

.....Wendens Ambo Conservation Area Appraisal and  
.....Management Proposals, 2013



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## Part 1: Appraisal 1

### Introduction

**1.1** This appraisal has been produced by Officers of Uttlesford District Council to assess the current condition of the Wendens Ambo Conservation Area, to identify where improvements can be made and to advise of any boundary changes that are appropriate. The document is in draft form and will be subject to public consultation and agreement by District Council Members.

**1.2** The historic environment cannot be replaced and is a resource that is both fragile and finite. Particularly in an age when society and its needs change with rapidity, the various historic and architectural elements of Conservation Areas can be perceived to interact in a complex manner and create a 'unique sense of place' that is appreciated by those lucky enough to reside in such special places and the many interested persons who appreciate and visit them.

**1.3** Uttlesford has a particularly rich built heritage, with 36 Conservation Areas and approximately 3,700 listed buildings displaying a variety of styles representative of the best of architectural and historic designs from many centuries. Generally and very importantly the clear distinction between built form and open countryside has been maintained. This is the case in Wenden where the village is still mostly contained within the historic envelope bisected to the east by the London Liverpool Street to Cambridge railway line and with occasional development along the arterial roads.

**1.4** The District is situated in an economically buoyant region where an attractive environment, employment opportunities and excellent transport links by road, rail and air, make it a popular destination to live and work. The District is particularly influenced by Stansted Airport within its administrative area and by the presence of London and Cambridge within easy commuting distance. Additionally, there are other towns of substance such as Harlow, Bishop's Stortford and Braintree that provide employment opportunities nearby. With such dynamics the historic environment of the District is a popular destination for in-migration. The associated pressures accompanying such in-migration make it more important to protect the high quality of both built and natural environments.

**1.5** The Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in 2005 recognises these facts and commits the Council to prepare Conservation Area Statements and Supplementary Planning Documents and the production of this document is part of this process.

**1.6** Conservation Areas are environments which are considered worthy of protection as a result of a combination of factors such as the quality of design and setting of the buildings or their historic significance. In addition to the individual qualities of the buildings themselves, there are other factors such as the relationship of the buildings with each other, the quality of the spaces between them and the vistas and views that unite or disrupt them. The interaction with adjoining areas and landscape, the quality of trees, boundary treatments, advertisements, road signage, street furniture and hard surfaces, are also important features which can add to or detract from the Conservation Area.

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**1.7** This Appraisal will consider these factors carefully. Once it has been approved by the District Council it will be regarded as a 'material consideration' when determining planning applications. The document also puts forward simple practical management proposals to improve the character of the Conservation Area and that are capable of being implemented as and when resources permit.

**1.8** The recommendations in this Appraisal concerning non listed buildings and structures are generally formed by the field worker's observations made from the public realm and rarely involve internal inspection of buildings or their structural condition. Therefore such recommendations as set out in this Appraisal might be subject to reconsideration through the planning application process, where that is necessary, and which would involve the submission of additional relevant information.

**1.9** This Conservation Appraisal will:

- Identify the special character of Wendens Ambo
- Identify elements that should be retained or enhanced
- Identify detracting elements
- Review the existing boundary
- Put forward practical enhancement proposals

**1.10** The document has been prepared in partnership with the local community and the Council would like to record its thanks to the Parish Council and to the members of the local community who provided useful information to officers when the survey was being undertaken. Particular thanks are due to The Wendens Ambo Society for their advice on numerous historical and topographical points and permission to reproduce archive photographs from their archive and to the Parish Council.

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Picture 1.1 Wendens Ambo from the air, probably taken sometime in the early 1950s  
(Reproduced courtesy of The Wendens Ambo Society)

**1.11** The Wendens Ambo Parish Plan Steering Group produced a Parish Plan in 2012 which built on the findings of the Village Appraisal undertaken in 2011. This document noted the local support for maintaining the unique character of the village and particularly acknowledged the importance of the local environment. As with many similar settlements there are pressures for development, though opportunities for house building within the historic core are necessarily limited to a few infilling opportunities. The Parish Plan notes the lack of locally affordable housing for young people, a concern shared in many other settlements and proposes that any future focus should be on developments that support the conversion of redundant buildings and on single dwellings of appropriate size and scale. A Village Design Statement might be usefully developed to identify the physical qualities and characteristics of the village and its surroundings. Great concern was also expressed regarding the speed and volume of traffic through the village. This issue will be dealt with in the relevant section of this document.

**1.12** In undertaking an exercise such as this, one aspect that is too easily forgotten is the community itself and the people who live locally and contribute to its cohesion and social success. Wendens Ambo is a vibrant village with a small but diverse range of local organisations. These include an active parish council, regular meetings of the Women's Institute and the local historical group, the Wendens Ambo Society. There is also a well used village hall, originally built around 1838 as a Sunday School and extensively refurbished in 2007. Active rugby teams at both junior and senior levels play in the winter months whilst cricket is played on the green during the summer. The church of St Mary the Virgin shares a priest with the neighbouring parish of Saffron Walden but still provides services every Sunday to the growing congregation. There is a keen group of bellringers and active teams of volunteers maintain the large churchyard.

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**1.13** This document is written in three parts: Legal and Policy Framework; Appraisal; Management Proposals.

### Planning Legislative Framework

**1.14** The legal background for designating a Conservation Area is set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This states that the Council shall from time to time designate Conservation Areas, which are defined as being '*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance*'. The same section of the Act also requires that Councils undertake periodic reviews.

**1.15** Section 71 of the Act requires Councils to '*formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement*' of Conservation Areas and hold a public meeting to consider them.

**1.16** Within Conservation Areas there are additional planning controls and if these are to be supported it is important that the designated areas accord with the statutory definition and are not devalued by including land or buildings that lack special interest.

**1.17** One of the most important additional planning controls that apply to Conservation Areas is set out at section 74 of the Act which states that '*a building in a conservation area shall not be demolished without the consent of the appropriate authority*'. This requirement is known as 'Conservation Area Consent' and is subject to certain exceptions. For example, it does not apply to Listed Buildings which are protected by their own legislation but is relevant to other non listed buildings in the Conservation Area above a threshold size as set out in the legislation (115 cubic metres). Looking for and identifying such buildings is therefore a priority of this appraisal.

**1.18** The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 (as amended), defines the range of minor developments for which planning permission is not required and this range is more restricted in Conservation Areas. For example, the Order currently requires that the addition of dormer windows to front roof slopes, various types of cladding, satellite dishes fronting a highway and a reduced size of extensions, all require planning permission in a Conservation Area, whereas they would not require permission beyond.

**1.19** However, even within Conservation Areas there are other minor developments that do not require planning permission. So as to provide further protection the law allows Councils to introduce additional controls if appropriate. Examples of such controls can include some developments fronting a highway or open space, such as an external porch, the painting of a house or the demolition of some gates, fences or walls. The removal of important architectural features that are important to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area or individual buildings within it such as distinctive porches, windows or walls or railings to non-listed properties can be subject to a more detailed assessment and if appropriate made subject to protection by a legal process known as an 'Article 4 Direction'. The use of such Directions can be made in justified

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circumstances where a clear assessment of each Conservation Area has been made. In conducting this appraisal, consideration will be given as to whether or not such additional controls are necessary.

**1.20 Trees.** Another additional planning control relates to trees located within Conservation Areas. Setting aside various exceptions principally relating to size and condition, any proposal to fell or carry out works to trees has to be 'notified' to the Council. The Council may then decide to make the tree/s subject to a Tree Preservation Order. This Appraisal diagrammatically identifies only the most significant trees or groups of trees that make a particularly important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Other trees not specifically identified may still be suitable for statutory protection.

**1.21 Hedgerows.** Some hedges may be protected by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. This legislation is extremely complicated and only applies in certain situations that are determined by the location of the hedge, its age and or its historical importance, the wildlife it supports and its number of woody species.

### Planning Policy Framework

**1.22 National Planning Policy Framework.** Published in March 2012, this document replaces previous advice, including PPS 5, Planning for the Historic Environment. The principle emphasis of the new framework is to promote sustainable development.

**1.23** Economic, social and environmental roles should not be considered in isolation because they are mutually dependent and positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment should be sought, including replacing poor design with better design. Whilst architectural styles should not be imposed it is considered proper to reinforce local distinctiveness.

**1.24** In relation to the historic environment the new National Planning Policy Framework advises as follows:

- There should be a positive strategy in the Local Plan for the conservation of the historic environment and up-to-date evidence used to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make.
- Conservation Areas. Such areas must justify such a status by virtue of being of 'special architectural or historic interest'.
- Heritage assets. A heritage asset is defined as 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listings)'.
- Considerable weight should be given to conserving such heritage assets and the more important they are the greater the weight. For example the effect of an application affecting a non- designated heritage asset should be taken into account

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and a balanced judgment reached. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II Listed Building should be exceptional whilst harm to heritage assets of higher status, e.g. a Grade I or II\* Listed Building should be wholly exceptional.

- Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal their significance and proposals that preserve such elements should be approved.
- The use of Article 4 Directions to remove national permitted development rights should be limited to situations 'where this is necessary to protect local amenity or the well being of the area...'
- Green Areas. Such areas of particular importance can properly be identified for special protection as Local Green Spaces in selected situations.

**1.25 Uttlesford Adopted Local Plan.** Uttlesford District Council has a commitment to the environment and its Local Plan Policies. Uttlesford's policies protect Conservation Areas by only permitting development that preserves or enhances their quality and by preventing the demolition of structures that positively contribute to their character and appearance. The Council's Conservation Officer can provide appropriate advice.

**1.26** The Uttlesford Local Plan was adopted in 2005 and can be viewed on the Council's website or a copy can be obtained from the Council. In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council is currently preparing a replacement Local Plan that will, in due course, contain the relevant Council planning policies.

**1.27** The Wendens Ambo Village Inset of the Uttlesford Local Plan shows the existing Conservation Area and the Development Limits. Also shown is the Ground Water Protection Zone which just impinges on the Conservation Area at its eastern extent.

**1.28 Essex County Council Buildings at Risk Register.** The County Council has a 'Buildings at Risk Register'. In relation to Wendens Ambo no such buildings have been identified within the Conservation Area and neither has this Appraisal identified any. One, Westbury Barn on Royston Road is situated just beyond the boundary of the Conservation Area.

**1.29** Assets of Community Value. A total of seven Assets of Community Value are registered in relation to Wendens Ambo of which six are situated within the Conservation Area. These include the village hall, cricket field and the church.

**1.30 Wendens Ambo Conservation Area date of designation.** The Conservation Area was designated in 1977.

### General Influences

**1.31** Wendens Ambo is situated in a primarily rural area on a gently sloping ridge some 16 miles south of Cambridge and 10 miles north of Bishop's Stortford. It is the settlement's proximity to both the M11 and to Stansted Airport, that exerts the greatest

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influences offering opportunities for employment and enhanced communications with Cambridge, Bishop's Stortford, Harlow, London and beyond. The main Cambridge to London Liverpool Street railway line bisects the village to the east and can be accessed from Audley End station. Bus services from the station are frequent but car ownership is still high eroding the need for local services. There are no longer any local shops in the village itself, but a well-used newsagent in the station complex supplies papers and a small range of groceries. Two public houses, The Bell and The Fighting Cocks, serve the needs of the community and an Indian takeaway has recently opened on the upper level of the station building. There is also a well used village hall managed by an active Village Hall Committee and a wide range of social and sporting groups.

**1.32** Because of the lack of local opportunities and the ease of access to good communication routes, out-commuting is high and has led in the past fifty years to a change in the residential make up of the village. There are few opportunities for local employment other than in agriculture, though in recent years a significant proportion of residents have been able to work from home reflecting the increasing availability of fast and reliable internet access. <sup>(1)</sup>

**1.33** Historically, agriculture was the main source of employment and although still an important local activity, its prominence is not as marked as it once was. Audley End Estate remains a working business and is the largest local landowner with the main administrative office situated at Blunketts. Since the nineteenth century the railway and its associated sidings have also provided local opportunities for work. This is still the case, though much diminished, with jobs available at the station itself, the nearby Wenden Garage or with any of the businesses on the Bearwalden Business Park. Many other activities associated with village life are now only remembered in the house names such as the Old Post Office, the Old Forge and Old Mill House, together with the former railway workers' accommodation now known as Railway Cottages. The Neville Arms used to be a pub serving thirsty travellers and several local barns no longer provide storage for agricultural machinery or produce. Today, some of the buildings which were once home to these myriad activities have been converted to residential use.

**1.34** The 2012 Wendens Ambo Parish Plan<sup>(2)</sup> highlighted the need for future housing development, particularly providing affordable accommodation for young people and families. At the same time, the Plan acknowledged the impact of increased building with excessive traffic being cited as one of the key impacts on the quality of life. Protection of environmental features, including open spaces, hedges, groups of trees, streams, ponds, banks and ditches was also noted as being of high importance to the local residents. Due to its location the village will continue to be subjected to development pressures and so now is an appropriate moment to be considering how to best protect its built and open space environment.

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1 *Wendens Ambo Parish Plan*, 2012 Section 5.0 A survey conducted in 2011 showed that 26% of the respondents had their main place of work in Wendens Ambo. Some 74% work outside the village and commute to and from their place of work - 16% work in London, 16% in Saffron Walden and 10% in Cambridge.

2 *ibid.* Sections 10.1-11.0

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### The General Character and Setting of Wendens Ambo

**1.35 Setting.** Wendens Ambo is situated on the gently rolling slopes of the western extent of the river valley as it rises from the Cam. This Landscape Character Type is classified as 'Cam river valley' <sup>(3)</sup>, and is predominantly rural in character comprising a complex network of irregular fields punctuated by few dense blocks of ancient woodland. Colour-washed thatched or mellow red brick houses linked by flint walls are found throughout and emphasise the historic character of the area. Modern buildings are generally discrete and there are some old outstanding barns now often converted to living space or used as small business units. Since the nineteenth century the railway line has cut the village in two and together with the B1383 provides routes out to Cambridge and London. Now the M11 marks a further boundary to the west, occasionally impinging on the tranquility of rural life with the roar of distant motor traffic. To the south a tributary of the Cam runs east to west, crossing Duck Street at an attractive ford before disappearing off between reed covered banks. Meadow pasture historically ran along its full length, a high percentage of which still survives.

**1.36** The wider topography is characterised by attractive panoramic views framed by distant blocks of trees; rolling fields descend to waterways; settlements are intimate and sometimes contrast with the scale of modern agriculture; hedgerows are gappy with visible loss and urban fringe development is occasionally not well integrated into the landscape. In 1874 Kelly described as "the soil is principally light; subsoil chalk ... " <sup>(4)</sup>. The quality of this landscape has now lead to it being included in an Area of Special Landscape Value (SLA) where it is classified as 'North West Essex chalk farmland' <sup>(5)</sup>.

**1.37** In the nineteenth century wheat, oats, barley and roots were cultivated usually on a 'four course system' <sup>(6)</sup>. Today, wheat, barley and rape are most frequently grown and, the land is classified as being of Grade 2 quality (very good) <sup>(7)</sup>.

**1.38** The fieldscape consists of irregular fields of ancient origin, probably of medieval or earlier date, interspersed with areas of former common fields. Many of these were enclosed in the 19th century, forming large fields with irregular outlines and grid-like internal subdivisions. There has been a degree of boundary loss since the 1950s largely as a result of the removal of 19th century field divisions <sup>(8)</sup>. Ancient lanes are sunken

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3 *Landscape Character Assessment of Uttlesford* Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006, Fig. 7.1

4 *Post Office Directory of Essex*, London: Printed and Published by Kelly and Co., 1874, p.248

5 *Strategic Environmental Assessment Consultation Environmental Report Annex B: Baseline Information*, Essex County Council, March 2012, Parra. 5.3.3-5.3.4

6 *Post Office Directory of Essex*, London: Printed and Published by Kelly and Co. 1874 p.248

7 *Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales: Revised Guidelines and Criteria for Grading the Quality of Land*, Defra Publications, 1988

8 *The Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Report*, 2009, notes that the area to the south of Wendens Ambo village has suffered considerable boundary loss (p.107)

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and winding, though none leading to the village are of sufficient quality to warrant Protected Lane Status. Station Road, though, is noted for its species rich embanked verges and accordingly has been designated 'Special Verge' status<sup>(9)</sup>.

**1.39 General character and plan form.** The developments that have occurred in Wendens Ambo over the past half century reflect the social and economic changes that the settlement has undergone. Local authority housing development during the 1950's on Station Road and at Robinsons Bungalows now provides some comfortable low cost housing for local people whilst the mainly detached housing strung out along the southern extent of Duck Street has expanded the village's stock of family homes. All of the railway sidings have now gone, to be replaced by the Bearwalden Business Park offering facilities for a variety of local enterprises.

**1.40** Otherwise, and with the exception of some infilling throughout the historic core, Wendens Ambo has changed relatively little over the last century. The existing Conservation Area is a mirror reflection of the community as it existed in the late 19th century and as shown on the 1877 Ordnance survey map (see Figure 1). Within the village the scale is intimate, with channelled views out through gaps in the buildings and over open spaces to the gently rolling countryside. At the southern end of Duck Street there is the sound of trickling water sometimes, eclipsed by the roar of traffic on the nearby M11. The historic flint and brick St Mary's Church forms a visual centre point to the village; the spire visible across the cricket ground, glimpsed up Church Path and from the Wick at the top of Duck Street. To the east of the railway track the cottages are semi-industrial - a long terraced run built of brick and flint with slate roofs, but countrified by sitting back from the road in generous front gardens. In the village core, to the west of the track, colour-washed plaster and thatched roofed buildings predominate interspersed with a few grand houses roofed in peg tiles or slate. Any incremental new housing is discreet and, where visible, has often been designed to blend in with the environment.

**1.41** The National Heritage List for England records some 32 individually listed buildings and other structures in the parish of Wendens Ambo, of which 19 are to be found in the designated Conservation Area. The majority of these are timber-framed and plastered. Most date from the 16th to 18th centuries, though the 20th century K6 telephone kiosk at the top of Duck Street is included. St Mary's Church - properly called Church of St Mary the Virgin - is Grade I, the remainder are classified Grade II.

**1.42** Thatch is a traditional roofing material in Wenden and an important feature of the village that must be retained. Of the Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area some 25% have thatched roofs.

**1.43** When examined in conjunction with the spread of unlisted constructions and buildings of later date, the indications are of a piecemeal infilling of timber framed buildings continuing into the early 19th century when brick and slate became the choice for the better quality buildings. Like other settlements along the route of the railway line

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9 Reference - Figure 9 and p.33, Strategic Environmental Assessment Baseline, Essex County Council, November 2010

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and the old A11, Wenden experienced a partial rise in fortunes which divided the community between those still reliant on the land and those for whom better communications meant employment if not wealth.

**1.44** There are several other buildings and features that whilst not being listed are nevertheless of architectural and historic interest and which add to Wendens Ambo's overall quality.

**1.45** One very important feature of the village is the use of flint and brick walls interspersed with low hedges to define boundaries and link buildings. The use of these materials reflects the local landscape where flints abound and hedged field boundaries form such a visually important part. This appraisal also identifies a number of important walls that are not individually listed but there may also be others not immediately visible from the public realm and or in otherwise inaccessible locations.

**1.46** Throughout the Conservation Area there are trees in abundance, either as groups or as individual specimens located on the small green and in the churchyard. Others are to be found in private gardens, many of which have already been made subject to Tree Preservation Orders. They add considerably to its attractive appearance and diversity of the Conservation Area particularly in the churchyard and around the perimeter of The Wick.

**1.47** Overhead cables on poles detract significantly in some locations.

**1.48** There are many high quality buildings representative of various periods. Despite some occasional less than satisfactory adjoining modern development, the Conservation Area itself represents an historic grouping of buildings in a rural setting that warrants its formal designation.

### Origins and Historic Development

**1.49** Historical background data has been extracted principally from the *Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Report*<sup>(10)</sup> and the *Essex Historic Environment Record (HER)*<sup>(11)</sup>.

**1.50 Prehistoric and Roman.** There is some evidence of Prehistoric and Bronze Age activity in the Wenden zone in the form of sporadic cropmarks indicating the existence of a range of enclosures, many of probable prehistoric date, ring-ditch cemeteries of probable Bronze Age date and field systems to the north west of the

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10 *Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Report*, Essex County Council, 2009, HECZ 6.2: Wendens Ambo

11 <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/>

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current village. One of the most notable finds, a neolithic skull of a woman, was found in 1864 during excavations associated with the railway and is now held in the collections of Saffron Walden Museum<sup>(12)</sup>.

**1.51** A substantial Roman villa at Chinnel Barn is protected as a Scheduled Monument; its associated estate potentially extends across the M11 to the outer edges of the present village of Wendens Ambo. This site was excavated by the Hon.R C Neville (of Audley End) in 1853<sup>(13)</sup>. Finds included a number of infant burials, coins of Julia Domna, Tetricus, Probus and Constantius, bronze armlet, a bronze ring with green glass intaglio, a brooch, pottery fragments, a bone comb, an iron knife with bone handle, bronze bracelet and the bowls of two bronze spoons. Rescue excavations in 1971 in advance of the construction of the M11 directed by MG Spratling revealed Roman corn drying kilns and a possible small bath house with hypocaust. Further excavations have occurred on both sides of the motorway and during the motorway's construction and a recent evaluation at Norton End has found considerable Roman occupation<sup>(14)</sup>.



Picture 1.2 Field adjacent to Duck Street (Reproduced courtesy of The Wendens Ambo Society)

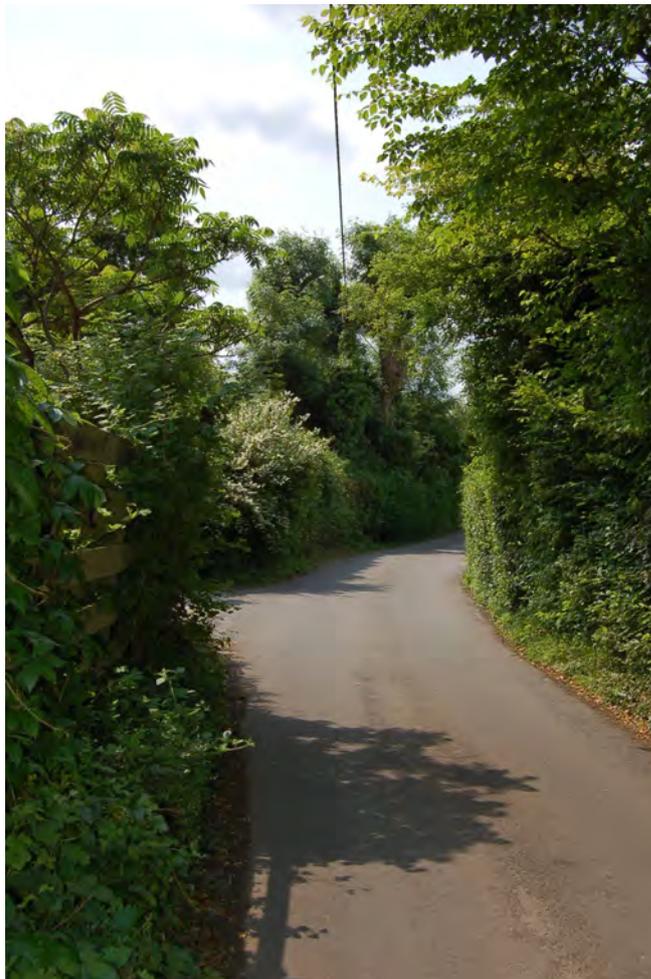
**1.52** Within and on the peripheries of the conservation area further finds indicate dispersed Roman occupation. At Cranford Cottage on Duck Street an archaeological excavation in March 2011 reported finds of pottery fragments and a loom weight suggesting peripheral activities in the area associated with the villa complex at Chinnel barn. Further finds are noted of broken tiles in the field adjacent to Chinnel Lane and Duck Street.

12 Guy Maynard *Notes on a human skull found at Wendon (sic), Essex. Reprinted from The Essex Naturalist*, 1914. SW Museum register A p.553 records "Skull of an Early British Female, found 22 feet below the surface and amongst roots of sedges and sandy gravel (without doubt the bed of an ancient stream) during excavations for the Railway in 1864"

13 Neville, RC, 1853, *Braybrooke Diaries*

14 Atkinson, M, 1993, *Site of Roman villa, Wendens Ambo, Essex: Stage II Assessment*

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Picture 1.3 Duck Street - an ancient sunken lane, of Medieval or earlier origin, as it ascends into the village

**1.53 Medieval.** *A History of the County of Essex*, Victoria History of the Counties of England 1903, describes the Domesday entry giving the following details:

*Wenden was held by Hugh as a manor and by Robert Gernon in demesne. The value to the lord in 1066 was £7, this had risen to £8 by 1086. The manor consisted of nine villagers, five smallholders and five slaves. Three of the lord's plough teams worked the land and five of the smallholders did likewise. In all There was 24 acres of meadow and 2 mils. In 1066 only seven pigs and 5 sheep were supported but by 1086 this had increased to 30 pigs and 67 sheep.*

**1.54** This is the first record of the two villages which then comprised the settlement, namely that of Wenden Magna (Great Wenden) and Wenden Parva (Little Wenden).

**1.55** Reaney advises that the name 'Wendens Ambo' is derived from the old English word 'Wendena' which is interpreted as meaning 'winding valley'<sup>(15)</sup>, and 'Ambo' from the Latin, meaning 'both', referring to the amalgamation of Great Wenden and Little Wenden in 1662 during a period of increasing local development. Morant, writing in

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1768 describes this union saying that 'the two parishes of Great and Little Wenden were united in 1662, by Bishop Sheldon, (Bishop of London) at the petition of the two parishes with the consent of the Earl of Suffolk, Patron to both Churches. The Church of Little Wenden and the Vicarage House of Great Wenden, being ruinous, were both pulled down and the Parsonage House of Little Wenden being in best repair, remains to the Vicar of Wendens Ambo as he is styled in the act of Union'<sup>(16)</sup>. Duck Street is a probable medieval lane which survives as a hollow-way.

**1.56** Using evidence from the Essex Placenames Project<sup>(17)</sup> it is possible to build up a picture of Wenden at this period as a fairly typical small agricultural community surrounded by common land, tenanted and privately held fields.

**1.57** To the northeast of Chinnel Lane there is some limited evidence of a medieval moat identified as incomplete earthworks, defining the angular north-western corner of a rectilinear enclosure of at least 1hectare, with a slightly raised central platform (MONUMENT NO. 373726).

**1.58** The 11th century St Mary's Church is the principal built structure extant from the early Mediaeval period. The aisleless nave and lower part of the tower are of late eleventh century (Saxo Norman) workmanship. It incorporates a chancel and south aisle of 13th century date and the north aisle from the 14th century although this was extensively rebuilt in 1898. The semicircular arch of the west door is entirely comprised of Roman tiles and brick of a similar period can be found in the tower. There is also the remains of a 14th century cycle of wall paintings depicting episodes in the life of St. Margaret. On the south wall there is a brass of a man in plate armour with besagues and transverse sword-belt, c. 1415 and an unusual wooden font cover with chamfered ribs, of c. 1600.

**1.59 Post Medieval.** Historically, the settlement was focused around St Mary's Church with further development extending to the south along Duck Street the although until the 20th century this remained rather piecemeal. From the 1830's the development of the railway to the east of the historic settlement acted as a secondary draw. More recent infilling has tended to interlink these areas giving the village its present layout and dual foci of church and station.

**1.60** Wenden Hall dates from the 15th century and the nearby barn is even earlier in origin. Both Wenden Place and The Bell seem to have appeared in the 16th century - the later bears the date of '1576' in the plasterwork. The number of surviving domestic buildings dating from the 17th and early 18th centuries onwards indicate that the area had entered a period of relative prosperity with a gradual spread of substantial builds. Nos 1-3 Church Path, the Old Post Office and The Close all clustered near the church, date from this period and further afield can be found Wenden Place Cottage and Old Rectory Cottages in Duck Street. Further piecemeal development continued throughout the late 18th century and into the 19th century when a number of quality brick built

16 Philip Morant *History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*, London: T Osborne, J Weston, S Baker, L Davis and C Reymers and B White, 1768

17 Essex Placenames Project, Wenden portal

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properties, such as the Railway Cottages development near the station, the Old Chapel, Sunday School (now the Village Hall) and Old School House, make an appearance on the streetscene.

**1.61** The Chapman and Andre survey of 1773-5, published in 1777, and the 1828 estate map for Wenden<sup>(18)</sup> both give a good idea of the village at this period. The focus of the settlement is still on St Mary's Church with a number of buildings strung out south down Duck Street to Norton End ("or Cold Fair Hill") and along the Royston Road. To the later map Audley End station and the route of the railway have been added in manuscript - an indication of what was to come.



Picture 1.4 Wenden as shown on the Chapman and Andre map of 1777 (Reproduced courtesy of a private collection)

**1.62** The official Census summary report of 1831<sup>(19)</sup>, paints a picture of Wendens Ambo as a primarily rural community largely reliant on the land. Then the total population is listed as 333 persons comprising 185 males and 148 females. There were 55 inhabited

18 'Plan of the parishes of Wenden alias Wendens Ambo and Littlebury, in the county of Essex' map held by Essex Record Office Reference Code: D/DQy 20

19 1831 *Census of Great Britain, Abstract of answers (Sample Report Title: Abstracts of the Answers and Returns Made pursuant to an Act, passed in the Eleventh Year of the Reign of His Majesty King George IV, Intituled, "An Act for taking an Account of the Population of Great Britain, and the Increase or Diminution thereof." Enumeration Abstract.)*, Table [1]: "Population Abstract". Available on the *Vision of Britain Through Time* website

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houses, 1 uninhabited and none under construction. In all a majority of families are chiefly employed in agriculture against only 8 whose main occupations are given as 'retail and handicrafts'. Just 2 men are described as "Capitalists, Bankers, Professional & other Educated men" and 3 as "Farmers employing Labourers". At the time of the census the majority of men aged 20 and above, some 80 altogether, worked on the farms this accounting for some 84% of the working population as against a national average of 40%. As is often the case during this period, almost exactly half of the male population, some 90, were then aged under 20, making the village a much more youthful community than today.

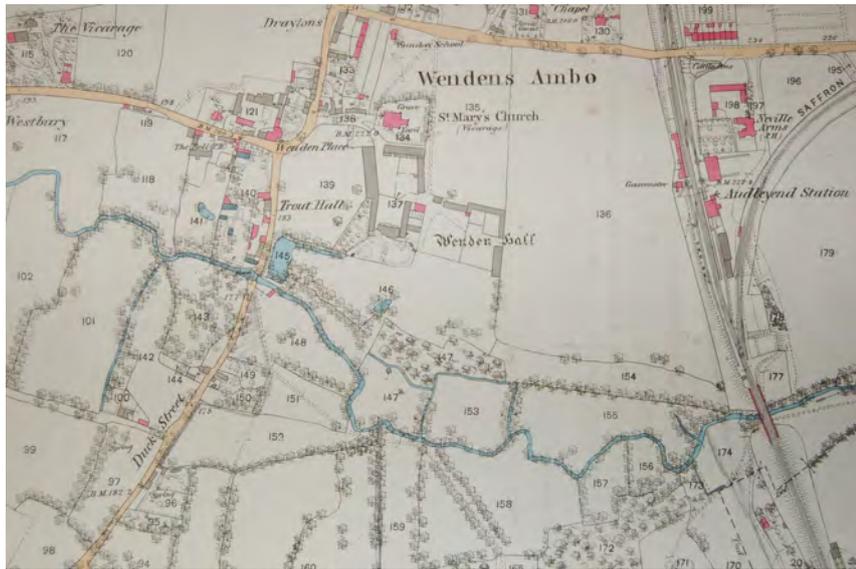


Picture 1.5 The Long Barn, now no longer standing, having collapsed during a storm some 20 years ago. (Reproduced courtesy of The Wendens Ambo Society)

**1.63** Half a century later and in 1881 the village still seems to be a vibrant and mostly self-contained community. The population has grown slightly to 359<sup>(20)</sup> but there are still 46 men and 1 woman employed in agriculture. There were, though, 16 men employed in "Transport and Comm." reflecting the rising importance of the railway and 16 women in domestic service. Surprisingly, one woman is listed as being employed in "Defence of the country" class against not a single male resident in this category. The number of houses has also grown to 86 with 1 uninhabited and 1 under construction

20 1881 Census of England and Wales, Population tables 2, Table 4, 'Area, Houses, and Population of Civil Parishes in the several Registration Sub-Districts in 1871 and 1881' Available on A Vision of Britain Through Time website at: [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit\\_page.jsp?u\\_id=10234219](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit_page.jsp?u_id=10234219)

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Picture 1.6 Wenden as shown on the 1877 Ordnance Survey mapping. (Reproduced courtesy of Saffron Walden Museum)

**1.64** During this period, *The Post Office Directory of Essex* for 1874 describes Wenden as being 'a village situated on a feeder of the Cam, near its confluence in the Western division of the county ... The Great Eastern Railway has a station (the Audley End) here where Lord Braybrooke has built a railway hotel ... The church of St Mary the Virgin is a small ancient building, with chancel, nave, aisles, south porch, and low square tower containing 5 bells: a screen divides the nave from the chancel ... The Day school is at Audley End: the school-room is used only for a Sunday school. The Independents have a small chapel here. Lord Braybrooke is lord of the manor and the principal landowner ... The area is 1,220 acres ... and the population in 1871 was 363'.



Picture 1.7 Children at Wenden School in 1910 (Reproduced courtesy of The Wendens Ambo Society)

**1.65** In addition to the several farmers the same directory lists the following commercial activities in the village: William Barker 'shoe maker'; William Havers 'shopkeeper' and Thomas Samuel 'blacksmith'. George Savill filled the dual roles of publican at the Bell

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and as a local farmer. Around the station George Barnard is carrying on the business as a 'coal merchant'; John Holland is listed as proprietor at Wenden Mills and Walter Saich presided over the Nevile Arms. William Seward was the station master. The railway offered chance of employment away from the land -signalmen, platelayers and porters could each earn up to 21s a week. Curiously, though, few Wenden men seem to have taken up jobs on the tracks. New Row, constructed sometime before 1877, was built to provide accommodation for the growing number of railway workers and with their cast iron lattice pane windows, decorative brickwork and sturdy construction, they must have seemed the height of modern convenience. None of the householders in 1881 were native to Wenden, although a railway porter, James Clement, had married a local girl.



Picture 1.8 The Neville Arms at Audley End station around 1920. (Reproduced courtesy of Saffron Walden Museum)

**1.66** The proximity of the railway and major roads providing alternative employments meant that when the agricultural depression of the early twentieth century hit, Wenden unlike more inaccessible villages, such as Arkesden, did not suffer the general decline in population as more and more villagers moved away from the land. The number of residents has remained fairly constant throughout the twentieth century drifting slowly down from 377 in 1901 to 330 in 1951 (Census reports, 1931-1981) before rising in the latter part of the century as new housing has been developed on the peripheries of the Conservation Area and options on infill plots are taken up. The 2011 census records a population of 473 (2011 Census, Office of National Statistics).

**1.67** Situated in the Cam valley on route of the vital A11 and London to Cambridge railway line, Wenden occupied a strategically important site during the Second World War abutting the route of the GHQ Line (General Headquarters Line) - a defensive line

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built to contain an expected German invasion<sup>(21)</sup>. Many of the defences are still visible along the valley to Great Chesterford. A FW3 type concrete pillbox is located in the grounds of the Fighting Cocks Public House and another can be found adjacent to the pumping station at Silver Row. Spigot mortar emplacements, with their stainless steel pintles still in place, can be found in the Conservation Area beside the entrance to High Beeches<sup>(22)</sup> and in the grounds of The Chestnuts. In all nine defensive features are recorded for the parish.

**1.68** To accommodate the expanding population and provide much needed modern affordable accommodation a total of 22 local authority houses and bungalows were constructed in the late 1940's and early 1950's on land between the station and the old A11.

**1.69** In common with many other rural settlements, Wenden has seen a steady erosion of local facilities over the years. The nearest schools are in Saffron Walden and Newport, The Neville Arms has been redeveloped into office facilities and the former post office and school are now private residences. The only shop now operating is a newsagent at Audley End station which offers facilities to the many commuters and local people. Today, The Bell public house still trades providing an important focus for many village events.

### Character Analysis

**1.70** The current Conservation Area has been surveyed as a single character area with a map and key common to all. Historical photographs have been provided by Saffron Walden Museum and from the Wendens Ambo parish website. Other photographs have been taken by the fieldworker. All maps are reproduced from the Ordnance Survey under Uttlesford District Council Licence No: 100018688 (2004).

**1.71** Within Wenden's Conservation Area there are no designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

**1.72 Archaeological sites.** Wendens Ambo is described by the *Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project*<sup>(23)</sup> as exhibiting evidence of prehistoric occupation within the area ranging in date from the Bronze Age through to the Iron Age. There is one site of archaeological interest which, although outside the boundary, influences the Conservation Area; the Roman villa complex at Chinnel Barn (centred TL 50663 36078) to the south west of the village core. Not all archaeological sites are of equal

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21 The GHQ Line ran from the northern end of the Taunton Stop Line near Highbridge in Somerset, along the River Brue and the Kennet and Avon Canal to Reading, around the south of London south of Guildford and Aldershot, to Canvey Island and Great Chesterford in Essex, before heading north to end in Yorkshire. Full details are available via the Defence of Britain Project: <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/cba/projects/dob/>

22 SMR 10387. A wartime map of Home Guard dispositions in the area shows that this locality was the H.Q. of "C" Company Home Guard

23 *Uttlesford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project*, Essex County Council, 2009, pp. 73-4

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importance and the Council will decide a course of action that may vary from archaeological investigation and recording to protecting such a site from development, when determining planning applications. There will generally be a presumption in favour of preservation in situ.

**1.73 Listed buildings.** Individually listed buildings have been identified, plotted and a representative selection is described, such abbreviated descriptions being based on the Dept. of Culture Media and Sport's list. Full descriptions can be obtained on line at English Heritage's website or Heritage Gateway website ([www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk)) Listed Buildings are protected from unauthorised demolition, alteration or extension. Structures, including railings and walls, within the curtilages of listed buildings, if they are pre-1948, are subject to the same controls as listed buildings.

**1.74 Non-listed buildings of quality and worthy of protection from demolition.** This Appraisal has identified several non listed buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the Conservation Area and these have been separately identified. The basic questions asked in identifying such buildings/structures are:

- Is the non listed building/structure of sufficient architectural or historic interest whose general external form and appearance remains largely unaltered?
- Does the building contain a sufficient level of external original features and materials?
- Has the building retained its original scale without large inappropriate modern extensions that destroy the visual appearance, particularly in respect of the front elevation?
- Is the building/structure visually important in the street scene?

**1.75 Traditional materials and detailing.** Traditional materials and detail make a significant contribution to the character of the local area.

**1.76** Lime render, either finished plain or with pargetted decoration is the predominant finish at the historic core of the village where buildings are most commonly constructed from oak timber frame. Timbers are often left exposed, sometimes picked out in contrasting colours or, where plain, weathered to a silver grey. Infill should be with wattle panels, left plain for decorative effect. Bricks, used for principal construction from the eighteenth century, are handmade reds, occasionally with gault brick detailing and with cambered or gauged arches to openings. Other features such as flintwork panels and applied moulded window copings are typically found on better quality buildings dating from the 19th century. Brickwork is most commonly found



Picture 1.9 Traditional finishing to the fine listed barn at Wenden Place

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in Flemish bond although English bond is also used, usually on perimeter walls and outbuildings where decorative effect is required. Barns and outbuildings are usually constructed in weather board which is prevalent, both feather edged and plain edged. It is historically preserved with pitch or creosote though now most often painted black.



Picture 1.10 Traditional Essex fan pagetting recreated on the wall of a property in Duck Street

**1.77** Throughout the historic core there is a predominance of traditional straw thatch found laid very steeply, typically at a pitch of 45 to 60°. It is usually finished plain, but ridges may be finished with decorative ligger work in patterns including dragons' teeth, diamond, scalloped, clubbed, herring-bone and crossed, usually hipped. On other buildings roofs are sometimes of double cambered handmade red clay plain tiles laid steeply (47 to 50°) or for 19th century and later additions, natural blue-grey slate at a lower pitch Orange clay pantiles are usually confined to outbuildings only.

**1.78** Windows are largely traditional; in painted or stained timber with either symmetrical flush or recessed casements, vertical or horizontally sliding sashes, the latter a particular feature of North West Essex. Notable are the cast iron lattice casements with diamond panes to be found in the nine former railway workers' cottages on Station Road. Although plastic replacement windows are to be found on a number of later properties, surprisingly few historic houses have been assailed by this blight. Where replacement windows are in evidence they are usually good copies of the original or are in period style.

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Picture 1.11 Thatch, horizontal sliding sahes and delicate colour-washed plaster in Church Path



Picture 1.12 Roman brick re-used in the arch of the door on the west tower to St Mary's Church

**1.79** Roofscapes provide a rich variety of architectural detail, form and shape. Interest is drawn from the single or multiple red brick chimney stacks, some of very elaborate shape. On low 1 ½ storey cottages dormer windows penetrate the roofline where they typically provide contour and interest. On grander buildings smaller pitched roof dormers are typically narrow openings sometimes partly concealed behind a parapet.

**1.80** Boundary treatments are an important element in defining the street scene where they provide texture and interest to an area. Walls, many of which are constructed of flint panels supported by brick piers and capping, and fences, many of the timber picket type, are typically low to front and side elevations on public through-fares. They are either painted white or left untreated.



Picture 1.13 Well executed modern flint and brick walling adjacent to the village hall

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**1.81** Fields are defined by heavy agricultural timber fencing, always unfinished and usually of three horizontal bars either roughly squared or left in the round. Hedged boundaries are also frequent, particularly on the more rural periphery of the conservation area where they sometimes conceal more modern developments.



Picture 1.14 Trees have always been an important feature of the village as evidenced by this early 20th century image of Church Path. (Reproduced courtesy of Saffron Walden Museum)

**1.82 Trees and hedgerows.** There are a considerable number of trees that particularly contribute to the quality of the Conservation Area. The basic criteria for identifying such important trees are:

- They are in good condition
- They are visible at least in part from public view points
- They make a significant contribution to the street scene or other publicly accessible areas

**1.83** A large number of trees within the Conservation Area and around the Church are already subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

**1.84 Open land, open spaces or gaps of quality that contribute to the visual importance of the Conservation Areas where development would be inappropriate have been identified.** The basic question asked in identifying such areas is:

- Is the open space or gap an important landscape feature contributing to the general spatial quality and visual importance of the Conservation Area?

**1.85** Private open spaces forming an important setting for an historic asset and unkempt spaces that have the potential to be enhanced are candidates for selection subject to complying with the principle question.

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**1.86** Any other distinctive features that make an important visual or historic contribution are noted.

**1.87** Reference has previously been made to the potential of introducing Article 4 Directions in justified circumstances and the criteria for their selection in relation to features associated with selected non listed properties is as follows:

- In relation to retention of chimneys, these need to be in good condition, contemporary with the age of the property, prominent in the street scene and generally complete with chimney pots. Exceptionally chimney stacks of particular architectural merit without pots may be selected.
- In relation to retention of selected windows, these need to be on front or side elevations, fronting and visible from the street/s, contemporary with the age of the property and where the majority of windows of respective elevations retain their original characteristics and have not been replaced by modern glazing units.
- In relation to retention of walls or railings, those selected need to be below the prescribed heights (walls including a footpath or bridleway, water course or open space 1m fronting a highway or 2m elsewhere require prior consent for their demolition), be prominent in the street scene and make a positive architectural or historic contribution to its visual appearance.
- In relation to retention of other features, these may include good quality architectural detailing to non-listed buildings, constructed of wood, metal or other materials.
- It may also be appropriate to introduce Article 4 Directions to retain quality buildings below the prescribed threshold where consent for demolition is not required or to prevent the erection of inappropriate additions such as porches to terraced properties of historic interest.

**1.88** Features that detract or are in poor repair have been identified and appear in the Table 'Enhancement Proposals to Deal with Detracting Elements' set out in Part 2.

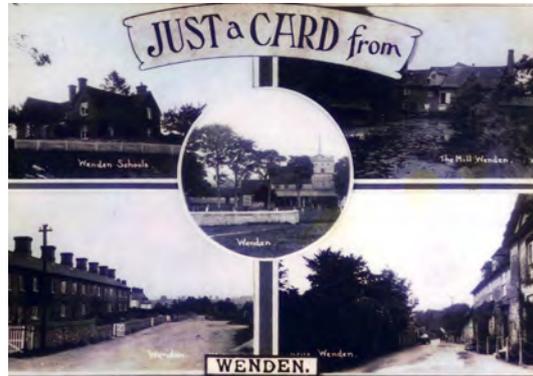
**1.89** Important views are identified and are briefly described.

**1.90** In suggesting any revisions to boundaries of the Conservation Area, consideration has been given as to whether or not the land or buildings in question form part of an area of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance should be conserved.

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### Wendens Ambo village

**1.91 General overview.** At its heart Wendens Ambo is quintessentially English in character with St Mary's church either distantly viewed across the cricket green or approached dramatically up Church Path where it presides on a rise flanked by colour-washed cottages and mature trees. To the south, historic and modern buildings line Duck Street as it descends to the ford, now often dry, and thence to open countryside. On the other side of the Wick the scale and spacing of structures is different where large houses such as Wenden Hall or the agricultural structures of Mutlow Farm sit in their own generous plots. But this is only one half of the village; on the other side of the railway tracks, all is bustle with commuters making their way to and from the station past the neat run of flint dashed railway cottages,



Picture 1.15 Early 20th century composite card of Wendens (Reproduced courtesy of The Wendens Ambo Society)

**1.92 Scheduled Ancient Monuments.** There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments recorded within the Conservation Area, though the site of a Double corridor Roman villa<sup>(24)</sup> is situated just to the south west of the village and on the other side of the M11. Excavations from the 19th century onwards to the present day have revealed this to be a substantial complex indicating considerable Roman activity in the area.

**1.93** Evaluation in a field to the west of the junction between Duck Street and Rookery Lane in 2006 revealed a series of ditches and gullies dated to the first century AD and predominantly aligned north-east/south-west. Also of this date was a metalled surface thought to be a yard. A subsoil deposit containing mid 2nd-mid 3rd century pottery was excavated and 4th century deposits were found overlying the metalled surface in an area of concentrated activity in the east of the field. Most of the Roman features are probably the result of agricultural activities associated with the Roman occupation site beneath the M11<sup>(25)</sup>.

**1.94** Separate evaluation in a field to the west of the junction between Duck Street and Rookery Lane revealed medieval features ranging in date from the 12th to the 16th century in date. Two ditches dated to the 12th/early 13th century and a pit and ditch to the 14th/early 15th century. The latest feature investigated was a metalled yard or track, aligned northeast/south-west, and dated to 15th/16th century. The medieval features may indicate the presence of an unknown occupation site in the vicinity<sup>(26)</sup>.

**1.95 Individually Listed Buildings.** A selection of representative Listed Building descriptions (generally abbreviated) is provided below.

24 SMR 169

25 (EHER 169-70, 16924). Ennis, T. *Duck Street, Wendens Ambo, Essex: Archaeological Evaluation 2006*

26 *ibid.*

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Picture 1.16 St Mary's Church in the late 19th century (Reproduced courtesy of Saffron Walden Museum)

**1.96** St Mary's Church. Grade I, properly called Church of St Mary the Virgin. Using local materials to their full potential, this is an interesting flint rubble building dating from the latter part of the 11th century comprising a west tower, nave with north and south aisles and a chancel. The west tower, again of 11th century date notably features bell openings with colonettes and a remarkable enclosed staircase. The adjacent ceiling, another rare survivor, retains clues to the many past configurations of the bells as well as some fine carved work. Today the church has a ring of six bells. A semi-circular arch to the west door is entirely of Roman tiles with a single storey tympanum. There is a later embattled parapet and the tower is surmounted by a slender spire (Hertfordshire Spike). The nave also is Norman but considerable restoration was undertaken when the north aisle was rebuilt by James Barr in 1847 and the south porch was remodelled by E Geldart during 1895-6. Amongst the 19th century roof timbers are a number of 15th century king posts. There is also the remains of a circa 1330 cycle of wall paintings depicting episodes in the life of St Margaret, the martyr of Antioch. The interior fittings include a fine nine-sided 15th century pulpit, a chancel screen and seven benches of similar date, one pew front notably with a carved tiger holding a paw on a mirror. The font cover is circa 1600 and the font is circa 1400. The several memorials include a brass of a knight (believed to commemorate Sir William Lovenay) circa 1415, a dedication to a midshipman in Nelson's vanguard who died in 1886 in his 104 year and a modern stained glass window of the Annunciation by Peter Caller which depicts a bird's eye view of the village. The church forms the focal point and is of a small picturesque village

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group of cottages and listed barns and, according to Pevsner "is best approached from the W, with the thatched cottages of Church Walk on the l. Contributing to a view that is a favourite with publishers of scenic calendars" <sup>(27)</sup>.

**1.97** Nos 1-3 Church Path (sometimes referred to as Church Street) abut this diminutive thoroughfare on its northern side where they sit on a slight rise behind well maintained lawns and herbaceous borders. Together they form a most pleasing and picturesque group with their differing roof heights, thatched and peg tiles, colour washed plaster fronts and varied ranges of windows. They range in date from the 16th to 18th century with some later additions. No 2 is thought to be a former guildhall of early 16th date <sup>(28)</sup>. All are Grade II.



Picture 1.17 The picturesque prospect of colour-washed cottages, varied roof heights and materials leading from the church is often photographed to depict the quintessential English village

**1.98** Lower down on the B1039, Royston Road, sits the Old Post Office, a Grade II 18th century timber-framed and plastered house. It is two storeys with a two window range of horizontal sliding sashes with glazing bars. A central boarded door has a gabled hood. Roof thatched, with end chimney stacks. A single storey addition with a thatched roof extends on the north end.

27 James Bettley and Nikolaus Pevsner *The Buildings of Essex*, London, Yale University Press, 2007, p. 819

28 See *Historic Buildings in Essex*, Essex Historic Buildings Group, Issue 1, December 1984

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**1.99** Further along the road to the west is Wenden Place (Grade II), an imposing 16th century timber-framed and plastered house with an early 19th century brick block (painted) added at the east end. The older west wing is of two storeys and attics and the east block is two storeys. The windows are double-hung sashes with glazing bars. The doorway has pilasters and a cornice hood. The south front of the east block has one window range set in a slightly recessed semi-circular headed panel with a pedimented gable. Roof slate. The west wing has three window range. Roof tiled, with a coved plaster eaves cornice and three hipped dormers.

**1.100** Associated with Wenden Place are a number of ancillary Grade II buildings all clustered around the courtyard to the west of the main house. These comprise the 17th century timber-framed and weather-boarded stables of four bays, originally a barn; a late 18th century timber-framed and weather-boarded barn of three bays; and the thatched Wenden Place Cottage - a plastered two storey building dating from the 18th century with double window range of horizontal sliding sashes with glazing bars.

**1.101** Opposite is The Bell Inn, a timber-framed and plastered building built about 1600. At the west end there is an extension with a jettied upper storey and a higher roof level. Two storeys. The windows on the north front are horizontal sliding sashes. Roof tiled, with a large central square chimney stack with diagonal shafting on each face.



Picture 1.18 The Bell Inn sometime in the early 20th century



Picture 1.19 The Bell Inn in 2013

**1.102** On Duck Street extending to the south are to be found a number of other listed buildings indicative of the piecemeal historic expansion of the village into the valley. The top of the street is marked by a K6 telephone kiosk, designed 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. Most notable are Trout Hall and Blythburgh House. The former is a large house of circa 1600 but entirely altered on the east and north sides in the 18th and 19th centuries when the building was faced in brick and a third storey was added, with tile hanging on the east and south. The latter, although of 16th century date, is something of an interloper, having been moved from east Suffolk to the present site in 1939 by a Miss Riley. Plain tile roof with gabled dormer and central stack. Two storey and attic, 2 window range of modern leaded light casements. Adjoining, facing south, 17th century timber framed and plastered cottage. Thatched hipped roof with central pair of brick stacks. One and a half storeys. Small paned windows to ground floor, casement attic dormer.

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Picture 1.20 Casement attic dormer to Blythburgh House which was moved to its present position from east Suffolk in 1939

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**1.103** To the north and right at the centre is Wenden Hall. It still sits in an essentially rural setting, little changed from the nineteenth century. Hall itself comprises part of a 15th century two-bay hall house on the east end and an 18th century block on the west. It is mostly timber-framed and plastered but with some plastered brick, and brick plinths. Pevsner notes that the form of the building was principally revealed during restoration by the photographer and artist, Edwin Smith, in the 1960's<sup>(29)</sup>. The late 14th century barn, one of the oldest buildings in the area, is now converted to domestic dwelling. Both are Grade II.

**1.104** On the other side of the railway track and very different in scale and date is the run of mid 19th century terrace cottages of houses fronted in flint with red brick dressings. These were built to house workers at the nearby station complex and are appropriately known as the Railway Cottages. They are two storeys in height with a sixteen window range on the main range. No 9 is set back and is plastered, with 3 window range. The windows are attractive cast iron lattice casements, with stone sills. The front is divided by pilasters. Roof tiled in the 20th century, with nine central chimney stacks. The 1877 Ordnance Survey shows them as then on the edge of the settlement but part of the extensive range of structures associated with providing services to Audley End station and new branch line to Saffron Walden.



Picture 1.21 Railway Cottages. The combination of flint panels, high quality brick detailing and lattice windows makes a very pleasing and important run of buildings at this entrance to the Conservation Area

29 James Bettley and Nikolaus Pevsner *The Buildings of Essex*, London, Yale University Press, 2007, p. 819

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### 1.105 Important buildings or structures within the curtilages of Listed Buildings.

A number of such buildings have been noted and are detailed below.

**1.106** In the churchyard are a number of tombs surrounded by 19th century railings and a number of others with rare cast iron grave markers. One marking the grave of William Nicholson<sup>(30)</sup> records that he was a midshipman in Nelson's Vanguard and that he died in 1886 at the age of 104. The north section marks the resting place of Henry Seymour Neville, 9th Lord Braybrooke of Audley End, who lived for the last years of his life at Mutlow Hall.

**1.107** To the rear of Wenden Hall Cottage and forming the final building of the group surrounding the courtyard is a low single storey barn constructed of brick with flint panels. Pitched roof of 20th century tiles with projecting rafters. Visible from the road, this is the only unlisted structure in the group.

**1.108 Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution.** A number of such buildings have been noted and are detailed below.

**1.109** The Old Chapel on Royston Road. A small elegant 19th century building, erected in 1851, set back from the road in its own grounds with two prominent vernacular gothic arched windows, cross-over glazing at the top, flanking a central door and brick porch. The building is one and a half storeys, principally constructed in brick with plain detail picked out in contrasting cement[?] capping to the half pillasters which support the porch and the central door arch. Simple scalloped barge boards and chimney stack. Now a private residence, this was formerly used by the Congregationalists when it was described as 'a small ... Chapel ... with 60 sittings'<sup>(31)</sup>. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for windows and selected architectural detailing may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 1.22 The former Congregationalists chapel, now a private residence, makes a charming addition to the streetscene

30 Noted by *Kelly's Directory* of 1874 as a 'Principal Resident of the village

31 *Kelly's Directory of Essex*, 1914 p.696

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**1.110** Reeves is a pleasing timber-framed and plastered house located in a prominent position on Nats Lane. Two storeys with three window range comprising a mixture of modern casements and horizontal sliding sashes with glazing bars. An off-set central panelled door is located within pilasters and a cornice hood. Roof thatched, with two chimney stacks. Local opinion is that the property is of 17th century origin, possibly dating from the early 1640's and was named after the Reeve family who were prominent in the village during the early part of the 19th century. A more detailed survey will be required to ascertain if an Article 4 Direction to provide protection for windows and selected architectural detailing may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.



Picture 1.23 Reeves, a pleasing thatched cottage of probable 17th century origin

**1.111** Situated on a rise just at the dogleg junction of Royston Road, the Old School House is tall elegant and prominent building, solidly 19th century in appearance, the core largely unaltered, two storeys, three bays with cross wing and extension to the east, constructed of red brick with alternate raised brick detailing to the cornices. Original windows on the upper storey set within depressed arches and tiled roofs of fairly shallow pitch three tall chimney stacks. A number of modern extensions have been added in recent years. This was the village Board School, erected in 1881 for 70 pupils. A year after opening the attendance was only 50 children and the mistress was a Mrs Ann Sharpe. By 1914 this had risen to 64 children and the school additionally employed an "infant's mistress"<sup>(32)</sup>. It closed in 1947 due to falling attendances and was converted into a private dwelling in 1962-3. An Article 4 Direction to provide protection for windows and selected architectural detailing may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

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**1.112** No.4 Church Path, otherwise known as Hillside. Believed to be comparable in date to the listed run of buildings at Nos. 1-3 Church Path, faced in brick in the early part of the 20th century. Two storeys high with a six window range of 20th century casements, offset front door under a small pedimented porch. Two Red brick central chimney stacks. Article 4 Directions to provide protection for selected architectural detailing may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

**1.113** The range of flint-walled barns/agricultural buildings immediately to the south of the cricket field are also of note and again Article 4 Directions to provide protection for selected architectural detailing may be appropriate subject to further consideration and notification.

**1.114 Other distinctive features that make an important architectural or historic contribution.** Walls so identified are protected from demolition without prior consent unless otherwise stated.

**1.115** A range of boundary treatments are found within this part of the Conservation Area - wooden picket style fences, some traditionally painted and others left untreated; garden hedges and flint walls with brick piers and capping detail. Most prominent is that extending east in a quadrant from Wenden Place to the south end of the Old Post Office. This 18th century red brick flint and stone wall, about 3.6 m high with brick capping and panelled with brick piers, is very prominent in the street scene and is Grade II listed. Of further note are the number of specimens of glacial erratic boulders probably collected from local fields and now included in the base of the wall itself. There are, though, several areas of degradation with spalled brickwork and inappropriate cement repairs. A number of specimens of pudding stone are also incorporated into the base and these should be preserved.

**1.116** Other walls are notably found to the front of Stone Cottage and the barns at Wenden Place; fronting Drayton Farm, to the side of Hoodwink House and fronting Railway Cottages. Those surrounding the churchyard and in the vicinity of the Village Hall were substantially conserved and rebuilt in 2008 and 2009. To the front of Wenden Place are ten elegant white painted cast iron posts linked by chains. Few of these boundaries are not particularly high permitting views into the many well-maintained gardens. Smaller historic dwellings generally sit to the front of their gardens whilst modern properties and larger period houses are often set further back in their generous plots. This spacing has helped to preserve the spacious and uncluttered village feel of Wenden.

**1.117** The 20th century raised pedestrian walkway and posts at the ford in Duck Street is a feature of this part of the village. Whilst of little historic or architectural note, it adds to the varied quality of the Conservation Area and acts as a reminder of the time when the stream flowed more swiftly over the road.

**1.118 Important open spaces.** The churchyard represents an area of high quality open space. The churchyard contains a number of historic tombs that add to its quality.

## Part 1: Appraisal 1

**1.119** The Wick and the Cricket Ground, the former now with the popular childrens' play area, are two further areas of important open space. Together they contribute to the quality and diversity of the centre of the Conservation Area adding its charm with a combination of mature trees, informal seating and historic features. Views across each to the church or clusters of cottages serve to reinforce the essentially rural nature of the village.

**1.120 Particularly important trees and hedgerows.** Mature trees of exceptional quality are one component of a quintessential English landscape particularly around the church, the cricket ground and nearby properties. Those to the front of the Old School House and High Banks effectively screen the properties from the road whilst trees around and behind many houses in Duck Street provide a green backdrop to these properties setting them in scale to the overall streetscene. Hedgerows delineating the boundaries of front gardens play an important function in adding to the high quality and diversity of the environment. The quality hedges abutting the run up into the village from the bottom of Duck Street to provide a transition from the surrounding countryside to the core of the village. Their retention is of the utmost importance as are those surrounding the Wick. A further feature is the pond to the west of Wenden Hall and next to Duck Street. This is a place of great tranquillity and a haven for wildlife.



Picture 1.24 Mature trees and distant views of the church and open fields across the Cricket Ground define the rural nature of this part of the village

## 1 Part 1: Appraisal

**1.121 Important views.** Three such views are identified - looking across the Cricket Ground towards St Mary's Church; the view up Church Path to the west tower of the church and looking up Duck Street to The Wick.

**1.122 Elements that are out of character with the Conservation Area.** A number of utility poles and their overhead services detract from the quality of the streetscene, particularly along Royston Road and in Duck Street. It is considered appropriate to draw attention to the level of visual damage, particularly where these services intrude in proximity to Listed Buildings. It is recognised that in the current economic climate it may be difficult to achieve any real improvements, though, will still be worth while exploring the potential for the under grounding of services with the utility companies should the opportunity arise.



Picture 1.25 The intrusion of utility poles in royston Road detracts from the otherwise high quality of the environment

**1.123** As mentioned above, the spalled brickwork and inappropriate repairs to the listed wall from Wenden Place to the south end of the Old Post Office detract from the overall quality of the environment. Dialogue should be opened with the owners to seek more appropriate repairs in this historic wall. The council's Building Conservation Officer can advise.

## Part 1: Appraisal 1



Picture 1.26 Imposing wall in need of some conservation

**1.124 Opportunities to secure improvements.** Repaint railing to the small pedestrian bridge over the ford at the bottom of Duck Street.

**1.125 Suggested boundary changes.**

A minor amendment is suggested to enclose the entire property of Springfield (part of the property is already within the Conservation Area).

A minor adjustment to remove the front portion of the garden and adjacent land to the south of High Banks back to the highway boundary as the property is effectively screened from the road.

Minor adjustment to revise the Conservation Area to the rear boundaries of Wenden Hill Cottage and The Close (the rear boundaries of both properties are currently bisected by the Conservation Area)

It is suggested that six properties in The Beeches are excluded given these are a discreetly located group of new dwellings at the periphery of the Conservation Area (whilst retaining frontage properties to Station Road). The properties comprise: Kenmoore Lodge, Beeches End, Silver Beech, Red Beeches, High Beeches and Beechwood House. Additionally part of the garden of Weald).

**1.126 Other actions.** As set out in the Table 'Enhancement Proposals to Deal with Detracting Elements' in Part 2.

## 1 Part 2 - Management Proposals

### Revised Conservation Area Boundary

**2.1** There are four areas proposed for revision:

1. A minor amendment is suggested to enclose the entire property of Springfield (part of the property is already within the Conservation Area).
2. A minor adjustment to remove the front portion of the garden and adjacent land to the south of High Banks back to the highway boundary as the property is effectively screened from the road.
3. Minor adjustment to revise the Conservation Area to the rear boundaries of Wenden Hill Cottage and The Close (the rear boundaries of both properties are currently bisected by the Conservation Area)
4. It is suggested that six properties in The Beeches are excluded given these are a discreetly located group of new dwellings at the periphery of the Conservation Area (whilst retaining frontage properties to Station Road). The properties comprise: Kenmoore Lodge, Beeches End, Silver Beech, Red Beeches, High Beeches and Beechwood House. Additionally part of the garden of Weald).

### Planning Controls and Good Practice: The Conservation Area

**2.2** All current planning policies are contained in the Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in 2005. It is against this document that the District Council will process applications. As set out above, this will be superseded in due course by the Council's new Local Plan.

**2.3** Applicants considering submitting any application should carefully consider the relevant policies and if necessary contact Council Officers to seek advice. For further details including advice on Planning Applications, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Landscaping and other general administrative advice, please contact the Planning Department for assistance.

Website: [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk)

Telephone no. 01799 510510

Or write to Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER

### Planning Controls and Good Practice: The Potential Need to Undertake an Archaeological Field Assessment

**2.4** Potential need to undertake an Archaeological Evaluation. Good practice for applicants will be to carefully consider the content of the policies set out in the Local Plan.

## Part 2 - Management Proposals 1

### Planning Control and Good Practice: Listed Buildings

**2.5** Those buildings that are individually listed and other buildings, structures or walls within the curtilage of a Listed Building are similarly protected in law.

**2.6** The Listed Buildings and associated structures within their curtilages, including those specifically identified by this Appraisal are important and are a major contribution to the quality of the built environment of Wendens Ambo. It is essential that their architectural detailing is not eroded or their other qualities and settings not compromised. Good practice for applicants will be to carefully consider the content of the policies set out in the Local Plan.

### Planning Controls and Good Practice: Other Buildings that Make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution

**2.7** A number of such unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area have been identified. The Council will seek to ensure that these are retained. These are as follows: The Old Chapel on Royston Road; Reeves on Nats Lane and the Old School House on Royston Road, No 4 Church Path, otherwise known as Hillside and the run of flint-walled barns/agricultural buildings to the south of the cricket field.

**2.8 Proposed Article 4 Directions.** There are other distinctive features that are integral to some of the unlisted buildings identified in the previous paragraph that make an important architectural or historic contribution, including selected chimneys, windows and other architectural detailing. In some situations protection already exists through existing planning controls but in other cases protection could only be provided by removing Permitted Development Rights via an Article 4 Direction. The associated legislation is complex. Should the Council consider such a course of action appropriate there would be a process of notifying the affected owners separately at a later date. This would be associated with further detailed consideration and possible refinement of the general proposals set out earlier in this Appraisal.

### Planning Controls and Good Practice: Other Distinctive Features that Make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution

**2.9** This Appraisal has identified several features including walls and posts that make a particular contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Some walls are protected from demolition without prior consent by virtue of exceeding the specified heights relevant to Conservation Area or by Listed Building legislation. Any proposal involving their demolition is also unlikely to be approved.

## 1 Part 2 - Management Proposals

### Planning Control and Good Practice: Important Open Spaces, Trees and Groups of Trees

**2.10 Important open land, open spaces and gaps.** The open spaces as identified being the churchyard, the cricket ground and The Wick. Additionally, the pond and areas around the ford on Duck Street are of note. All represent landscape features that materially contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area that must be protected.

**2.11 Particularly important trees and hedgerows.** Only the most significant trees are shown very diagrammatically. Many have already been made subject to Tree Preservation Orders but others worthy of protection have not. Subject to certain exceptions all trees in a Conservation Area are afforded protection and a person wanting to carry out works has to notify the Council. Trees that have not been identified may still be considered suitable for protection by Tree Preservation Orders. Owners are advised to make regular inspections to check the health of trees in the interests of amenity and Health and Safety.

### Proposed Controls: Other Distinctive Features that make an Important Visual or Historic Contribution

**2.12** The most important views within and out of the Conservation Area are diagrammatically shown.

### Enhancement Proposals to Deal with Detracting Elements

**2.13** The Appraisal has identified a number of elements that detract which are summarised below together with a proposed course of action. Within the staff and financial resources available, Council Officers will be pro-active and provide assistance. It must be recognised that such improvements will frequently only be achieved with the owners' co-operation.

*The features identified below are shown on the accompanying plans.*

Detracting element	Location	Proposed Action
Overhead utility services on intrusive poles	At various locations on Royston Road and Duck Street. These poles and associated overhead services are the most disruptive element in the Conservation Area	Contact utility company to explore potential of securing improvements of selected overhead services in selected locations
Spalled brickwork and inappropriate repairs to listed wall	From the south end of Wenden Place to the Old Post Office	Liaise with owner to seek appropriate remedial actions are taken. The council's Building Conservation Officer can advise

## Part 2 - Management Proposals 1

Detracting element	Location	Proposed Action
Traffic management plan	Principally through the core of the village	Discuss with parish council and local members to pursue with Essex County Council as appropriate

### Other actions

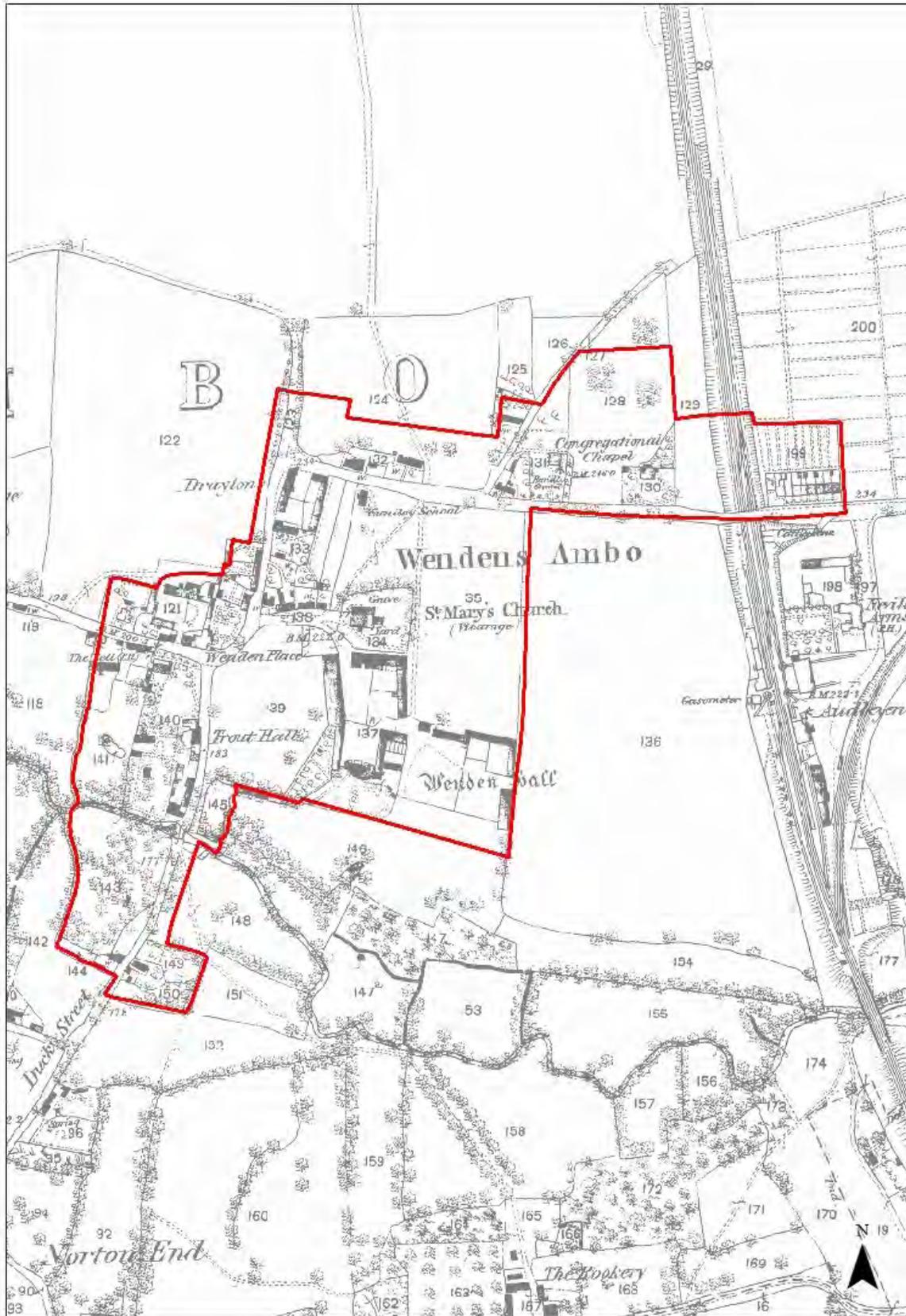
Pedestrian bridge over the ford, Duck Street. Suggest this is repainted

Advise English Heritage of updates required to listed property details - Barns at Mutlow Farm now converted to residential use and various updates to other property listing records

**If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language please contact us on 01799 510510**

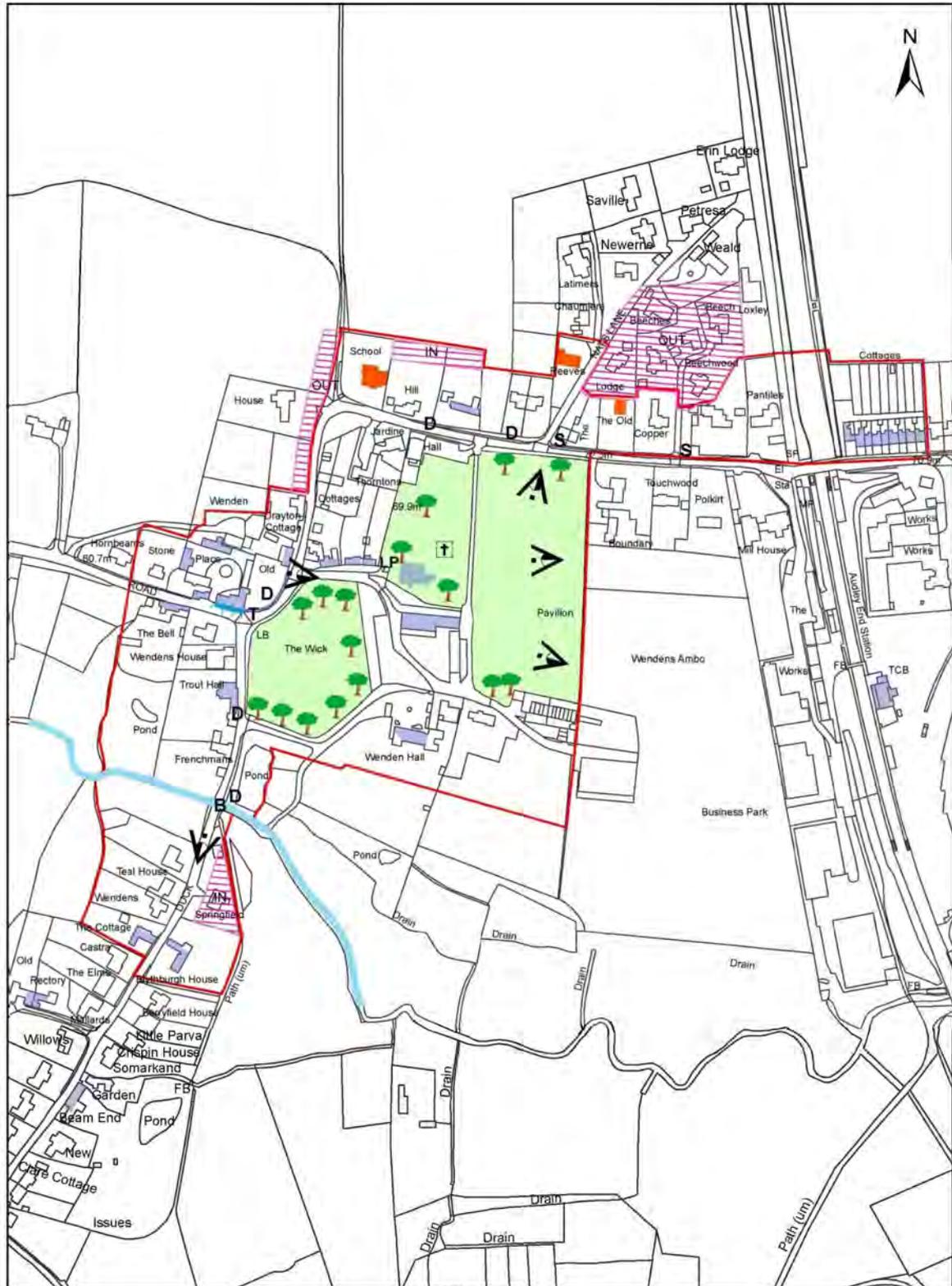
## 1 Maps

Figure 1 - 1877 Ordnance Survey Map



Maps 1

Fig 2 - Character Analysis



# 1 Maps

## Character Analysis Key

	Existing Conservation Area boundary (no changes are proposed)
	Proposed reduction of the Conservation Area
	Proposed extensions to the Conservation Area
	Individually Listed Buildings
	Other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the Conservation Area
	Important open spaces
	General location of important trees/hedgerows
	Water features

**Other distinctive features to be protected from demolition within the parameters of legislation (including walls and railings within the curtilages of Listed Buildings)**

	Railings
<b>Y</b>	Tombstones
<b>B</b>	Bridge
<b>LP</b>	Lamp Post
<b>T</b>	Telephone Box
<b>S</b>	Spigot Mortar
<b>"</b> <b>&lt;</b>	Important views
<b>D</b>	Elements out of character



## 1 Maps

### Management Plan Key



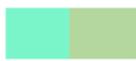
Revised Conservation Area boundary – adopted policy ENV1 applies



Individually Listed Buildings, adopted policy ENV2 applies



Other buildings to be protected from demolition see policy ENV1. Additional controls proposed for selected buildings



Important Green Spaces and landscape elements, to be protected from development, adopted policy ENV3 and National Planning Policy Framework apply



General location of important trees to be protected within parameters of legislation

**Other distinctive features to be protected from demolition within the parameters of legislation  
(including walls and railings within the curtilages of Listed Buildings)**

 Railings

**Y**

Tombstones

**B**

Bridge

**LP**

Lamp Post

**TB**

Telephone Box

**S**

Spigot Mortar

**E**

Proposed enhancements

## Appendices 1

### Appendix 1 - Sources

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## 1 Appendices

ESSEX RECORD OFFICE - PLAN OF THE PARISHES of Wenden alias Wendens Ambo and Littlebury, in the county of Essex. Map held by Essex Record Office Reference Code: D/DQy 20

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