster buildings roofed in peg tiles or slate predominate interspersed with thatched cottages of picturesque form. Any incremental new housing is discreet and, where visible, has often been designed to blend in with the environment or is screened behind high thick hedging.

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12 *Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Report*, 2009, p. 53

13 *Uttlesford Protected Lanes Assessment*, Essex County Council, March 2012.

Pennington Lane: UTTLANE159; Bentfield End Road : UTTLANE144; Limekiln Lane: UTTLANE41 and UTTLANE42

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**1.44** The National Heritage List for England records some 135 individually listed buildings and other structures in the parish of Stansted, of which 13 are to be found in the designated Conservation Area. The majority of these are timber-framed and plastered. Most date from the 16th to 18th centuries and all are classified Grade II.

**1.45** Peg tile and slate are the traditional roofing materials in Bentfield Green and are important features of the village that must be retained. There is also one thatched property.

**1.46** When examined in conjunction with the spread of unlisted constructions and buildings of later date, the indications are of a piecemeal infilling of timber framed buildings continuing into the early 19th century when brick and slate became the choice for the better quality buildings. Because of its proximity to the old A11 and to the railway Bentfield Green has seen the gradual creep of modern development infilling the old green spaces and orchards and encroaching on the rural calm.

**1.47** There are several other buildings and features that, whilst not being listed, are nevertheless of architectural and historic interest and which add to Bentfield Green's overall quality. Notable is the Grade II listed cast iron pump to the east of the Rose and Crown public house.

**1.48** One very important feature of the village is the use of flint and brick walls interspersed with low hedges or white painted picket fences to define boundaries and link buildings. The use of these materials reflects the local landscape where flints abound and hedged field boundaries form such a visually important part. This appraisal also identifies a number of important walls that are not individually listed but there may also be others not immediately visible from the public realm and or in otherwise inaccessible locations.

**1.49** Throughout the Conservation Area there are many trees, either found as groups or as individual specimens located on the edges of the small green and in private gardens, many of which have already been made subject to Tree Preservation Orders. They add considerably to its attractive appearance and diversity of the Conservation Area particularly around the greens and where they screen modern development.

**1.50** There are many high quality buildings representative of various periods. Despite some neutral adjoining modern development, the Conservation Area itself represents an historic grouping of buildings in a semi-rural setting that warrants its formal designation.

**1.51** The pond at the western end of the Conservation Area is an attractive feature and an important wildlife sanctuary.

**1.52** The 20th century railings supported on concrete posts and painted white are a feature of the Bentfield Green pond. Whilst not being of particular architectural and historic interest they do contribute to the quality of the street scene. They are generally in good condition but some are in need of minor repair or painting. It is very important

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that this feature is kept in good condition and painted on a regular basis because, should railings or posts become shabby, the visual qualities of the centre of the Conservation Area would be eroded.



Picture 1.1 Gappy views out to the open countryside from the Bentfield Green pond.

**1.53** There are many high quality buildings representative of various periods. Despite some occasional neutral adjoining modern development, the Conservation Area itself represents an historic grouping of buildings and open spaces in a semi-rural setting that warrants its formal designation. One further recognition of the quality of the local environment is the inclusion of this part of the village on National Route 11 of the National Cycle Network.

### Origins and Historic Development

**1.54** Historical background data has been extracted principally from the *Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Report*<sup>(14)</sup> and the *Essex Historic Environment Record (HER)*<sup>(15)</sup>.

**1.55 Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon.** The earliest archaeological deposits identified within the urban area of Stansted Mountfitchet comprise a Middle Bronze Age burial found in the south east of the town. Evidence of Roman occupation<sup>(16)</sup> has been found to the east of the Castle<sup>(17)</sup> and in the south west of the town. This material suggests Roman occupation near the Castle, where Roman coins have been found and at a separate site to the south west. J. J. Green observed Roman remains at Limekiln Lane, 2ft deep in black loamy soil. No tesserae, coins or whole pots were found but Samian

14 *Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Report*, Essex County Council, 2009, Parra. HECA 9 North Eastern Uttlesford

15 <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/>

16 Green, JJ. 1891. *Essex and Herts Observer*. Copy is in Saffron Walden Museum Register.

17 c.f. Powell, WR. *Victoria County History, Essex*, 1963, Vol III (VCH). Vol 3, p182

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ware was collected, including a piece stamped AFER.FE, together with much coarse ware, a few pieces of tile and fragments of cement. The collection was given to Saffron Walden museum but is not now identifiable<sup>(18)</sup>.

**1.56 Medieval.** The *Domesday Book* for Essex<sup>(19)</sup>, transcribes the entry for Stansted Mountfitchet thus:

*Robert holds Stansted (Mountfitchet) in Lordship, which a free man before 1066 as manor, for 6 hides. Then 4 ploughs in lordship, later 2, now 3. Always 10 men's ploughs ...  
Value then and later £8, now [£] 11.*

**1.57** The earliest recorded evidence comprises the scheduled motte and bailey castle on the eastern side of the present village of Stansted Mountfitchet. The Castle was originally constructed in the 11th century probably by Robert de Gernon, Duke of Bologne, who had arrived with William the Conqueror. The market would have been located close to the castle in Lower Street and the medieval occupation would have probably centred on the area of the castle. However, at a later date occupation also developed along Silver Street and Chapel Hill with outlying farmsteads around the Bentfield area. Cropmarks and field walking finds made by local historians indicate the possible presence of a Medieval, or later, causeway to the north of Bentfield Green. Geophysical survey undertaken in advance of housing development also found range of field boundaries, some shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey mapping<sup>(20)</sup>.

**1.58** Using evidence from the Essex Placenames Project<sup>(21)</sup> it is possible to build up a picture of Bentfield Green at this period as a fairly typical small agricultural community on the edge of a larger settlement surrounded by common land, tenanted and privately held fields. Citing documentation from 1086 to 1693 the project database records names for the locality as variously: Benedfelda; Bentfeld,-bury; Benfeld(e) and offers a transcription of these as the "beonet feld" or "bent grass country".

**1.59** Reaney<sup>(22)</sup> also advises that the name 'Bentfield' has been variously previously rendered as Benfield, Bendfield and Bentfields.

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18 See, Saffron Walden Museum, 1891, Saffron Walden Museum Register (DESC TEXT): Found during gravel extraction - "a veritable rubbish heap which curiously enough was generally placed in or adjoining a Roman cemetery and there can be no doubt but that in the vicinity there is, or has been such a cemetery and of course, naturally, a Roman settlement, villas etc." Found c1-2ft below the surface in black, loamy soil. Finds: Roman pottery, honestones (Roman?), flint implements, iron, nails and slag

19 *Domesday Book: Essex History from the sources Volume 32 of Domesday Book: A Survey of the Counties of England "Liber de Wintonia" Compiled by Direction of King William I*, Ed. John Morris, Phillimore, 1983

20 SMR Number: 46548: c.f. *Land at Bentfield Bury Farm, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex*, Cranfield University, 2013.

21 Essex Placenames Project, Bentfield portal

22 Percy Hyde Reaney *The Place Names of Essex*, CUP 1969, p. 110

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**1.60 Post Medieval.** Historically, the settlement was focused around the Green with development extending out along Pennington Lane to the east and the junction with Limekiln Lane although until the 20th century this remained rather piecemeal. More recent infilling has tended to interlink these areas giving this part of the village its present layout. There is no church at the centre of the settlement, the needs of the various congregations being served by the varied churches and chapels of Stansted village.

**1.61** No 18 Bentfield Green is a Wealden house of 15th-16th century origin, 53 Bentfield Causeway dates from the 17th century (or possibly earlier) as does Pond Cottage. Bentfield Green Farmhouse was originally built around the middle of the 18th century and the substantial timber-framed and weather-boarded gabled Tithe Barn to the south east of White Horse is of a just slightly earlier in date. The number of surviving domestic buildings dating from the 18th and early 19th century onwards indicate that the area had entered a period of relative prosperity with a gradual spread of substantial builds.

**1.62** Nos 51/53 49 and 47 Bentfield Green all date from this later period whilst the two runs of late 19th century terraced housing comprising respectively 33-43 and 26-44 Pennington Lane demonstrate the gradually spreading settlement.



Picture 1.2 Bentfield as shown on the Chapman and Andre map of 1777 (Reproduced courtesy of a private collection).

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**1.63** The Chapman and Andre survey of 1773-5, published in 1777, and the 1847 enclosure maps/awards for Stansted Mountfitchet<sup>(23)</sup> both give a good idea of the village at this period. The focus of the settlement is still on the green with a number of buildings strung out along Pennington Lane.

**1.64** The official Census summary report of 1831<sup>(24)</sup> paints a picture of Stansted Mountfitchet parish as a growing community. Detailed information at hamlet level is not available but from the figures for the parish as a whole it is possible to gather a flavour of what might have been happening in Bentfield Green. Then the total population is listed as 1,560 persons comprising 767 males and 793 females. There were 301 inhabited houses, 7 uninhabited and none under construction. At the time of the 1831 Census a total of 183 men are chiefly employed as agricultural labourers against with a further 104 whose main occupations are given as "Retail & Handicrafts". In all 22 are described as "Capitalists, Bankers, Professional & other Educated men" indicating that the village was a vibrant economic centre for the area.

**1.65** Half a century later and in 1881 the village still seems to be a vibrant and developing community. The population has grown somewhat to 1,924<sup>(25)</sup> but there are still 132 men and 6 women employed in agriculture. There were, though, 58 men employed as "Wkrs in House, Furniture & Decorations" and 118 women in domestic service. Surprisingly, 10 women are listed as being of "Professional" class against 13 male resident in this category and there is one woman and four men employed in local government. The number of houses has grown to 417 with 21 vacant and none under construction.

**1.66** In Victorian times, the Reverend John Marius Wilson's *Imperial Gazetteer*<sup>(26)</sup> described Bentfield as "a hamlet in Stansted-Mountfitchet parish, Essex; near the Eastern Counties railway, 3 ¼. miles NE of Bishop-Stortford. Acres, 740. Real property, £3,410. Pop., 529. Houses, 121."

**1.67** *The Post Office Directory of Essex* for 1874<sup>(27)</sup> adds some further brief detail for Bentfield End recording a population of 527 persons with Walter Gilbey of Hargrave Park as a principal resident and R. Gosling as lord of the manor and principal landowner. Other noted local inhabitants of the locality include William Hudson at Bentfield Mill,

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23 Enclosure maps held by Essex Record Office Reference Code: Q/RDc 36B

24 *1831 Census of Great Britain, Abstract of answers (Sample Report Title: Abstracts of the Answers and Returns Made pursuant to an Act, passed in the Eleventh Year of the Reign of His Majesty King George IV, Intituled, "An Act for taking an Account of the Population of Great Britain, and the Increase or Diminution thereof." Enumeration Abstract.)*, Table [1]: "Population Abstract". Available on the *Vision of Britain Through Time* website

25 1881 Census of England and Wales, Population tables 2, Table 4, 'Area, Houses, and Population of Civil Parishes in the several Registration Sub-Districts in 1871 and 1881' Available on A Vision of Britain Through Time website

26 *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales*, London & Edinburgh: A. Fullarton and Co. 1870-72

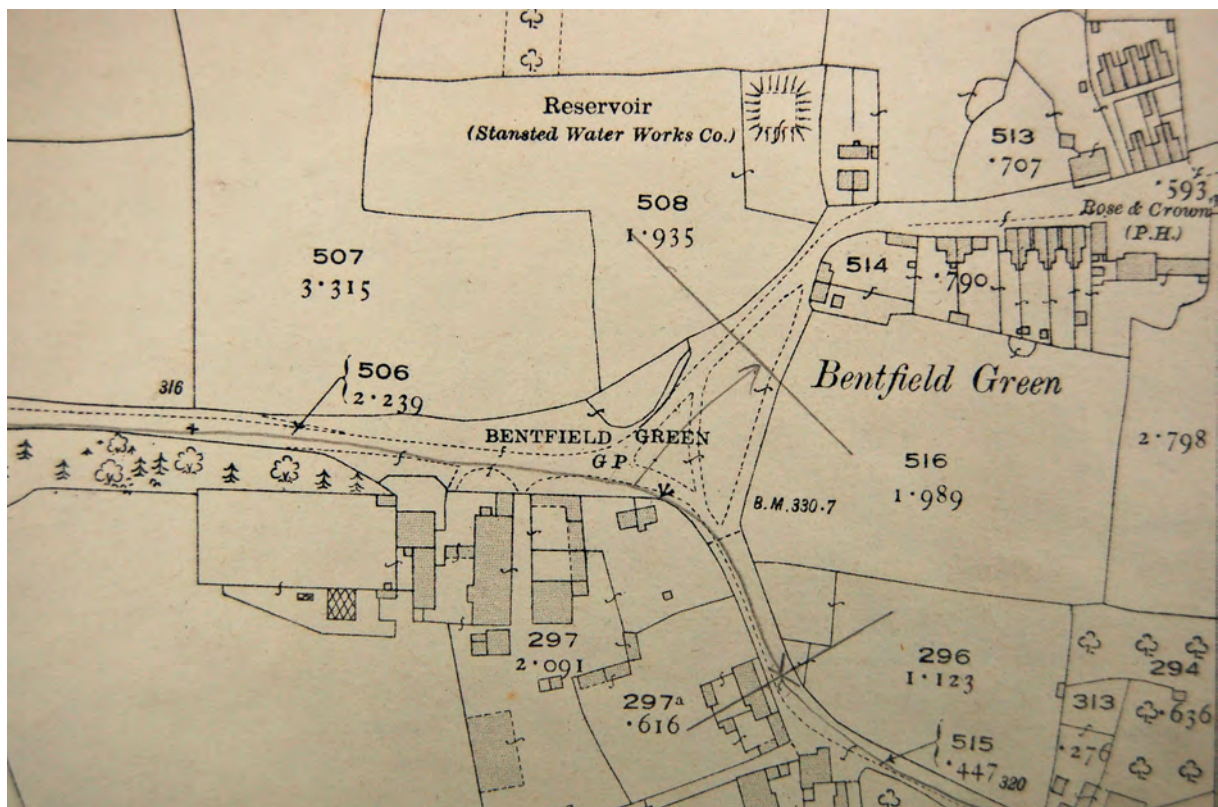
27 *Post Office Directory of Essex*, London: Printed and Published by Kelly and Co. 1874 p.207



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Miss Scruby, Bentfield Cottage and Geo. Phillips, "grocer & baker". Samuel Snow is landlord of the Rose and Crown, Chas. Hicks jun. Is a farmer in Bentfield Green and Arthur Snow provides additional sustenance as a "beer retailer" based in Bentfield.

**1.68** In addition to the several farmers the same directory lists the following commercial activities in Bentfield: Wm. Fordham "chimney sweeper", William Stacey Spencer "maltster & corn merchant" and Samuel Ives "beer retailer". In the wider region of Stansted village, Wm. Henry Kidd carries on business as an "inland revenue officer", Sydney Haynes is a surgeon, James Norris is an "osier dealer" and Charles Wilkinson pursues an trade as a professional "castrator". In all, the picture is one of a thriving mercantile centre with Bentfield Green at the outermost extent. Given its proximity to greater Stansted there is still no church and the only community facility is offered by the solitary public house.



Picture 1.3 Ordnance Survey map of 1875 updated to 1919 showing Bentfield Green as it then stood. (Reproduced courtesy of Saffron Walden Town Library).

**1.69** The agricultural depression of the early twentieth century seemed to all but pass Stansted by, although it is undoubted that many local farmers and landowners were affected. In 1931 the Hargrave Park estate was sold and its land and property dispersed, some to the local football club<sup>(28)</sup>. The population of the parish has grown steadily from

28 Details of the estate properties including the stables and electricity generating station at Bentfield Green can be seen in the estate sale prospectus of 23 July 1931. c.f. English Heritage National Monuments Record SC00349 - HARGRAVE PARK, STANSTED

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2,208 in 1901 to 3,376 in 1961<sup>(29)</sup>. All these new residents have required housing accounting for, first infilling of empty plots and then development on new estates - 675 houses in 931 and almost double again to 1,123 only three decades later. The 2011 Census records a population of 6,011 (2011 Census, Office of National Statistics).

**1.70** In common with many other settlements, Stansted and Bentfield Green have seen a steady change in its population over the years. The vast majority of residents now travel to work outside the locality<sup>(30)</sup>. Services are still good with nearby road and rail links offering the chance to access shops and facilities not available locally. In the immediate vicinity to Bentfield Green, the Rose and Crown still trades and Bentfield Primary School provides education and acts as a community hub.

### Character Analysis

**1.71** The current Conservation Area has been surveyed as a single character area with a map and key common to all. Historical photographs have been provided by Saffron Walden Museum and from the Saffron Walden Town Library. Other photographs have been taken by the fieldworker. All maps are reproduced from the Ordnance Survey under Uttlesford District Council Licence No: 100018688 (2004).

**1.72** Within the Bentfield Green Conservation Area there are no designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

**1.73 Archaeological sites.** The Stansted Moutfitchet urban area is described by the *Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project* as being of Medieval and post-Medieval origin. "On the First Edition OS map, three distinct historic areas are identified which is mirrored by the present conservation areas [of which Bentfield Green is one]. In the 20th century, all three areas were linked by modern residential development. In the 21st century, large-scale development is taking place to the south of the town"<sup>(31)</sup>. There are no sites of archaeological interest within the Conservation Area, though there are two such sites in the immediate vicinity. To the north west and adjacent to Bentfield Bower there are a number of cropmarks of old field boundaries<sup>(32)</sup>; to the south of Bentfield Green Farmhouse in 1870's there was a brick field visible on OS map and below ground remains may be extant<sup>(33)</sup>. Not all archaeological sites are of equal importance and the Council will decide a course of action that may vary from archaeological investigation and recording to protecting such a site from development, when determining planning applications. There will generally be a presumption in favour of preservation in situ.

**1.74 Listed buildings.** Individually listed buildings have been identified, plotted and a representative selection is described, such abbreviated descriptions being based on the Dept. of Culture Media and Sport's list. Full descriptions can be obtained on line at

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29 Census reports, 1931-1981

30 2011 Census, Office of National Statistics: *Method of Travel to Work (QS701EW)*

31 *Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project*, Essex County Council, 2009, p. 53

32 SMR Number: 46548

33 SMR Number: 15492

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English Heritage's website or Heritage Gateway website ([www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk)) Listed Buildings are protected from unauthorised demolition, alteration or extension. Structures, including railings and walls, within the curtilages of listed buildings, if they are pre-1948, are subject to the same controls as listed buildings.

### **1.75 Non-listed buildings of quality and worthy of protection from demolition.**

This Appraisal has identified several non-listed buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the Conservation Area and these have been separately identified. The basic questions asked in identifying such buildings/structures are:

- Is the non-listed building/structure of sufficient architectural or historic interest whose general external form and appearance remains largely unaltered?
- Does the building contain a sufficient level of external original features and materials?
- Has the building retained its original scale without large inappropriate modern extensions that destroy the visual appearance, particularly in respect of the front elevation?
- Is the building/structure visually important in the street scene?

**1.76 Traditional materials and detailing.** Traditional materials and detail make a significant contribution to the character of the local area.

**1.77** Lime render, either finished plain or with pargetted decoration is the predominant finish for older properties at the historic core of the village where buildings are most commonly constructed from oak timber frame. Timbers are often rendered over with only occasional detailing, such as supporting brackets left exposed. Infill should be with wattle panels, left plain or pargetted for decorative effect. Weather board cladding is found applied to some smaller buildings often as part of later extension. It is usually at ground floor level, most often painted black, though occasionally it is matched to the colour of adjacent joinery.

**1.78** Bricks, used for principal construction from the 18th century, are handmade reds of Cambridge gaults, occasionally with contrasting brick detailing and with cambered or gauged arches to openings. Other features such as deep moulded mullions with decorative stop chamfers surrounding large windows and elaborate brick chimneys are typically found on better quality buildings dating from the 19th and early 20th century, particularly those associated with the former Hargrave Park estate. Brickwork is most commonly found in Flemish bond although English bond is also used, usually on perimeter walls and outbuildings where decorative effect is required. Barns and outbuildings are usually constructed in weather board which is prevalent, both feather edged and plain edged. It is historically preserved with pitch or creosote though now most often painted black.

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**1.79** In the historic core there is only one incidence of traditional straw thatch, on Havering in Pennington Lane. As usual in this part of Essex it is laid very steeply, typically at a pitch of 45 to 60° finished plain, but with ridges finished with decorative ligger work in a diamond pattern with eye-brow dormers and swept cheeks. On other early buildings roofs are generally of double cambered handmade red clay plain tiles laid steeply (47 to 50°) or for 19th century and later additions, natural blue-grey slate at a lower pitch Orange clay pantiles are usually confined to outbuildings only.

**1.80** Windows are largely traditional, in painted or stained timber with either symmetrical flush or recessed casements, vertical or horizontally sliding sashes, the latter a particular feature of North West Essex. Although plastic replacement windows are to be found on a number of later properties, surprisingly few historic houses have been assailed by this blight. Where replacement windows are in evidence they are usually good copies of the original or are in period style. Particularly notable are the fine early 19th century iron lattice casements found on the Grade II Laundry Cottage. The house was the former wet laundry to the Hargrave Park estate, though internal structural evidence suggests that it was converted from an earlier building, possibly dating from the first half of the 17th century.



Picture 1.4 Clay tiles, white-washed plaster and distinctive diamond pane windows behind a simple picket fence on Laundry Cottage.



Picture 1.5 Decorative barge boards employed to dramatic effect under a slate roof on West Lodge - a building formerly associated with the Hargrave Park estate.

**1.81** Roofscapes provide a rich variety of architectural detail, form and shape. Interest is drawn from the single or multiple red brick chimney stacks, some of very elaborate shape. On low 1 ½ storey cottages dormer windows penetrate the roofline where they typically provide contour and interest. On grander buildings smaller pitched roof dormers are typically narrow openings sometimes partly concealed behind a parapet. Decorative barge boards, pierced and moulded are found on some better quality buildings.

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Picture 1.6 Traditional Essex flint panelling on the wall that defines the boundary of Pond Cottage.

**1.82** Boundary treatments are an important element in defining the street scene where they provide texture and interest to an area. Walls, some of which are constructed of flint panels supported by brick piers and capping, and fences, many of the timber picket type, are typically low to front and side elevations on public through-fares. They are either painted white or left untreated. The 20th century railings supported on concrete posts, many painted white, bordering the pond, are a feature of Bentfield Green. Whilst not being of particular architectural and historic interest they do contribute to the quality of the street scene.



Picture 1.7 Neat white picket fencing fronts the 18th century Bentfield Green Farmhouse.

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**1.83** Fields, glimpsed in gaps out from the settlement, are defined by heavy agricultural timber fencing, always unfinished and usually of three horizontal bars either roughly squared or left in the round. Hedged boundaries are also frequent, particularly on the more rural periphery of the conservation area where they sometimes conceal more modern developments.

**1.84 Trees and hedgerows.** There are a number of trees that particularly contribute to the quality of the Conservation Area. The basic criteria for identifying such important trees are:

- They are in good condition
- They are visible at least in part from public view points
- They make a significant contribution to the street scene or other publicly accessible areas

**1.85** A small number of trees within the Conservation Area are already subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

**1.86 Open land, open spaces or gaps of quality that contribute to the visual importance of the Conservation Areas where development would be inappropriate have been identified.** The basic question asked in identifying such areas is:

- Is the open space or gap an important landscape feature contributing to the general spatial quality and visual importance of the Conservation Area?

**1.87** Private open spaces forming an important setting for an historic asset and unkempt spaces that have the potential to be enhanced are candidates for selection subject to complying with the principle question.

**1.88** Any other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution are noted.

**1.89 Article 4 Directions.** Reference has previously been made to the potential of introducing Article 4 Directions in justified circumstances and the criteria for their selection in relation to retaining features associated with selected non listed properties is as follows:

- In relation to retention of chimneys, these need to be in good condition, contemporary with the age of the property, prominent in the street scene and generally complete with chimney pots. Exceptionally chimney stacks of particular architectural merit without pots may be selected.
- In relation to retention of selected windows, these need to be on front or side elevations, fronting and visible from the street/s, generally contemporary with the age of the property or of a sympathetic historic design and where the majority of windows of respective elevations retain their original characteristics and have not been replaced by disruptive modern glazing units.

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- In relation to retention of walls or railings, those selected need to be below the prescribed heights (walls including a footpath or bridleway, water course or open space 1m fronting a highway or 2m elsewhere require prior consent for their demolition), be prominent in the street scene and make a positive architectural or historic contribution to its visual appearance.
- In relation to retention of other features, these may include good quality architectural detailing to non-listed buildings, constructed of wood, metal or other materials.
- It may also be appropriate to introduce Article 4 Directions to retain quality buildings below the prescribed Permitted Development threshold or to prevent the erection of inappropriate additions such as porches to terraced properties of historic interest.



Picture 1.8 Mature trees adjacent to the pond and the playground frame the approach to the smaller green with its historic cast iron signpost.

**1.90 Detracting elements.** Features that detract or are in poor repair have been identified and appear in the Table 'Enhancement Proposals to Deal with Detracting Elements' set out in Part 2.

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### Bentfield Green

**1.91 General overview.** A distinct part of Stansted Mountfitchet village, Bentfield Green is possessed of a sense of some antiquity and of rural tranquillity with the two greens overlooked by mellow timber framed houses and mature trees. Open fields of some antiquity abut the area on two sides and ancient lanes head out to much more rural hamlets. Discrete terraces of nineteenth century houses sit between some of the older properties and, at the eastern end, former estate buildings related to Hargrave Park have now been incorporated into a modern development. Where 20th century housing abuts the Conservation Area it is mostly screened behind hedges or is discrete in scale. Everywhere there are ponds, two of them in the Conservation Area alone and two more just beyond the boundary.

**1.92** The area possesses a pleasing, predominantly rural character which is distinct from the more densely developed areas of Bentfield End and Bentfield Road, parts of which are incorporated into an existing Conservation Area. Many of the 19th century terraces abut the roadways whilst other historic buildings are set back, sometimes in substantial well-treed grounds. Thoroughfares are mostly quiet and uncluttered only provisioning access to housing in the immediate vicinity and to the smaller and geographically distinct settlements of Bentfield Bower and Bentfieldbury although Bentfield End Causeway, which is used as a route through to Manuden and beyond, can become busy during peak periods.

**1.93** Whilst modern development has intruded into the area, it has not done so with significant impact, due in part to the presence of the wide green verges, significant tree cover and several small and pleasant greens. Indeed, it is the presence of these greens dotted with historic signposts and trees, edged with quality buildings dating from the 17th to the 19th century and of varying heights, shapes and materials that serve to define this area and provide its dominant character.

**1.94** At the western end the substantial mass of Benfield Green Farmhouse is a dominant feature, whilst the eastern extremity is characterized by the open triangular green overlooked by the diminutive Laundry Cottage with its distinctive lattice casements and the former CMC Fabrications works, now a development of pleasing modern houses incorporating the original Hargrave Park estate red brick generating house with its striking copula. Diversity of building types from different periods displaying varied styles and characteristics, some set against extensive open spaces fringed by mature trees, represents the character of this part of the village.

**1.95 Scheduled Ancient Monuments.** There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments recorded.

**1.96 Archaeological sites.** There are no archaeological sites within the Conservation Area.

**1.97 Individually Listed Buildings.** A selection of representative Listed Building descriptions (generally abbreviated) is provided below. There are 13 individual buildings or groups of buildings that are listed and this represents about 33% of the principle buildings in this area.



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**1.98** Listed buildings are dispersed evenly throughout the proposed conservation area. The oldest, No. 18 Bentfield Green, is a well preserved late 15th or early 16th century house of Wealden form with jettied upper storeys at the east and west ends supported by prominent curved bracers under a tiled roof with gambrels at each end and central chimney stack<sup>(34)</sup>.



Picture 1.9 Number 18 Bentfield Green, a well-preserved house of the Wealden type.

**1.99** Havering, though of similar date is very different in size and character. With its thatched roof and distinctive 20th century bow windows in 18th century style it provides contrast and scale to the street environment.

**1.100** The listed buildings on the south side of the road are principally timber framed and plastered with slate or tiled roofs and, in the case of 49 and 51-53, close weather boarding to the ground floor stories. They date from the latter part of the 18th century or early 19th century.

**1.101** Set on one side of a small green and behind a low flint and brick wall can be found Pond Cottage. Presumably it is so named from the close proximity of Bentfield Green pond and another smaller water feature now in the grounds of another 17th century building - 53 Bentfield Causeway. Pond Cottage is a 17th century timber-framed and plastered house, restored in the 20th century. It is two storeys high, the upper storey being jettied on the whole front on brackets. Three window range, leaded casements, roof tiled, half hipped at the east and west ends, with a central old chimney stack with attached shafts.

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34 James Bettley and Nikolaus Pevsner *The Buildings of Essex, London*, Yale University Press, 2007, p. 741

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Picture 1.10 The attractive 17th century Pond Cottage

**1.102** At the southern end of the Conservation Area, the imposing late 18th century Bentfield Green Farmhouse is the most prominent building in the street scene. Of red brick construction it has a number of quality features including large double hung sashes and a central doorway set within a pedemented casement. It contrasts in style and scale with the 17th century weather boarded barn just to the east.

**1.103 Important buildings or structures within the curtilages of Listed Buildings.** A number of such structures have been noted and are detailed below.

**1.104** To the rear and side of No. 49 Bentfield End Causeway is a collection of 19th century simple farm buildings that make a specific historic and architectural contribution to the village's heritage. One is a brick barn with simple slate roof to which is attached a single story outbuilding or stable, both now converted to residential use. They appear on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map and add historic and visual interest to this part of the village.

**1.105** Another small weatherboarded structure is to be found to the south of No. 53.

**1.106 Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution.** There are a number of groups of buildings, all dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, which make significant contribution to the architectural charm and diversity of this area. These are detailed below.

**1.107** Rose Tree Cottage, now one house of pleasingly simple form, almost certainly dates from the late 18th or early 19th century when it comprised two separate residences. To the rear is to be found a small brick and flint barn, of single storey construction,

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retaining much original joinery but with a replaced tiled roof. Both are shown on the 1877 Ordnance Survey. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected architectural features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

**1.108** Nos. 26-32 and 34-44 Bentfield Green comprise two blocks of terraced houses constructed 'artisan style' front to back. Originally constructed in either a Cambridge gault or a pink engineering brick with contrasting door and window arching, a number have now been either rendered or painted in a variety of colours. Roofs are slate with shared multi-shafted chimney stacks. Windows and doors are mostly replaced. There is a stone plaque on Nos. 34-44 giving a building date of 1906. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected architectural features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 1.11 Number 34 Bentfield Road the first of two blocks of terraced houses constructed 'artisan style' and worthy of note.

**1.109** Nos.33-43 Bentfield Green is a similar run of red brick terraced houses with slate roof and five square section chimney stacks. Each has two vertical sashes to the front, recessed doorway and rear access under slightly canted brick arches. The majority of the detailing and joinery is original. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected architectural features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

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**1.110** The Rose and Crown public house is a large brick building with a range of vertical sliding sashes and an early entrance porch extending along the whole of the front of the building. It probably dates from the mid part of the 19th century, has been little altered and is clearly visible on the 1877 Ordnance Survey. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected architectural features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 1.12 The Rose and Crown pub - an important local amenity which has stood on this site since the late 19th century.

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**1.111** Probably associated with the nearby Hargrave Park estate and related in date and style to the former estate generator building, now No. 1 Bentfield Close (see parra. 1.112 below) are Nos. 37 and 66 Bentfield Road. Both are distinguished by their highly decorative barge boards and quality windows. The former has heavy stone mullions, similar to those used on the surviving block across the road. Whilst these two properties have been much extended in recent years, they are both quality buildings which contribute much to the street scene. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected architectural features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 1.13 No. 37 Bentfield Road. A building of quality with stone mullions and decorative barge boards. It was probably formerly associated with the Hargrave Park estate.

**1.112** Visible amidst the recent development on Bentfield Close is the distinctive 19th century red brick former generator building to the Hargrave Park estate. Now No. 1 Bentfield Close, this has now been successfully converted to residential usage but is of some historical interest. Hargrave Park, a large house which once stood on the site of the modern estate just to the east is clearly visible on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map where a substantial building is shown set amongst tree cover in sprawling grounds. No. 1 Bentfield Close is particularly striking with decorative stone mullions, Dutch gable ends and a centrally mounted lead-covered copula letting light into the centre of the building. The English Heritage PastScape record notes that it is a "Former generator building built for the Hargrave estate between 1897 and 1921<sup>(35)</sup>". An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected architectural features may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

35 The building is single storey and constructed of brick with gable roofs covered in slate; it is similar in architectural style to the main house. It is built on a cruciform plan with an addition at the south west corner and to the south east of one arm. Each arm has a projecting Dutch gable end with stone-coped parapet and kneelers. At the centre of the roof is a cupola with a decorative metal finial above believed to have once housed a wind-driven extractor to remove gasses released during the charging of accumulators. The building has been converted into offices and there are no historic fixtures or fittings or electrical generating equipment left" Ref. Monument Number: ( TL 52 NW 51 )

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Picture 1.14 The former electricity generating house from the Hargrave Park estate, now converted to residential use.

**1.113 Other distinctive features that make an important architectural or historic contribution.** Walls so identified are protected from demolition without prior consent unless otherwise stated.

**1.114** A range of boundary treatments are found within this part of the Conservation Area - wooden picket style fences, some traditionally painted and others left untreated; garden hedges and flint walls with brick piers and capping detail. Most prominent is that forming the front boundary of Pond Cottage where it is particularly visible from across the green and on the approach to the junction. A further section is found to the front and side of Low Barn where it acts to provide coherency in the street scene.

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**1.115** Not visible from the road, but equally worthy of note, are the sections of mixed brick and flint walling enclosing the walled garden attached to Bentfield Green Farmhouse. Such features of the utmost quality and should always be retained.

**1.116** Also in this part of the Conservation Area the 20th century railings supported on concrete posts along the edge of the pond adjoining the green and the children's play area are a dominant visual motif.

**1.117** At the junction of Pennington Lane and Bentfield End Causeway and Clatterbury Lane can be found a cast iron circular section tapered post with decorated with ring mouldings and outward flair below arms. The finial is an ogee on a ball moulding. Dating from sometime around 1920-30, this was possibly originally manufactured by Maldon Iron Works, though there are no identifying markings. There are three wooden arms with square ends (replacing the original rounded end arms in 2004) bolted to metal carriers reading (1) MANUDEN (2) STANSTED (3) BENTFIELD END / GREEN. A fourth carrier does not appear to have been used to hold an arm<sup>(36)</sup>. As such it is a scarce and attractive survival.



Picture 1.15 A quintessentially English scene. The timber-framed and whitewashed Pond Cottage sits behind a brick and flint wall over which rose scramble.

**1.118** To the east of the Rose and Crown is a plain 19th century cast iron pump. It is Grade II listed.

**1.119 Important open spaces.** The 1877 Ordnance Survey shows the large triangular sward of Bentfield Green as a primarily open space with few houses sitting in substantial wooded plots. This area is at the heart of the settlement and is the site of a number of village events including the popular bi-annual fun run. Whilst much has changed in the intervening years, this Conservation Area is still very much defined by its green spaces all of which play a different function.

**1.120** The small triangular island, green, playground and pond opposite Pond Cottage are of considerable importance in so far as the mature trees emerge as a dominant visual feature from public view points. These mature trees makes a very valuable contribution to the quality of the Conservation Area whilst the open space contrasts with the more enclosed built form of the street scene to the south east along Bentfield End Causeway. An early cast iron and wood seat is a notable feature. The playground

36 SMR Number: 40806. See: John V. Nicholls *Essex survey of cast iron signposts 2002-2005*. 2005

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additionally provides a safe leisure space for families whilst the pond is a haven for wildlife and thus performs an important ecological function in this area. A further pond to the south of Pond Cottage should be similarly considered.



Picture 1.16 Bentfield Green pond, bordered by hedges, a haven for wildlife and an important local feature.



Picture 1.17 The open green, fringed by hedges over which modern and older properties can be glimpsed.

**1.121** A further green open space at the northern end of the Conservation Area is equally important providing a village-like setting for several historic properties and for the Rose and Crown public house. Here the preserved water pump acts as a reminder of a time when this area was a focal point for many domestic activities.

**1.122 Particularly important trees and hedgerows.** Trees play an important role in the street scene elsewhere by providing vertical emphasis and visual focal points. Most notable are those in the grounds of Bentfield Green Farmhouse and in the grounds of No. 18. A number of trees are also found along the field boundaries where development gives way to open countryside.

**1.123** Wide grassy verges also play a role in ruralizing the street scene particularly where they provide a break between the historic and modern built environments.



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**1.124** Hedges make an important visual contribution to the landscape often marking the boundaries between the various properties or performing a shielding function where more modern developments meet the historic core. This is particularly notable on the southern side of the large green opposite the Rose and Crown public house and at the eastern extent of the smaller green where they soften the developments along Wetherfield.

**1.125 Important views.** Two such views are identified. There is a fine view looking down to the green and Pond Cottage from adjacent to the playground and Nos. 51-53. To a lesser degree the view from the same green looking north is also important.

**1.126** Another view looking across the green from the Rose and Crown public house to Laundry Cottage is also notable.

**1.127 Elements that are out of character with the Conservation Area.** Some granite kerb stones around the Rose and Crown public house green have been replaced with inappropriate concrete substitutes. These should be replaced.

**1.128 Opportunities to secure improvements.** Repaint concrete posts and iron protective railings around the pond.

**1.129** Careful consideration should be given to any future development of the long range of former agricultural buildings on the Yews Farm site. These occupy a prominent position on the approach to the village from the north west and the sensitive treatment of these structures will be important in maintaining the quality of the Conservation Area in this part of the village.

**1.130 Suggested boundary changes.** None are suggested.

**1.131 Other actions.** Continuing ecological conservation of the pond adjacent to the playground area is of importance. This feature represents an important wildlife haven and a visible reminder of the tangible link between Bentfield Green and its rural surroundings.

## 1 Part 2 - Management Proposals

### Revised Conservation Area Boundary

2.1 None are suggested.

### Planning Controls and Good Practice: The Conservation Area

2.2 All current planning policies are contained in the Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in 2005. It is against this document that the District Council will process applications. As set out above, this will be superseded in due course by the Council's new Local Plan.

2.3 Applicants considering submitting any application should carefully consider the relevant policies and if necessary contact Council Officers to seek advice. For further details including advice on Planning Applications, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Landscaping and other general administrative advice, please contact the Planning Department for assistance.

Website: [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk)

Telephone no. 01799 510510

Or write to Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER

### Planning Controls and Good Practice: The Potential Need to Undertake an Archaeological Field Assessment

2.4 Good practice for applicants will be to carefully consider the content of the policies set out in the Local Plan.

### Planning Control and Good Practice: Listed Buildings

2.5 Those buildings that are individually listed and other buildings, structures or walls within the curtilage of a Listed Building are similarly protected in law.

2.6 The Listed Buildings and associated structures within their curtilages, including those specifically identified by this Appraisal are important and are a major contribution to the quality of the built environment of Bentfield Green. It is essential that their architectural detailing is not eroded or their other qualities and settings not compromised. Good practice for applicants will be to carefully consider the content of the policies set out in the Local Plan.

## Part 2 - Management Proposals 1

### Planning Controls and Good Practice: Other Buildings that Make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution

**2.7** A number of such unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area have been identified. The Council will seek to ensure that these are retained. These are as follows: Rose Tree Cottage, Nos. 26-34 and 34-44 Bentfield Green, Nos.33-43 Bentfield Green, the Rose and Crown public house, No. 1 Bentfield Close, Nos. 37 and 66 Bentfield Road.

**2.8 Proposed Article 4 Directions.** There are other distinctive features that are integral to some of the unlisted buildings identified in the previous paragraph that make an important architectural or historic contribution, including selected chimneys, windows and other architectural detailing. In some situations protection already exists through existing planning controls but in other cases protection could only be provided by removing Permitted Development Rights via an Article 4 Direction. The associated legislation is complex. Should the Council consider such a course of action appropriate there would be a process of notifying the affected owners separately at a later date. This would be associated with further detailed consideration and possible refinement of the general proposals set out earlier in this Appraisal.

### Planning Controls and Good Practice: Other Distinctive Features that Make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution

**2.9** This Appraisal has identified several features including walls, railings and a street sign that make a particular contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Some walls are protected from demolition without prior consent by virtue of exceeding the specified heights relevant to Conservation Area or by Listed Building legislation. Any proposal involving their demolition is also unlikely to be approved.

### Planning Control and Good Practice: Important Open Spaces, Trees and Groups of Trees

**2.10 Important open land, open spaces and gaps.** The open spaces as identified being the large green adjacent to the Rose and Crown pub and the small triangular island, green, playground and pond opposite Pond Cottage. All represent landscape features that materially contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area that must be protected.

**2.11 Particularly important trees and hedgerows.** Only the most significant trees are shown very diagrammatically. Many have already been made subject to Tree Preservation Orders but others worthy of protection have not. Subject to certain exceptions all trees in a Conservation Area are afforded protection and a person wanting to carry out works has to notify the Council. Trees that have not been identified may still be considered suitable for protection by Tree Preservation Orders. Owners are advised to make regular inspections to check the health of trees in the interests of amenity and Health and Safety. Most notable are those in the grounds of Bentfield

## 1 Part 2 - Management Proposals

Green Farmhouse and in the grounds of No. 18. Wide grassy verges also play a role in ruralizing the street scene particularly where they provide a break between the historic and modern built environments. Hedges too make an important visual contribution to the landscape often marking the boundaries between the various properties or performing a shielding function where more modern developments meet the historic core particularly where they soften the developments along Wetherfield.

### Proposed Controls: Other Distinctive Features that make an Important Visual or Historic Contribution

**2.12** The most important views within and out of the Conservation Area are diagrammatically shown.

### Enhancement Proposals to Deal with Detracting Elements

**2.13** The Appraisal has identified a number of elements that detract which are summarised below together with a proposed course of action. Within the staff and financial resources available, Council Officers will be pro-active and provide assistance. It must be recognised that such improvements will frequently only be achieved with the owners' co-operation.

*The features identified below are shown on the accompanying plans.*

| Detracting element              | Location                              | Proposed Action  |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Iron railings on concrete posts | Protective feature bordering the pond | Currently painted white, but in need of repainting. It is suggested the condition of the protective railings bordering the pond be monitored on an occasional basis and that the parish council advise Essex County Council of any necessary remedial actions. |

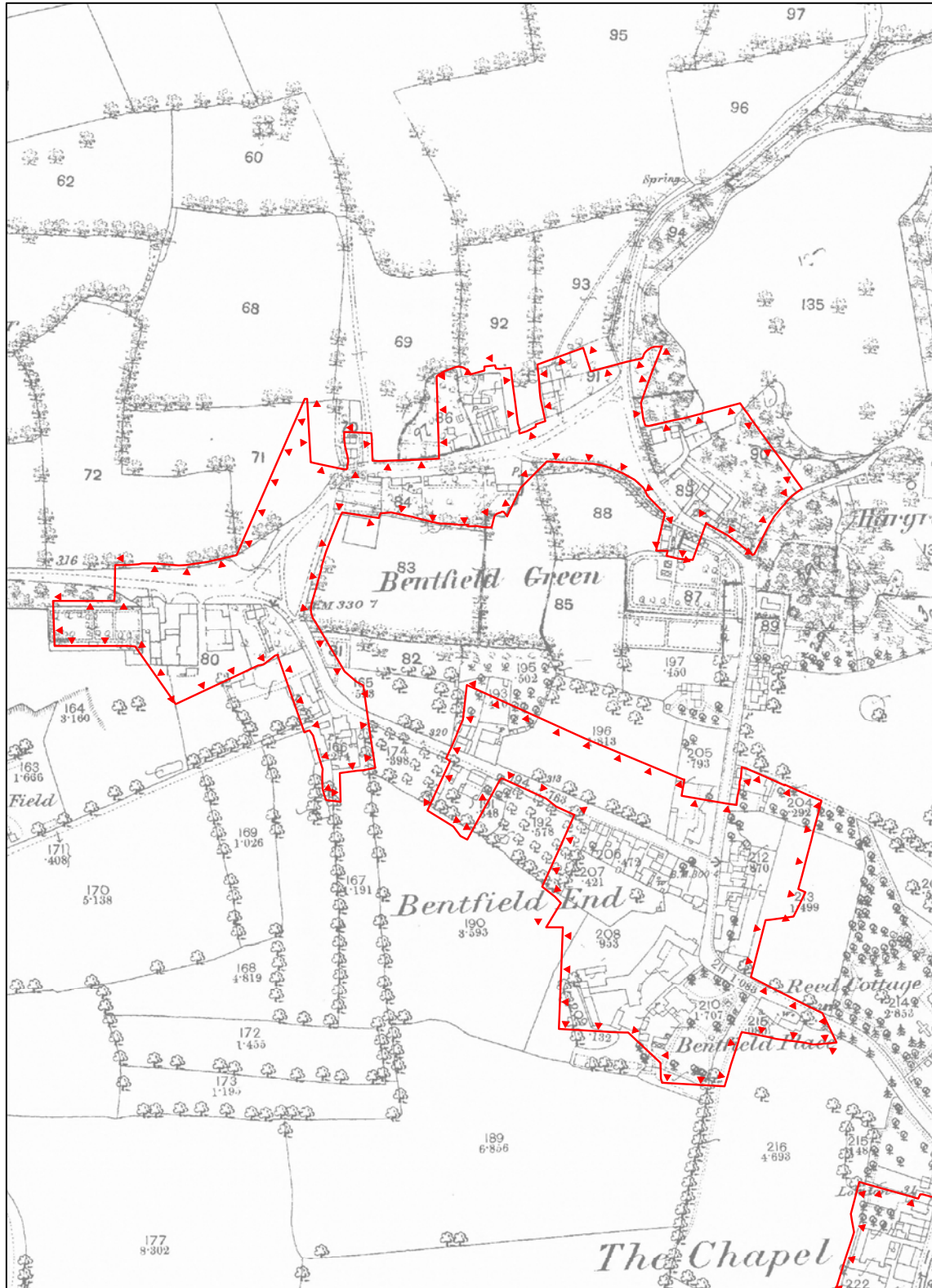
#### Other actions

Some granite kerb stones around the Rose and Crown public house green have been replaced with inappropriate concrete substitutes. These should be replaced.

Maintain ecological care of the pond.

Maps 1

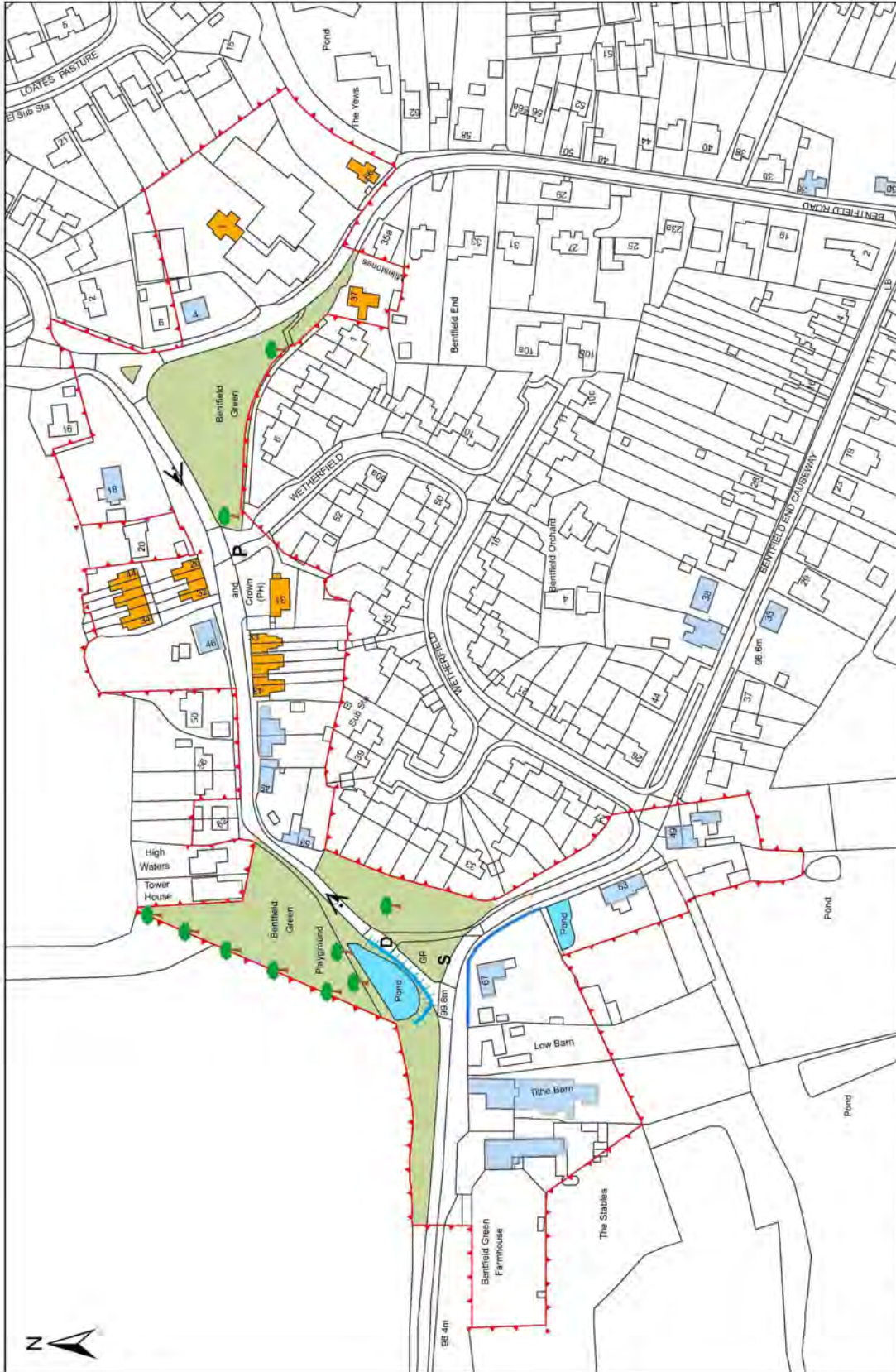
Figure 1 - 1877 Ordnance Survey Map



Bentfield Green - Historic map

# 1 Maps

## Fig 2 - Character Analysis










Bentfield Green Conservation Area Appraisal  
Character Analysis

1:1,300



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Ordnance Survey 0100019888

## Maps 1

## Character Analysis Key

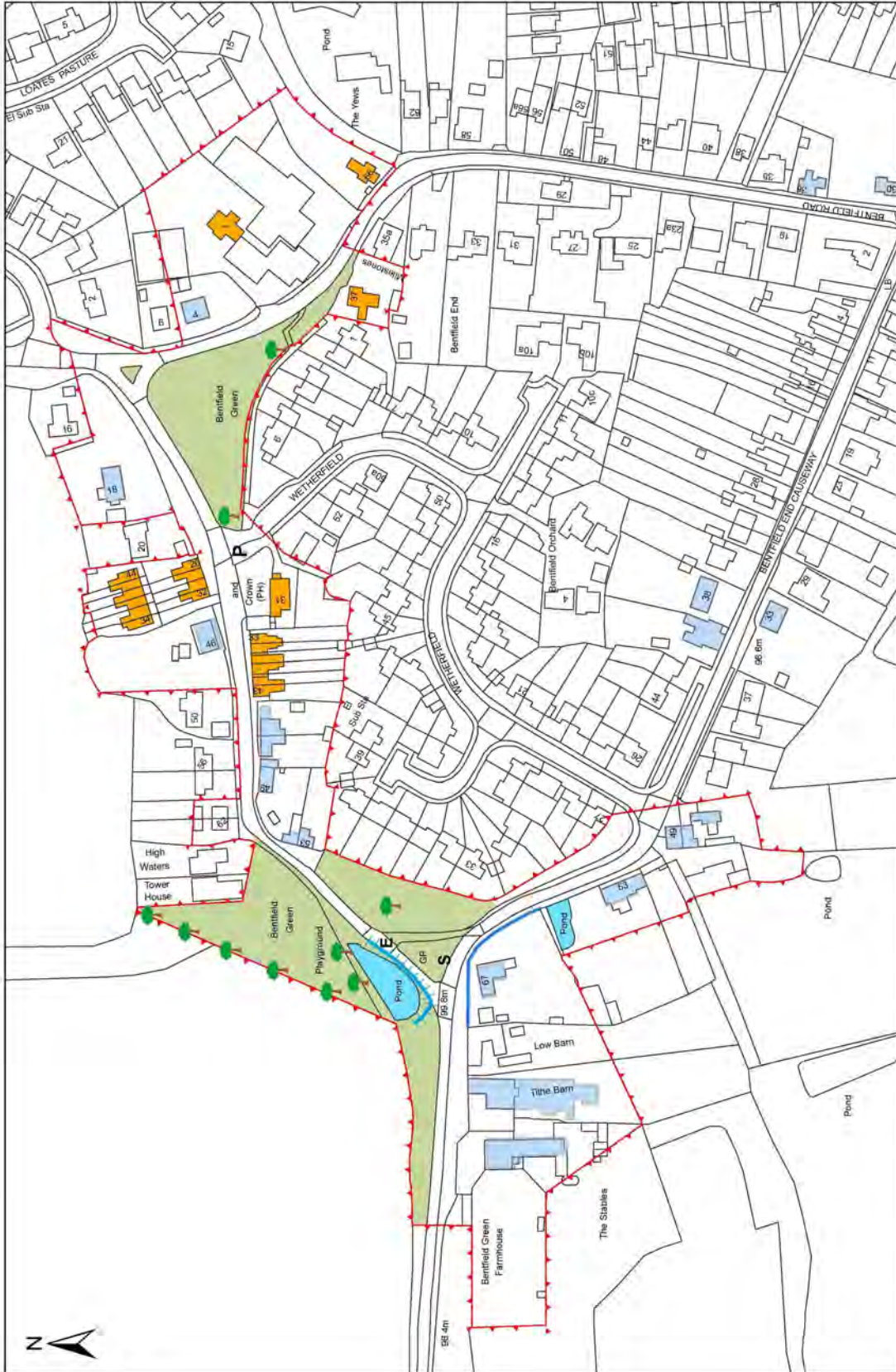
|   |   |
|---|---|
|    | Conservation Area boundary                                |
|    | Individually Listed Buildings                             |
|    | Important Buildings in the curtilages of Listed Buildings |
|    | Other buildings to be protected from demolition.          |
|    | Important open spaces                                     |
|   | Ponds   |
|  | General location of important trees                       |

**Other distinctive features to be protected from demolition.**

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
|  | Walls              |
|  | Railings           |
| <b>S</b>  | Sign               |
| <b>P</b>  | Pump               |
| <b>D</b>  | Detracting element |

# 1 Maps

## Figure 3 - Management Plan



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1:1,300

Bentfield Green Conservation Area Appraisal  
Management Plan



## Maps 1

## Management Plan Key



Conservation Area Boundary, adopted Policy ENV1 applies



Individually Listed Buildings, adopted Policy ENV2 applies



Important buildings/structure in the curtilage of listed buildings. Adopted Policy ENV2 applies



Other buildings to be protected from demolition, see policy ENV1. Additional controls proposed for selected buildings.



Important open spaces and water features to be protected from development, adopted Policies ENV3 and ENV 8 apply.



General location of important trees/hedgerows to be protected within parameters of legislation.

**Other distinctive features to be protected from demolition within the parameters of legislation  
(including walls and railings within the curtilages of Listed Buildings)**



Railings



Walls

**P**

Pump

**E**

Proposed enhancements

## 1 Appendices

### Appendix 1 - Sources

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## Appendices 1

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## 1 Appendices

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