

Summary of Heritage Assessment relating to the emerging Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of the Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

This summary contains substantial extracts and edited highlights of the full report which may be viewed or downloaded at <https://www.stebbingneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/>

The full version of the Heritage Assessment has been sent to both Uttlesford District Council and Braintree Council for their consideration as a part of the local consultation process.

1. Stebbing Neighbourhood Heritage Assessment.

- 1.1. This survey and report were commissioned after the Landscape Report, also available on the Neighbourhood Plan website. There are references to the Landscape Report contained within the full Heritage Assessment report which provides commonality of site locations and descriptions such as site numbers and parcel numbers.
- 1.2. Town and Parish Councils that are preparing Neighbourhood Plans are advised by the District Council to undertake initial evidence gathering and consultation on their emerging ideas alongside the development of the new Local Plan. This Heritage Assessment is part of that process.
- 1.3. Stebbing is a very characterful historic village that has retained its distinctive historic morphology. Well over half of the listed buildings in the parish are located beyond the boundary of the Stebbing Conservation Area, which reflects the fact that the village's historic character goes much wider than its historic core. In particular, it is surprising that the distinctive character of Stebbing Green has not been recognised with conservation area status.
- 1.4. Stebbing has accommodated a degree of twentieth-century development, but the village has not been subject to the harmful effects of large scale suburban expansion.
- 1.5. In the parlance of the National Planning Policy Framework, the listed buildings, scheduled monuments and conservation area within Stebbing parish constitute designated heritage assets and in accordance with the Framework, this assessment has considered the impact on the significance of these heritage assets, including the contribution made by their settings.
- 1.6. This Heritage Assessment has focused on nine potential development sites and has sought to establish the likely impact that would result from their development. None of these sites would result in direct harm to built heritage assets, if developed. In all cases potential harm is limited to indirect harm as a result of impact on setting. The tight urban villagescape of the historic core along High Street, which results in there being very few views out of the village to the surrounding countryside and conversely, very few views of the listed buildings that line the High Street from the surrounding countryside, mitigates impact on some of the village's heritage assets. However, the open nature of much of Stebbing makes heritage assets in those more open parts more susceptible to harm as a result of development within their setting.

- 1.7. The Heritage Assessment has considered views from publicly accessible vantage points, including the well-developed network of public footpaths in the open countryside within Stebbing parish.
- 1.8. The Heritage Assessment concludes that development of all but one of the nine sites considered would result in some degree of adverse heritage impact and harm to the significance of heritage assets. The only site where development would have a neutral impact on heritage assets is at Brick Kiln Lane.
- 1.9. In accordance with Government policy in the NPPF, those responsible for allocation of development sites must balance the degree of harm in each case against the wider public benefits that would flow from development of the sites. Consequently, it is important to have an understanding of the degree of potential harm that development would be likely to cause.
- 1.10. The Heritage Assessment concludes that the greatest degree of harmful impact on the historic environment would result from development of the following sites: (Full descriptions of these sites are contained in the full report)
 - Site 04: Land to the north of Watch House Road
 - Site 05: Land centred on Andrewsfield Airfield
 - Site 06: Bosted Wood
 - Land to the west of High Street, Stebbing – Site B
- 1.11. More moderate but still harmful impacts on the historic environment would result from development of the following sites:
 - Site 01: Meadowbrook, Mill Lane, Stebbing
 - Site 02: Land at Brick Kiln Lane, Bran End
 - Land to the west of High Street, Stebbing – Site A
- 1.12. Development of Site 03: Hornsea Lodge, Bran End would only cause a negligible impact on the historic environment.
- 1.13. Development of the land north of Brick Kiln Lane would have a neutral impact on the historic environment.
- 1.14. Development of the garden plot part of Site 01: Meadowbrook, Mill Lane could potentially have a minor beneficial effect.
- 1.15. Additionally, the assessment has considered the potential impact on heritage assets of development of other parcels of land identified in the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Appraisal as having medium-low and medium landscape capacity. The heritage assessment concludes that:

- Development of Parcels 15 and 16 (with the exception of the northern margin of Parcel 16) would result in a major adverse impact on heritage assets of medium and high sensitivity
 - Development of Parcel 14 in whole would result in a minor/moderate adverse impact on heritage assets of medium sensitivity. However, a more limited, linear frontage development would be likely to have no more than a negligible adverse effect on the heritage assets of medium sensitivity.
 - Development of Parcel 10 would result in a major adverse impact on heritage assets of medium sensitivity.
- 1.16. Finally, the assessment has considered sites suggested in a village questionnaire. Most of these are covered in the assessment of sites put forward under the 'call for sites' or identified in the Landscape Assessment. The following three residual sites have been considered separately:
- 1.17. • Development of the margin of land on the north-eastern side of Clay Lane would result in a major adverse impact on heritage assets of medium and high sensitivity, although the northern part would result in no more than a negligible adverse impact on heritage assets of medium sensitivity due to increased separation
- Development of land on the south side of Watch House Road would result in a major adverse effect on heritage assets of high and medium sensitivity
 - Development of land on the northern side of Warehouse Road would cause no more than a minor adverse impact on assets of high and medium sensitivity.

2. Stebbing Conservation Area

- 2.1. The Stebbing Conservation Area was designated by Essex County Council in 1977. The conservation area boundary was reviewed in 1991. The boundary of the conservation area embraces the historic core of the village. In March 2010, Uttlesford District Council approved a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. The Council's appraisal notes that the conservation area has three distinct character areas.
- 2.2. The High Street character area comprises a length of the main village that is flanked by a high density of historic buildings, the majority of which are listed.
- 2.3. The Church End character area, to the immediate south of the High Street zone, is distinguished by the sudden change to openness at the southern end of the built-up length of the High Street. A band of small fields on the west side and a wooded meadow on the east side, separate the High Street zone from an area characterised by a looser grouping of historic buildings, many of which stand within open plots. A high percentage of the buildings in the character area are listed.
- 2.4. The Mill Lane/Stebbing Park character area extends to the west of the High Street, down to the valley of the Stebbing Brook. Mill Lane runs to the west, from a junction adjacent to

the White Hart Public House. Mill Lane contains a diverse range of historic buildings laid out in a ribbon, interspersed with twentieth-century development. Key buildings are the former Methodist Chapel, the former United Reformed Church (now the Village Hall), and the imposing timber-framed Tan Farmhouse (see description above). Mill Lane falls towards the river and overhanging trees give a tunnel effect before the lane turns sharply to the north towards Stebbing Mill, with its attached Mill House.

- 2.5. The conservation area gains considerable significance from its surrounding countryside, due to the longstanding functional, visual, and spiritual link between the historic village and its rural setting. The absence of extensive areas of modern development has ensured the survival of a close relationship between the village and its countryside setting. Whilst there are relatively few views of surrounding countryside from the High Street character area, due to the high level of enclosure, it can be appreciated from surrounding public footpaths. The relationship between village and its setting is particularly strong in the Mill Lane/Stebbing Park and Church End character areas, with both inward and outward views.
- 2.6. A primary purpose of conservation areas is to acknowledge and protect the cumulative quality of a variety of attributes that have survived in historic places. The setting of the conservation area contributes to this significance. Impacts on the conservation area and its setting have to be considered in terms of their impact on the whole asset.

3. Scheduled Monuments

There are four scheduled monuments within Stebbing parish.

3.1. The Mount: a motte castle in Stebbing Park

The monument is situated on a prominent west-facing spur in Stebbing Park, 750m north-west of the church. The approximately thirteen metre high circular earth mound, measures sixty-nine metres in diameter at its base. An approximately 1.5 metre deep water-filled moat with a maximum width of fifteen metres surrounds the motte. Originally a narrow causeway on the west side of the moat gave access to the motte but has been excavated to form a continuous moat and access is now via a small wooden bridge.

3.2. Porter's Hall moated site

The monument is situated at Porter's Hall, to the north-east of Stebbing Green. It comprises a rectangular moated area which measures 110 metres NW-SE by 65 metres NE-SW. The arms are between 12 metres and 6 metres in wide and are water-filled, except to the south-west where they have dried out. The eastern corner has an irregular extension which measures 30 metres NE-SW by 20m NW-SE. The southern corner has also been extended along the same line as the south-western arm for a further 32 metres. Along the southern edge of this arm is a slight bank, which is considered to have been used as a garden terrace. An outlet channel leads from the southern corner of the moat to the road. The island is undulating, particularly to the north-west where the foundations of the original house are located. A small section of the original house, which dates to the 15th or 16th century, survives as the northern-most part of the present day outhouses (listed grade II). The present Porter's Hall is dated to the 16th century and is listed grade II* (see above).

3.3. Holt's Farm moated site

The monument is situated on high ground over-looking Stebbing Brook, 2.5 kilometres north of Stebbing parish church. The monument comprises a quadrangular moated area which measures about 100 metres north-south by 50 metres east-west. The arms are an average of 10 metres in width, apart from at the south-eastern corner where the moat measures a maximum of 20 metres in width. Only the south-eastern corner remains water-filled. The northern and eastern arms have been partly brick-lined. At the north-western corner is the outlet channel, a ditch 9 metres in length by 2.5 metres in width. The eastern arm has been partly infilled to form a causeway, giving access to the island which is raised from the surrounding ground level by approximately half a metre. The house which is situated on the island dates from 1650 and is listed grade II.

3.4. Medieval tile kilns south of Church End

The monument is located in open countryside approximately half a kilometre to the south of Church End and covers a large rectangular area on the sloping valley-side of the Stebbing Brook, on the eastern side of the river. The site is part of a wider agricultural field, which is surrounded by other fields. There are no upstanding features or visible remains. The site has evidential significance and the wider setting could potentially add to the evidential value of the monument. The wider setting makes no visual contribution to the significance of the monument.

3.5. Other heritage designations

There are no registered historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields or World Heritage Sites within the parish of Stebbing.

4. Uttlesford Local Plan

- 4.1. Current planning policy is set out in the saved policies of the Uttlesford Local Plan (ULP), which was adopted on 20 January 2005. Stebbing was not identified in the ULP as a location for new development. However, the village is subject to Policy H3 which states that *"infilling with new houses will be permitted ... if the development would be compatible with the character of the settlement and ... its countryside setting"* (subject to detailed criteria relating to the site and local infrastructure).
- 4.2. The limits of the settlement in relation to Policy H3 were defined on a proposals map. The map shows a tight development limit boundary for the High Street part of Stebbing together with The Downs, together with a separate tight development limit boundary for Bran End. The Church End and Stebbing Green component parts of the village are indicated as beyond the development limit boundaries. In effect, urban expansion of Stebbing was not envisaged under the provisions of the 2005 Local Plan.
- 4.3. The District Council is currently in the process of formulating a new Local Plan that is intended to replace the 2005 Local Plan, following the withdrawal of an earlier draft replacement Local Plan in January 2015. The withdrawn plan was criticised by a Government Inspector for its failure to provide a clear and transparent audit trail of rejected development options and options taken forward into the plan.

- 4.4. In formulating a new development strategy, parishes within Uttlesford District have been encouraged to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans. Such plans are required to adhere to the strategic elements of the emerging district-wide Local Plan. Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan is one of seven such plans being prepared by local groups, as sub-components of the emerging Uttlesford Local Plan. A Neighbourhood Plan for Great Dunmow was formally made (i.e. adopted) on the 8 December 2016 and became the first of this set of plans to achieve such status.
- 4.5. Uttlesford District Council made a call for sites in 2015. Additional sites were sought in 2016. Potential development sites identified are being assessed through a Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) and Sustainability Appraisal.
- 4.6. Uttlesford District Council has advised Town and Parish Councils which are considering preparing a Neighbourhood Plan that two-way communication is essential to avoid inconsistencies between the emerging Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans.
- 4.7. A draft Local Plan strategy is currently the subject of public consultation.

5. Braintree Local Plan

- 5.1. Braintree District Council is similarly preparing a new Local Plan. Consultation on a Publication Draft Local Plan ran until 28th July 2017. The key provision in the emerging Braintree Local Plan with implications for the Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan is draft policy SP10, which identifies a strategic area for development of a new settlement known as the West of Braintree Garden Community on an extensive tract of land between Braintree and Stebbing.
- 5.2. The Braintree Publication Draft Local Plan proposes that details and final number of homes will be set out in a Strategic Growth Development Plan Document, to be prepared jointly between Braintree DC and Uttlesford DC, if applicable, and which will incorporate provision of around 2,500 homes within the Plan period.