



North End Village Design Statement



Interim Planning Guidance

**Approved by
Chelmsford Borough Council
December 2007**



North End Village Design Statement

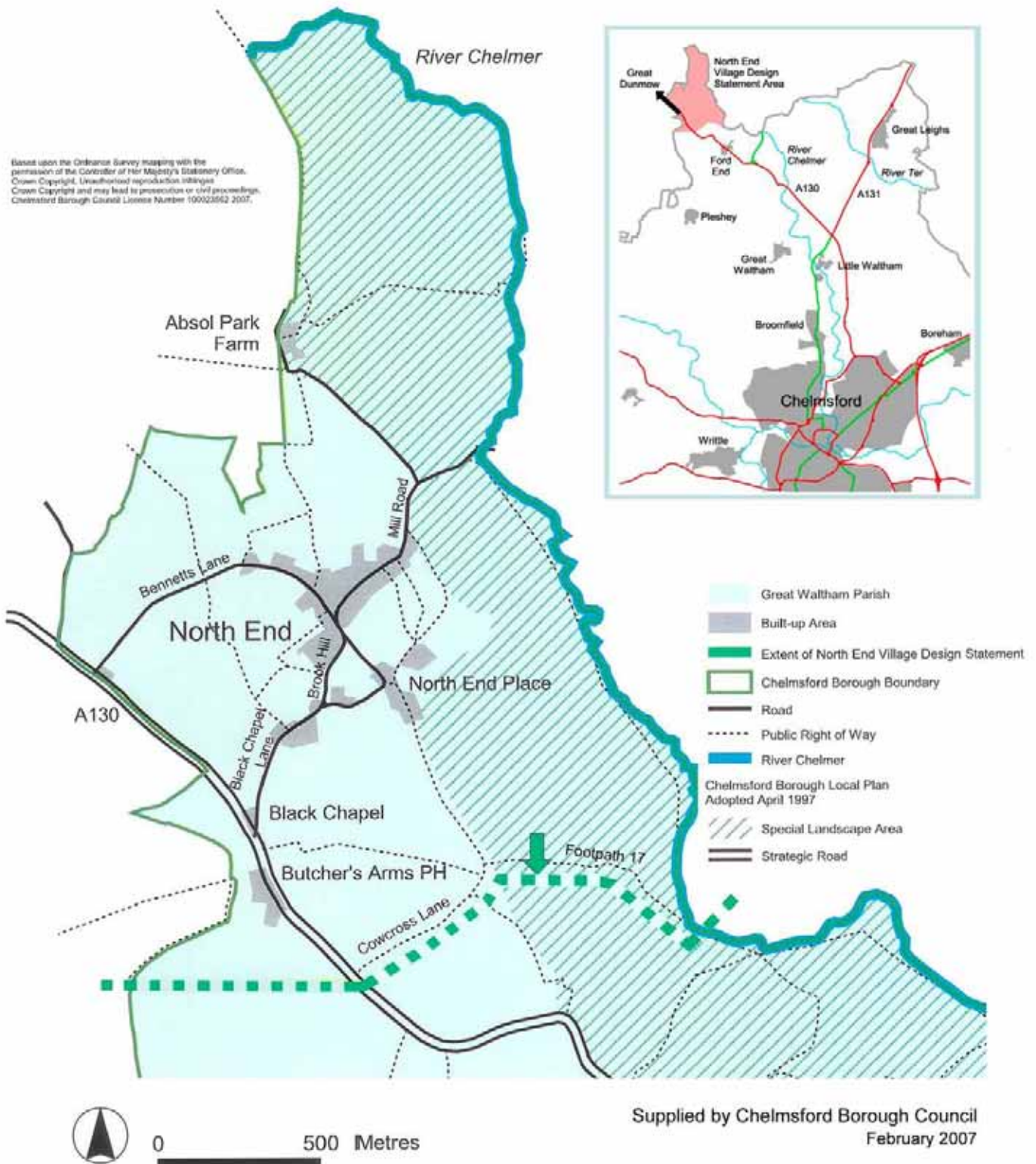
This document gives a description of the existing character and main features of the village, as perceived by the residents of North End. It also expresses the views of the community on how changes could be incorporated in the village.

It should:

- guide property owners and occupiers on the care of the village.
- assist developers in adopting designs which are acceptable to the local community.
- assist Chelmsford Borough Council in the determination of planning applications.
- not prevent, but assist, in the management of change in the village.
- help protect visually important buildings and open spaces.
- propose environmental enhancements.
- guide people undertaking new building work on design, including setting and materials.
- help to protect and manage the historic environment of the village and its surrounding landscape.



Map1 showing area of North End VDS



North End is in the parish of Great Waltham, near Chelmsford, in Essex. This document concerns the area from the northern border of the parish, south as far as Cowcross Lane and footpath 17 to the River Chelmer; and covers the area between the A130 and the River Chelmer.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Area of Interest – see Map 1

North End is a small, rural village of just over 60 residences situated in the parish of Great Waltham in the valley of the River Chelmer. A Village Design Statement (VDS) already exists for the village of Great Waltham and its surrounding hamlets in the south of the parish but it does not cover the north of the parish. The residents of North End care deeply about their environment and decided to produce their own VDS.

How the VDS was developed



One of the survey groups on the Photoday

A team of seven residents was elected to produce this document at an initial village meeting. The emphasis has been on consulting the whole community and the opinions stated in this document reflect the majority view of the residents. This has been achieved through a photo-exploration day, flyers and displays at village events. A questionnaire was sent to every household to which 71% of the residents responded and the results were reported back. Feedback was encouraged throughout the whole process.



Working on the presentation at the photo-exploration day

Document Status

North End VDS was approved in December 2007 as interim planning guidance by the Borough Council. It is a public document and carries weight in the determination of planning applications by the local planning authority.

Planning Policy Context

The Government has introduced a new plan-making regime, which will mean that the Borough Council will replace the Local Plan with the Local Development Framework (LDF).

The LDF sets out policies and proposals for dealing with new development. It identifies sites where new housing and other development can take place and sets out policies of the Council in relation to the use of land and buildings.

The LDF is itself governed by regional policies, which result from central government policies.

The LDF and North End

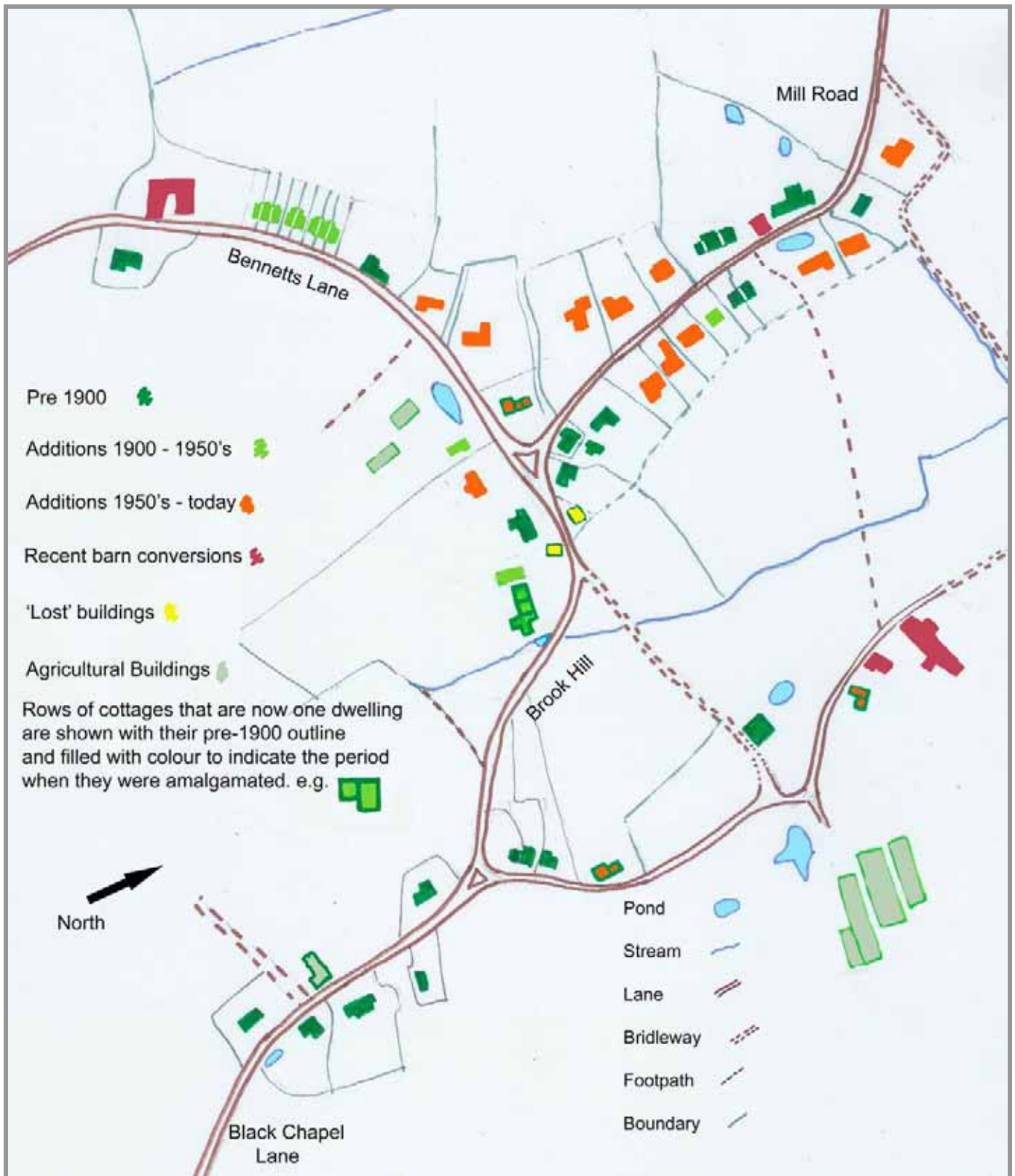
- North End is not a defined settlement. The Borough Council is consulting on the Issues and Options Site Allocations Document (part of the LDF) which continues to support this.
- North End is surrounded by countryside. Planning policy seeks to protect the countryside from undesirable development.
- The design of development is covered by core policies CP20 and CP21 and development control policies DC46 and DC49. Core Policy CP14 provides a direct link between a VDS and local planning policy. The policy also sets the scene for the visual impact of all development proposals on the landscape.
- North End has 23 listed buildings (including the telephone box) and the island within Absol Park moat is an Ancient Monument.

The VDS will also complement the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Documents and the residential design guidance on roof and side extensions, which are also taken into account during the determination of planning applications.



Blackchapel

Map 2 showing the development of the centre of North End





North End Place in 1913



Exterior of Blackchapel in 1937



Interior of Blackchapel in 1937



The Butchers Arms in the 1900s



Barns at Absol Park around the 1950s



The coat of arms of Humphrey de Bohun, who created the moat and island at Abchilde (now Absol Park) in 1347

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

North End is a small village at the 'north end' of the large parish of Great Waltham.

Finds of Mesolithic and Neolithic flintwork indicate that the village area was used in the prehistoric period. This is further supported by Bronze Age pottery finds in the area immediately outside the village.

In past times, the village consisted of little other than a settlement of farms and associated minor dwellings, many of which date back to mediaeval times. This is supported by finds of early medieval pottery in the village.

The village is clearly shown as a settlement on the Andre and Chapman map of 1777.

Historically, the most important estates belonged to North End Place and Absol Park. The location of the places mentioned in this section are shown on Map 5 on page 9.

North End Place farmhouse, which was formally known as Bullocks, was bought by the Wiseman family in 1430 and remained the family home for several generations. The Wiseman's were staunch Catholics and in 1598 'widow' Wiseman was arrested for harbouring a priest and imprisoned until the accession of James I.

North End does not have its own church but it does have a small chapel of ease, Blackchapel, which is grade 1 listed and of outstanding national historical interest, particularly as it has an attached priest's house. Mentioned in 1347 as a local landmark, the present mediaeval timber framed building dates from the 14th century. It was enlarged and refurbished in the 18th century but the interior remains humble, early Georgian with box pews and a 3-decker pulpit.

The Wiseman family had endowed the chapel before 1500 and continued to support it all through the reformation until Elizabeth's time. In 1681, Ann Wiseman made a further endowment "in trust to purchase lands ... the rents and profits ... to be laid out for the maintenance of an honest and orthodox preacher" or to

be distributed among the local poor. This practice is continued to this day and Blackchapel is still managed by trustees, remaining a 'peculiar' outside the jurisdiction of the Bishop of the Diocese and the local vicar.

Absol Park, which had many different historical names, was mentioned in the Court Rolls in the Middle Ages and was sold by the Duke of Suffolk to Richard Lord Riche in 1538. The estate passed to the Montague family in 1678 and in turn passed to the Duke of Buckingham in 1722. The estate has changed hands many times since and at one time belonged to Guy's Hospital. It is notable for a 17th century farmhouse, large barn and moat with island; the latter may have been the site of the original house and is an Ancient Monument.

Brook House is another substantial village house. This timber-famed grade II listed house was originally built in the 15th century and was substantially extended in the early 20th century.

Although North End was always too small to support much commercial activity other than farming, there is evidence for the existence of at least three shops in the last century, at Chestnuts, Harvesters (formerly Hillside Cottages) and Black Chapel Cottage. In addition, there was a public house at Oak Cottage and a smithy at Bay Tree Cottage. The current public house, The Butchers Arms, is grade II listed and was originally owned by the trustees of Blackchapel. It was leased to Ridleys in 1952 before being purchased by them in the 1970s and, in turn, was bought by Greene King in 2005. For several years there has been a commercial wholesale nursery in Bennetts Lane.

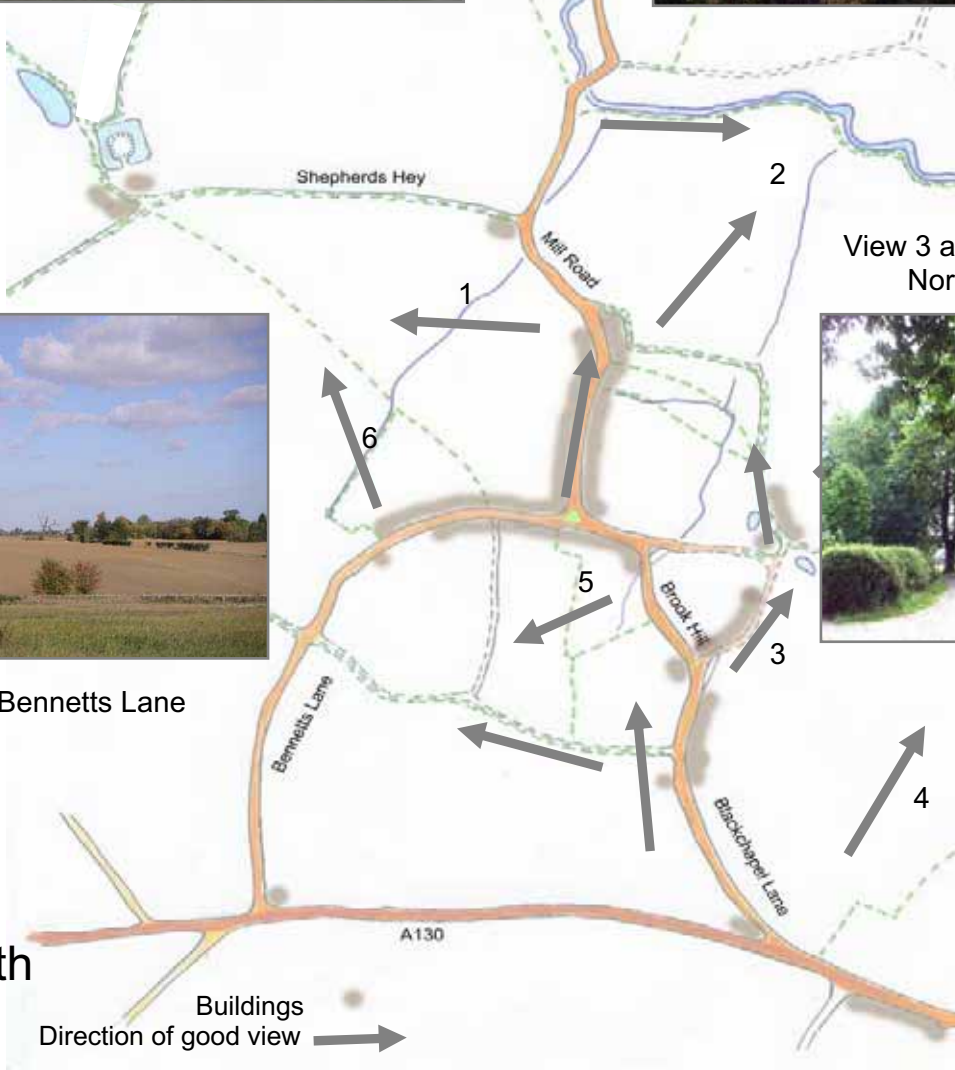
The last 50 years have seen some limited development in the village, as shown on Map 2. The most significant development was the building of a row of eight houses in Bennetts Lane, which was formerly owned by the local authority. In addition, some houses and bungalows have been built, mainly in Mill Road, and four barns have been converted for residential use.

Map 3 showing good views around North End

View 1 from Mill Road



View 2 over Chelmer Valley from Mill Road



View 3 along lane towards North End Place



View 6 from Bennetts Lane

North

Buildings
Direction of good view



View 5 from the stile



View 4 across Chelmer Valley from A130

Guidelines

The quiet, unspoilt and rural character should be maintained.

The open aspect with its low-density housing and greens should be maintained.

Open agricultural land around the village, particularly the Chelmer valley should be retained.

The rural character of open spaces, greens and verges should be retained.

Open spaces should be kept tidy but not be 'prettified' and any planting should be of naturally occurring species.

Mature trees, hedge rows and ditches are an important asset that should be retained.

Landowners should be encouraged to plant trees and hedgerows, using native species whenever practical.



Pump Green and tree planted in 2002.

3. THE VILLAGE SETTING

General Description

The village comprises a small community situated in a predominantly open undulating arable agricultural landscape on the west side of the Chelmer valley.

The village is rural in character, containing many mature trees and hedgerows and enjoying beautiful views, across the valley towards Causeway End and Felsted from most parts of the village. Indeed, this part of the Chelmer valley was designated as a Special Landscape Area (SLA, April 1997 Chelmsford Borough Local Plan). The Chelmer valley is special because it is an undeveloped, tranquil valley with a meandering river channel amongst gently rolling hills and an open arable character. (see section 7 for landscape character references)



View across the Chelmer valley

Most villagers agree that the most distinctive features of the village are its quiet, unspoilt and friendly rural character. The open aspect of the village with its low-density housing and green verges is also important.

There are relatively few public open spaces but those that the village has, such as the triangular green, pump green and the area at the foot of Brook Hill are considered to be important characteristics.



View of Pump Green open space

In particular, the triangular green with its finger post, public bench, parish notice board, village map and telephone box (listed building, see map 5) and Victorian post box is an important hub of the village.



Post and telephone boxes on the green

The post box fascia was originally set in a wall, probably on Brook Hill, and was later moved to the current brick pier. Many residents consider that this post box provides colour and historical interest to the street scene and it also deserves protection, in accordance with the joint Royal Mail and English Heritage policy.

Open spaces, greens and verges should retain their rural character, be kept tidy but not be 'prettified' and any planting should be of naturally occurring species. Urbanisation of the village, such as the addition of further street furniture and the placing of barriers on the grass verges should be avoided.

The open agricultural land around the village, some of which extends into areas between buildings, is an important feature. Most of the existing hedgerows are old field boundaries. These hedgerows, together with mature trees, are significant assets that contribute greatly to the setting and character of North End. Most residents consider all trees to be important, particularly broad leaved native species. Surprisingly, there are currently only two Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) in the village:

- Two groups of Horse Chestnut and Lime trees (North End Place 1976/13)
- Ash, Birch and Oak (Little Acorns 2002/87)

Landowners are encouraged to plant trees and hedgerows, which should be native species whenever practical.

Guidelines

Footpaths and bridleways are an important asset, which should be protected and maintained.

The Parish Council should be encouraged to work with the landowner and the Highway Authority Rights of Way team to pursue a potential new footpath to connect the village to the River Chelmer.

Map 4
showing footpaths and important green spaces, trees and hedges

Footpaths and Bridleways

Positioned in the Essex countryside some distance from significant built-up areas, North End offers its residents considerable opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. This is facilitated by an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways, which are considered an asset by residents and are well used. Footpaths 8 and 10 which follow the bank of the River Chelmer provide additional interest.



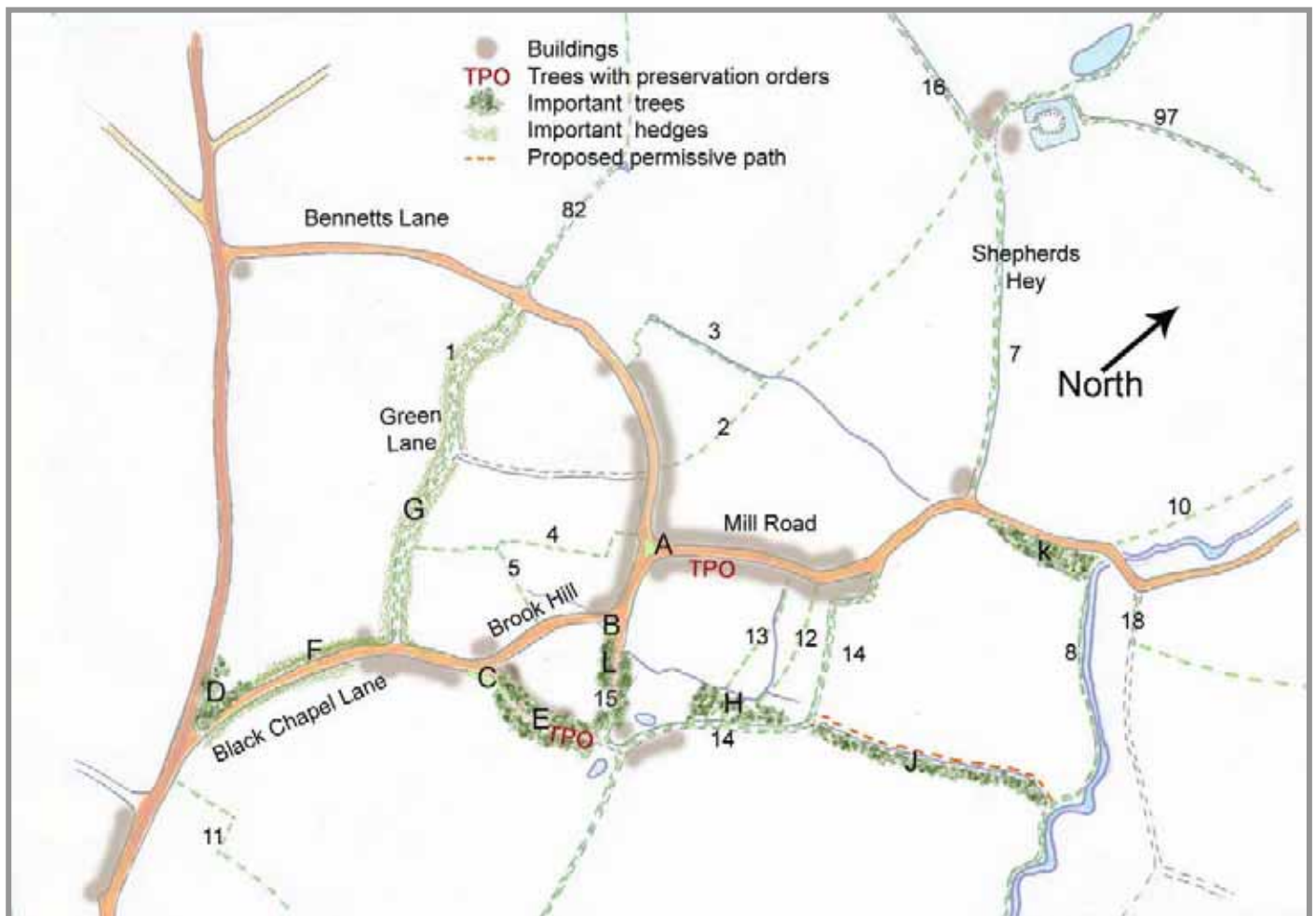
View along the river from footpath 8
The footpaths and bridleways are, on the whole, well maintained but paths

on the field headland or through the middle of the field are sometimes partially ploughed or cultivated over. Green Lane is an ancient footpath in particular need of protection.



The ancient Green Lane footpath

Although there is a good network of footpaths the survey results indicated that a number of villagers would appreciate an additional permissive path, leading from bridleway 14 near North End Place directly down the field headland to join footpath 8 by the River Chelmer. (see map 4)



- A. Triangular green with telephone box
- B. Green space at foot of Brook Hill
- C. Pump Green
- D. Horsechestnut trees at Blackchapel
- E. Trees along private lane
- F. Hedgerows in Black Chapel Lane

- G. Green Lane
 - H. Tree plantation/reserve
 - J. Trees along field to river
 - K. Plantation near Absol Bridge
 - L. Trees along bridleway 15 to North End Place
- Public footpaths/bridleways are numbered

Guidelines

Any physical change to listed buildings and their setting should ensure that their special character and features are protected.

4. THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

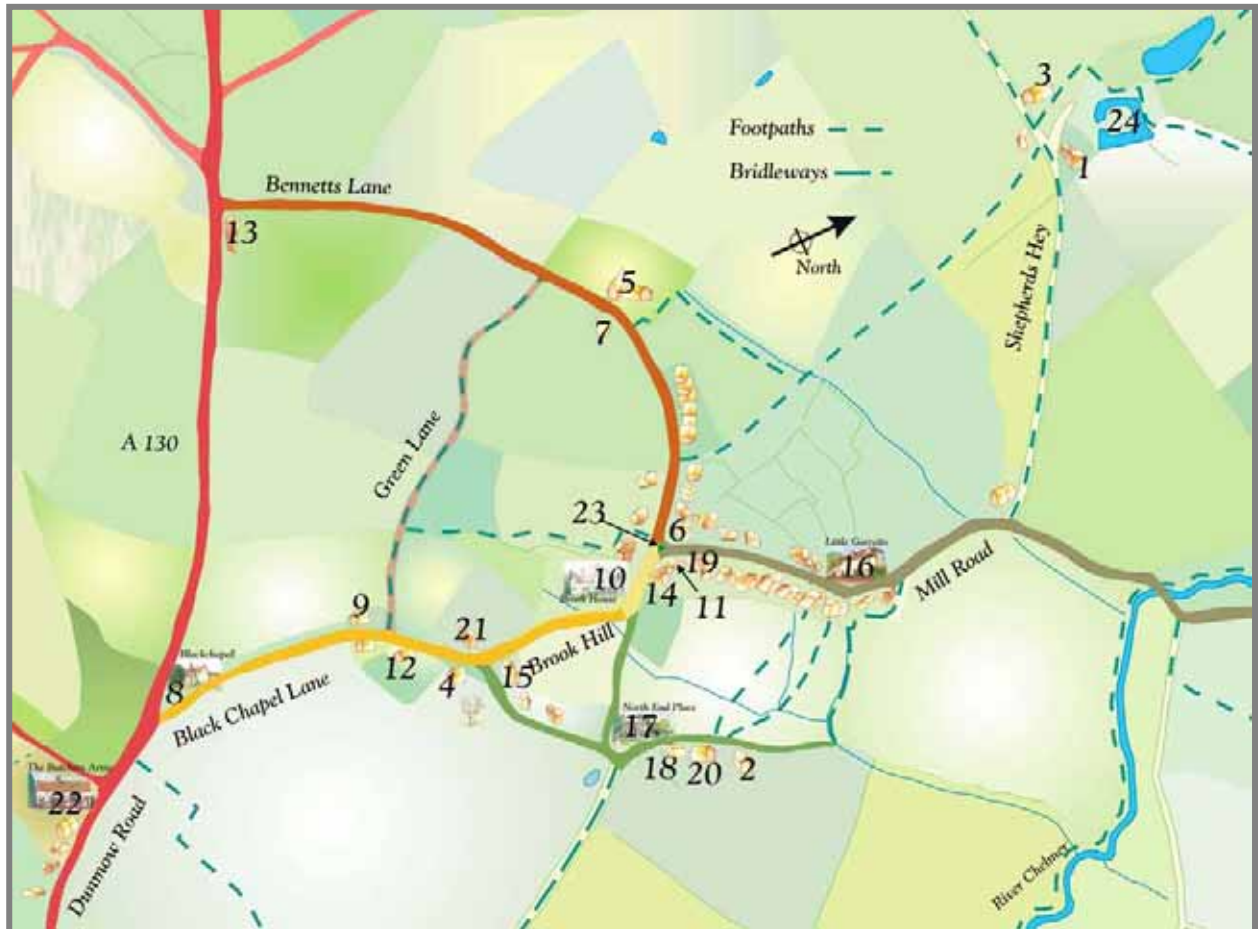
Settlement Description

The central part of the village is clustered around the small triangular green at the junction of Brook Hill, Mill Road and Bennetts Lane. The local chapel and village public house are located approximately half a mile to the south, close to the junction of the A130 with Black Chapel Lane.

Of the 63 properties in North End, 22 are listed as being of architectural or historical interest. This is an unusually high proportion of the total number of buildings in North End and contributes greatly to the understanding of the character and history of the settlement.

The remaining buildings in the village are a pleasant mix of single and two storey dwellings of more modern origin and a row of cottages built in Bennetts Lane just after World War II.

Map 5 showing the listed buildings in North End

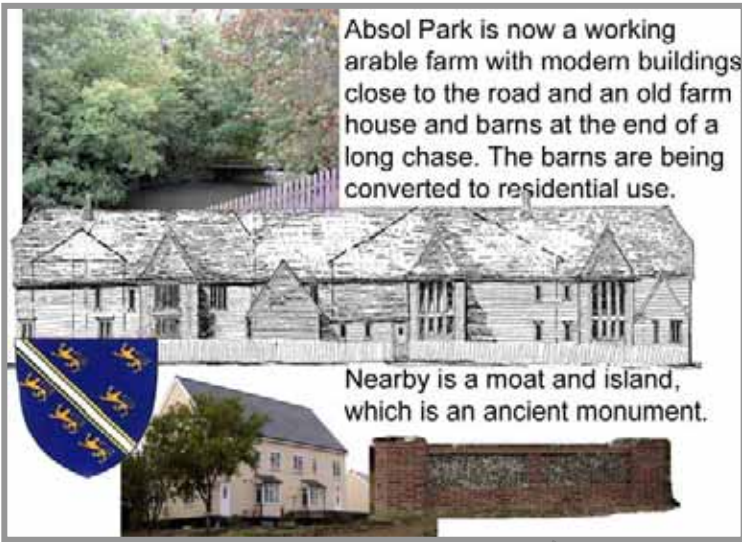


- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Absol Park Farmhouse | 13. Greenend Farmhouse |
| 2. Brook Hill Barn | 14. Green Oaks (ex. Brendon Cottage) |
| 3. Barn to the north of Absol Park Farmhouse | 15. Hillcrest |
| 4. Baytree Cottage | 16. Little Garretts |
| 5. Bennetts Barn | 17. Northend Place |
| 6. Bennetts Cottage (Nos. 1 and 2) | 18. Northend Place Cottages |
| 7. Bennett's Farmhouse | 19. Oak Cottage |
| 8. Black Chapel | 20. Store to north-east of Northend Place Cottages |
| 9. Black Chapel Cottage | 21. Sunnyside |
| 10. Brook House | 22. The Butchers Arms Public house |
| 11. Bumbles | 23. Telephone Box |
| 12. Marples | |
| | 24. Absol Park Island – Ancient Monument |



Brook House: a listed building extended in the 20th century

Note: Any ancillary structure within the curtilage of a listed building built before 1st July 1948 is also deemed to be listed



Absol Park is now a working arable farm with modern buildings close to the road and an old farm house and barns at the end of a long chase. The barns are being converted to residential use.

Nearby is a moat and island, which is an ancient monument.



As the name suggests, Mill Road curves gently down to the river and Felsted Mill. The houses vary from modern bungalows to listed buildings, both large and small. These include the only remaining row of old cottages. The houses are set back from the road at varying distances, with mainly hedge or open green frontages.

The village is a typical rural settlement, having evolved over the centuries. This has resulted in a variety of styles, types and sizes of properties. Many of the dwellings have a loose and open character and the spaces between them are important to maintaining the relationship of buildings set within an open rural landscape. The dwellings comprise frontage plots, mostly overlooking open countryside to the side or rear; there is no 'in depth' or backland development

Most buildings are made of traditional materials for their era, with front boundaries, reflecting the rural nature of the surroundings.

Although North End is a small village, there are special characteristics to each area, as shown on this page.



The area around North End Place is approached through a shaded, gravel lane with mature trees. The buildings are all old but vary greatly in size, from the large, North End Place, through barn conversions to more humble, but no less attractive, cottages.

Bennetts Lane is quite narrow and has passing places. There are open views across the countryside through gaps in the boundary hedging. The dwellings are a mix of old and new including modern bungalows, older cottages, a barn conversion, farmhouse and commercial nursery. Its special feature is a row of eight post-war houses with lay-by. North End Nursery is the only commercial enterprise in the village centre. Their land includes a large, natural pond near the road.



Blackchapel and the Butchers Arms are situated on either side of the main road, currently the A130. Both are timber framed and of some antiquity. There are old cottages and more modern houses on one side of the road to Ford End. This road is very busy during business hours and, unlike the rest of the village, has kerbed edges. At the junction with Lawn Lane, there is a small island with a post box, bus shelter and recycling bins.



Guidelines

New development should be of small scale.

New infill building should be restricted to small gaps within existing groups of buildings, taking care to respect the spaces between buildings which form an important contribution to the character of the settlement.

The density of development should remain low to reflect that of its surroundings.

Building frontages should be set well back from the road and respect the existing informality of building lines established in the village.

New Building

Many residents considered that the village could absorb some growth and that any new development should be of small scale and in accordance with Policy DC13. New buildings should not occupy the full width of the plot, save for a vestigial path on each boundary; this is particularly important where the adjoining building is also close to the common boundary. The importance of the spaces between buildings is illustrated by the aerial photograph of Mill Road and the triangle green below.

New development should be of low density (notwithstanding current minimum standards) in order to reflect the rural character of the village and have building frontages set well back from the road.

Any new buildings should be provided with adequate off-street parking for all occupiers and visitors, as on-street parking is effectively precluded by the narrowness of the roads.



Mill Road can become difficult to negotiate if there are parked cars and vans

The shape and scale of any new building will be determined by the existing character. Any new building will need to respect its setting and compliance with these guidelines will help to achieve this.

Panoramic view of the north side of Mill Road to show the varying building line



Aerial view of Mill Road and the triangular green



Guidelines

The conversion of derelict buildings to residential or low-key commercial use should be encouraged.

Re-use of the derelict commercial site is preferable to the use of new sites in, or on the edge of, the village.

Any new commercial activity should be small scale, in keeping with the size of the village.

Residents prefer commercial activity to be conducted in existing buildings or small extensions.

The siting and design of new commercial buildings should be sensitive to the environment and appropriate to the ambience of its surroundings.



The Butchers Arms

Previously Developed Land

North End has few unoccupied buildings and the redevelopment of existing plots to a more intense form of development should be avoided where this would lead to an adverse impact on the character of the area. From the survey, the conversion of the currently redundant agricultural buildings is encouraged, in order to prevent further decay and dereliction, with a preference for residential or low key commercial use in accordance with DC61.



Old timber barn in Black Chapel Lane

Commercial Building

Apart from farming, the only commercial activities in the village are two plant nurseries and the Butchers Arms. Nearly 90% of survey respondents considered that any increase in commercial activity would adversely change the character of North End. However, businesses located in existing houses, or small extensions, were considered to be more acceptable. Few people felt the need for increased employment opportunities in the village. In the survey, a particular concern was that traffic should not increase. The Butchers Arms is on the main road, outside the centre of the village and neither nursery brings much traffic into the village; one is an on-line business, whilst the other caters to the wholesale trade.

Over 80% of survey respondents considered it important that the external appearance of commercial buildings blended into their surroundings and were in scale with nearby buildings; traditional designs were generally preferred but high quality modern design was not precluded. Residents were very concerned that there should be no increase in noise, dust or smell

pollution. Several people commented that small arts/craft or web-based businesses might be most appropriate for this rural setting.

During the Photoday, people commented adversely on the new agricultural barns in Shepherds Hey. The trees and hedging behind the barns have been allowed to grow, so these necessary buildings should become less visible in the landscape, with time.



The new barns were clearly visible in 2003

Some years ago, there was some small-scale light industry, based in buildings near North End Place. These buildings are now derelict and some people consider them to be an eyesore. The survey showed that few villagers want this site brought back into use, especially if its use causes increased traffic through the village. However, re-use of this small brown-field site is preferred to commercial building on new sites within, or on the edge, of the village.



Derelict buildings near North End Place

Extensions

Extensions are commonplace and with care and sensitivity can be acceptable. In general, building extensions should reflect the character and style of the original building and conform to the principles of good design in the Borough Council's Residential Design Guidance on Side Extensions and Roof Extensions together with

Guidelines

Extensions should not fill the entire width of the plot.

Extensions should reflect the character and style of the original building.

North End has good examples of extensions that are subservient, seamless or special and this principle should be maintained.

Traditional designs and materials are preferred by residents.

Physical boundary treatments should be rural in nature, similar to those currently in the village.

Existing hedges should be retained wherever possible.

Driveways should use traditional materials to reflect the rural character and minimise problems of surface water run-off.



Little Garretts

policies DC49(A) and DC51(B) of the LDF Core Strategy. In the context of North End however, it is important that any extensions reflect the size and scale of the host building and the immediate surroundings, in terms of the character of adjacent development and its setting within the wider rural landscape.

Extensions should not unduly affect adjoining residents and should not remove entirely, or unacceptably reduce, the gaps between buildings and the glimpses of the countryside that remain. Building materials should be sympathetic to the original building and car parking should not be reduced by the extension.

Provided these criteria are met and extensions are suitably well designed, they may be seamless, special or subservient to the original building.



Green Oaks after extension

Conversion of roof spaces into living accommodation needs particular care and attention to detail in a village context. In particular, the type, size, proportion and number of dormer windows is of great importance, as roof conversions of a more urban or town house style would adversely affect the rural nature of North End. Further guidance can be found on the proportions of dormer windows, and roof conversions generally, in the Borough Council's Residential Design Guidance on Roof Extensions.



Cottage with gravel driveway and hedge boundary

Property Boundaries

Front gardens and boundaries are an important visual contribution to the public image of a road. North End is typified by dwellings set well back from the boundary, with a mixture of boundary treatments. These range from open plan, brick or knapped flint walls to estate railing fences and indigenous hedges. The most appropriate front boundary feature is the hedge, using native species such as hawthorn, hornbeam and field maple.



A typical front boundary hedge in Mill Road

Existing hedges should be retained wherever possible. High boundary walls, the unsympathetic use of close board fencing in front gardens and tall railings and gates are more urban in origin and do not reflect the essentially rural character of the village. Fences and gates should be of traditional materials.



'Estate' type railing fencing is appropriate in this parkland setting

Parking within boundaries can present a problem if not sensitively designed, particularly in small gardens. Materials are very important in this rural environment, as the use of large areas of concrete, tarmac, or even block paving, can lead to an urban character that is inappropriate to this rural setting and lead to increased surface water run-off. Driveways should use traditional materials such as gravel or shingle on a permeable sub-base wherever possible.



Materials and Features

There is strong support for the sensitive use of traditional building details and materials, drawing inspiration from the local palette:

- Pitched clay tile roofs
- Timber casement windows
- Brick detailing such as corbels, plinths, bonding etc
- Chimneys
- Bay windows
- Rendered walls
- Timber weatherboarding
- Pargetting
- Gravel driveways
- Walls of brick and flint



Guidelines

Any introduction of traffic calming in North End should have the rural environment as the key design objective.

5. ACCESS, HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Vehicular Access

North End is a small rural village without street lighting and linked by lanes with grass verges rather than streets with kerbs and footways.

Apart from the main A130, the street scene in North End is idyllically rural. Black Chapel Lane, lined with trees and hedgerows on both sides, is an attractive 'entrance' to the centre of the village. It may also be worthy of 'protected lane' or 'quiet lane' status and the three principal lanes may be possible candidates for a 'quiet lane' network.

Traffic Calming

Dualisation of the A120 and housing developments in Little Dunmow has significantly increased the volume and weight of traffic on the A130, Bennetts Lane and Mill Road (see Appendix).

The residents were almost evenly divided (47% for and 38% against) on the likely effectiveness of physical traffic-calming measures. However, should traffic-calming measures be introduced, most residents would want the rural environment as the key design objective; they do not want designs for standard urban measures, such as speed bumps or build outs and their associated signage. Only a minority considered "gateways" to the village as an appropriate method of traffic calming

The Parish Council and Highway Authority should be encouraged to consider improvements to the space in the region of the triangular green, as marked in yellow, including means of slowing traffic entering Mill Road from Bennetts Lane (see Appendix).



The access routes into the central and largest settlement area are Black Chapel Lane from Great Waltham via the A130, Bennetts Lane from Great Dunmow via the A130 and Mill Road from Felsted and Little Dunmow.



Private Lane near North End Place



Entering the village along Blackchapel Lane



Aerial view of the space around the triangular green

Guidelines

Footways or hard kerbing, irrespective of the material used should not be introduced; the rural character of soft green verges and hedges is preferred.

Any new or replacement signage in the village should be mounted on wooden posts and blend well with the rural environment.

New or replacement bus shelters should be of timber construction and sympathetic to the rural environment.

Wooden posts to a common design approved by the Highway Authority could improve protection of the grass verges.



View from the stile

Pavements and Verges

There are footways and granite kerbs on the A130. These are limited to the junctions with Bennetts Lane and Black Chapel Lane where they provide access to the bus stops. Other examples of kerbing in the village include protective triangles to the corners of the triangular green and a short stretch in Bennetts Lane, which was installed to control flooding but is visually discordant. This kerbing is concrete, which if replaced with granite, would provide a small visual improvement. However, most residents do not want any hard kerbs; preferring the rural character of soft green verges and hedges.



Verge damage in Mill Road

Regrettably, heavier and more frequent traffic is damaging the soft verges. Some residents have installed a variety of protective measures, such as small boulders or posts on the open grassed areas fronting their properties. These different ad-hoc styles are visually disturbing.



Different verge protection styles in Mill Road

Although they dislike hard kerbing, most residents believe that some protection of the soft verges from vehicular encroachment is becoming necessary.

A common solution, approved by the Highway Authority, could resolve these issues. However, the design and style of the verge protection should retain the rural character of the street scene. For example, similar plain, unpainted wooden posts, differing slightly in dimension or shape for different properties could provide an informal rural style, avoiding urban regimentation.

Most residents use two 'unofficial' passing places in Bennetts Lane and they want them improved without loss of rural informality.



'Unofficial' passing place in Bennetts Lane

The Highway Authority should be encouraged to improve these passing places by reinforcing the edges of the road to enable two cars to pass safely. An un-kerbed tarmac road surface should be retained, with just the road edge marking adapted to suit.

Signs, Markings and Street Furniture

In general, highway signage is minimal throughout the village and this is consistent with residents' wishes. Introduction of any further signage, except for safety reasons, should be discouraged.

Road markings are limited to hazard lines at the principal junctions and white lines at the carriageway edges. Generally, the residents do not want more street markings and consider that the existing white lines are sufficient to show the carriageway edges at night.

The bridlepath and footpath signs are mounted on wooden posts; blending well with the rural environment.

New or replacement highway signage should be designed for the rural character of the village and mounted on existing timber posts, as far as is reasonably possible.



A wooden bridlepath sign

Guidelines

When the opportunity arises, the Parish Council is encouraged to seek enhancement of the space in front of the Butchers Arms; working with the landowner to improve the private space and the Highway Authority and Borough Council to enhance the public space, to include retaining access to Lawn Lane and the safe vehicle 'lay-by' facility formed by the old highway.

Electricity and telephone services should be installed underground whenever the opportunity arises and cost permits.

Improve surface water drainage whenever the opportunity arises.

Streetlights should not be introduced to North End.

There is a residual, short stretch of old highway between the front of the Butchers Arms car park and the current A130. Recycling bins, a bus stop shelter and a post box are on the small piece of land between the old and new highway. The old highway is not redundant but provides a safe 'lay by' for residents using the recycling bins, the post box or meeting the bus.

Although the recycling bins are sited behind the bus shelter, they are still visible from the main road.



Recycling bins near the Butchers Arms.

When asked if the recycling bins should be removed, re-sited or camouflaged, a majority of the residents do not want them removed but do want them camouflaged, e.g. with green planting. However, as kerbside recycling collections improve, this facility may become redundant.

The Highway Authority and the landowner should be encouraged to use green planting to camouflage and improve the appearance of the recycling bins.

Improvement of this whole space is highly desirable, as outlined in the Appendix.

The timber bus shelters on the A130 are appropriate to the village. Any future new or replacement shelters should retain this sympathy with the rural village environment.



Bus shelter opposite the Butchers Arms

Services

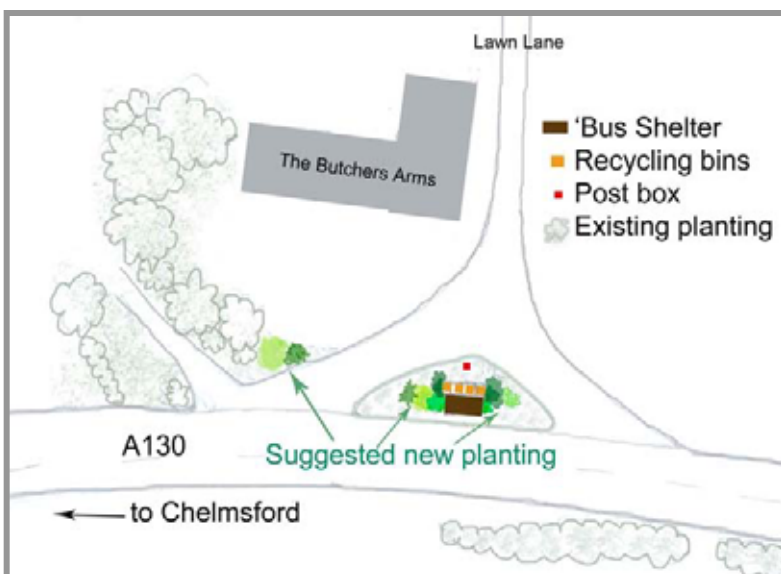
Since World War Two, electricity and mains water have come to North End but gas and mains sewers have not. The electricity and telephone services throughout North End are predominately via overhead cables, which detract from the street scene. Some property owners have had cables taken underground when the opportunity has arisen. This should be encouraged for future developments where the cost is acceptable.

There are no streetlights in North End and the residents support this.



Miscellany of service poles and overhead cables detract from the street scene

North End is an area of springs and sinks and there is no public foul or surface water drainage. A traditional system of field ditches and open drains carry the surface water run off. Water not drained by this system results in excessive water flow along the roadways. Property owners should be encouraged to improve the maintenance of ditches and culverts and any future development should take account of this existing drainage system, in accordance with the guidance in the CBC Sustainable Development SPD, section 9.4.



Suggested new planting near the Butchers Arms

6. Conclusion

Summary of Findings

Historically, North End was an agricultural based community; however modern agriculture no longer sustains the village community. It is exceptional in the Chelmsford Borough, being distant from Chelmsford and on the Borough boundary with social, health and shopping amenities located outside both the parish and borough; with a high concentration (over 30%) of listed buildings and a historic chapel that is independent of the Great Waltham Parish churches.

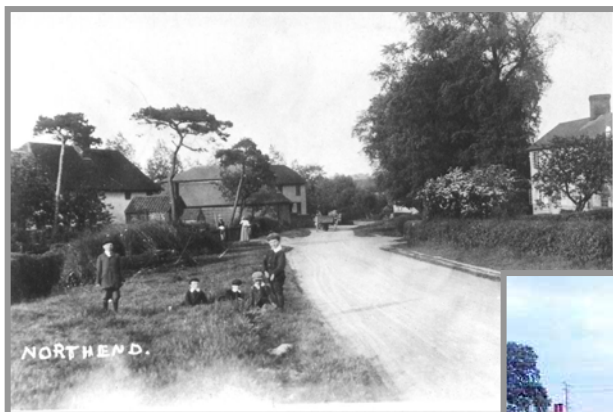
Most of the North End residents have moved here because it is where they want to live; both long term and newer residents are enthusiastic about their environment, as indicated by the 71% return on the VDS questionnaire.

The characteristics of North End that the residents value most and want to keep are:

- The quiet, friendly rural ambience.
- The panoramic views of the landscape, especially across the Chelmer Valley. Most homes have uninterrupted views of the surrounding countryside and are not overlooked from the rear.
- The mixture of old and newer styles of dwelling, largely unassuming and almost all of traditional materials.

The residents also consider that:

- The village could only absorb very limited residential growth, in keeping with the character, scale and proportion of the village and within the existing settlement areas. Commercial development leading to new building is to be avoided.
- There is no need for affordable housing for the village.
- Urbanisation is to be avoided.



Mill Road in the 1920s



Mill Road today

Appendix

Community Projects and Amenities

Community activities are organised locally, revolving around Blackchapel and the residents association, VOICE. The residents, mainly through VOICE, organise and fund their own projects for community activities and village enhancements. They have already provided a village signpost, a new village notice board and illustrated map, bench seats and have undertaken planting projects throughout the village.

Many residents prefer independent, rural outdoor activities, especially those afforded by the extensive network of footpaths. North End is in countryside protected by the Core Strategy and LDF and is not a defined settlement; it follows that the possibility of linking community benefits with development schemes is unlikely.

During development of the VDS, two areas were identified as possible future projects for improvement by analysis of them as 'spaces', through application of ideas from the document 'It's our Space' (<http://www.cabe.org.uk/default.aspx?contentitemid=1718>) published by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE).

These are:

- Improvements to the space in the region of the triangular green; with particular emphasis on how a different road surface treatment might enhance the appearance, remove the need for kerbing and slow traffic entering Mill Road from Bennetts Lane.
- The space between the A130 and the Butchers Arms; designing it to improve amenity value, to the benefit of the publican and the residents. Complications that would need taking account of are maintenance of access to Lawn Lane, access for pub car parking and the safe 'layby' facility afforded to residents.

If the opportunity arises for either of these projects, cooperative planning by the residents and the Highway Authority would be necessary to design and implement the scheme, perhaps using the CABE Spaceshaper Toolkit (refer to <http://www.cabe.org.uk/default.aspx?contentitemid=1675>).

Speed Limits

Dualisation of the A120 and housing developments in Little Dunmow have significantly increased the volume and weight of traffic on the A130, Bennetts Lane and Mill Road. The residents have indicated that they would strongly support:

- Introduction of a 40mph speed limit on the A130*.
- Extension of the existing speed limits in the village lanes.
- Limits on HGV access.

Whilst of relevance to the community, these matters are not VDS material. Therefore, they have been handed over to the Great Waltham Parish Plan Association for further consideration in drafting the Parish Plan.

* At the time of issue of this document, it was announced that the Department for Transport and Essex County Council had agreed that the A130 between Dunmow and The Walthams would be reclassified as the B1008.

7. REFERENCES AND CREDITS

Other sources of reference to be used in conjunction with the VDS are:

LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies, Submission Development Plan Document, CBC Nov. 2006

Sustainable Places, Supplementary Planning Document, CBC 2007

Landscape Character Assessment, technical document to LDF, Chris Blandford Associates for CBC 2006.

Residential design guidance; side extensions and roof extensions, CBC 2004.

Chelmsford Borough Council Local Plan adopted April 1997, to be replaced by the Local Development Framework.

Essex Design Guide, 2005.

Protected Lanes, Essex County Council, 1998.

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Bumbles



Decoration found on wall plaster in Blackchapel

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