

Little Baddow Village Design Statement



Supplementary Planning Document



1. Introduction

Purpose of Little Baddow's Village Design Statement (VDS)

The Little Baddow Village Design Statement aims to give clear guidance on how to care for the qualities and characteristics that residents and visitors value. The main objective is to ensure that the landscape character is respected and enhanced in any change to roads, buildings, car parks, woodland and open spaces. It puts forward guidance from the community on how any development or physical change to buildings and open spaces should respect or enhance the parish history and character. The VDS applies to the entire parish of Little Baddow.

Background

The Government wishes to involve rural communities in maintaining their character and managing any necessary changes without altering the uniqueness of the area. To assist with this aim, the Countryside Agency established the concept of Village Design Statements (VDS). Chelmsford City Council has encouraged villages within the area to produce VDS documents that can be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents.

A VDS for Little Baddow was first adopted by Chelmsford City Council as Interim Planning Guidance in May 2005. Consultation with the community included an extended questionnaire which received a response rate of more than 50%, an exhibition and publication on the VDS website.

As with the first edition, consultation with residents of Little Baddow, the Parish Council, and Chelmsford City Council was first undertaken in 2009 to update the document, particularly in relation to:

- historical evolution of the community;
- its setting in the countryside;
- the form of the settlement as a whole;
- the characteristics of the buildings and spaces within the village, and to express the view of the community on the future development of the village by assisting property owners and developers in adopting designs which are acceptable to the local community;
- promoting the use of appropriate building materials; ensuring that the valued physical qualities and characteristics of the village and its surroundings are conserved, protected and improved;
- assisting the local planning authority in their determination of planning applications.

The Development and Production of the VDS

The 2005 VDS was produced by village residents with extensive consultation within the village. The final 2005 document with the 2009 update reflects the majority opinion in all respects. For further details of the process leading to the production of the VDS refer to the Appendix.

The document has also been subject to consultation with residents of Little Baddow, visitors to the village, the VDS website, Little Baddow Parish Council and Chelmsford City Council; it has been revised to take account of all comments received.

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Status of this document

The VDS has been adopted by Chelmsford City Council, and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. This means that planning officers can make use of specific guidance in the VDS when dealing with cases and planning inspectors can refer to it when handling planning appeals. The Parish Council can refer to it in any comments they make on planning applications. As a public document the VDS will also influence people carrying out work on their home or land, whether it needs planning permission or not.

Planning Policy Context

Alongside other Chelmsford City Council planning guidance, the VDS adds a local dimension so that these policies can be specifically applied in Little Baddow.

The Local Development Framework (LDF) includes a Site Allocations Document (SADPD), which defines two Settlement Boundaries in Little Baddow (shown on Page 8-9). These are drawn tightly around the existing built up areas to preserve the special character of Little Baddow. The intention of the Defined Settlement Boundaries is to preserve the countryside by containing development within these areas.

In addition, a number of other Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) have been adopted by Chelmsford City Council, including Making Places (design guidance) and Sustainable Development, which along with guidance on side extensions and roof extensions, should be taken into account during planning. Copies are available from Chelmsford City Council, or on their website:

www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning

Other useful background documents, which help to describe the local landscape, include:

Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation – Conservation Area Appraisal
<http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/conservation-area-character-appraisals>

Landscape Character Assessment

<http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/sites/chelmsford.gov.uk/files/files/documents/files/EB46%20%20Landscape%20Character%20Assessment.pdf>

The guidelines in this VDS should be considered in the context of all relevant Chelmsford City Council policies in force at the time of publication of this document.

CCC adopted policies especially relevant to Little Baddow include, among others:

- CP5 – containing urban growth
- CP9 – protecting areas of natural and built heritage and archaeological importance
- CP12 – protecting and enhancing recreational provision
- CP14 – environmental quality and landscape character
- CP21 – ensuring buildings are well designed
- DC1 – controlling development in the Metropolitan Green Belt
- DC4 – protecting existing amenity
- DC7 – vehicle parking standards at developments
- DC11 – replacement dwellings in the countryside
- DC12 – infilling in the countryside
- DC14 – protected trees and hedges
- DC15 – protected lanes
- DC17 – conservation areas
- DC18 – listed buildings
- DC32 – rural housing need
- DC33 – agricultural workers dwellings
- DC37 – protecting existing local community services and facilities
- DC45 – achieving high quality development
- DC47 – extensions to dwellings
- DC53 – employment uses within rural areas
- DC57 – re-use of rural buildings



The Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation



Along the Millennium Walk

2. Landscape

The Parish of Little Baddow bounds the River Chelmer to the north and west. This was made navigable in the late 18th Century forming the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. From the river flood plain, the ground to the south-east rises by approximately 100 metres onto the Danbury Ridge on which the upper part of the village is situated. The ridge was formed before the last Ice Age from London Clay, and it prevented the southward progress of the ice sheet. As the ice melted, it deposited a mixture of gravel and sands in various areas on the ridge. The river valley has deposits of Terrace Gravel and is overlaid in some areas by alluvium.

The area is mainly of arable farmland interspersed with woodlands, some of them ancient.

The position of Little Baddow on the Danbury/Little Baddow ridge allows magnificent views across open farmland and the Chelmer Valley.

Approaching from the south the boundary is noticeably marked by a fall in housing density and an increase in natural vegetation, both of which are critical to the character and separate identity of the Parish.

The roads through the village are minor rural lanes other than the main route linking the A414 at Danbury to the B1137 between Boreham and Hatfield Peverel. Some of them are high-banked on ancient trackways. Most of the housing and woodland is on former farmland with old hedge lines still present. The A12, running through the Chelmer Valley, can be accessed at the western-most boundary of the village. Little Baddow lies approximately 7 miles from Chelmsford and 7.5 miles from Maldon. The railway line between the East Coast and London can be accessed from Chelmsford or Hatfield Peverel.

The valley bottom is part of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Conservation Area; there are a number of Local Wildlife Sites in this area. It is recognised for its natural beauty and it provides a haven for plants and wildlife. The roads in this area are prone to flooding, restricting access to the village when this occurs.

Guidance

- 1 The character of the village is defined by green wooded areas and views over large open spaces. Every effort should be made to protect these and to respect this important characteristic in all applications for development.
- 2 Towards the south end of The Ridge the views through gaps and the spaces between and above properties are particularly important to the identity of the village. The conspicuous decline in housing density that marks the transition from Danbury to Little Baddow should be retained.
- 3 Any flood prevention measures should not impact adversely on the character of the valley bottom of the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation.



Views from North Hill



3. Woodland and Open Spaces

It was readily apparent from the questionnaire results that the woodland character of the village is very special to Little Baddow residents and visitors to the area. Those who responded made clear how much they valued all aspects of the landscape picture - woodlands, leafy lanes, tree-lined roads, old hedgerows, footpaths and bridleways - plus the small open spaces within housing developments.

The many views over largely unspoilt countryside were also considered to be of the utmost importance.

“Woodland” can mean many things in Little Baddow. The most unique feature is the presence of no less than nine nature reserves and significant parts of two others. It is further enhanced by the adjacent Woodham Walter Common, Lingwood Common and the balance of Scrub Wood and Little Baddow Heath which lie outside the parish. The bulk of the reserves are owned or managed by Essex Wildlife Trust while Holybred Wood is looked after by the parish and Blakes Wood mainly by the National Trust.

Together this amounts to some 412 acres - approximately 258 of which lie in Little Baddow. All the land enjoys total protection, offers free access to the public and helps to enclose the village settlements along both sides of the north-south axis. To bolster the reserves there are private woods, woodland gardens, remnant hedgerows, numerous mature trees and beyond all of these the fields and open farmland. These woodlands, including those managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust, provide a valuable habitat for wildlife and plants. A network of footpaths and bridleways gives access for leisure activities. A village walk was especially designed for the Millennium, details are to be found under Amenities on the Parish Council website at www.littlebaddow.org.uk

The nature reserves we have are of the highest quality mainly having S.S.S.I. status (Sites of Special Scientific Interest). Together they form an intricate mosaic of ancient and secondary woodland, coppice, heath, meadow, spring-fed streams, ponds and marshes. Notable features include ancient pollarded trees, newly-restored heather, carpets of Bluebell, Wood Anemone and Lily-of-the-Valley to name just a few. Some of the species present are of county importance, such as the scattered populations of dormice. Almost any of the local flora and fauna may be seen in gardens throughout the village.

Those managing the reserves are always working to develop them for the maximum benefit both to wildlife and people. This may be difficult to achieve elsewhere in the village for many reasons. As examples, problems could well occur with urbanisation to frontage, further loss of hedgerows, conflict with very large trees or the possible extension of roadside paths.

Any such situation might tend to erode the quality of the landscape scene which is so highly valued. One possible action to consider might be to link the Millennium Walk in the north with Essex Wildlife Trust's nature trail in the south of the parish. Joined together by Postman's Lane it would give continuity from Runsell Lane right down to the river. In the process the defined settlement areas would also be joined as well as the three parish-owned reserves - Poor's Piece, Heather Hills and Holybred Wood.

Guidance

- 4 When planting new trees and hedges, native species should be preferred.
- 5 Existing hedgerows should be retained and trees and hedges protected when roadside work is being carried out.
- 6 Support should be given to further development of recreational footpaths particularly linking the Millennium Walk to the Essex Wildlife Trust's nature trail.
- 7 Nature conservation should continue to be a significant consideration when any new development is proposed to ensure protection and enhancement of the natural environment.
- 8 Farmland hedgerows should be restored where practicable.
- 9 Protection of trees should be encouraged.



The woods and open spaces which characterise the village must be preserved



Renowned Bluebell Woods

4. Evolution of the Village

Little Baddow developed from a group of small hamlets and scattered farms. There is evidence of early Celtic settlements both on the heavily wooded hill and by the river.

In Roman times the river was navigable as far as Little Baddow and there was a Roman villa in the area of the present day church. The Saxons are thought to have settled by the river and the line of farms that lie parallel to it dates back to this time. The manor houses of Little Baddow Hall, Tofts, Graces and Riffhams originated with such farms.

Construction of the church started some twenty years after the Norman Conquest and the north wall contains Roman tiles. It is thought that the present building replaces an earlier Saxon church. When Ecclesiastical parishes were created, the settlements which formed the manors of Little Baddow Hall and Middlemead were grouped together and took the name Baddow, with the Church later becoming the Parish Church.

After the Conquest the village was divided into three manors – Baddow Hall, Middlemead (later divided into Tofts and Bassetts) and Graces. In the Middle Ages further settlements were established as the population increased. The largest of these was Wickhay Green, now the site of most of the modern village, which is situated almost a mile from the church. The green at Aldermanburgh was only established in the 1970s.

The population at the time of the Norman Conquest is estimated to have been between 100 and 150. Although it rose over the centuries that followed, in the 1901 census it was still only 510. The greatest increase in population (now around 1500) came during the second half of the twentieth century but the pattern of the village remains the same. A conjectural sketch map of Little Baddow in the Middle Ages does not look very different from one of 1897.

Thomas Hooker and John Eliot, who started a non-conformist school in Little Baddow in the seventeenth century, were founding fathers of the State of Connecticut and this has led to strong links between the United Reformed Church and the U.S.A.

Agriculture remained the principal occupation of the village until the 20th century, when the availability of land for development and improved transport links made Little Baddow attractive for commuters.

It is still possible to see how attractive the land must have appeared to the early farmers with the combination of woodland, arable land, and the river that supplied both water and opportunity for transport.

The diversity of the listed buildings in the village is reflected in the time periods covered and the size of properties represented.

Listed Buildings

Bassetts
Paper Mill Lock
Yew Tree Cottage
Church of St. Mary the Virgin
Little Baddow Hall
United Reformed Church
The Manse
Cuckoos
The Old Rectory
Great Graces
Little Graces
Phillows Farmhouse
Hammonds Farmhouse
Holybred Farmhouse
Pilgrims
Water Hall
Mill Cottage
Forest Lodge
Barn to the east of Forest Lodge
(Nos. 1 and 2) Chelmer Cottage
The Rodney Inn
Cock Farm
The Return
House at Warren Farm
57 North Hill
Coleraines
Poleighs
Thatched Cottage
Woodlands
Old Riffhams
Gibbs
Monks Garden
Walters Cottage
Tofts
Bassetts' Farmhouse
Outbuilding to the north-east of
Great Graces
Barn to the north-east of Great
Graces
Outbuilding to the south-east of
Great Graces
Wall and Pavilion to the east of
Great Graces



Left: Baddow Hall



The United Reform Chapel was built in 1707 and is one of the earliest non conformist churches in Essex

5. Development of the Village

The most important characteristic of Little Baddow, which unifies the whole village, is its open appearance. Stretching as it does from The Ridge to the River Chelmer there are still heavily wooded areas but also open views. Much of the more recent development is open plan and with wide verges at the entrances to access roads.

The areas approaching the entrances to the Rye Field, Rysley and Spring Close should be maintained without enclosures; they enhance the openness of the areas adjacent to each of those unique developments.

Although there is great architectural diversity within Little Baddow, once again the feature which is evident throughout the village is the space between properties. The majority of houses are detached or semi-detached and the large number of trees creates a streetscene in which it is the green spaces between properties which most strongly epitomize the character of the village.

Little Baddow comprises many sizes, styles and periods of property, the defined settlement areas being loosely based on the main North/South route through the village.

Large plot sizes allowed the village to maintain open space between houses and to retain its rural character. Some infilling has been permitted.

Although there are no statutory conservation areas covering the built up areas of the village, the group of cottages on North Hill surrounding and including The Rodney Inn was given special mention among listed properties as being of local interest. There are also several listed properties between St. Mary's Church and Chestnut Cottage that should be of special concern.

Council housing was built at Wickhay Green shortly before World War I and in the early 1960s Spring Close was built providing a mixture of social housing, including bungalows for the elderly and private dwellings. With a few exceptions, all of these are now privately owned. The Close was designed around a large green area and many of the houses have pleasant views over the Chelmer Valley or Holybread Wood. A children's play area, formerly known as the Spring Close Play Area and now Wickhay Green, is adjacent to the Close and is also accessed from Jarvis Field. Jarvis Field was built in the 1970s and mainly consists of detached four-bedroom family homes; there are a few smaller properties and no social housing. This combined area has the highest density in the village and provides the largest number of homes without jeopardising its rural aspects.

Since 1960 there has been more informal development at the Southern end of the village with houses, and some bungalows, being built piecemeal in Fir Tree Lane and the Woodroffe estate, consisting of Wayside, Chestnut Walk and Woodside. These are individual detached houses set in large gardens reflecting the spacious and rural character of Little Baddow. Adjacent to these developments and backing on to Essex Wildlife reserves, Litchborough Park was built on previously developed land in the 1990s and comprises large detached houses.

Guidance

- 10 The open spaces such as those at the entrance to the The Rye Field, Rysley and Spring Close should be maintained in their present form without enclosure, street furniture or formal planting.
- 11 The open spaces between properties and the views they afford are highly important to the character of the village and it is important when considering planning applications that these are maintained. Any proposals for infill or backland development should respect these gaps to protect the village character.



Large plot sizes maintain the arcadian nature of much of the village



Spring close a 60s development that maintains an open aspect

6. General Residential Design Considerations

Little Baddow is an area of low-density housing with attractive perspectives.

Plans

Because of the impact that additional development would have on the existing landscape of Little Baddow, developers should be encouraged to provide perspective drawings to show how proposed new development will appear in relation to the overall surroundings and should specify any proposed landscape development.

Layout

The size of any proposed development, whether of new properties or extensions to existing properties, should be appropriate to the size of the plot and the extent to which the development will "urbanise" the street scene. Particular attention should be given to maintaining sufficient distances between properties. It is preferable that new houses are set back from the road. Infill development would erode the low-density housing pattern of the village and is, therefore, not considered desirable by residents.



New developments should retain space between properties with views beyond

Boundaries, Lighting and Surface Materials

In order to maintain the rural character of Little Baddow careful consideration with regard to boundaries, lighting and surface materials needs to be given to all proposals whether the physical change needs planning permission or not as such changes can have much effect on the appearance of the area.

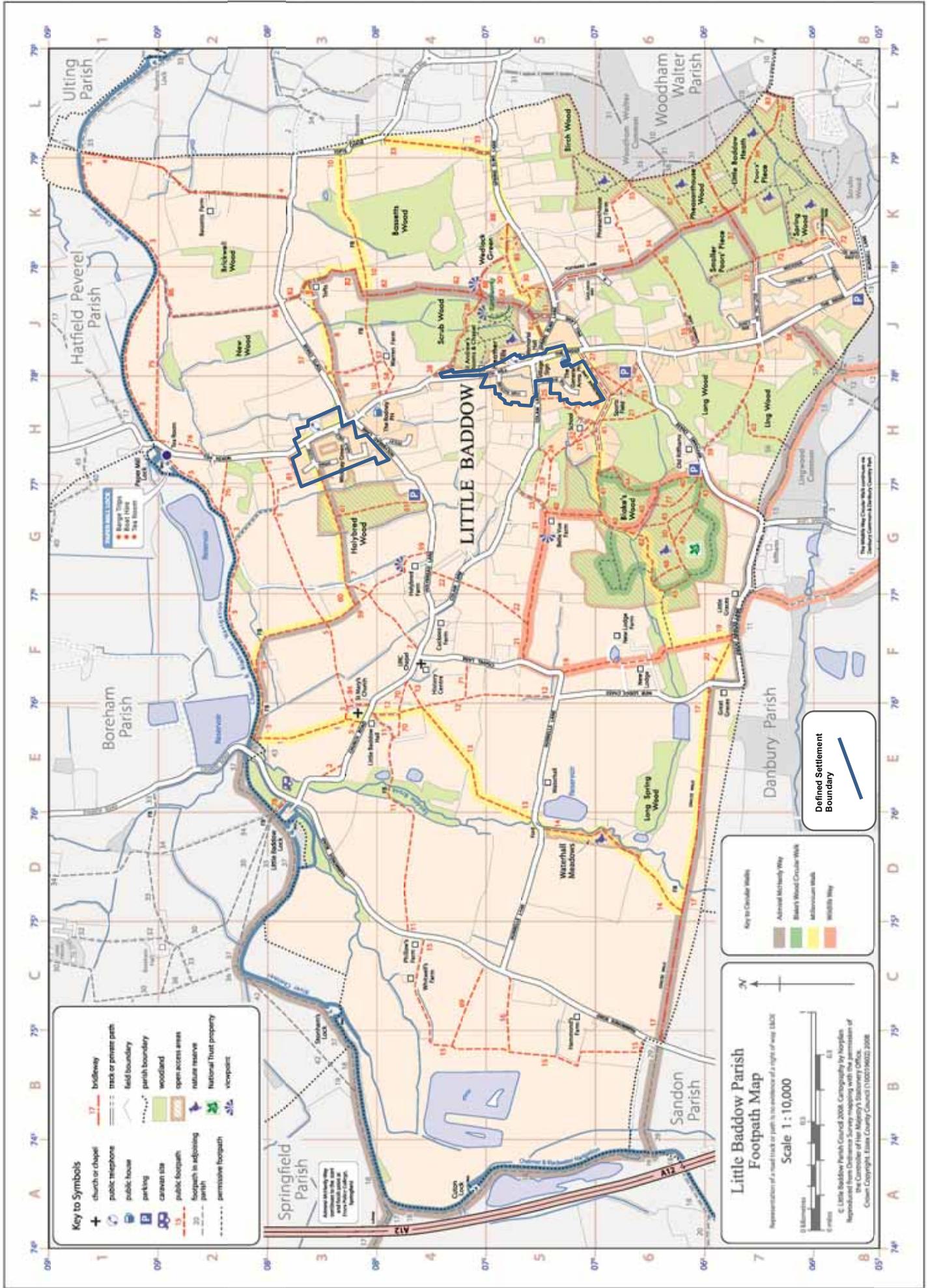
Any new or replacement driveway of any size should use permeable (or porous) surfacing which allows water to drain through, such as gravel, permeable concrete block paving or porous asphalt, or if the rainwater is directed to a lawn or border to drain naturally.

New Housing

Any new developments should be for individual houses or small groups of houses built at low density.

Guidance

- 12 New buildings should be set back from the road and should visually relate to neighbouring properties.
- 13 Existing roadside hedges, trees and shrubs should be retained where they contribute to the character and be supplemented with new planting.
- 14 New garages should match the materials of the host dwelling and surroundings, and as a general rule should not be built in front of the building line. Roof pitches should reflect the style of the main building.
- 15 The visual impact of boundary materials should be sensitive to the rural location and in keeping with the character of the street scene using natural boundary materials and native species hedging.
- 16 Gates should be low, farm-style and of natural materials, not high and ornate city-style gates.
- 17 Driveways and access paths should be finished with materials appropriate to the rural environment and the street scene.
- 18 Security and convenience lighting should be kept to a minimum and careful consideration given to strength and location, especially when adjacent to the highway and other properties.
- 19 Any new or replacement driveway of any size should use permeable (or porous) surfacing as recommended in government guidelines; so allowing water to drain through gravel, permeable concrete block paving or porous asphalt, or if the rainwater is directed to a lawn or border to drain naturally. Due to the narrow roads, frequent absence of footways and lack of public transport, provision for on-plot parking is highly desirable.



Key to Symbols

- church or chapel
- public telephone
- public house
- parking
- caravan site
- public footpath
- footpath in adjoining parish
- permissive footpath
- bridleway
- track or private path
- field boundary
- parish boundary
- woodland
- open access areas
- nature reserve
- National Trust property
- viewpoint

Key to Colour Walks

- Admitted Public Path
- Public Path
- Byway
- Restricted Byway

Little Baddow Parish Footpath Map
 Scale 1 : 10,000

Representation of a road track or path to the east of a right of way (R100)

0 0.5 1 Miles
 0 0.5 1 Kilometres

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Defined Settlement Boundary

6. General Residential Design Considerations - continued

Given the natural character of Little Baddow and the inadequacies of the infrastructure, any large-scale development in Little Baddow is considered undesirable. Any development would be at the cost of woodland or open spaces.

The site of the demolished garages adjacent to Wickhay Green Play Area might be appropriate for development.

Alterations and Extensions to Existing Houses (including New House Building in the Grounds of Existing Houses)

Alterations and extensions to existing houses should be compatible with the size, design and materials of the existing house and should be considered in the context of the whole road. There should be consistency in roads built to a single style such as Spring Close, High Pasture, Rysley, The Rye Field, Jarvis Field and Litchborough Park. Particular attention should be paid to the relationship between the size of a proposed dwelling and its plot. Replacement dwellings within the defined settlement boundaries should leave sufficient space around the new dwelling in order to protect its setting and the character of the area. Replacement dwellings outside the defined settlement boundary should be of a size and scale similar to the original dwelling.



Replacement dwellings should remain low density and be set back where possible

The character of Spring Elms Lane has been designated a Protected Lane in accordance with the LDF. Protected Lanes are country lanes with considerable historic and landscape value that contribute to rural character. These routes often originate from pre-historic trackways through the forest, and later lanes used during Saxon and Medieval periods.



Natural boundary hedging appropriate to the village

Guidance

- 20 The chimney skyline should be preserved. Pitched roofs for houses and dormers are preferred although flat roofs would be appropriate if designed to complement the architectural style of an existing building.
- 21 Landscaping with open space and the planting of indigenous trees are an important consideration and should be part of any new development.
- 22 Alterations and extensions within the curtilage of existing houses should be appropriate in size, using comparable design and materials with the existing house; taking account of the character of immediate surroundings, including nearby properties. Extensions should relate to their context and not dominate the main building.
- 23 Complementary materials, e.g. render can look better alongside brick rather than more brick, and can avoid the building appearing over-large, or being out of scale.
- 24 A replacement dwelling within the defined settlement area should leave sufficient space around the new dwelling in order to protect its setting and the character of the area.
- 25 A replacement or new dwellings outside of the defined settlement area should be of a size and scale similar to the original dwelling.
- 26 Rainwater goods should reflect the colour, shape and form of the original, and where new, respect those of the surrounding materials.
- 27 The pattern and style of windows and doors should be replicated in extensions to properties. In semi-detached and terraced houses, windows and doors should aim to achieve unity in the design of the whole building.

7. Transport and Infrastructure

Excess speed and volume of traffic is a major concern to the residents of Little Baddow. The road network in the village, consistent with its rural character, consists of a network of narrow lanes. There is one principal road through the village leading from Danbury to Hatfield Peverel and Boreham, but the network could not be made adequate to accommodate either a large volume of traffic or non-agricultural vehicles of any great size without affecting the character of the village.

Unfortunately, because of its location, this network is increasingly used, not only as a convenient through route from the A12 to Danbury and beyond, but also as a shortcut by many anxious to avoid traffic jams on the Chelmsford bypass and the A414.

The Local Development Framework (LDF) envisages an increase in the number of houses in the key defined settlements of South Woodham Ferrers, Bicknacre, Danbury and Boreham. These lie on a line running approximately north-south to east of town. This line runs through Little Baddow and connects with the proposed new transport facilities of the Chelmsford north-east railway station and the north-east bypass. These proposals will produce considerable additional north-south traffic which will inevitably affect Little Baddow and its protected lanes.

The volume of traffic using the road network in the village, and the speeds maintained, cause considerable damage both to the lanes themselves and also to the verges which are constantly being eroded at points where they are particularly narrow. Spring Elms Lane is of particular historic and landscape value. Concern has also been expressed at the danger caused to pedestrians, there being few roadside footways. In particular reference has been made to The Ridge, North Hill and the junction of Holybred Lane with Colam Lane which are considered especially dangerous.



Traffic speeds should be taken into account

Guidance

- 28 Any future installations of overhead wires, radio and mobile phone masts should reflect the feelings of the local residents and involve local consultation. Rural views should be retained by placing any unsightly cables and structures underground.
- 29 Designation of the whole of North Hill to Papermill Lock as a 30 mph zone should be encouraged.
- 30 Further consideration should be given to creating a footway along North Hill/The Ridge from Colam Lane to Ridge Cottages, to make it possible to walk from Little Baddow to Danbury on the pavement.
- 31 Footways/footpaths should be provided along lower North Hill to Paper Mill Lock while maintaining the existing rural character. Any discussions that might take place between the Parish Council and local landowners with a view to providing a footpath to improve the safety of pedestrians on lower North Hill would be encouraged.
- 32 Due to narrow roads, frequent absence of footways and lack of public transport, provision for on-plot parking should be a requirement for all properties. Where alterations and extensions could increase occupancy of a property, the need for additional parking should be addressed.
- 33 Parking spaces and garages should be inconspicuously sited to minimise the impact on the streetscape.
- 34 Design of new developments should take traffic speeds and volumes into account and not exacerbate existing problems.

Overhead Wires and Masts

There was strong feeling that future installations of overhead wires, radio and mobile phone masts should be restricted more than occurs generally.

Roadways

Ninety percent of respondents felt that greater priority should be given to pothole repairs and the general condition of the roads especially near verges and corners.

Parking

Difficulties are also caused by inappropriate parking of vehicles in areas where it causes congestion, on footways forcing pedestrians into the road, and on grass verges where damage is caused to the greensward. North Hill and Colam Lane are specific examples.

There is still a small section of North Hill approaching Paper Mill Lock to the north end of the defined settlement where there is a 40 mph limit followed by the national limit of 60mph at the lock where the road narrows and road parking is permitted. The popularity of the area for walkers and the popularity of the area makes the road unsafe. A footpath/footway should be provided.

Little provision for public car parking has been made within the village; visitors to the village, anxious to enjoy the area, only serve to make the problem worse. There are various areas in the village (e.g. the Jarvis Field/Spring Close section of North Hill) where historically either no provision has been made for off road parking, or the facilities that are available are not used by the residents. This makes travel in this section of North Hill one direction at a time.

A large proportion of the population of the village own their own transport and the public transport system has deteriorated over the last 20 years. The provision of improved morning and evening bus services would encourage increased use by commuters and young people. The majority of others would continue to use private transport.



On road parking is a problem for through traffic

- 35 Traffic should be discouraged from using the roads through Little Baddow as an alternative to the A12 or A414.
- 36 The footpath and bridleway network should be protected and maintained in keeping with the surroundings.
- 37 There is no street lighting in Little Baddow. There is a strong view by most residents that it would be inappropriate and spoil the rural setting of Little Baddow.

8. Village Facilities, Community and Leisure

There are two public houses along North Hill and the Ridge and the tea room at Paper Mill Lock provide popular facilities for residents and visitors alike.

Doctors' surgeries and dentists are to be found in neighbouring Danbury, as is a petrol station and a selection of shops. The 'Danbury Flyer', a subsidised mini-bus service, provides limited transport to Danbury in addition to limited scheduled services.

There are voluntary schemes for hospital visits and weekly 'drop-in' lunches and monthly Sunday lunches for older parishioners. There is a community care organisation that monitors all parts of the village to care for the elderly and infirm.

The Churches work together in the Community to provide a focus for many activities and help for the more vulnerable parishioners. St. Mary's organises an annual fund-raising Open Gardens event in May which attracts visitors from all over the County and beyond. Many other events are held throughout the year by other organisations.

There are a great many clubs and societies providing opportunity for a wide range of activities for all ages. The Memorial Hall and St. Andrew's Room are available for the use of groups and individuals.

There is an active Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in the village.

The Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation also contributes to an atmosphere of tranquillity enjoyed by those walking, riding, boating or just contemplation.

There has been an Historical Society in the village for many years and in 2004 a History Centre was opened in the grounds of the United Reformed Church. Exhibitions are held there throughout the year and the Village Archive is stored there. There is also a very popular and enthusiastic Family History group.

The Cricket Club, Ridge Runners and Elm Green School make good use of the sports field and there are extensive sports facilities in Danbury.

The new children's play area at Wickhay Green was completely refurbished in the last few years through local fund raising activities.

The use of the area surrounding Paper Mill Bridge and the Lock House has gradually expanded over time to provide year round tea rooms, leisure boating, cruises and moorings. The area provides an attractive facility to both residents and visitors alike and would benefit from year round parking. Walks along the river bank are towards Maldon in one direction and past Black Bridge at Little Baddow Mill Lock and towards Chelmsford in the other direction.

In 2000 the Millennium walk was created and in 2008 the Parish Council published and distributed a map showing all the parish footpaths. Encouraged by the Little Baddow Conservation Society, Holybred Wood was purchased by the village for the village in 2001. The extensive areas of woodland are accessible to all and most are owned or managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust, a number are Sites of Special Scientific Interest. A group, which all are invited to join, walk the footpaths on a monthly basis.

Guidance

38 The popularity of the area around the River Chelmer and Papermill Lock should not be a reason for planning guidelines to be relaxed. The effect on the local environment including traffic flow and parking should be considered when applications are made.



9. Commerce and Industry

Farming businesses, either wholly owned or rented acreage, frame the village. A more recent development of the farms has been the provision of equestrian activities. The main effect of this is the presence of horses and riders in the narrow lanes and there is concern for their safety due to the speed of traffic.

Across Little Baddow and Danbury there is a myriad of small enterprises catering for local needs. Most services are available including carpentry, electrical and plumbing services, taxis, estate agencies and public houses.

The questionnaire established that light business or office based activity was generally acceptable provided it was strictly controlled.

Smoke, fumes, noise or unsociable hours of work should not be permitted. Heavy industry is not welcome as the infrastructure is unable to support it nor is there capacity for industrial estates. Roadways offer no opportunity for casual parking.

Additional vehicle movements, especially HGVs, cannot be accommodated within the network of narrow lanes and weak bridges around the village.



A popular area for horseriding



Rural lanes are unsuitable for large vehicles

Guidance

- 39 The use of agricultural buildings for business use would be preferable to new commercial buildings, provided they are appropriately screened.
- 40 New commercial activities such as small craft workshops are to be encouraged for their low impact on the surrounding infrastructure.
- 41 Planning applications should be viewed critically in relation to the effect of any consequent heavy goods vehicle movements, especially where there might be impact on narrow lanes.

Appendix - The consultation process

As part of the continuous community and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the VDS, the VDS Association and its partners has consulted with a number of different organisations, bodies and individuals during the scoping and preparation of the document.

With support from the Rural Community Council for Essex, the Little Baddow VDS Association was set up comprising people from the community. A VDS for Little Baddow was first adopted by Chelmsford City Council as Interim Planning Guidance in May 2005. Further consultation has taken place to update the 2005 document, including village-wide consultation events, posters, questionnaires, information on their website, regular meetings of the VDS Association, and discussion with Little Baddow Parish Council and the Council's Design Team throughout the process.

Event	Date
VDS consultation for first edition	2003-2005
Village character photo funday	March 2003
Questionnaires	2003
VDS first edition published	2005
VDS consultation for second edition - exhibitions	September 2009
Regular meeting of VDS Association	Throughout the process
Draft SPD Consultation	August to September 2012



Further copies of this document are available from

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