

LANDSCAPE PLANNING STATEMENT

LAND OFF DUNMOW ROAD, KEERES GREEN

guarda
landscape



LANDSCAPE PLANNING STATEMENT

Statement of Development for
Land to the East of Dunmow Road, Keeres Green
REF: GUARDA 20/80

ON BEHALF OF
Real8

February 2021



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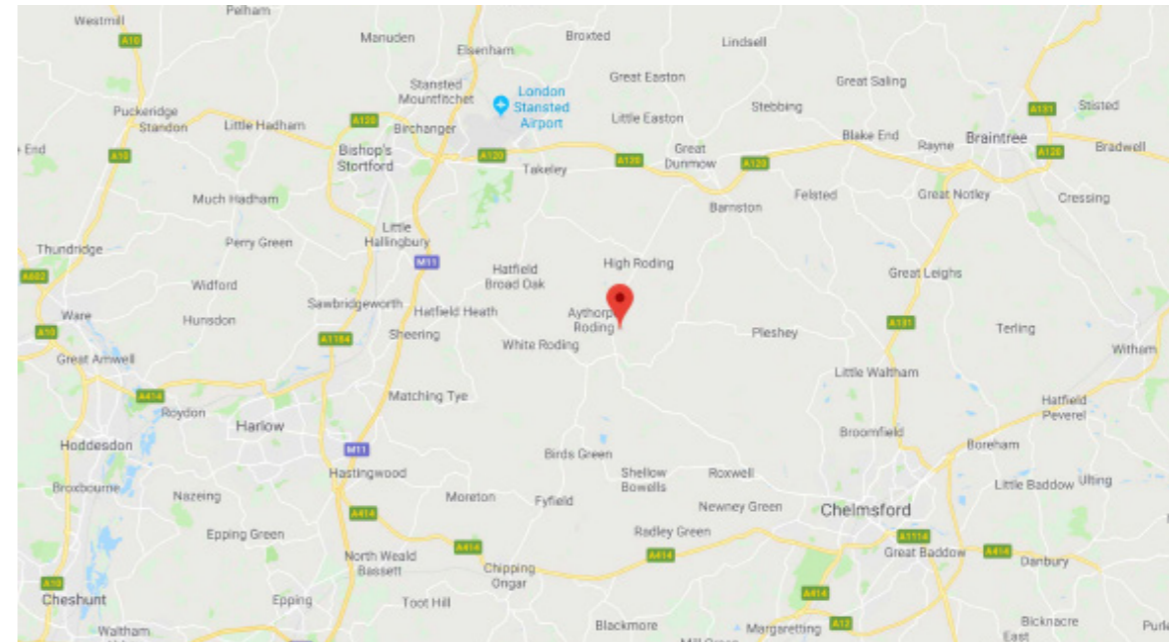
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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 GUARDA has been commissioned to prepare a landscape statement, on behalf of Real8, which aims to provide landscape planning background to the site. It then describes the development and how it's design fits within its context and the surrounding landscape. This will accompany the planning application and should be read in conjunction with the other drawings and documentation.
- 1.2 The site and its surroundings were surveyed and a background study was carried out to identify landscape designations and relevant design policy.
- 1.3 An amended layout was prepared, in close liaison with the architect, which responded to the baseline work and also the appeal decision for a prior application on the site (appeal ref: APP/C1570/W/19/3240578). Landscape mitigation was proposed to further integrate this development into the landscape and enhance the amenity and ecological value of the site.

LOCATION

- 1.4 Figures 1 and 2 show the location of the site within the county and the village. The site is situated in Keeres Green, which is a hamlet approximately 15km to the north west of Chelmsford and 10km south east of Stanstead Airport. It is on the eastern side of the B184, Dunmow Road, which links Dunmow with Chipping Ongar.
- 1.5 The hamlet is just off the B184, to the east of the road, and it comprises of a group of houses aligned and facing along School Lane. Keeres Farmhouse and barns sit proud to the north of the hamlet and a Crest development on the western edge of the hamlet (at Old Mill Close) introduces cul-de-sacs into the built form typology.



Figures 1 and 2 - Location plans showing Keeres Green in relation to Essex and the site in its village context.

1.6 The site is a strip of land at the western edge of the village, situated on the other side of School Lane from the Crest development.

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

1.7 It is intended that this land is developed for residential use, extending the line of properties along School Lane to Dunmow Road. Figure 3 shows the proposed architects layout and the type/size of dwellings.

1.8 Three dwellings are shown:

- two with three bedrooms; and
- one dwelling with two bedrooms.

1.9 There is also associated access and highway works and landscape works to help the development fit within its surroundings and generally enhance the environment.

1.10 It is a landscape led design to ensure that there is the space and opportunity to maximise the landscape. The architectural layout and design also responds to the character of the landscape.



Figure 3 - Architectural layout plan, produced by Laura Jones Architects

LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

- 2.1 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment [1] states that: *'The baseline will have established the value attached to the landscape receptors, covering the value of the Landscape Character Type of Areas that may be affected, based on review of any designations at both national and local levels, and, where there are no designations, judgements based on criteria that can be used to establish landscape value'*.
- 2.2 A large proportion of the land area in Great Britain is under the protection of conservation designations. Statutory designations broadly fall into three categories: nature conservation, landscape conservation and natural heritage conservation, which protects wildlife, landscape and cultural aspects of the countryside.
- 2.3 Figure 3 shows the landscape designations within and surrounding the site (abstract from MAGIC map). The site is situated within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone - to assess planning applications for likely impacts on SSSIs/SACs/SPAs & Ramsar sites (England). Guidance from Natural England [2] explains the significance of this designation: *'The Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks to SSSIs posed by development proposals. They define zones around each SSSI which reflect the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts'*.
- 2.4 It is noted that it is likely that Natural England would be consulted in relation to a planning application on this site and so any potential impacts on the SSSI should be appraised.
- 2.5 Listed buildings are located close to the site and development should therefore respect the setting of these buildings and aim to reflect the local vernacular. The nearest Listed buildings are as follows:

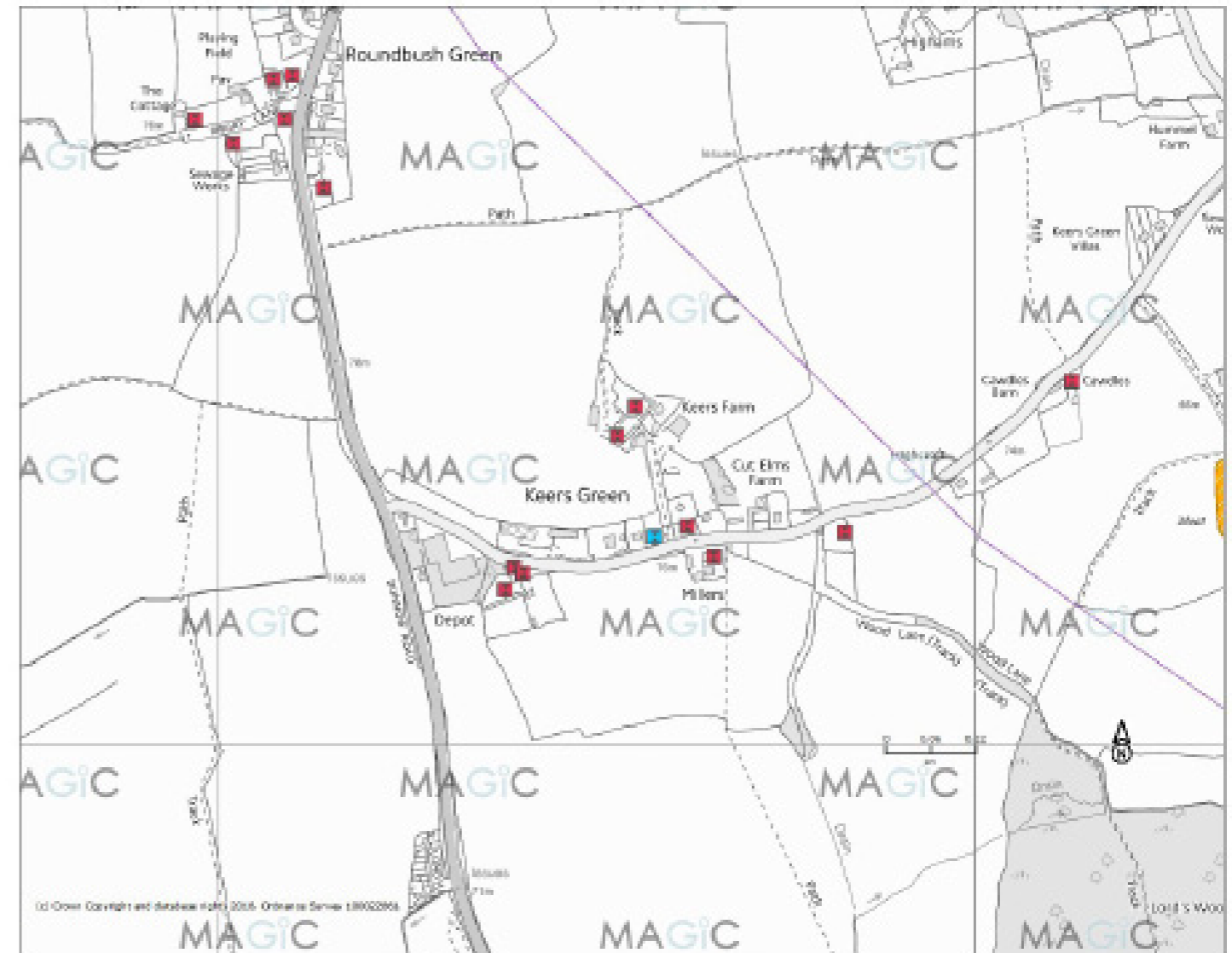


Figure 4 - Landscape Designations Plan (abstract from MAGIC map)

- Grade 2 Listed cluster of houses including Beadles Cottage, Pavitts, Lattice Cottage, adjacent to the south east corner of the site.
- Grade 2 Listed Keeres Farmhouse and Barn Approximately 30 Metres South West Of Keeres Green Farmhouse. Both are approximately 200m to the north east of the site.
- Grade 2* Judds Cottage is situated approximately 200m to the east of the site.

1.6 There are no Public Rights of Way within the site. However, there are a number within the surrounding landscape (refer to Figure 4). These will not be effected directly, although views from these routes have been considered.

1.7 There is a footpath which runs parallel to the site (east to west) approximately 300mm to the north of the site boundary.

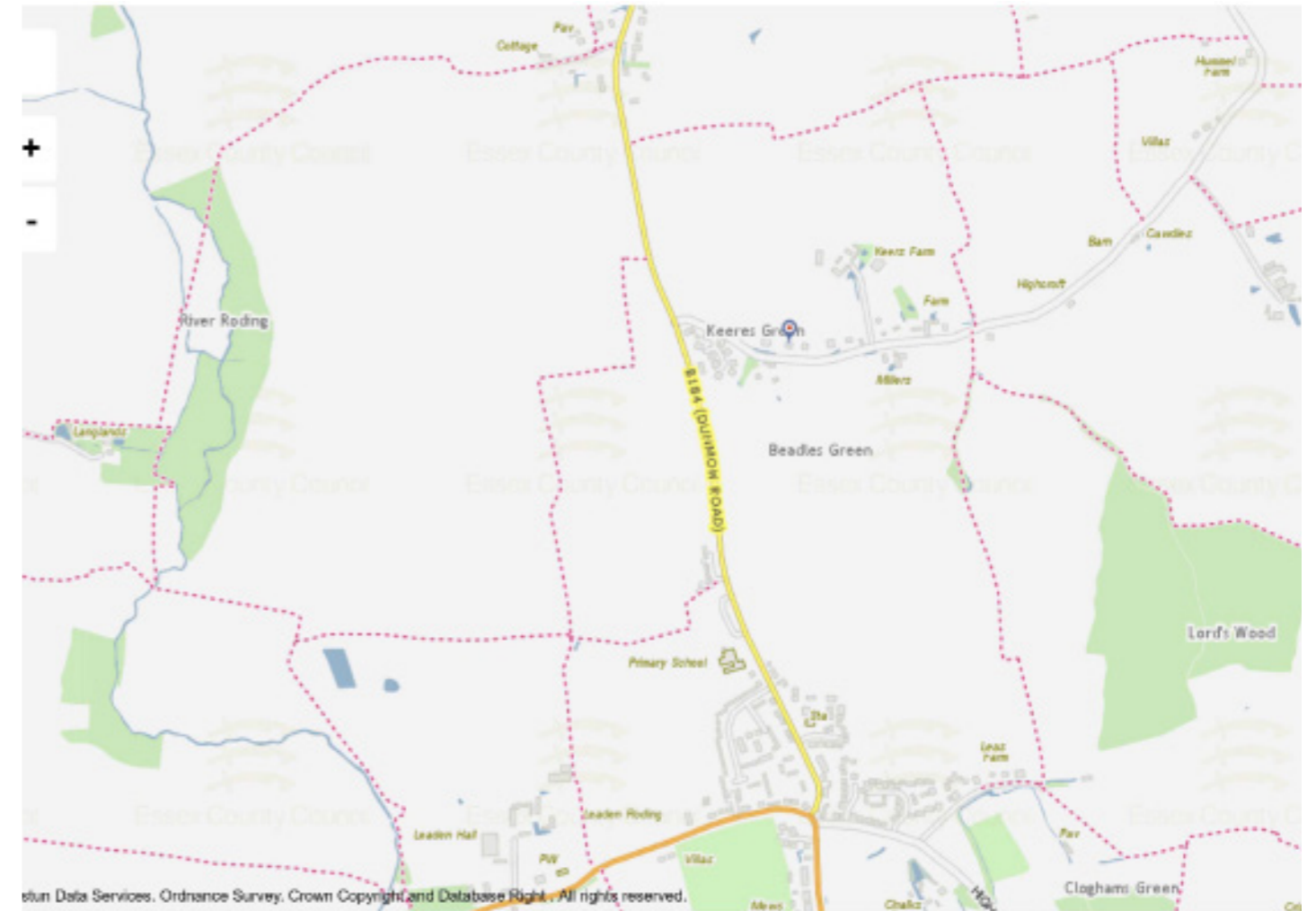


Figure 5 - Public Rights of Way map (obtained from Essex County Council website)

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND CONTEXT

EXISTING CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

3.1 The following character assessments have already been carried out by others at different scales, which encompass the site and its surroundings. Characteristic features, relevant to the site, are listed.

3.2 National Character Area - 86. South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland [3]:

- *'An undulating chalky boulder clay plateau is dissected by numerous river valleys, giving a topography of gentle slopes in the lower, wider valleys and steeper slopes in the narrower upper parts.*
- *Fragments of chalk give many of the soils a calcareous character, which also influences the character of the semi-natural vegetation cover.*
- *Lowland wood pasture and ancient woodlands support the dormouse and a rich diversity of flowering plants on the clay plateau. Large, often ancient hedgerows link woods and copses, forming wooded skylines.*
- *The agricultural landscape is predominantly arable with a wooded appearance. There is some pasture on the valley floors. Field patterns are irregular despite rationalisation, with much ancient countryside surviving.*
- *Field margins support corn bunting, cornflower and brown hare.*
- *There is a dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, parishes and small settlements around 'tyes' (commons) or strip greens and isolated hamlets. The NCA features a concentration*



Figure 6 - Extent of National Character Area

of isolated moated farmsteads and numerous well-preserved medieval towns and large villages.

- Traditional timber-frame, often elaborate buildings with exposed timbers, colour-washed render, parquetry and steeply pitched roofs with pegtiles or long straw thatch. Sometimes they have been refronted with Georgian red brick or Victorian cream-coloured bricks ('Suffolk whites'). Clay lump is often used in cottages and farm buildings.
- Winding, narrow and sometimes sunken lanes are bounded by deep ditches, wide verges and strong hedgerows.
- A strong network of public rights of way provides access to the area's archetypal lowland English countryside.

3.3 The Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment [4] includes a section on the Uttlesford Character Areas. The site is situated in Character Type B - Farmland Plateau and Landscapes Character Area B14 - Roding Farmland Plateau. The site is located at the southern edge of this Area.

3.4 Key characteristics from this Character Area relevant to the site, are as follows:

- Raised farmland plateau dissected by Pincey Brook in the west.
- A mixture of medium to large semi irregular arable fields
- Large open views contrast with enclosed wooded character of other villages and some lanes.

B14 RODING FARMLAND PLATEAU

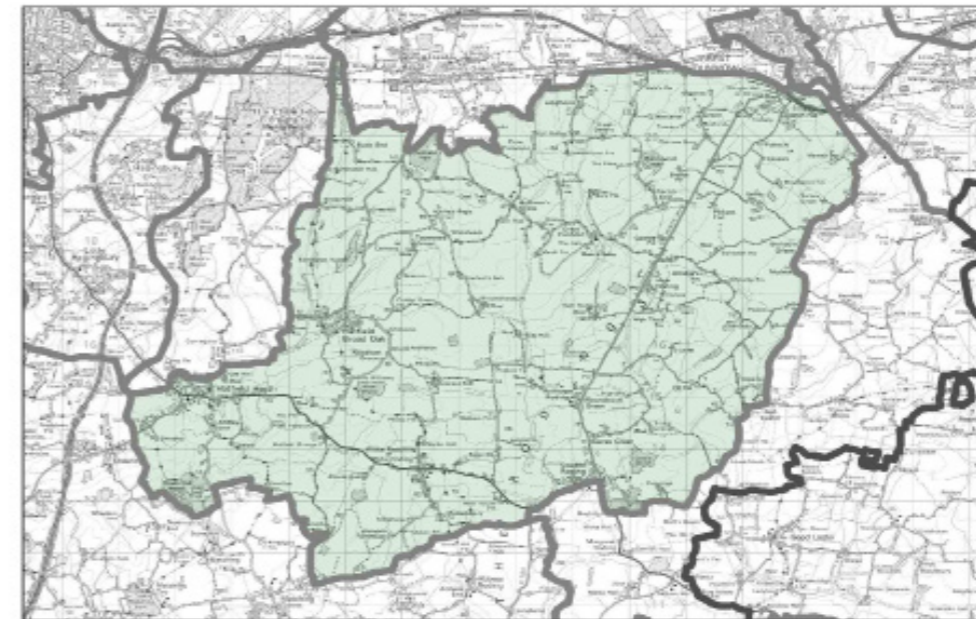
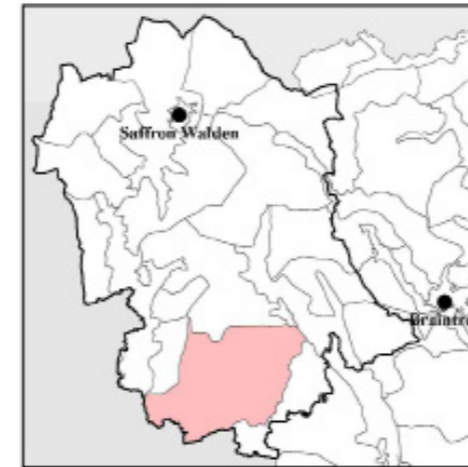


Figure 7 - Extent of Landscape Character Area

- Hedgerows a feature of the field pattern.
- Settlement pattern consists of several small to large villages, scattered hamlets and regularly dispersed farmsteads scattered over the plateau.

ASSESSMENT OF SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

3.5 The site is located on the edge of the hamlet as it approaches Dunmow Road. It consists of part of a linear field surrounded on two sides by houses. It borders Maberley House on the eastern boundary, where the boundary is defined by a low post and wire fence. On the other side of School Lane is the recent Crest development which stretches as far as Dunmow Road.

3.6 The north and south boundaries are bordered by drainage ditches with overgrown hedgerows planted along the edge. The northern boundary is gappy in places, but also has some mature trees along its length, their canopies overhang into the site. The southern hedgerow is more dense and forms a good screen against the road. A small copse of trees and shrubs are located in a triangular shape just outside of the western corner of the site.

3.7 There is a small group of native shrubs on the western side of the site and a metal container is also present on the northern boundary. The field is currently accessed by a gate in the south east corner of the site. There is also a pedestrian gate into the field from Maberley House.

3.8 The Crest scheme is incongruous with the local vernacular and introduces a cul-de-sac arrangement. There are backs of properties along the roadside and the view of the close-board fencing adjacent



Figure 8 - Photos showing Keeres Green hamlet and its surroundings (top left - view facing north from the site boundary over open fields, top right - Listed buildings in Keeres Green, bottom left - the new Crest development, open and prominent in views, bottom right - northern boundary at Maberley and Arundel House, with large gaps in the boundary planting).

to the road is not positive. The adjacent development (Jenny Moody site) is much more sympathetic, with house frontages facing the road and a roadside hedgerow veiling the development from the road.

3.9 Identified key landscape features within and surrounding the site are as follows:

- Native hedgerows and hedgerow trees along the north and south boundaries. These follow the line of drainage ditches.
- Enclosed, wooded character of site contrasting against open, arable fields to the north.
- Entrance to Keeres Green from Dunmow Road.

KEY VIEWS

3.10 The views back towards the site from the public right of way (facing south) are of the hamlet edge and houses can be clearly viewed. The character of the views are of the hamlet edge, veiled by some boundary planting which is gappy in places.

3.11 The views from Dunmow Road (B184) are more fleeting as vehicles travel at speed, but at the entrance into Keeres Green, at the entrance into Keeres Green, the Crest scheme is clearly visible on the corner and the houses and other structures are open.



Figure 9 - Photographs showing the site and its key features (left - the northern hedgerow, right - the southern hedgerow)



Photograph showing the corner of Dunmow Road as it meets with School Lane, the Crest development being very open at this junction and dominating the entrance into Keeres Green. On the northern side of School Lane is a group of vegetation which forms a boundary along the existing field edge.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

LANDSCAPE PERIMETERS

4.1 This landscape baseline study has identified a number of landscape parameters which should be integrated into the design where possible:

- The boundary vegetation needs to be retained as much as possible as it is generally a species rich hedgerow which would serve to partially screen the proposed development and maintain the rural appearance of the street. Tree roots and canopies need to be protected and where development encroaches into the tree RPAs a 'no dig' (or at least hand dig) approach should be considered. Gaps in the hedgerows should be infilled with new, appropriate planting.
- The dwellings should face towards or diagonally onto the road where they are partially visible (i.e. in views through gaps in the hedgerow) to provide a positive and active frontage, consistent with the rest of the hamlet.
- New tree and shrub planting should be proposed within the development to maximise interest and to soften the built form. This should be native or semi-native to fit within the semi-rural character of the site and to maximise the ecological value of the site.
- Provide some planting along the eastern boundary to screen the new development from Maberley House.

RELEVANT DESIGN GUIDANCE

4.2 The Essex Design Guide (2018 Edition) has a section on Landscape and Greenspaces (V.1). Although the recommendations are mainly for larger scale sites, there are some which are still relevant to this scheme:

- *'The provision and type of ground surfaces should be considered from the outset of any development, and an approach taken that balances the needs of all users in terms of patterns, colours and materials with the technical requirements and future maintenance of highways.'*
- *Existing ecology and natural habitats found on sites must be safeguarded and enhanced, and new opportunities for increasing biodiversity should be explored.*
- *Surface water run-off systems should be considered to minimise flood risk and increase biodiversity.*
- *Care should be taken in the selection of tree and shrub species that are appropriate to the area, fitting in scale and colour, climatic requirements and growth habits.*
- *The future management and care of green spaces and infrastructure should be considered at the planning stage.*
- *Landscape proposals should look to ensure proposed landscape schemes complement and draw from the positive aspects of the sites wider landscape setting, this often identified through landscape or townscape character assessment.'*



Figure 10 - Landscape Masterplan

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

- 4.3 The scheme has been developed using a landscape-led approach, where the landscape baseline was done first to inform the architectural layout and design. The baseline demonstrates the rural nature of the site and sensitivities that exist, especially in relation to the character and visual amenity on the site and within its surroundings.
- 4.4 The scheme aims to retain as much of the **existing vegetation** as possible and this has been achieved except for the length of hedgerow which is removed to accommodate the entrance access. Otherwise the boundary vegetation is retained and enhanced, with infill planting to the northern and southern boundary where there are gaps and additional hedgerow tree planting to ensure a dense and well-defined edge.
- 4.5 **Views into the site** are important and the entrance and proposed dwellings are set out to ensure that a green and open view is maintained, as shown in Figure 11. Part of the central dwelling will be visible from the entrance, but the hedgerow and trees beyond will also be visible maintaining a partially green character. The dwelling to the east will also be seen in oblique views.
- 4.6 Also views from the southern Crest development have been considered and the proposed dwellings have been located so that they are roughly staggered with the Crest houses, as shown in Figure 12. This ensures that there is no direct overlooking, although this is further diminished by the existing hedgerow and hedgerow trees along the site boundary, which forms an effective screen, especially in the summer.

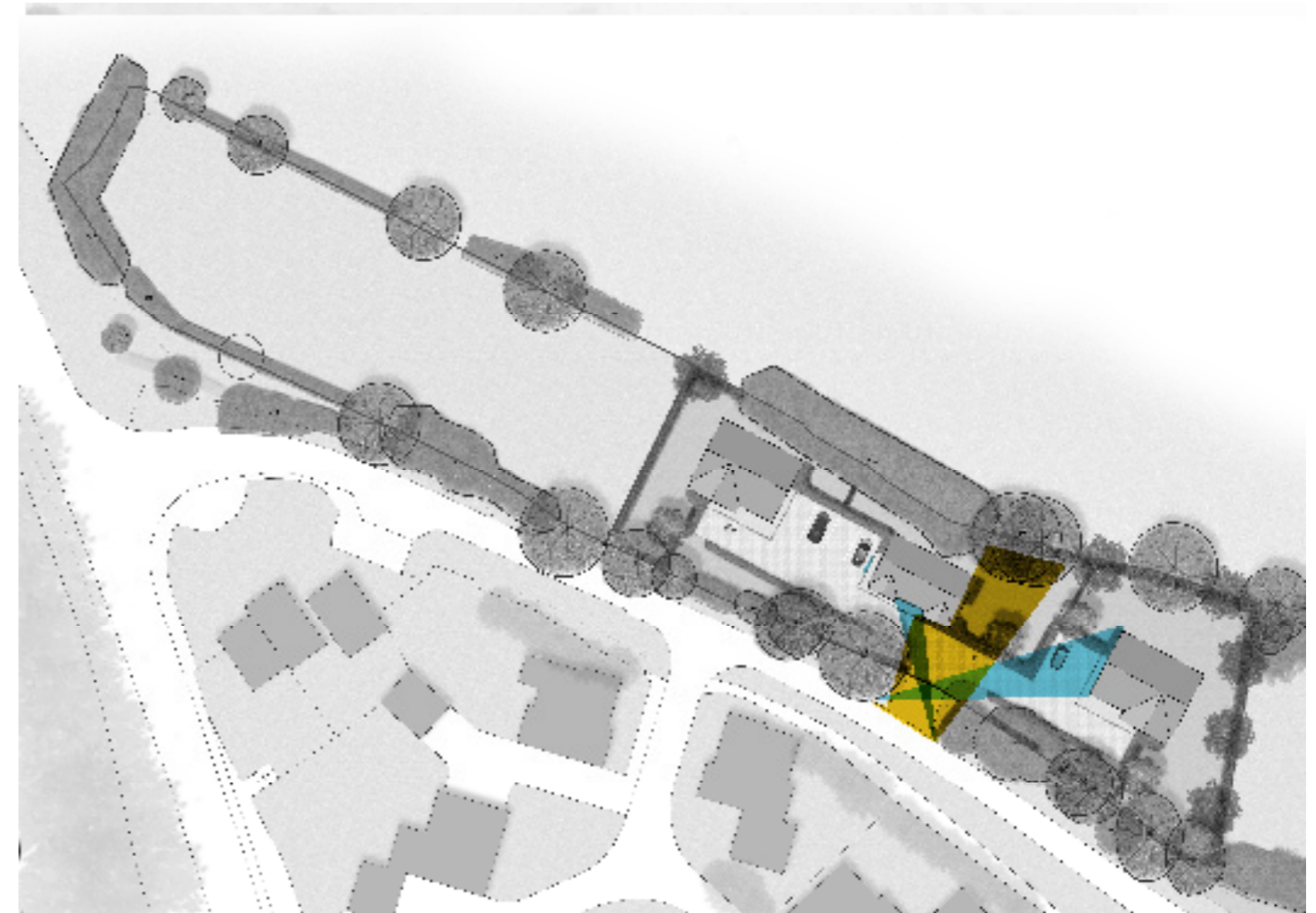
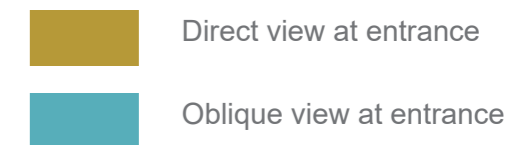


Figure 11 - Views from Keeres Green lane into development



- 4.7 Views from the east, from the Jenny Moody development will be screened by a proposed native hedgerow and hedgerow trees. This will also create a green edge to the development and prevent any overlooking. The creation of new hedgerows is also valuable in terms of ecological enhancement and also reinstating important landscape character features, as described in the landscape character assessments for the area.
- 4.8 The western edge of the site will have a new hedgerow boundary to define the field and development boundary. This offset and additional planting, along with existing vegetation will effectively screened the proposed dwellings from Dunmow Road, at the entrance of Keeres Green, and so the quality and character of this view will not change or be diminished. The existing Crest House, located on the corner is open, with no screening around it and so this will form the dominant urbanising feature in this view. The substation and layby (also part of the Crest development) also form incongruous elements in the landscape, at the entrance to Keeres Green.
- 4.9 The hedgerow along the northern boundary of the site is gappy and so there are views through into the site, although these are filtered by the existing trees and shrubs. This hedgerow will be infilled with native planting to form an effective edge to the site and will further screen the proposed dwellings from views across the farmland. Housing is not incongruous in views from the north, as the houses at the Jenny Moody development are clearly visible (with very little vegetation along the northern boundary). Other buildings on the edge of the village are also visible.
- 4.10 The proposed dwellings also positively face towards the road to provide an active frontage, where views are experienced. Close board fencing is not proposed along any boundaries as this will be inappropriate in this rural situation, even through it is prevalent in

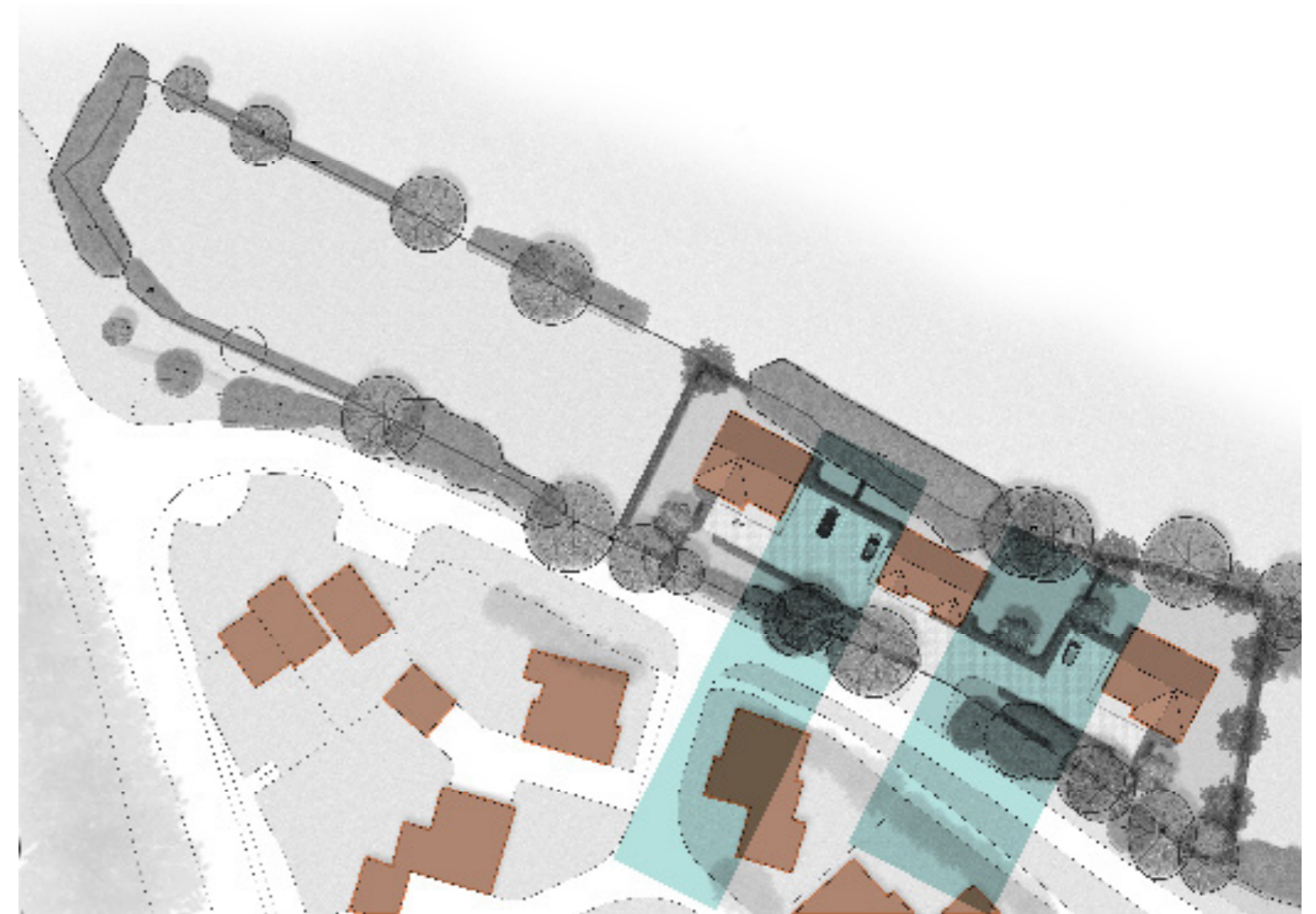


Figure 12 - Relationship between gaps in proposed dwellings to existing Crest houses

the Crest development. Instead the boundaries will consist only of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

- 4.11 To enhance the hedgerow habitats it is proposed to add some woodland bulb and wildflower planting which will add interest and provide a greater variety of species. They will also be managed to ensure future healthy and robust growth.
- 4.12 The landscaping within the site will be kept relatively low-key and informal to maintain a rural character. However, there will be pockets of shrub and perennial planting to provide a welcoming frontage. The character of the planting will be traditional English garden to reflect the style of gardens in the village.



Figure 13 - Photographs showing (top) existing dwellings at Keeres Green, along School Lane, to which the proposed development aims to reflect. (Bottom left) View down lane into Keeres Green showing the back close board fences at the Crest development and (bottom right) the existing hedgerow and hedgerow trees along the southern boundary

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND CONTEXT

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1 - BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013).
- [2] Natural England's Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Natural England, March 2018).
- [3] National Character Area - 86. South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland (Natural England, January 2014).
- [4] Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, September 2006).

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