

## **Built Heritage Note - Land South of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green, Essex**

### **Introduction**

The aim of this note is to provide a high-level review of the Built Heritage impacts associated with the potential future development of Land South of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green, Essex (Colchester City Council, Site Search Reference: 10760), as part of the site's promotion through the emerging Colchester Local Plan.

Land South of Halstead Road is centred on NGR TL 9394 2573, located to the south of the eastern urban concentration of Eight Ash Green. The site consists of a single arable field, with existing structures limited to a small number of agricultural outbuildings located near the southwest boundary. The boundary of the field is made up of hedges and mature vegetation on all sides.

In terms of Built Heritage, there are two designated heritage assets within 500m of the site boundary. These assets comprise the Grade II Listed Malting House (NHLE 1239711) located approximately 30m to the west of the site boundary, and the Grade II Listed Bakery Cottage (NHLE 1239673) located approximately 220m to the east of the site. Due to their designation, both the Malting House and Bakery Cottage can be considered as assets of national significance.

The Locally Listed Orchard Cottage (Reference: DCC26133) is located approximately 15m to the west of the site, while All Saints Church located approximately 60m to the east of the site could also be considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. Both Orchard Cottage and All Saints Church are assets of local significance.

No other built heritage assets of interest have been identified within immediate proximity of the site.

### **Policy Summary**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework**

Section 16 of the: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment relates to the conservation of heritage assets in the production of local plans and decision taking. It emphasises that heritage assets are 'an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance'.

For proposals that have the potential to affect the significance of a heritage asset, paragraph 207 requires applicants to identify and describe the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected. This is supported by paragraph 208, which requires LPAs to take this assessment into account when considering applications.

Under 'Considering potential impacts' paragraph 212 states that 'great weight' should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, irrespective of whether any potential impact equates to total loss, substantial harm or less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage assets.

Paragraph 214 states that where a development will result in substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused, unless this harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, or a number of criteria are met. Where less than substantial harm is identified paragraph 215 requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.

Paragraph 216 states that where an application will affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement is required, having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

## Local Planning Policy

The Colchester Local Plan 2013-33 contains the following policy relating to Built Heritage:

### *Policy DM16: Historic Environment*

*Development that will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a listed building, conservation area, historic park or garden or important archaeological remains (including the setting of heritage assets) will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss. Where development will lead to less than substantial harm this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.*

*Development affecting the historic environment should seek to conserve and enhance the significance of the heritage asset and any features of specific historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest. In all cases there will be an expectation that any new development will enhance the historic environment or better reveal the significance of the heritage asset unless there are no identifiable opportunities available. In instances where existing features have a negative impact on the historic environment, as identified through character appraisals (or other method of identification of historic assets), the Local Planning Authority will request the removal of the features that undermine the historic environment as part of any proposed development. The Local Planning Authority will request the provision of creative and accessible interpretations of heritage assets impacted by development.*

*Conservation of the historic environment will also be ensured by:*

- (i) Identifying, characterising, protecting and enhancing Conservation Areas;*
- (ii) Protection and enhancement of existing buildings and built areas which do not have Listed Building or Conservation Area status but have a particular local importance or character which it is desirable to keep;*
- (iii) Preserving and enhancing Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, including their respective settings, and other features, which contribute to the heritage of the Borough; and*
- (iv) Sites of archaeological interest will be clearly identified and protected, and sites that become known, whether through formal evaluation as part of a Planning Application or otherwise, will similarly be protected according to their importance.*

*Heritage Impact Assessments and/or Archaeological Evaluations will be required for proposals related to or impacting on the setting of heritage assets and/or known or possible archaeological sites, and where there is potential for encountering archaeological sites so that sufficient information is provided to assess the significance of the heritage assets and to assess the impacts of development on historic assets together with any proposed mitigation measures.*

The adopted Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan 2017 – 2033 also contains the following heritage focused policy:

*Heritage Policy 1 (Her 1): Any Listed Building or Heritage Asset and their setting within the Neighbourhood Plan Area should be maintained or where possible enhanced to protect from any future development.*

## Designated Heritage Assets

### Grade II Listed Malting House (NHLE 1239711)

The Historic England Listings for the Grade II Listed Malting House describes the building as:

*C18 house. Long range to street faced in red brick laid in Flemish-bond, on an L-plan; with hipped ridged and gabled roof clad with pegtile. Central square plan red brick chimney-stack. A range of 4 small-pane sash windows in exposed boxes. On first storey, front door under pedimented hood, with 5 pairs of C19 sash windows on ground storey.*

The Malting House appears on the 1839 Copford Tithe Map, and is recorded as being owned by Richard Cason, whereas the site is recorded within the ownership of Henry Skingley and Abraham King. The asset is depicted as sitting within a small, roughly triangular, enclosure, surrounded on all sides by wide trackways linking Eight Ash Green to Daisy Green c500m further to the west. The layout of the property remains unchanged on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map. The modern layout of the property remains relatively unchanged, as the Malting House is still located within the same enclosure bounded by a thick mature vegetation, surround by the existing Turkey Cock Lane and agricultural tracks/footpaths.

The significance of Grade II Listed Malting House is primarily derived from its evidential value in its form and fabric, and as a well preserved example of a substantial 18<sup>th</sup> century house with some alterations, although it has some aesthetic values, principally derived from its long elevation, the uniform colour of the exterior construction materials utilised and its regular fenestration. It has limited historical and communal values.

The setting of the asset is limited to the triangular enclosure in which the building has historically occupied, and the Turkey Cock Lane road frontage from where the principal elevation can be seen. Due to the thick vegetation which forms the boundary of the enclosure in which the asset sits, there is no intervisibility with the surrounding rural landscape, including land south of Halstead Lane. Its principal façade faces towards Turkey Cock Lane, away from the site of the proposed development. The historic mapping indicates that although the asset was constructed within a rural area, there was a conscious effort in its location to seek a degree of separation from the surrounding rural landscape by its positioning within a discrete enclosure surrounded by wide trackways. This detachment from the surrounding rural environment is emphasised by current retention of the thick boundary vegetation, preventing wider intervisibility. As such, the wider rural landscape does not form part of the asset's setting. The limited setting of the asset, confined to the enclosure in which the house is located, and the immediate road frontage, contributes to the asset's significance by providing it with a secluded, private feel, whilst also facilitating views of the house and appreciation of its evidential and architectural values.

There is no intervisibility between the Grade II Listed Malting House and the site, nor does the site form part of the setting of the asset. The proposed development will retain and enhance the southwestern boundary of the site, further reducing any risk of intervisibility between the two. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not negatively impact the significance of the Grade II Listed Malting House.

## **Grade II Listed Bakery Cottage (NHLE 1239673)**

The Historic England Listings for the Grade II Listed Bakery Cottage is described as:

*C17, long range in red brick Flemish-bonded with central red brick chimney stack, roof gambrelled and pegtiled. Of one storey with attics, and tiled lean-to dormer to road. A pantiled one storey, ridged and gabled extension on right, and with 2 dormers one central and one on right at centre. Ground storey has 2 pairs of small pane casements under segmental arches.*

Bakery Cottage appears on the 1839 Copford Tithe Map and is recorded as being owned by James Beavis. The asset is depicted as sitting centrally within a small plot, set back from the road, with gardens to the front and rear. This layout is similar to that which can be discerned currently. During the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the asset would have been located within the core of the historic hamlet at Eight Ash Green, focused on the established crossroads formed by the modern Halstead Road, Spring Lane, and Blind Lane. The hamlet was set within a wider agricultural landscape. The layout of the property appears slightly modified on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map, with the eastern part of the plot subdivided to facilitate the construction of an additional dwelling. The modern setting of Bakery Cottage is associated with the historic core of the eastern part of Eight Ash Green, fronting onto the busy Halstead Road, surrounded by modern residential properties on all sides, with the exception of its southern boundary where an agricultural field lies.

The significance of Grade II Listed Bakery Cottage is derived from its evidential value as a well preserved 17<sup>th</sup> century cottage, and in its form and fabric, as well as the aesthetic values it derives from its appearance, use of traditional local materials and roadside village location. It has limited historical and communal values.

The current setting of the asset is associated with the modern village of Eight Ash Green, being dominated by modern residential properties and a busy main road. It is one of the few historic buildings surviving within the core of the modern village, and as such, its setting is largely confined to the immediate grounds of the house and its immediate road frontage, from where the evidential and aesthetic values of the asset can be seen and appreciated. This setting provides a relatively peaceful confined area within which the building can be appreciated and makes a slight positive contribution to its significance. There is no intervisibility between the site and the Bakery Cottage.

The site does not form part of the setting of Bakery cottage, and there is no intervisibility or historical associations between the two. As a result it is considered that the proposed development on the site would not be negatively impact the setting or significance of the Grade II Listed Bakery Cottage.

## Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Orchard Cottage, located approximately 15m to the west of the site, is a Locally Listed building as designated by Colchester City Council. The property is recorded as a one-and-a-half-storey, timber-framed/brick-built structure, the exterior of which has been heavily altered and modernised. Some internal features survive to indicate that the building was originally constructed between 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. The significance of Orchard Cottage is derived from its evidential value relating to the elements of historic internal fabric which survive. It has limited aesthetic, historical, and communal values. The setting of the asset derives from the grounds in which the building sits and the wider rural landscape, which has remained relatively consistent during then life span of the building. Due to the evidential value of the asset deriving from those historic internal features which survive, its setting does not contribute to the significance of the asset. The proposed development would be located within the setting of the asset, although the presence of modern forms in proximity of the asset would not negatively impact the significance of the Locally Listed Orchard Cottage.

All Saints Church, located approximately 60m to the west of the site first appears on the Ordnance Survey mapping in 1920, indicating the church was constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and is of brick construction with tiled roof. The significance of the asset derives from its evidential value as a good example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century ecclesiastical building, and communal value as an active place of worship. The 1920 Ordnance Survey mapping depicts the asset a small tree lined enclosure, set back from Halstead, with the Parsonage located a short distance to the west of the church. The setting of the church has altered by the subsequent demolition of the Parsonage and the introduction of an associated cemetery to the south of the church. The setting is now principally defined by the thickly tree-line boundary to the church enclosure and the road frontage of Halstead Road. The setting contributes to the significance of the asset by allowing the evidential values of the asset to be seen and appreciated. Due to the thick vegetation there is no intervisibility between the asset and the site. The site does not form part of the setting of All Saints Church, and there is no intervisibility or historical associations between the two. As a result, it is considered that the proposed development on the site would not be negatively impact the setting or significance of the non-designated All Saints Church.

## Summary

Based on an initial assessment of the designated built heritage assets within 500m of the site, it is considered that any residential development proposal associated with land south of the Halstead Road would not negatively impact the significance of the Grade II Listed Malting House or the Grade II Listed Bakery Cottage. Nor would proposed residential development impact the significance of those non-designated built heritage assets identified in immediate proximity of the site.

The assessment process undertaken as part of the emerging Colchester Local Plan draft allocation process has allocated the site a score of 'significant negative effect likely (uncertain)' under the SA7: Historic Environment category. In terms of built heritage, it is our view that this rating cannot be substantiated, and that a rating of 'negligible effect likely' would be considered appropriate in this scenario.

Chris Clarke – Technical Director

13/05/25