

Little Dunmow Parish Landscape Character Assessment

Prepared for: Little Dunmow Parish Council

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Version Control

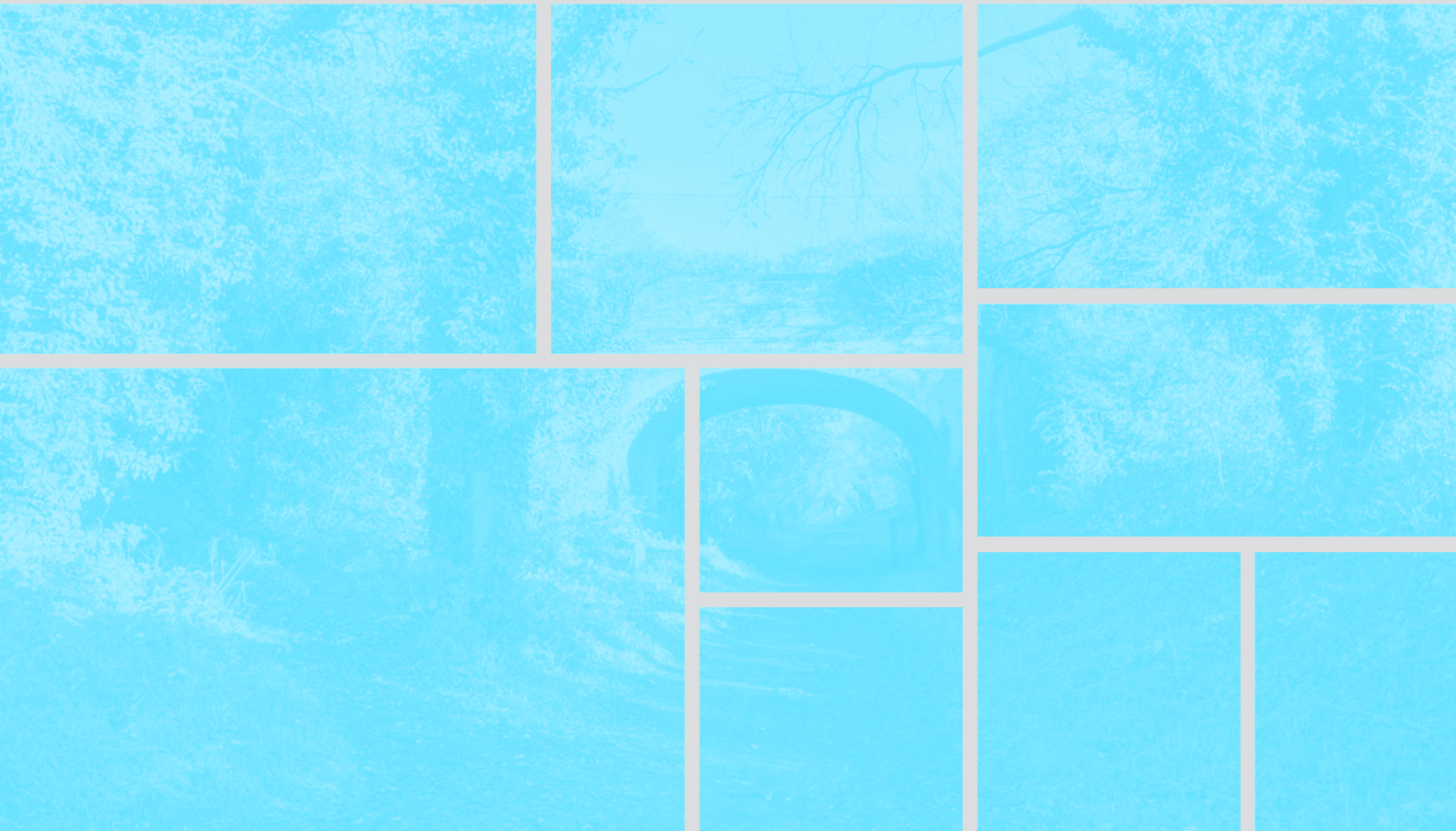
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Introduction



1.1 Introduction

This Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was commissioned by Little Dunmow Parish Council and carried out by Wynne-Williams Associates, Chartered Landscape Architects. The aim of the assessment is to provide an evidence base as part of the preparation of the parish's Neighbourhood Development Plan.

This assessment seeks to define the essential landscape character features in the Parish of Little Dunmow and assess how sensitive they are to changes, such as development.

This assessment includes both a field study and a research and mapping investigation, carried out to standards set down by both Natural England and The Landscape Institute. Following the gathering of baseline information, the assessment considers the sensitivity of the landscape and its value.

To establish the capacity for development in the parish, the areas adjoining the settlement boundaries have been mapped and assessed and the broad capacity for small scale housing has been considered.



Landscape Baseline



2.1 Little Dunmow Parish Situation and Context

Little Dunmow is a parish within the Uttlesford District, to the northwest of the county of Essex. The parish is largely rural, containing within it the village of Little Dunmow as well as other smaller settlements, and is bisected by the A120.

To gather the baseline information about the landscape of the parish, a number of published sources and studies have been reviewed. The starting point was the Essex Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, 2003).

2.2 Essex Landscape Character Assessment 2003

According to the Essex LCA, Little Dunmow Parish sits partially within the Central Essex Farmlands (B1) character area [Figure 1]. This character area extends far beyond the parish itself, representing a larger area within Essex.

2.2.1 Central Essex Farmlands (B1)

Key characteristics described in the Essex LCA are:

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and ponds.
- A concentration of isolated moated farmsteads.
- Network of narrow, winding lanes.
- Mostly tranquil character away from major roads and Stansted Airport.

The landscape condition as described in the Essex LCA can be summarised:

- condition of the hedgerows and woodlands overall is moderate. In some parts many hedges have been lost or are very fragmented, in others they are well managed.
- localised erosion of character occurs due to sand and gravel workings.
- condition of small settlements overall is good however, some farmsteads have modern sheds and/or conifer planting which are out of character.



2.2.2 Chelmer Valley (C5)

Key characteristics described in the Essex LCA are:

- Narrow valley, with a restricted valley bottom
- Dense riverside trees
- Arable valleysides with a fairly open character
- Small linear settlements occupy the upper valleysides or straggle down to a few bridging points
- Historic watermills and Second World War pillboxes are distinctive features
- Mostly tranquil character

The landscape condition as described in the Essex LCA can be summarised:

- condition of valley-side vegetation is mixed with many fragmented hedgerows
- on the valley floor there is some evidence of abandonment of grazing valley floor meadows.



2.2.3 Relevance to Little Dunmow Parish

In general the key characteristics described in B1 are relevant to the character of Little Dunmow parish. Fields are largely arable and medium in scale, although there are some that are on the larger size. Woods and copses are not a particularly well represented feature within this area characterised as B1 however elsewhere in the parish (characterised as C5 in the Essex LCA) copses and woods are more common. The settlement pattern is scattered as described and, with the exclusion of the A120 and the B1256, lanes are narrow and winding.

The key characteristics described in C5 are mostly relevant to the parish, with the river valley dominating many elements which make up the landscape character including views, topography and vegetation. However, watermills and pillboxes are not distinctive features in the landscape.

In terms of condition Little Dunmow parish in general does not tend to suffer from deterioration in character caused by gravel workings, nor are modern sheds and conifer planting a prominent detracting feature.

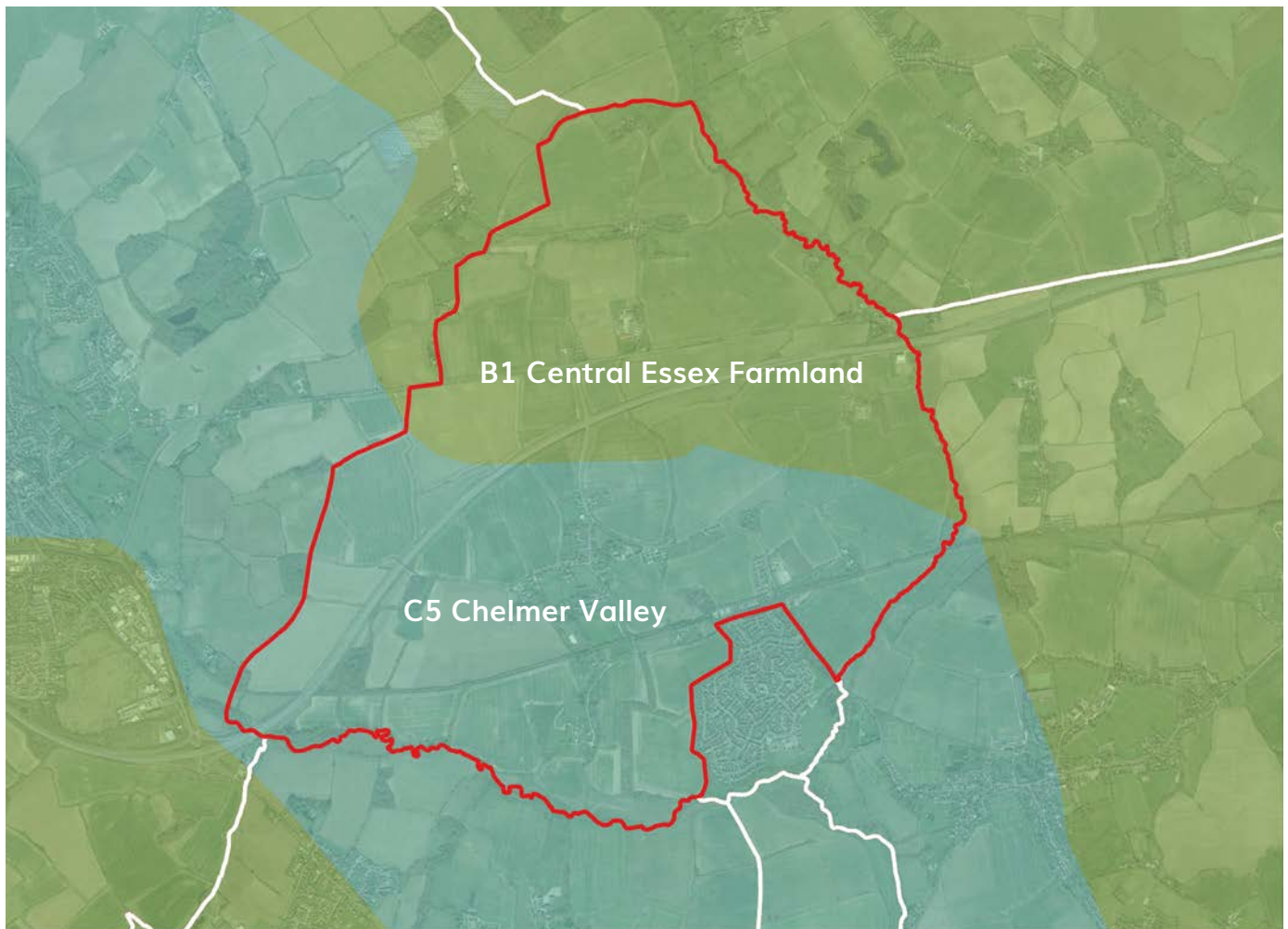


Fig. 01 Essex Landscape Character Area Map

2.3 Uttlesford District Landscape Character Assessment 2006

Following production of the Essex LCA, the Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, 2006) was carried out.

The study was a finer grained assessment and as such identified more specific defining characteristics. The character areas identified within the parish of Little Dunmow are Upper Chelmer River Valley (A6), and Rayne Farmland Plateau (B13) [Figure 2]. Part of all character areas in the parish extend beyond the parish itself but do have key characteristics which are present within the parish.

There are two character areas within the parish, but the parish is also surrounded by multiple farmland plateau landscapes, as well as being close to Great Dunmow which is characterised as urban.

2.3.1 Upper Chelmer River Valley (A6)

This character area covers most of the parish. Relevant points from the LCA are summarised below.

Key Characteristics

The character area is summarised by key characteristics, as follows:

- Narrow valley, with a restricted valley floor
- Small meandering river channel on the left side of the valley close to the rising ground of the valley side.
- Dense riverside trees.
- Arable valley sides with a fairly open character.
- Small linear settlements occupy the upper valley sides or straggle down to a few bridging points.
- Historic watermills and Second World War pillboxes are

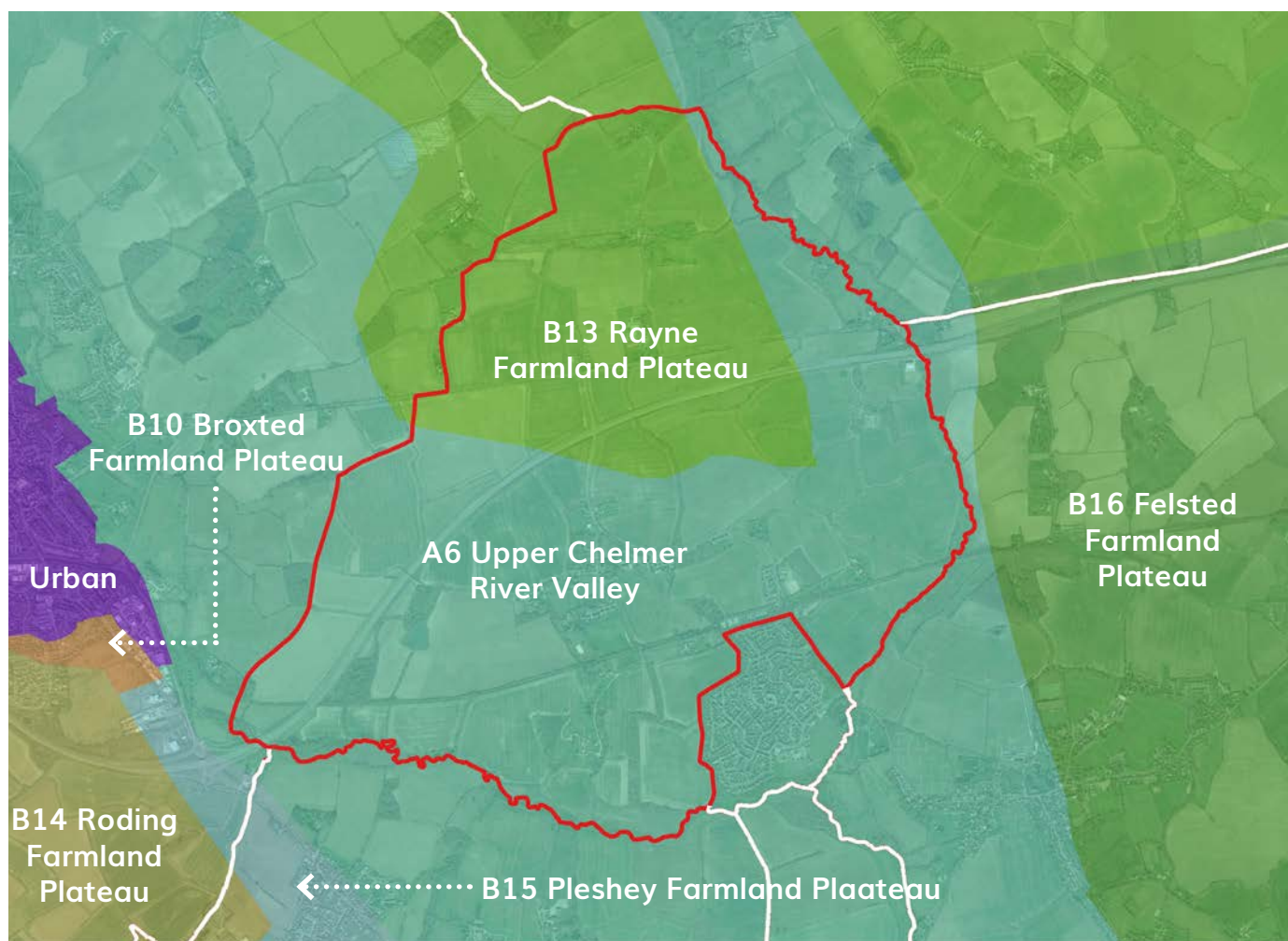


Fig. 02 Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment Map

distinctive features.

- Mostly tranquil away from Great Dunmow, Chelmsford and the A120.

Sensitivity:

Overall this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines:

Consider the visual impact of new residential development and farm buildings upon valley sides.

- Conserve and enhance cross-valley views and characteristic views across and along the valley.
- Ensure any new development on valley sides is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.
- Protect and enhance the role of the river valley in providing a network of informal open space and nature conservation sites.

2.3.2 Rayne Farmland Plateau (B13)

This character area occupies an area to the north of the parish. Relevant points from the LCA are summarised below.

Key Characteristics

The character area is summarised by key characteristics, as follows:

- Irregular field pattern of mainly medium and large arable fields, marked by sinuous fragmented hedgerows and ditches.
- Many small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape.
- Scattered settlement pattern, with a few small hamlets.
- A concentration of isolated farmsteads, some with moats.
- A comprehensive network of rural lanes and Public Rights of Way.

Sensitivity:

Overall, this character area has moderate to high sensitivity to change

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines:

- Consider the visual impact of new residential development and farm buildings upon the farmland plateau.
- Maintain cross-valley views and characteristic views across the farmland.
- Ensure new development within the farmland is small-scale, responding to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting and locally distinctive building styles.



2.3.3 Relevance to Little Dunmow Parish:

The characteristics described are very similar to those established in the Essex LCA (2003). The character area boundaries differ however, it is considered that the boundaries in the Uttlesford LCA are more representative of the landscape character.

The Upper Chelmer River Valley is considered to be more sensitive than the Rayne Farmland Plateau, however the suggested landscape planning guidelines are concurrent with one another.

As with the Essex LCA there are some characteristics that are described in the plateau landscape which are not particularly relevant to that area of the parish but are apparent in the valley landscape. These are: the presence of small woods and copses, and the comprehensive network of lanes and PRow.

2.4 Underlying topography and soils

2.4.1 Topography

Little Dunmow parish is partially bounded to the east and the south by water courses – the Stebbing Brook and the River Chelmer. These watercourses create valleys to the edges of the parish offering views to distant features and neighbouring parishes. As identified in the character assessments already carried out, the watercourses and associated valleys are integral to the landscape character.

The plan below shows the contours and landform across the parish [Figure 4].

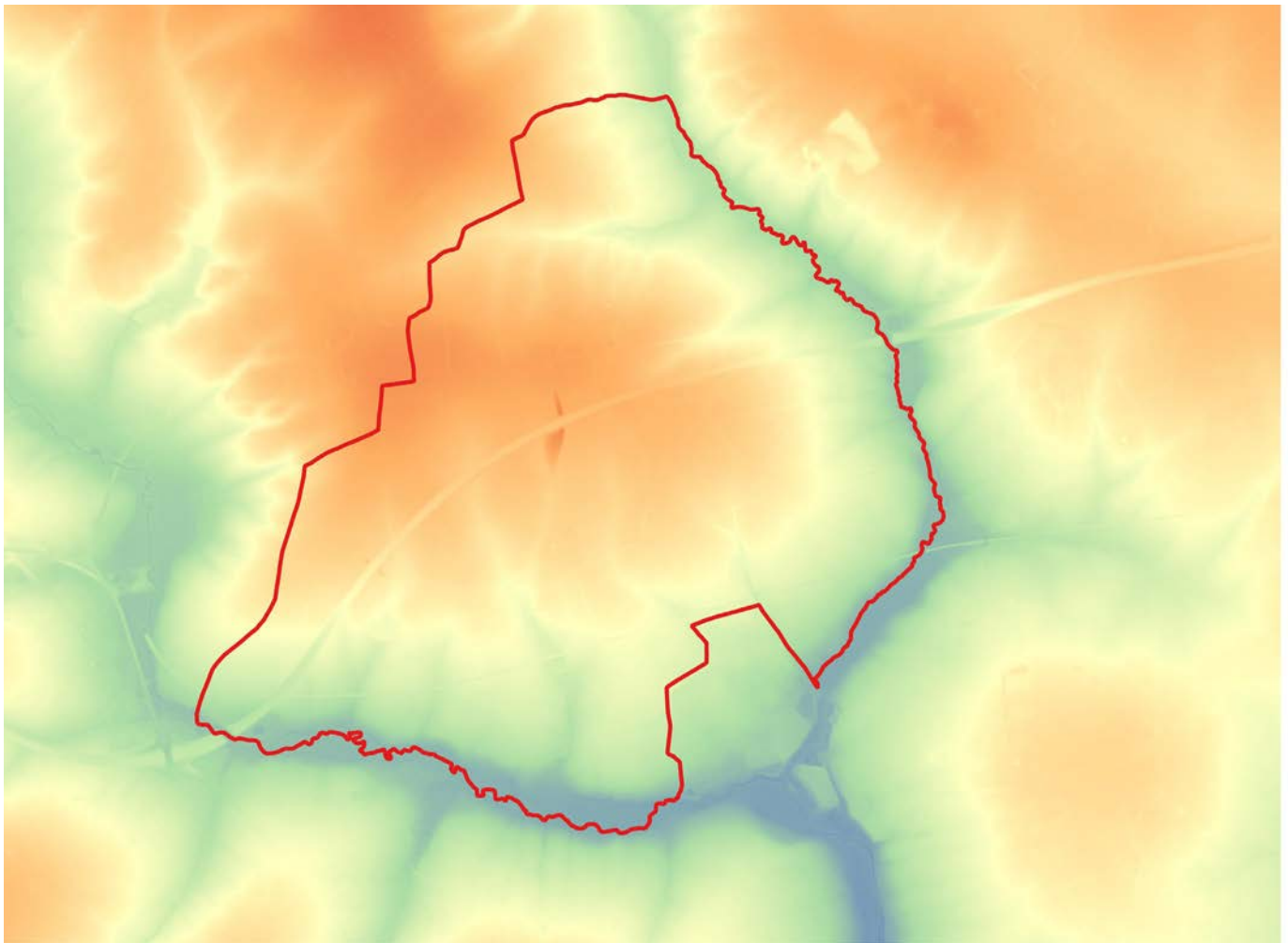


Fig. 03 Parish Topography Map (red=high, blue=low)

2.4.2 Soil

The soils in the central part of the parish are lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage.

These soils are high fertility and support habitats such as base rich pastures, classic chalky boulder clay ancient woodlands, some wetter areas and lime-rich flush vegetation.

Areas to the south and east boundaries (following water courses) are freely draining slightly acid loamy soils, and these have low fertility. These soils support: neutral and acid pastures and deciduous woodlands, and acid communities such as bracken and gorse in the uplands

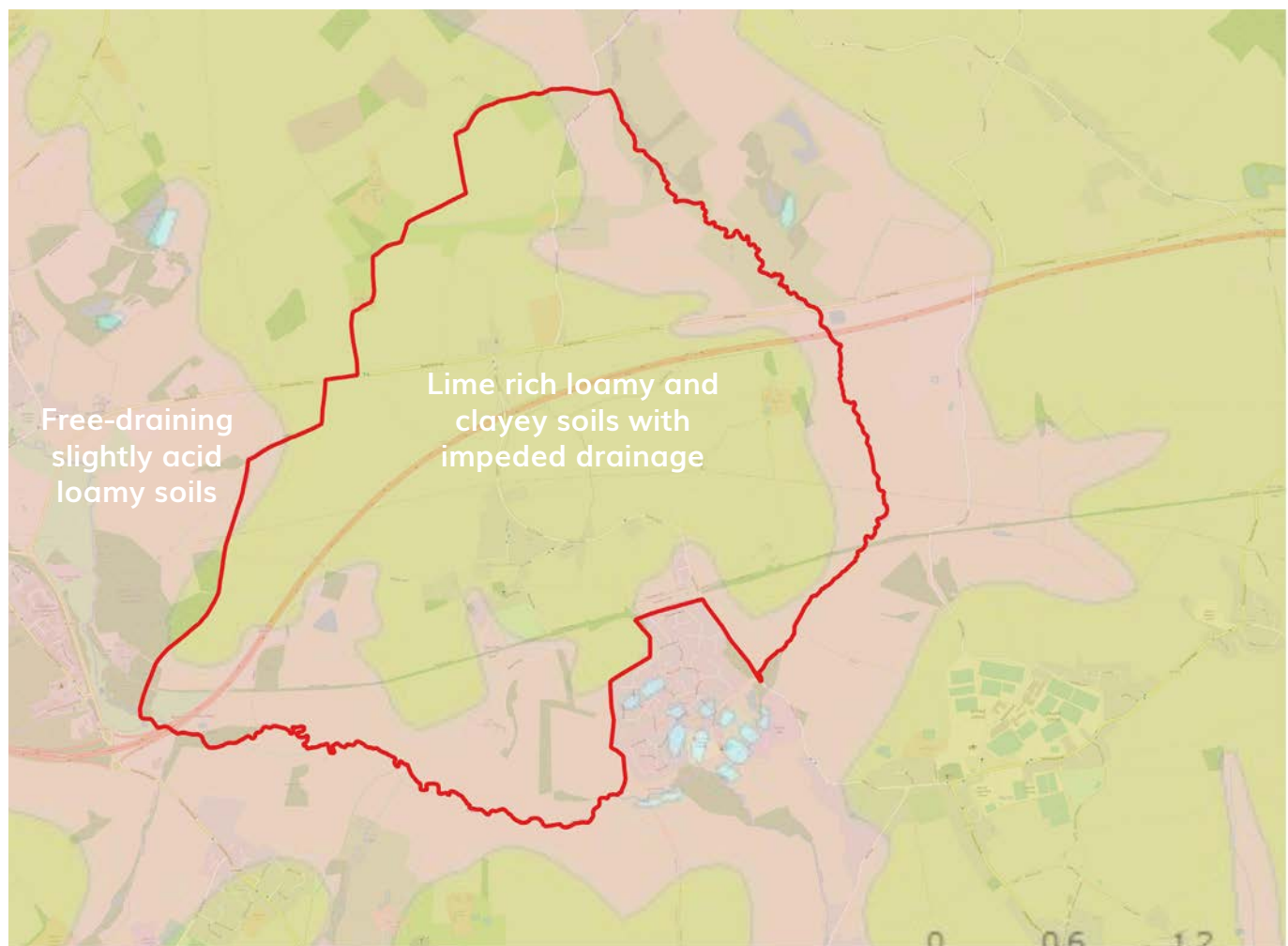


Fig. 04 Parish Soil Map

2.5 Historical Development

2.5.1 Origins & Evolution of Settlement

There is evidence of prehistoric settlement within the parish. Most of this dates to the Bronze Age and Iron Age, however prehistoric activity from the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic has also been found.

The B1256 was a Roman road which linked Roman forts in Colchester and St Albans, and predictably evidence of roman archaeology has been found when construction has taken place along this route.

The parish is rich in medieval history, with mention of Little Dunmow being made in the Domesday book of 1086 as 'Dommawa'. The parish has been known by several variations of 'Dunmow' with the meaning thought to be derived from ancient words akin to 'meadow on the hill'.

Historically the evidence of settlements is generally dispersed in nature and small in scale (farms, moated sites and hamlets).

This settlement pattern has persisted to this day retaining the historic settlement character. Aside from Little Dunmow village, other settlements within the parish include Brook Street, Haydens, Brookend and Stebbingford.

The new settlement of Flitch Green was built in 2001 to the southeast of the old village of Little Dunmow. Although this was originally within the parish of Little Dunmow, as of 2009 it became its own civil parish.

2.5.2 Heritage Assets

There is one conservation area in the parish, it is within the village of Little Dunmow and was designated in 1980. There are also many listed buildings (both within and outside the conservation area). Most of these are Grade II listed buildings, two are Grade II* listed buildings (Grange Farm Granary and Brick House) and there is one Grade I listed building which is the Church of St Mary the Virgin.

St Mary the Virgin is the Parish church in Little Dunmow village and is part of what survives of a priory. Buildings from

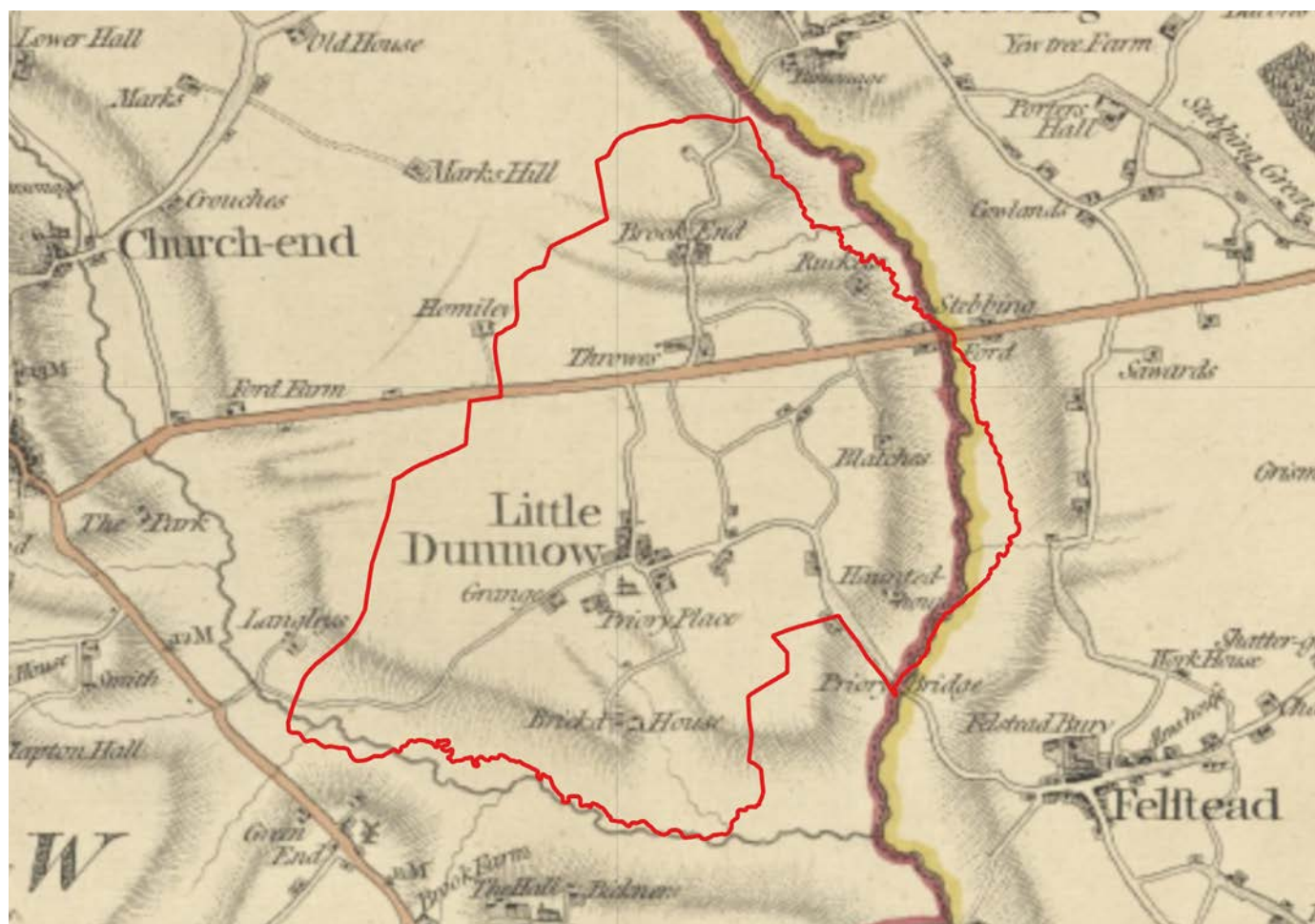


Fig. 05 Extract from Chapman & Andre Map of Essex 1777 (current boundary overlaid)

every century since the 14th century are represented in the conservation area, and a high percentage of these are from the 17th century (50% compared to the national percentage for the same period which is 19%).



The Little Dunmow Conservation Area Appraisal identifies landscape features that are important to the integrity of the conservation area. These are:

- 'Important open spaces' at the centre of the village giving setting to the church, Grange Lane and The Street i.e. the paddocks and the churchyard; and
- The presence of mature trees and hedgerows which add to its quality

As well as listed buildings there is also a cast iron water pump which is Grade II listed. This is 19th Century and is situated on The Street. There are also some listed 19th Century tombs located in the churchyard.

One lane in the parish is designated as a protected lane as part of Essex policy. This is intended to safeguard lanes as important heritage features in the landscape. The protected lane is Bramble Lane, it runs north from Station Road and ends just short of the A120. Although it isn't well connected to the road network it does provide connection to a bridleway and footpaths.

The Flitch Way is another important historical feature in the landscape. This rail link was opened in 1869 and connected Bishops Stortford, Braintree, and Dunmow. There was a station and platform within Little Dunmow Parish. Passenger trains ran for 83 years and for a short while afterwards the railway continued to be used for freight until it was closed completely in 1966. The old track route now forms the Flitch Way, a public access walking and cycling route which is also a well-used Country Park.

2.5.3 Historic Land Use

Historic land uses are described in the Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment, and those pertinent to Little Dunmow are summarised below:

- Extensive enclosed meadow pastures along the river valley floodplains and pre-18th century generally irregular fields, probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older.
- Pre-18th century irregular fields on the plateau, probably of medieval origin and some maybe even older, interspersed by what is categorised as 'mixed origin' fields
- Original medieval pattern of dispersed settlements and scattered farmsteads largely survives, with isolated farms, moated sites, and small hamlets strung out along linear greens.
- Occasional common fields, which has been later enclosed piecemeal by agreement.
- The line of the Roman road from Chelmsford to Braintree, which effectively bisects the area.





Administration boundaries

parish_region

Access

Essex PRow

Bridleway

Byway

Footpath

Restricted Byway

Country Parks

Heritage Designation

Scheduled Monuments

Listed Buildings

I

II

II*

Conservation Area

Protected Lane Uttlesford District

Fig. 06 Access and Designations Map

2.6 Transport Links and Accessibility

The B1256 (Braintree Road) runs east-west through the parish. The road is also variously known as Stane Street and the Roman Road. Partially parallel to this is the A120, although west of the parish this heads further south to bypass Great Dunmow. The B1256 was previously the A120 until this stretch of road between the Great Dunmow and Braintree was bypassed in 2004 to create a better connection between east Essex and Stansted Airport. There are no direct connections to the A120 from the parish. Although the B1256 was bypassed it remains busy with local traffic.

The A120 is cut into the landscape and buffered by mature screen planting so that it is not always visible particularly to the west. To the east, where views are more open, the road is more visible. The road is also audible in proximity along its length.

Other main roads include Brookend which heads north from the B1256 towards Stebbing, and Station Road which heads south from the B1256 to Little Dunmow and on to Flitch Green. Station Road has been reconfigured to bypass The Street in Little Dunmow, meaning that the village centre itself is quiet with no through traffic.

Many of the roads appearing on the Chapman and Andre map of Essex 1777 [Figure 7] are present to some extent, however some have been disturbed by the creation of the A120. Several roads now result in dead-ends rather than connecting to the wider road network as they had previously. Braintree Road, Brookend and Station Road remain largely intact and so provide the primary routes for connection within the parish.

The Flitch Way is a long-distance walking route which follows

the former railway route from Bishops Stortford to Braintree. It is also designated as a Country Park [Figure 6].

2.7 Tranquillity

Tranquillity varies in the district. Traffic on the A120, and to a lesser extent the B1256, presents an intrusive element in the landscape both in terms of noise and visibility. This is most intrusive at the centre of the parish where topography is flatter and character is more open. The valley landscape is separated from and to an extent protected by the plateau and therefore have greater tranquillity generally.

Air traffic from the nearby Stansted Airport is occasionally evident in the parish but not prominent overall. Occasionally pylons are also an intrusive element in the landscape.

Generally, there is a good level of tranquillity away from roads.

2.8 Land use

The majority of the land use in the parish is agricultural. Settlement land use is mainly contained to the village of Little Dunmow. There are other scattered settlements and individual farmsteads. The main village settlement of Little Dunmow is on the hill, whilst other scattered hamlets are largely at river crossings (Brook Street, Brookend and Stebbing Ford). The exception to this is the new Cromwell Place development on Station Road which is dense more in keeping with Flitch Green.

There are no schools within the parish, however there is a Technology College at Throws Farms. The parish also contains St Mary's Church in Little Dunmow Village and the Crematorium at Blatches Farm. As settlement in the parish is generally sparse, there is also little in the way of shops and other amenities. These are generally catered for in neighbouring settlements. A notable exception is the Flitch of Bacon Restaurant which is in Little Dunmow.



Station Road bypassing the The Street in Little Dunmow

2.9 Flood risk

The Environment Agency prepare flood maps for the UK. Land is classified as being in one of three zones:

Flood Zone 1 is land assessed as having less than a 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding.

Flood Zone 2 is land assessed as having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding (1% – 0.1%), or between a 1 in 200 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of sea flooding (0.5% – 0.1%) in any year.

Flood Zone 3 is land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding (>1%), or a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea (>0.5%) in any year.

The River Chelmer runs west-east to form the southern boundary of the parish. It has a wide flood zone of up to 0.5km that does not impact on settlement areas. The Stebbing Brook runs north-south on the eastern parish boundary. Its flood zone is fairly contained with some impact on settlement areas at Stebbing Ford. There are two small brooks/ditches that run north – south to the River Chelmer through the village. These are not in the flood zones but there has been some localised flooding.

In the main, settlements occupy higher ground outside flood zones 2 and 3 and are identified as being in flood zone 1 with a low risk of flooding [Figure 8]. There are no specific flood defences in the parish.

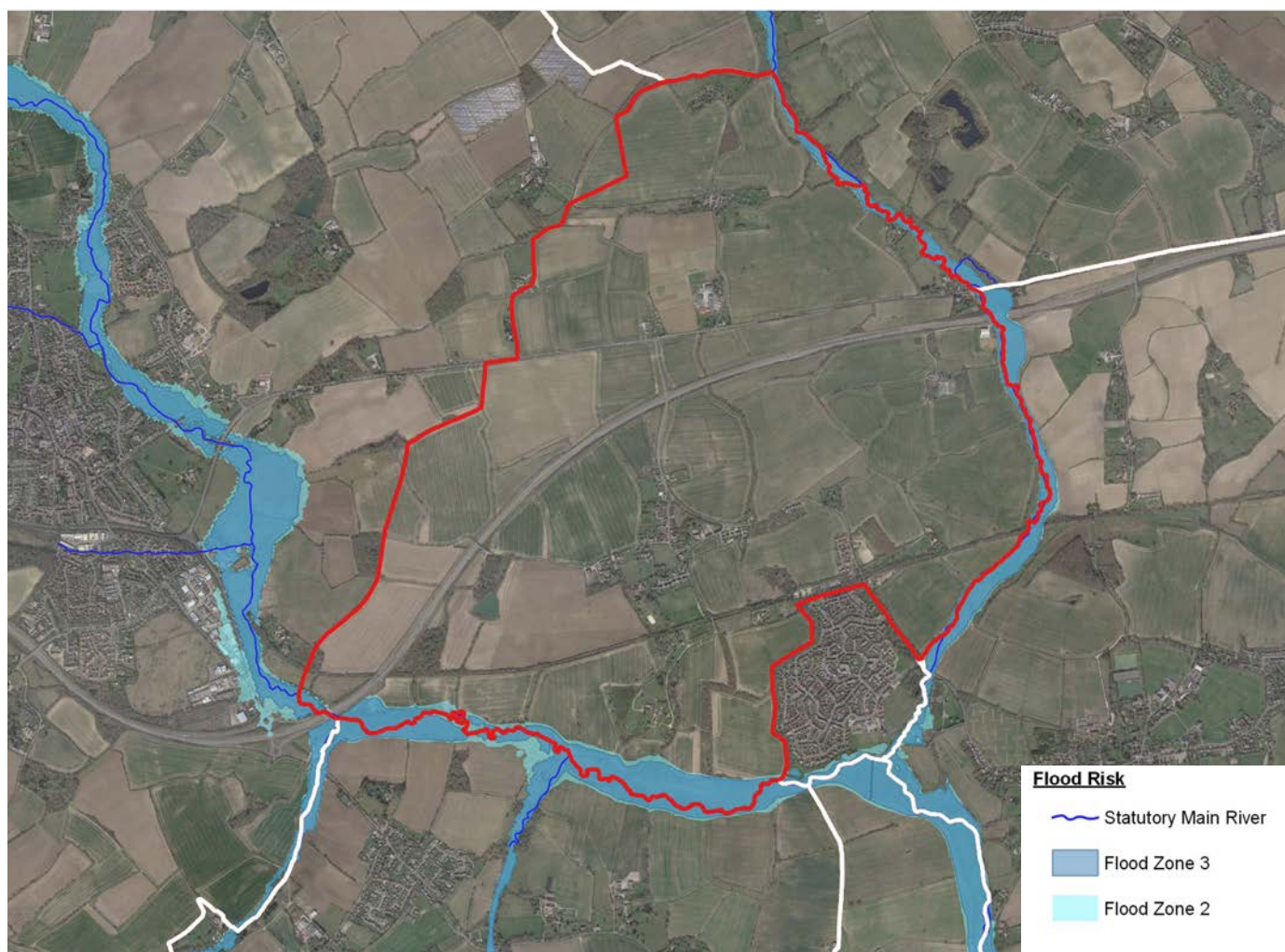


Fig. 07 Parish Flood Risk Map

2.10 Biodiversity

Biodiversity in the parish is provided by:

- The watercourses which run through the parish
- Scattered woodland
- A network of mature hedgerows
- The Flitch Way – a Local Nature Reserve

The parish has priority areas for woodland habitat (Source; magic.defra.gov.uk).

2.11 Green Spaces

Green Spaces are of particular importance within the village of Little Dunmow. The paddocks, churchyard and recreation ground create a significant area of green space at the centre of the village. These areas are listed as 'Important Green Spaces' in the Conservation Area Appraisal. Along with the green space to the east of the Flitch of Bacon, the cumulation of green space and mature vegetation establish the village character as open and tranquil.



2.11 Combining the baseline information

Review of the baseline information shows how the character of the parish is a product of many natural and human factors.

The watercourses have determined the topography, creating valleys to the south and east, and plateau to the north and west. This in turn has affected land use, patterns of settlement, and tranquillity.

Historic land use and settlement patterns are largely intact but have to some extent been interrupted by more recent influences such as the A120 and the addition of residential developments. The A120 bypass, which bisects the parish, has disrupted the old network of winding lanes leaving settlements more isolated and creating a division between the north and south of the parish.

The historic settlements, features, lanes, and land use patterns provide a strong historic integrity which is an important part of the landscape character.

Landscape Views



3.1 Landscape Views

Views in the landscape are a valued feature in the parish that are enjoyed by both local people and visitors. Most important to preserve are open cross-valley views from footpaths and views that can be enjoyed from the Flitch Way.

These views tend to be most sensitive when they:

- include distinctive landscape features in the skyline e.g. churches and water towers
- feature the historic scattered settlement pattern
- contain minimal intrusion from detracting features e.g. roads and pylons

This section includes some labelled examples of these types of views, both within the parish but also from neighbouring parishes looking back towards Little Dunmow parish. This is not an exhaustive list of key views. As part of any proposed development the effects on views should be analysed by a landscape professional, and views specific and pertinent to that development should be considered in each case.

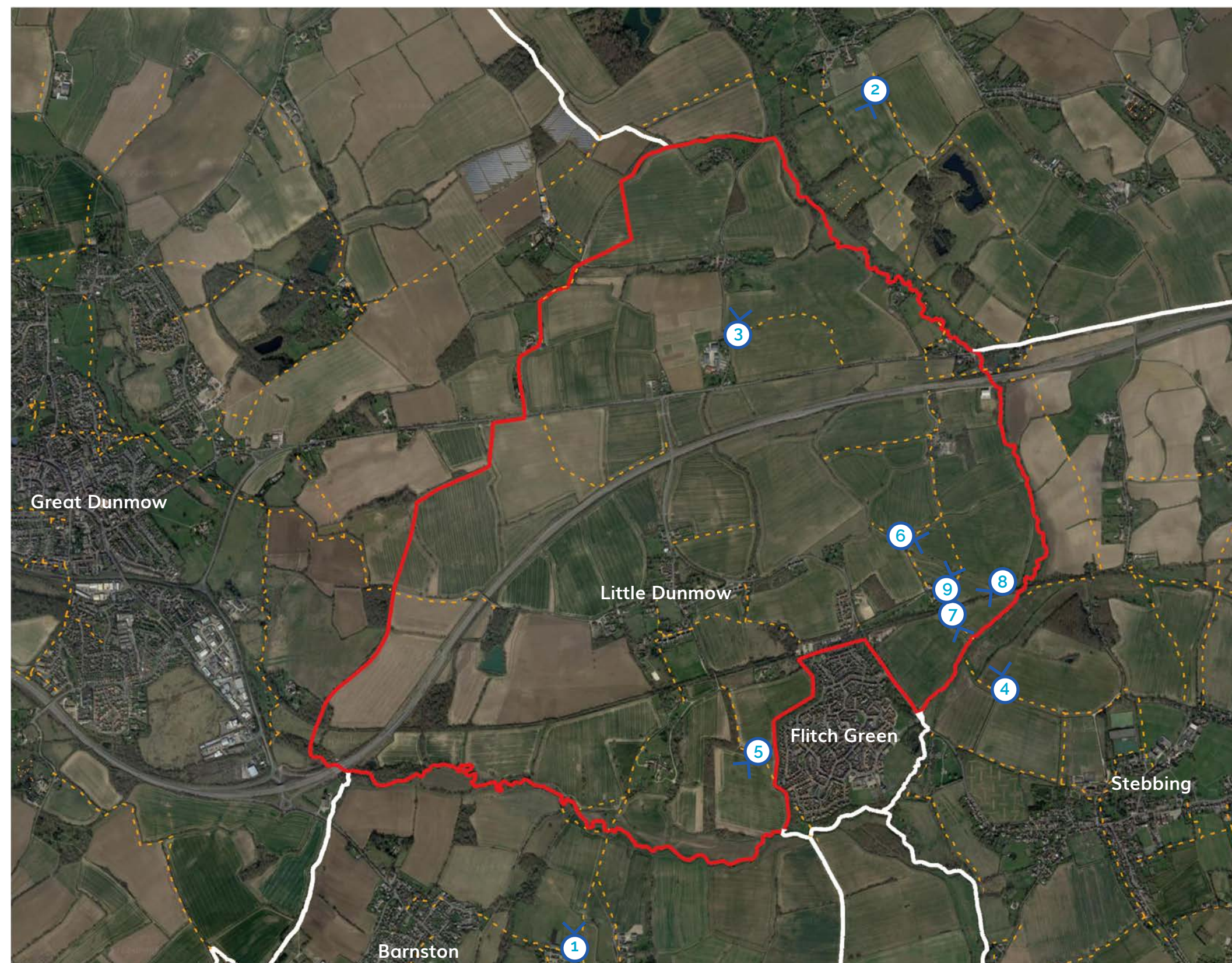


Figure 08 - Viewpoint reference map



Viewpoint 1



Viewpoint 2



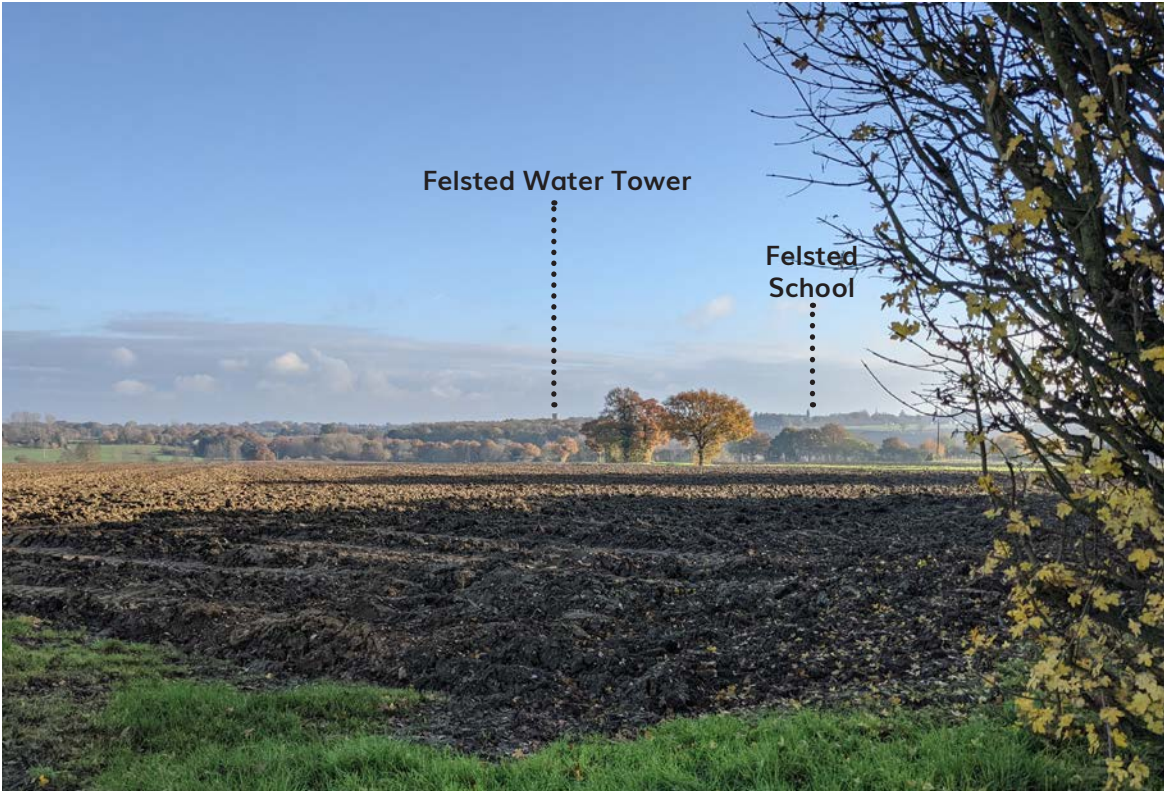
Viewpoint 3



Viewpoint 4



Viewpoint 5



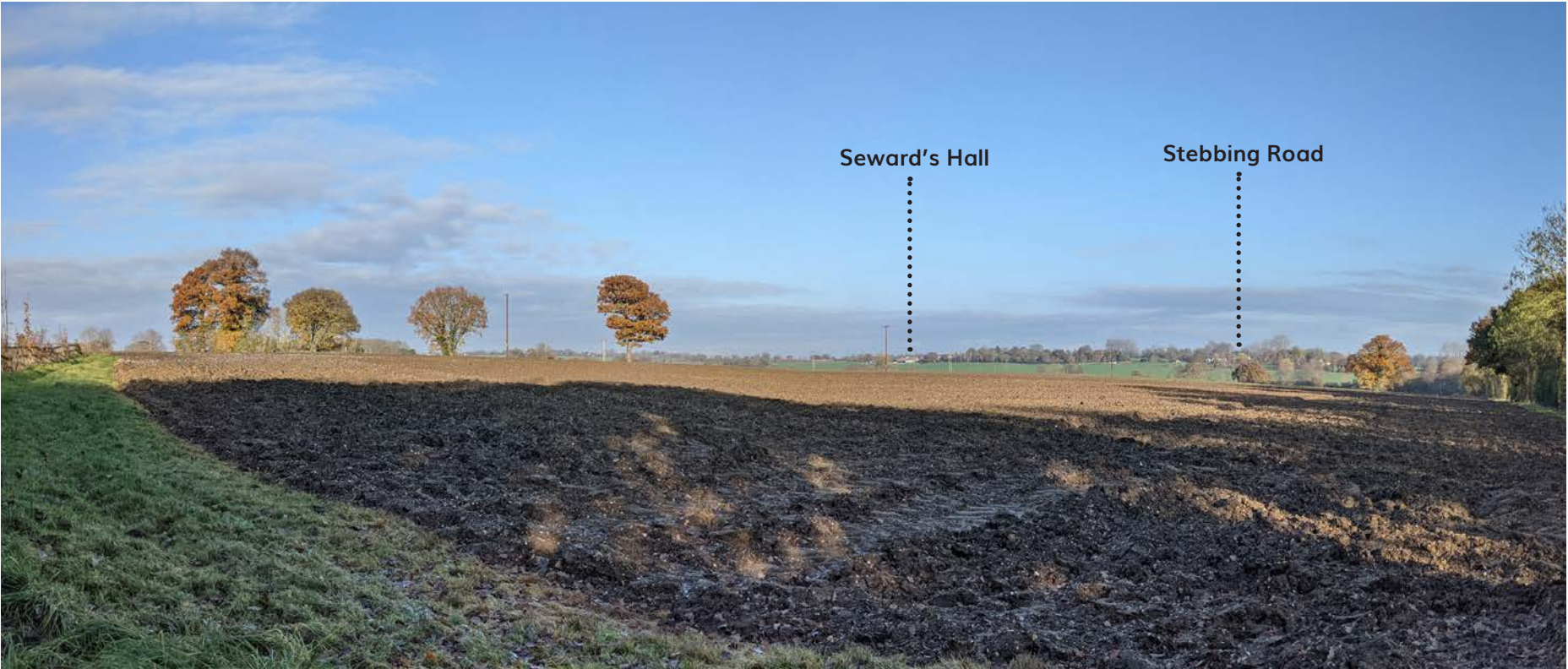
Viewpoint 6



Viewpoint 7



Viewpoint 8



Viewpoint 9

Local Landscape Character



Local Landscape Character

Field work was carried out between October and November 2022 to establish and record the local parish characteristics.

A photographic survey was carried out to support the field work and provide examples of the most characteristic local features.

The map below illustrates the finer grain of the local landscape character [Figure 9]. The broad character types are roughly the same as the Uttlesford LCA with some adjustments:

- The plateau landscape has been expanded to better reflect the existing situation
- Extra detail added as listed opposite:

1. A zone either side of the A120 has been added to reflect its dominance in the landscape. The zone has been determined based on a combination of visibility and noise pollution
2. The main village settlement is defined including the conservation area
3. Hamlets and other scattered settlements are identified
4. The Flitch Way Country Park
5. ECC Traveller Site & the derelict Station House interrupts the route of Flitch Way is shown.

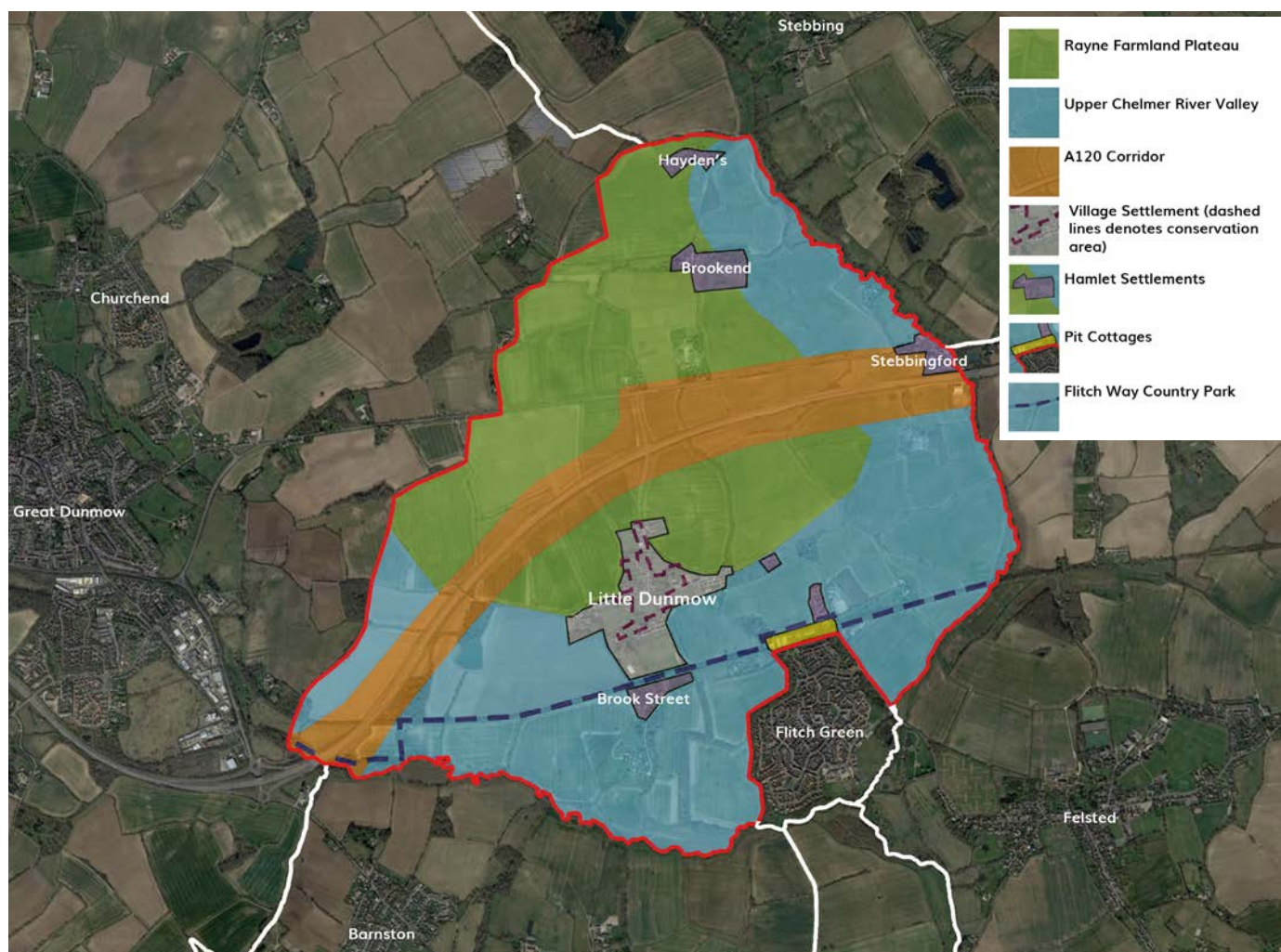


Fig. 09 Little Dunmow Parish Landscape Character Area Map

3.1 Photographic Survey

The photographic survey captures views which are typical of and illustrate the character of the parish and highlight specific landscape character features.

3.1.1 Little Dunmow Village Settlement



The Paddock in Little Dunmow and view to the Church of St Mary The Virgin



Recreation Ground and cross-valley view



Church of St Mary The Virgin

3.1.2 A120 Corridor



A120 in the Rayne Farmland Plateau

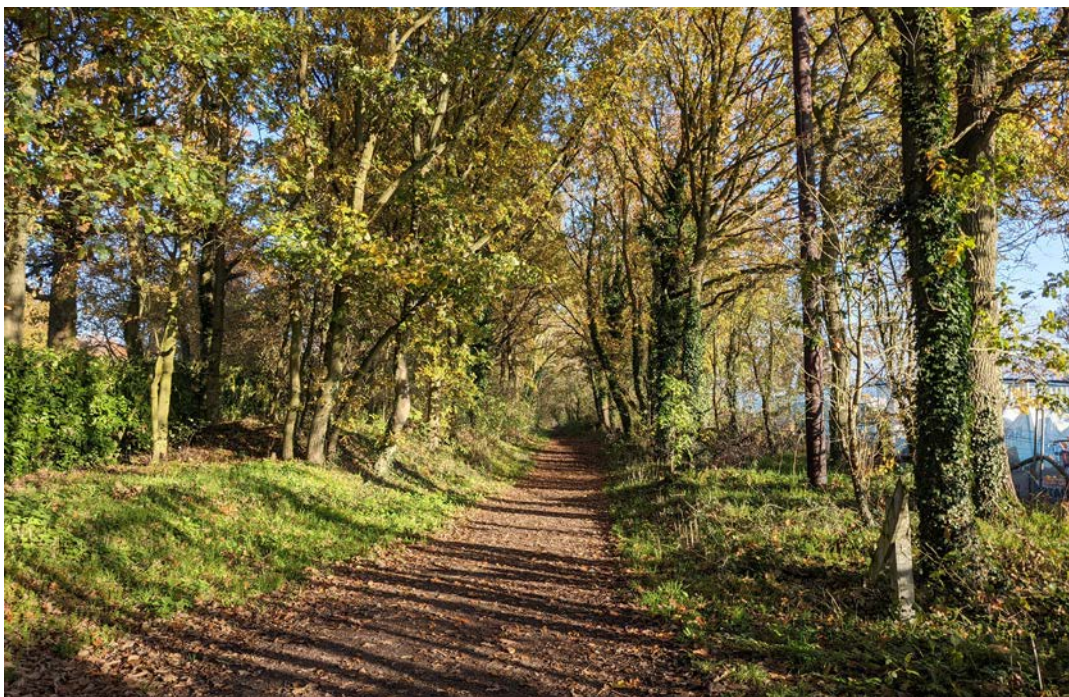


A120 in the Upper Chelmer River Valley

3.1.3 The Flitch Way



The Flitch Way at Little Dunmow



The Flitch Way at Bouchiers

3.1.4 Essex County Council Traveller Site



Station House



Traveller site as viewed from the Flitch Way

3.1.5 Upper Chelmer River Valley



3.1.6 Rayne Farmland Plateau



3.1.7 Hamlet Settlements



Brook Street



Brookend



Scattered Farmsteads



New Development on Station Road - view from the Fitch Way

Landscape Sensitivity & Value



Landscape sensitivity and value are terms which are used in landscape studies to assist in informing planning for change. By assessing the sensitivity and value of an existing landscape its capacity to absorb change can be measured.

Using guidance: 'Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Inform Spatial Planning and Land Management' (Natural England, 2019), GLVIA, and LI TGN 02/21, the sensitivity and value of the parish has been assessed.

4.1 Definitions

Landscape sensitivity is defined as; the sensitivity of the landscape resource (in terms of both its character as a whole and the individual elements contributing to its characteristics) and the degree to which the landscape can accommodate change without adverse impacts to its character.

Visual sensitivity of the landscape is assessed in terms of a combination of factors such as views, visibility, the number and nature of people perceiving the landscape and the particular nature of the type of change in question, (Source Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity).

Landscape Value is the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. Landscapes may be valued by different stakeholders for a variety of reasons (GLVIA3)

Landscape value can be assessed by looking at a number of criteria – does the landscape have any national or local designations? Does it have other indicators of value such as tranquillity, remoteness, wildness, scenic beauty, cultural associations, conservation interests and consensus on value?

4.2 Assessment of the Parish – Landscape Sensitivity

A full sensitivity assessment of the six identified landscape character types can be found in Appendix 1. Each area was assessed for its sensitivity to potential future small-scale residential development, with varying levels of sensitivity identified. Each character area is summarised below.

Natural England's guidance 'Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Inform Spatial Planning and Land Management' (2019) was used.

4.2.1 Upper Chelmer River Valley

The landscape character of the Upper Chelmer River Valley is discernibly intact with relatively few intrusions. The A120 has some impact on the character area however this is a short section at either end, and visual impacts are largely mitigated by existing vegetation and topography.

Only small-scale development responding to historic settlement pattern which is sensitive to valley views would be acceptable. The historic pattern is typically of small linear settlements, therefore scale and location of developments should have special consideration. Of specific interest is preventing coalescence of Little Dunmow village with Flitch Green – efforts should be made to protect the open landscape between settlements and along Station Road.

4.2.2 Rayne Farmland Plateau

The landscape character of the Rayne Farmland Plateau is somewhat present with the Little Dunmow parish, however numerous of the key characteristics noted in the Uttlesford LCA are not present in this area.

This character area is also bisected by the A120 and B1256 which does present an intrusive element and detracts from tranquillity in proximity to the roads.

Nevertheless, this area is still sensitive to development as noted in the Uttlesford LCA. There may be scope for some small-scale developments that follow historic settlement patterns, however opportunities are limited due to the need for development to consider impact on landscape views across valleys and farmland.

4.2.3 Village Settlement

The village settlement is particularly well intact, in part owing to the Station Road bypass which negates any through traffic. Green spaces within the village e.g. the Recreation Ground

and The Paddocks, are an important contributor to the village character and should be protected when considering proposed developments.

Within this character area there are limited locations for small-scale housing or individual plot developments. Opportunities to extend this character area on the settlement edge should be avoided to prevent coalescence of settlements. Any development that is allowed should not detract from surrounding character areas and should complement the existing village settlement pattern and character.

Any proposed development would need to maintain the established pattern of building and scale of properties, with careful consideration given to views and gateways in and out of the village. Material selection would need to be appropriate to the local vernacular in terms of finish, colour, and quality.

4.2.4 Hamlet/Small Settlements

The scattered hamlet settlements provide historic integrity and should be protected. Proposals are likely to be limited to internal renovations or conversions of existing buildings, however some minor extensions to these areas or infill developments, that are in keeping with the settlement pattern and scale may be appropriate.

Some more recent small settlements are present between Little Dunmow and Flitch Green and are less in-keeping with the historic settlement pattern. Any further development along this route should be avoided so as to prevent coalescence.

Any proposed development would need to give careful consideration to views. Material selection would need to be appropriate to the local vernacular in terms of finish, colour, and quality.

4.2.5 A120 Corridor

The character of the landscape adjacent the A120 corridor is separated from the Uttlesford character areas due to the dominating presence that the roads have and that impact on tranquillity, which is otherwise good in the parish.

Aside from the presence of the road the area generally maintains the character of the surrounding areas and so proposed developments will likewise need to respond to existing scale and patterns of settlement to prevent cumulative deterioration of character.

4.2.6 ECC Traveller Site - Flitch Way

This site adjacent to the old station on the Flitch Way previously provided plots for Gypsies/Travellers. The site creates an interruption to the Flitch Way route which requires

users of the Country Park to divert around the site. The site is mostly disused although some plots are still in use, and is separated from the Flitch Way with a closeboard fence. The character of this area is weak and at odds with its surroundings.

Any proposals for this area should take care to integrate the site into the wider landscape, considering impact on the settlement edge, the valley character, and the Flitch Way.

4.2.7 Flitch Way Country Park

The character of the Flitch Way is strong and distinct from the surrounding landscape and has therefore been separated from the Upper Chelmer River Valley Character Area.

The country park provides opportunities for leisure, pedestrian and cycle connections to other settlements and the wider footpath network, views within the Park itself but also over the chelmer valley, and heritage connection to the old railway.

Development within this character area is not considered to be suitable, with the exception of the ECC Traveller Site (4.2.6) which has already been degraded by development and would benefit from steps to reinstate lost character.

4.3 Landscape Value

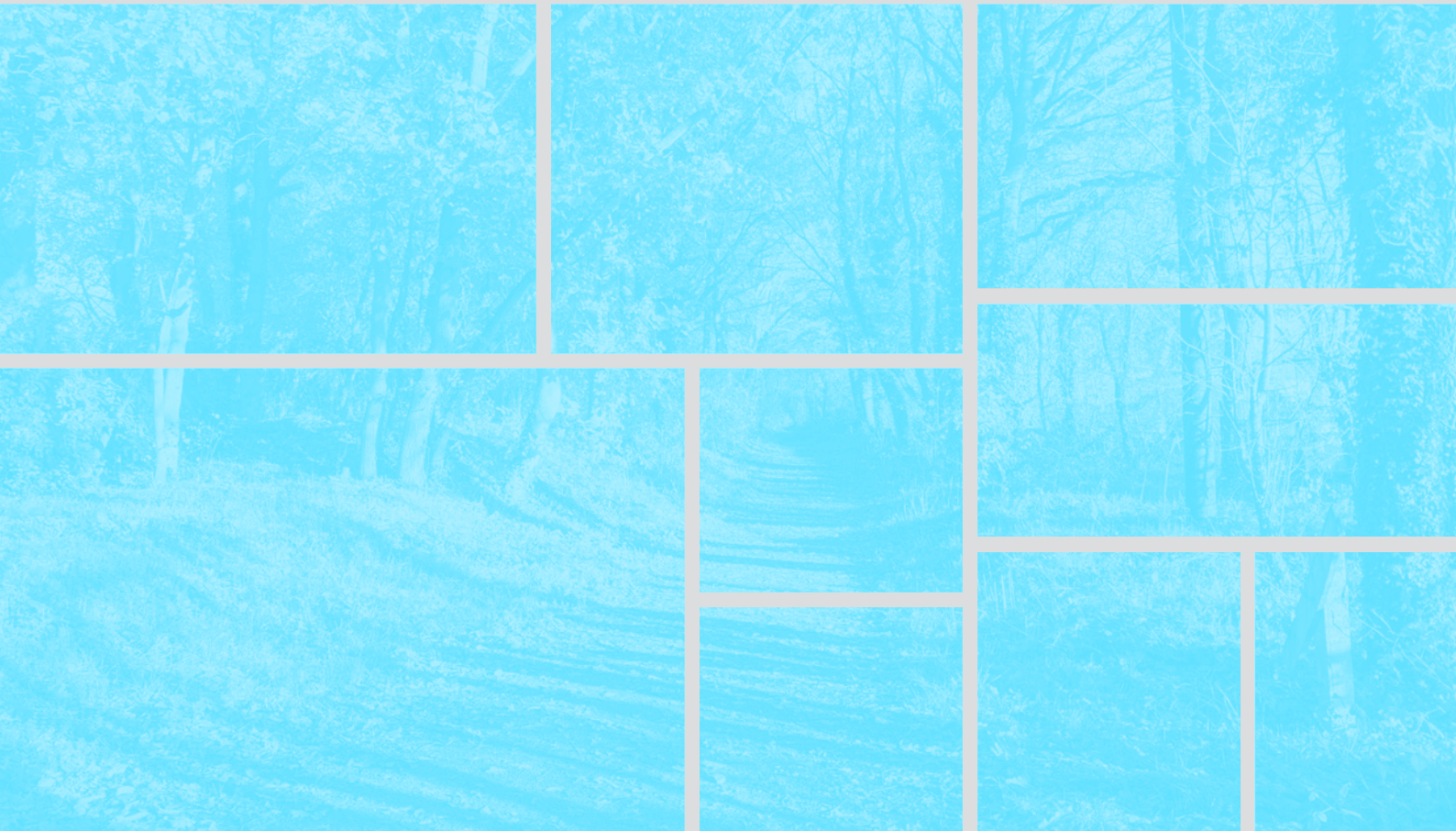
Landscape value of the parish has been assessed using the method described in GLVIA and LI Technical Guidance Note 02/21. A full assessment can be found in Appendix 2.

The parish holds landscape value. Specific designations include a conservation area, protected lanes, a country park, as well as a range of listed buildings and features.

Aside from designations, much of the value is experiential within the more tranquil valley areas owing to quiet lanes, open skies, mature vegetation and cross-valley views. The network of public rights of way is strong and allows good access to enjoy the landscape.

The long-standing land use patterns, lanes, and historic buildings offer strong continuity with the past and deepen the sense of historic character. This is something that should be preserved. The quality of this character is diminished adjacent to the A120.

Landscape Development Capacity



5.1 Recent Development

Significant Housing Growth has taken place in Little Dunmow since 2011, as identified in the Housing Needs Assessment 2022. This identified

- 58 units completed
- 25 units with outstanding planning permissions under construction.

Permissions granted since 2011 are for 96 units, this amounts to a 82 unit net additional taking into account demolitions. This amounts to a 69% increase between 2011 and 2021 (based on 119 dwellings recorded in the 2011 census).

5.2 Basis for New Developments

Given the housing growth in recent years, and the largely intact settlement pattern of the parish, the ability for the landscape to accept further development is minimal.

Uttlesford Local Planning Authority have commissioned a Local Housing Needs Assessment which will identify parish-level housing needs and inform the housing requirement in the emerging Local Plan. This is expected to be completed March 2023.

In the absence of these requirements at time of writing, this report considers broadly the capacity for development within the parish:

- Small-scale (5 units or fewer) developments in the landscape that are in keeping with the historic settlement pattern and are not detrimental to locally valued landscape views (refer section 3 for examples)
- Single dwellings in the landscape or as infill in existing settlements where considered appropriate in location and scale.
- Consideration should also be given to community-led developments which have the ability to meet needs not met by other developers. These are identified in the Housing Needs Assessment 2022.

All prospective developments should use materials and design in keeping with the local vernacular. Proposals should be considered unacceptable if they:

- cause coalescence between existing settlements
- extend settlements such that 'gateways' to existing settlements are lost
- degrade valued views (refer section 3 for examples)

5.3 Potential Sites

The housing developments that have been undertaken in recent years, combined with developments which have planning approval form a considerable area in the parish. Refer Figure 10.

Given the scale of current and future development, this report does not propose any further potential development sites. Any small-scale developments should select sites which take care to avoid the unacceptable criteria above.

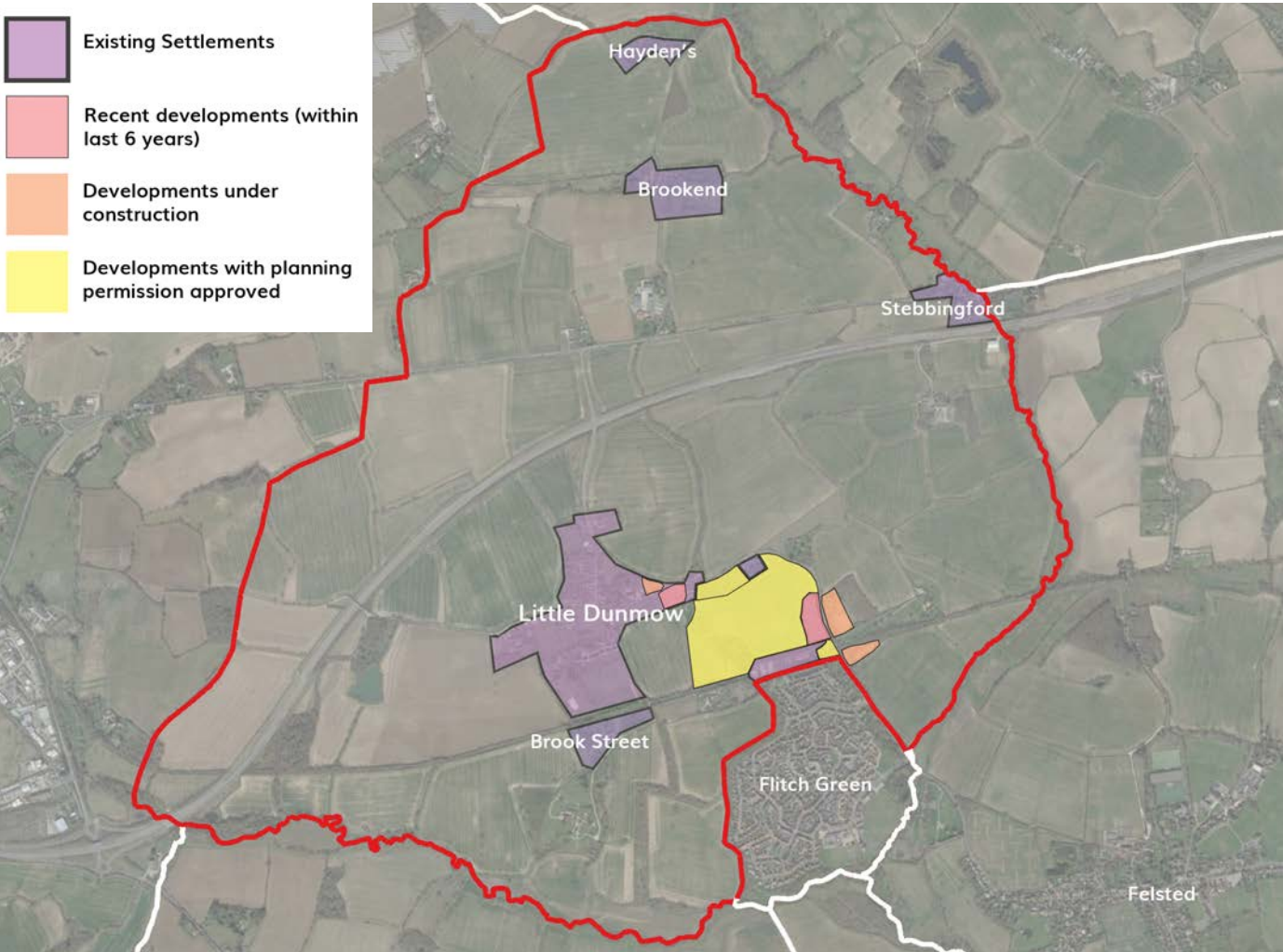


Fig. 10 Little Dunmow Developments

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