



**LITTLE BADDOW
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:
DESIGN GUIDE**



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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the Guide

The Little Baddow Design Guide has been produced to inform policies and design principles in the Neighbourhood Plan so that development is designed and planned with regard to the existing character and context of the Little Baddow Neighbourhood Plan Area. It identifies the key characteristics of the area and sets out a series of design guidelines related to these. It builds upon design guidance established in the Chelmsford City Local Plan 2013-2036, National Planning Policy Framework (2021), and the National Model Design Code (2021), developing these further such that they are reflective of local areas within Little Baddow. The importance of ‘character’ and high-quality design is emphasised through the Local Plan. Policy DM3 (High Quality and Inclusive Design) for example states:

1. *Responding to Context*

Planning permission will be granted for development that respects the character and appearance of the area in which it is located. Development must be compatible with its surroundings having regard to scale, siting, form, architecture, materials, boundary treatments and landscape.

2. *Design of all new buildings and extensions*

- I. are of a high-quality design; and*
- II. are compatible with the character and appearance of the area, and also, where relevant, the host building in terms of the siting, scale, form, massing, materials and detailing; and*
- III. are well-proportioned; and*
- IV. have visually-coherent elevations; and*
- V. have active elevations where the building or extension is visible from public vantage points; and*
- VI. create safe, accessible, and inclusive environments; and*
- VII. minimise the use of natural resources in accordance with Policy DM25.*

The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the use of codes and guidelines to help deliver quality outcomes for development. It is important that full account is taken of the local context and that development responds to and enhances the village of Little Baddow.

The National Model Design Code (2021) provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides, and policies to promote successful design at the local level. The National Model Design Code sets a baseline standard of quality and practice which local planning authorities are expected to take into account when developing local design codes and guides and when determining planning applications including:

- The layout of new development, including street pattern;
- How landscaping should be approached including the importance of streets being tree-lined;
- The factors to be considered when determining whether façades of buildings are of sufficiently high quality;
- The environmental performance of place and buildings, ensuring they contribute to net zero targets;

- That developments should clearly take account of local vernacular and heritage, architecture and materials.

High quality design has a role in contributing to the quality of life around the village. This goes beyond the look of buildings and considers the local character and distinctiveness of a place, reflected through its landscape to enhance the quality of the environment.

The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 35b) emphasises that a proportionate evidence base should inform plans. Neighbourhood Plans need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the corresponding Local Plan. Where new policy requirements are introduced (that carry costs to development) over and above Local Plan and national standards it is necessary to assess whether development will remain deliverable. The principles and guidance set out in this document and within the Neighbourhood Plan's policies are aligned with national policy and non-statutory best practice on design. The values and costs of construction between new developments and within new developments will vary based on location, situation, product type, design (architecture, placemaking etc.) and finish; and the state of the market at the point of marketing the properties. The guidelines herein constitute place-making principles and guidance to help interpret and apply the statutory policies within the Neighbourhood Plan. Good design is not an additional cost to development and good placemaking can result in uplifts in value.

Good design helps create quality, safe places where people enjoy living and visiting. This is emphasised in the National Design Guide, which should be referred to by all involved in the planning system when considering or approving planning applications. This recognises the importance of local character and the role of the community in the design process. It states that: 'Local communities can play a vital role in achieving well-designed places and buildings and making sure there is a relationship between the built environment and quality of life'.

This Design Guide includes a series of character areas (see Section 3) including those within the defined settlement areas as well as a set of codes and guidelines for development. It also presents general guidance in respect of the rural environment, entrances to the village, roads, and infrastructure. Applicants for any development will be expected to show how they have responded to these policies, principles, and guidelines within their proposed development.

1.2. Objectives

Consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan and previously for the Village Design Statement highlighted the utmost importance placed by residents and visitors on the natural environment including woodlands, nature reserves, open spaces, and the Chelmer & Blackwater conservation area and these need to be considered in the context of any design proposal.

The historic context and growth of the village is recognised as being highly important to its character reflected by the diverse range of architectural styles, types, and periods of property to be found throughout the village. Where small areas of similar style housing have been identified the key characteristics and features of the built form have been reviewed to inform future development proposals.

1.3. Process

This Design Guide has been prepared by the Little Baddow Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee in consultation with residents as part of the Neighbourhood Plan development process. It considers responses to the Neighbourhood Plan engagement and household survey (2018) as well as previous work undertaken to produce the Village Design Statement (VDS) (November 2012 and earlier versions). These provided particularly useful overviews of the characteristics and qualities of Little Baddow.

2. Context

2.1. Description of the area

Little Baddow is a small, rural settlement seven miles to the east of the City of Chelmsford, the county town of Essex. The village is positioned on one of the many elevated hills in Essex and mainly comprises arable farmland interspersed with woodlands, some of them ancient.

LITTLE BADDOW PARISH BOUNDARY

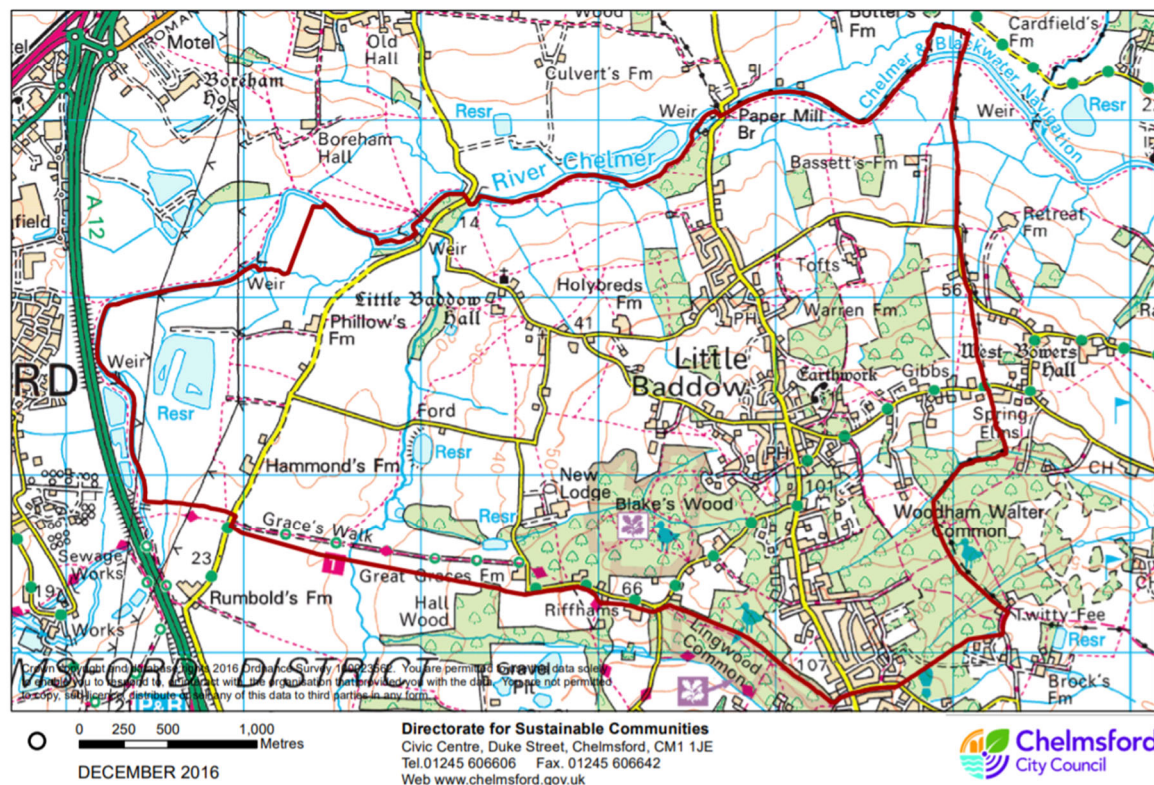


Figure 1. Little Baddow Parish Boundary, Source: Chelmsford City Council

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

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

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

Most of the housing and woodland is on former farmland with old hedge lines still present. The A12, running through the Chelmer Valley, can be accessed at the western-most boundary of the village. The railway line between the East Coast and London can be accessed from Chelmsford or Hatfield Peverel.

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

The village is characterised by its landscape picture: woodlands, leafy lanes, tree-lined roads, old hedgerows, footpaths and bridleways, plus the small open spaces within housing developments. These aspects of the village, together with the many views over largely unspoilt countryside, are of the utmost importance to residents and visitors.

There are about 258 acres of woodland nature reserve within the Parish which are of the highest quality. These are mainly Sites of Special Scientific Interest status and enjoy total protection while offering free access to the public. These reserves are bolstered by numerous private woods, woodland gardens, remnant hedgerows and numerous mature trees, all of which provide a valuable habitat for wildlife and plants. Beyond these are the fields and open farmland with a network of footpaths and bridleways which give access for leisure activities.

Little Baddow is an area of low-density housing with great architectural diversity comprising many sizes, styles and periods of property. The most important characteristics which unify the whole of Little Baddow are its open appearance, woodlands, and green spaces.

The Parish developed from a group of small hamlets and scattered farms with agriculture remaining the principal occupation of the village until the 20th century when the availability of land for development and improved transport links made it attractive for commuters. Large plot sizes allowed the village to maintain open space between houses and to retain its rural character. The village comprises about 630 dwellings and several farms which mainly grow cereal crops or have been converted into horse livery. There are two pubs, a tea-room and two touring caravan sites.

Most of the houses are detached or semi-detached and the large number of trees creates a street scene in which it is the green spaces between properties which most strongly epitomize the character of the village. It is still possible to see how attractive the land must have appeared to the early farmers with the combination of woodland, arable land, and the river that supplied both water and opportunity for transport.

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

Much of the more recent development is open plan, with wide verges at the entrances to access roads which should be maintained as they enhance the openness of the adjacent areas.

There is no street lighting in Little Baddow. There is a strong view by most residents that it would be inappropriate and spoil the rural setting.

Infrastructure in the village is limited. There are no longer any shops, post office or other facilities and with very limited public transport, residents need to use their own transport to access these in neighbouring villages.

This lack of infrastructure, together with concern that any development would be at the cost of woodland or open spaces, means that any large-scale development in Little Baddow is considered undesirable, a view which is upheld by Chelmsford City Council.

2.2. Designation

Little Baddow is designated as a small settlement and Designated Rural Area in the Chelmsford Local Plan. Small settlements have the least services and facilities and transport links and are considered the least sustainable in the development hierarchy. This means that while there might be limited opportunities for very small-scale development there is no growth allocated within the Local Plan.

2.3. Footpaths, byways, bridle paths and permissive ways

Little Baddow has an extensive network of footpaths, bridle paths and permissive footpaths. It attracts many visitors who enjoy the circular walking routes of Admiral McHardy Way and The Millennium Walk as well as providing access to the 14-mile Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation.

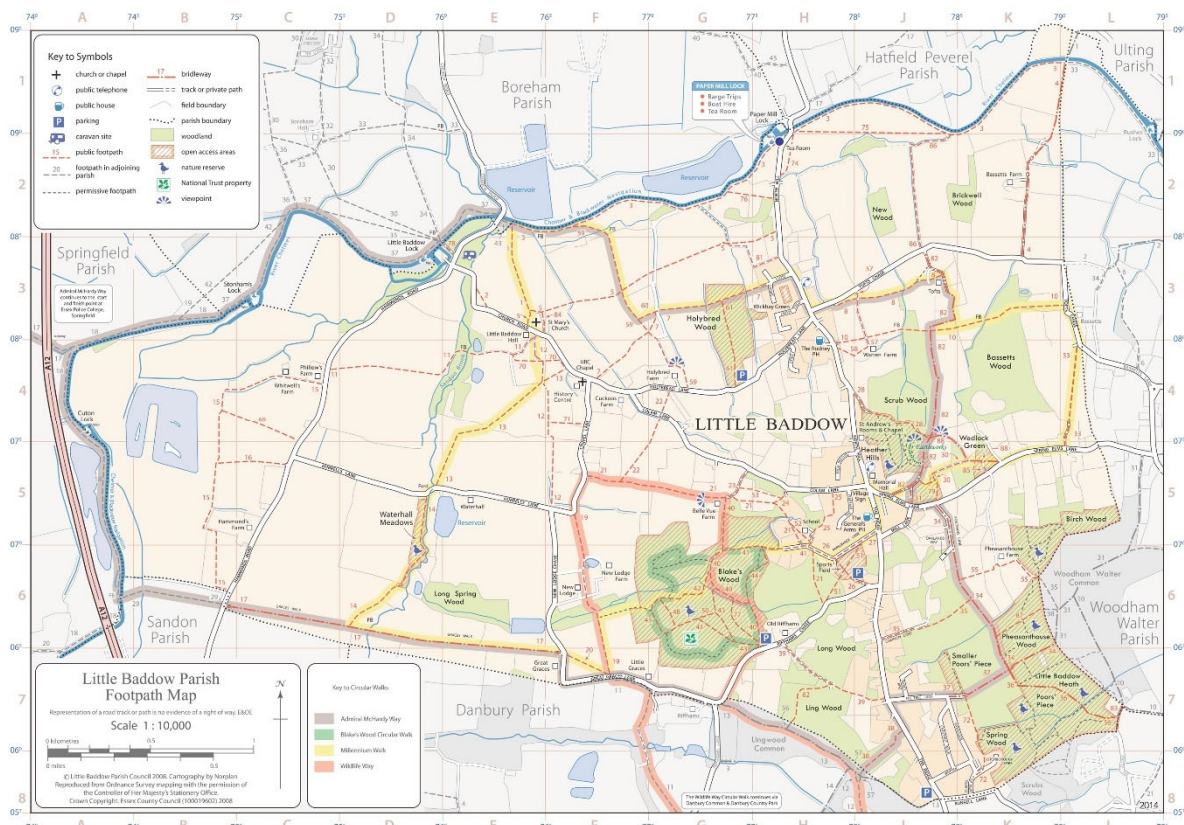


Figure 2. Little Baddow Parish Footpath Map, Source: Little Baddow Parish Council

2.4. Non-designated Heritage Assets

The protected lanes in Little Baddow are of significance both on historic and environmental grounds. Spring Elms Lane, Holybread Lane and Tofts Chase have Protected Lane status. Colam Lane was previously included and is of historic importance. Part of Colam Lane has been designated a Special Roadside Verge. There are two significant tracks – the ancient York Street from North Hill to Spring Elms Lane and Graces Walk from Graces Lane to Hammonds Farm.

2.5. Conservation Area

Although there are no designated conservation areas, there are two areas defined as being Non-Designated Heritage Assets: Church Road from Chestnut Cottage to St Mary's Church and North Hill from the junction with Holybread Lane/Tofts Chase up to and including Little Baddow Almshouses. Both of these areas have a high concentration of listed properties and represent the two earliest settlements of Little Baddow and Wickhay respectively.

2.6. Strategic Issues / Public Consultation

The Neighbourhood Plan consultation exercises identified key issues of concern to residents:

- Protecting the environment, woodlands, open spaces, views, and rurality of the village is of the highest importance to residents.
- There is a strong sense of community and residents value the village character and way of life.
- The impact of traffic volumes and speed and on-road parking is a key concern, especially for the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and horse-riders.
- Any housing development should be small in scale and within the defined settlement so that Little Baddow remains a small, rural parish separate from its neighbours.

2.7. Development

As a designated small settlement there is no growth allocated in the Chelmsford Local Plan for Little Baddow. It is though recognised that proposals for change and development will come forward over the lie of the Neighbourhood Plan and that, where they do, they should contribute to the sense of place. Consultation as part of the Neighbourhood Planning process revealed that residents would prefer any development to be:

- very small in scale (1 or 2 dwellings) to enable better integration;
- located within the existing defined settlement;
- reflective of the character and qualities of the village;
- maintaining a range of housing sizes to meet all needs, especially those requiring smaller dwellings; and,
- any site of more than 4 dwellings must take into account the identified needs of the village

3. Character Areas and Design Qualities

3.1. Introduction

This section outlines the broad physical, historical and contextual characteristics of the Little Baddow Neighbourhood Plan Area. Character assessment is used to describe and articulate what is special and distinctive about a place. It is used to identify recognisable patterns of elements or characteristics that make one place different from another. The features introduced in this section are later used to inform the design guidelines.

Development within Little Baddow should show an appreciation for the local character by providing evidence that the following general design principles have been considered and applied.

Development proposals should:

- Preserve the chimney skyline, with pitched roofs for houses and dormers being preferred. Flat roofs would be appropriate if designed to complement the existing architectural style of an existing building.
- Blend with and enhance the village in terms of physical form and land use.
- Relate well to local topography and landscape features including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views.
- Maintain views of the landscape when entering the village as well as maintaining views of the landscape that frame the village.
- Retain and incorporate important built form and existing landscape features into any development.
- Ensure all components such as buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space integrate with each other and respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form, and size.
- Ensure that any landscaping with open space involves the incorporation of indigenous planting.
- Minimise visual intrusion through the appropriate scale, design, and siting of development, and through the planting of trees and hedgerows.
- Use materials and boundary treatments that complement the street scene, rural character of the village and landscape setting. For example, render can look better alongside brick rather than more brick, and can avoid the building appearing over-large, or being out of scale.
- Include off-street parking wherever possible, combined with landscaping, to minimise the visual impact of vehicles on the street scene.
- Ensure that any rainwater goods positively reflect the colour shape and form of the original, or where new, respect those of the surrounding materials
- Include provision for sustainable waste management away from the street scene when not being collected, and to include facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation and minimisation where appropriate without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape, or the amenities of neighbours.
- Maintain the pattern and style of windows and doors between the original property and any new extensions. In semi-detached and terraced houses, windows and doors should aim to achieve unity in the design of the whole building.

3.2. Landscape character assessments

The Neighbourhood Plan area falls within National Character Area (NCA) 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland and NCA 111 Northern Thames Basin, as defined by Natural England (Natural England, 2014). Little Baddow is located on the border of NCA 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland and NCA 111 Northern Thames Basin.

The Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments (BBCMULCA) by Chris Blandford Associates (2006) sets out a detailed Character Assessment for Chelmsford Borough. This identifies the Neighbourhood Plan area as falling within the 'Little Baddow and Danbury Wooded Farmland' character area, as visible on Figure 3 below.

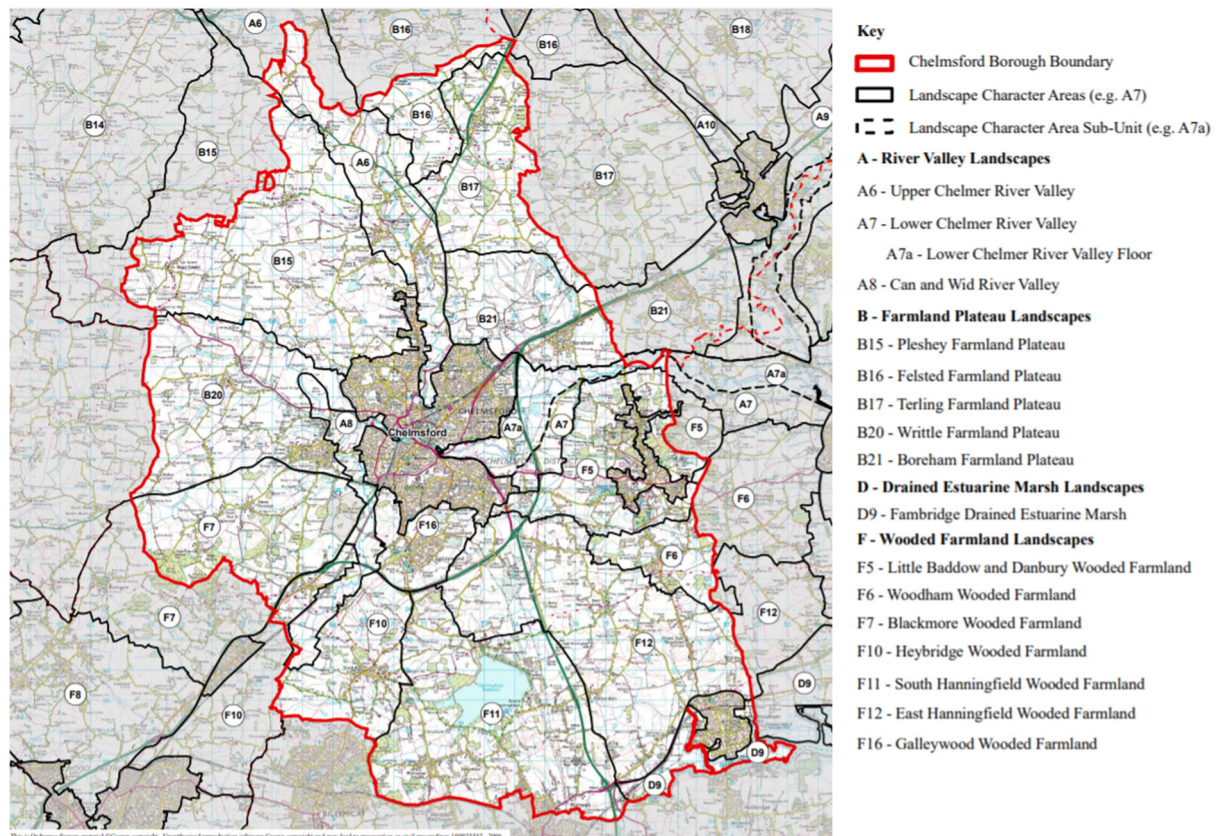


Figure 3. Chelmsford Borough Landscape Character Types and Areas (Source: BBCMULCA)

The assessment notes that this character area encompasses a distinctive area of wooded hills, where the linear village of Little Baddow forms a crossroads upon a very large, gently domed hill and connecting ridge. There is also a distinct sense of enclosure within the settlement provided by extensive patches of deciduous and mixed woodland.

Narrow lanes, often tree-lined, are common in the area. These wind down hillsides, facilitating panoramic views into the Chelmer/Blackwater valley to the north and east. Further to the south, character is influenced more by views to wooded horizons within adjacent character areas.

In areas away from the Little Baddow village centre there is a sense of enclosure and tranquillity and pockets with intimate character.

The assessment's proposed landscape strategy for the 'Little Baddow and Danbury Wooded Farmland' character area, which seeks to "protect and enhance positive features that are essential in

contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning”, ultimately echoes the goal of what this document aims to achieve for Little Baddow Parish.

The Landscape Character Assessment¹ goes on to list a series of suggested landscape planning guidelines.

- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of Little Baddow
- Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated within the surrounding landscape.
- Potential new development should be carefully sited in relation to the ridge and hillsides (taking into account possible visual intrusion when viewed from adjacent character areas).
- Conserve the open and framed nature of views into and across the Chelmer/Blackwater valley to the north and also to wooded horizons to the south.

3.3. Little Baddow Village Design Statement

The Little Baddow Village Design Statement (VDS) was developed in 2005 by the residents of Little Baddow. It sets out the historical context of the village, general guidelines for development and identifies the local character. The VDS will be superseded by the Neighbourhood Plan but provides helpful background information.

The purpose set out in the VDS is:

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

The VDS was updated as a Supplementary Planning Document in 2012 and is still relevant, providing a framework for development in the village. The VDS establishes a set of guidelines for new development. These have been incorporated into appropriate policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and Design Guide and are repeated in full here for comprehensiveness:

VDS Guidelines:

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

¹ The Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments (BBCMULCA) by Chris Blandford Associates (2006)

Woodland and Open Spaces	When planting new trees and hedges, native species should be preferred.
	Existing hedgerows should be retained and trees and hedges protected when roadside work is being carried out.
	Support should be given to further development of recreational footpaths particularly linking the Millennium Walk to the Essex Wildlife Trust's nature trail.
	Nature conservation should continue to be a significant consideration when any new development is proposed to ensure protection and enhancement of the natural environment.
	Farmland hedgerows should be restored where practicable.
	Protection of trees should be encouraged.
Development of the Village	The open spaces such as those at the entrance to the The Rye Field, Rysley and Spring Close should be maintained in their present form without enclosure, street furniture or formal planting.
	The open spaces between properties and the views they afford are highly important to the character of the village and it is important when considering planning applications that these are maintained. Any proposals for infill or backland development should respect these gaps to protect the village character.
General Residential Design Considerations	New buildings should be set back from the road and should visually relate to neighbouring properties.
	Existing roadside hedges, trees and shrubs should be retained where they contribute to the character and be supplemented with new planting.
	New garages should match the materials of the host dwelling and surroundings, and, as a general rule should not be built in front of the building line. Roof pitches should reflect the style of the main building.
	The visual impact of boundary materials should be sensitive to the rural location and in keeping with the character of the street scene using natural boundary materials and native species hedging.
	Gates should be low, farm-style and of natural materials, not high and ornate city-style gates.
	Driveways and access paths should be finished with materials appropriate to the rural environment and the street scene.
	Security and convenience lighting should be kept to a minimum and careful consideration given to strength and location, especially when adjacent to the highway and other properties.
	Any new or replacement driveway of any size should use permeable (or porous) surfacing as recommended in government guidelines; so allowing water to drain through gravel, permeable concrete block paving or porous asphalt, or if the rainwater is directed to a lawn or border to drain naturally. Due to the narrow roads, frequent absence of footways and lack of public transport, provision for on-plot parking is highly desirable.
	The chimney skyline should be preserved. Pitched roofs for houses and dormers are preferred although flat roofs would be appropriate if designed to complement the architectural style of an existing building.
	Landscaping with open space and the planting of indigenous species are an important consideration and should be part of any new development.
	Alterations and extensions within the curtilage of existing houses should be appropriate in size, using comparable design and materials with the existing house; taking account of the character of immediate surroundings,

	<p>including nearby properties. Extensions should relate to their context and not dominate the main building.</p> <p>Complementary materials, e.g. render can look better alongside brick rather than more brick, and can avoid the building appearing over-large, or being out of scale.</p> <p>A replacement dwelling within the defined settlement area should leave sufficient space around the new dwelling in order to protect its setting and the character of the area.</p> <p>A replacement or new dwellings outside of the defined settlement area should be of a size and scale similar to the original dwelling.</p> <p>Rainwater goods should reflect the colour, shape and form of the original, and where new, respect those of the surrounding materials.</p> <p>The pattern and style of windows and doors should be replicated in extensions to properties. In semi-detached and terraced houses, windows and doors should aim to achieve unity in the design of the whole building.</p>
Transport and Infrastructure	<p>Any future installations of overhead wires, radio and mobile phone masts should reflect the feelings of the local residents and involve local consultation. Rural views should be retained by placing any unsightly cables and structures underground.</p> <p>Designation of the whole of North Hill to Papermill Lock as a 30 mph zone should be encouraged.</p> <p>Further consideration should be given to creating a footway along North Hill/The Ridge from Colam Lane to Ridge Cottages, to make it possible to walk from Little Baddow to Danbury on the pavement.</p> <p>Footways/footpaths should be provided along lower North Hill to Paper Mill Lock while maintaining the existing rural character. Any discussions that might take place between the Parish Council and local landowners with a view to providing a footpath to improve the safety of pedestrians on lower North Hill would be encouraged.</p> <p>Due to narrow roads, frequent absence of footways and lack of public transport, provision for onplot parking should be a requirement for all properties. Where alterations and extensions could increase occupancy of a property, the need for additional parking should be addressed.</p> <p>Parking spaces and garages should be inconspicuously sited to minimise the impact on the streetscape.</p> <p>Design of new developments should take traffic speeds and volumes into account and not exacerbate existing problems.</p> <p>Traffic should be discouraged from using the roads through Little Baddow as an alternative to the A12 or A414.</p> <p>The footpath and bridleway network should be protected and maintained in keeping with the surroundings.</p> <p>There is no street lighting in Little Baddow. There is a strong view by most residents that it would be inappropriate and spoil the rural setting of Little Baddow.</p>
Village Facilities, Community and Leisure	<p>The popularity of the area around the River Chelmer and Papermill Lock should not be a reason for planning guidelines to be relaxed. The effect on the local environment including traffic flow and parking should be considered when applications are made.</p>
Commerce and Industry	<p>The use of agricultural buildings for business use would be preferable to new commercial buildings, provided they are appropriately screened.</p>

	New commercial activities such as small craft workshops are to be encouraged for their low impact on the surrounding infrastructure.
	Planning applications should be viewed critically in relation to the effect of any consequent heavy goods vehicle movements, especially where there might be impact on narrow lanes.

3.4. Conservation Area Appraisal

The Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation conservation area was designated on 24th September 1991. The conservation area extends from High Bridge Road east following the line of the navigation and the extent of the valley floor to Paper Mill Lock, then beyond to Heybridge Sea Basin - a total length of 22.1 km (Figure 4).

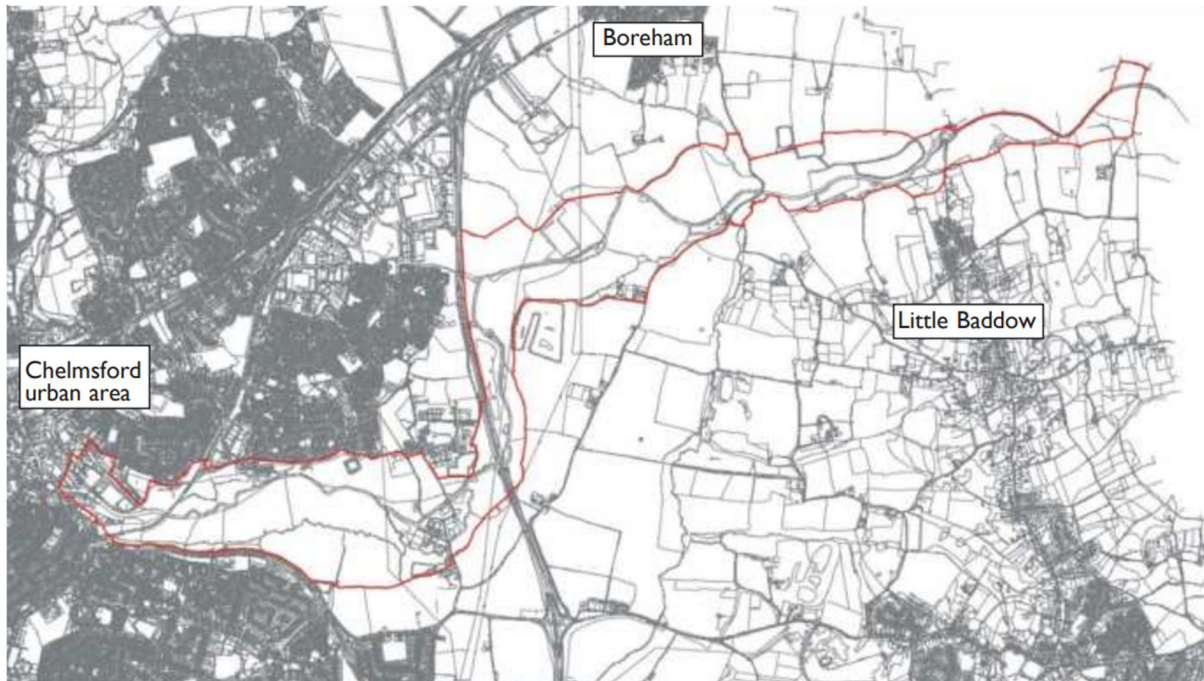


Figure 4. The Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation conservation area boundary

The open setting provided by most of the river valley and flood plain contrasts with the urban edge of the Chelmsford town centre. The remaining historic buildings, including the industrial structures, define the character of the area.

The appraisal splits the conservation area up into five zones:

Area 1

1. High Bridge Road to Chelmer Road;

Area 2

2. Chelmer Road to Barnes Mill;
3. Sandford Mill;
4. Sandford Mill to the A12;
5. A12 to Paper Mill Lock.

Character area 1 (zone 1) has a largely urban character, whilst character area 2 (zones 2-5) have an essentially rural, river valley character.

The western and northern edge of the Little Baddow Parish boundary overlap with the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Conservation Area, specifically zone 5 (shown in figures 5-7)

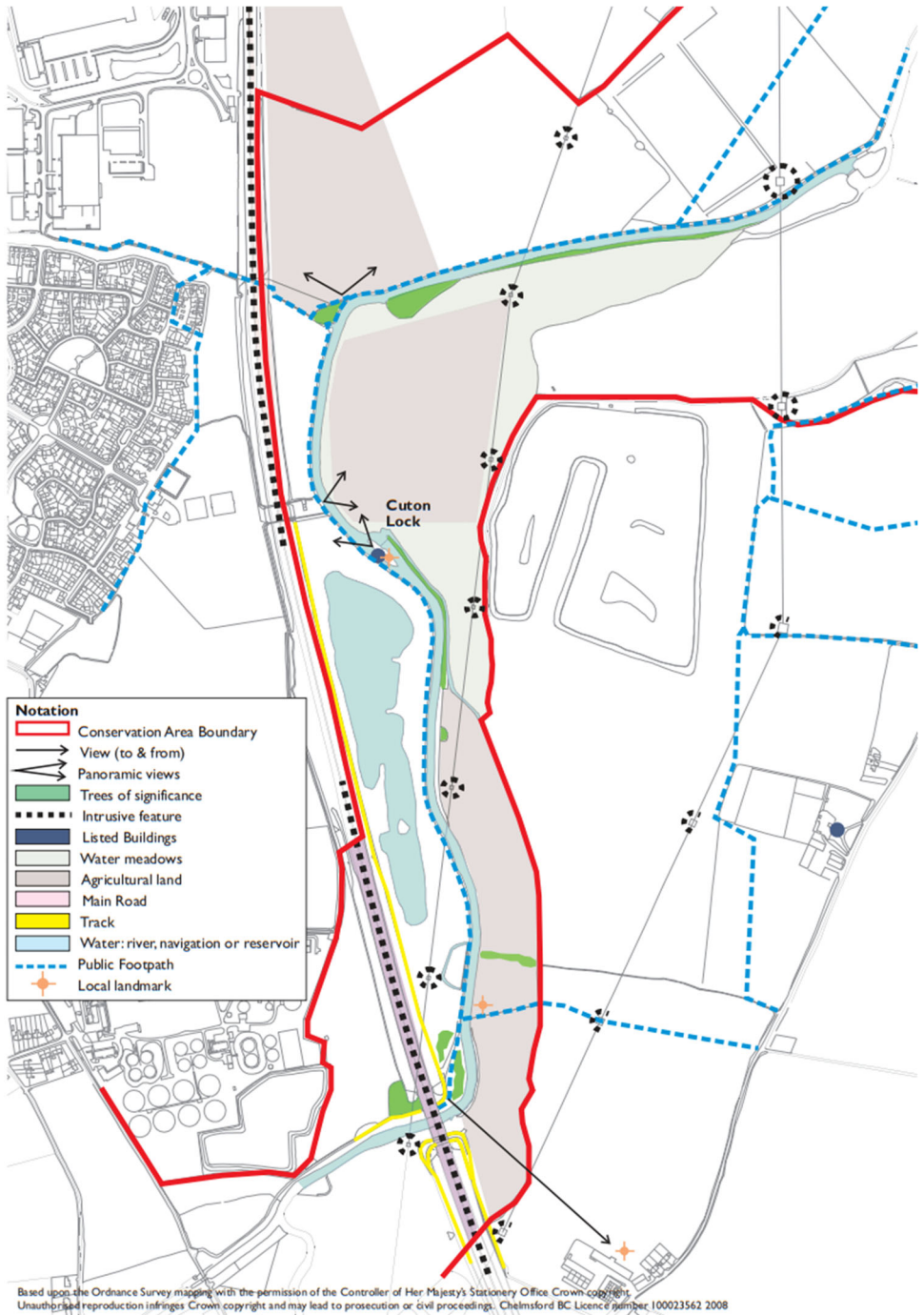


Figure 5. Zone 5 (A12 to Paper Mill Lock) character zone (Sheet 1/3)

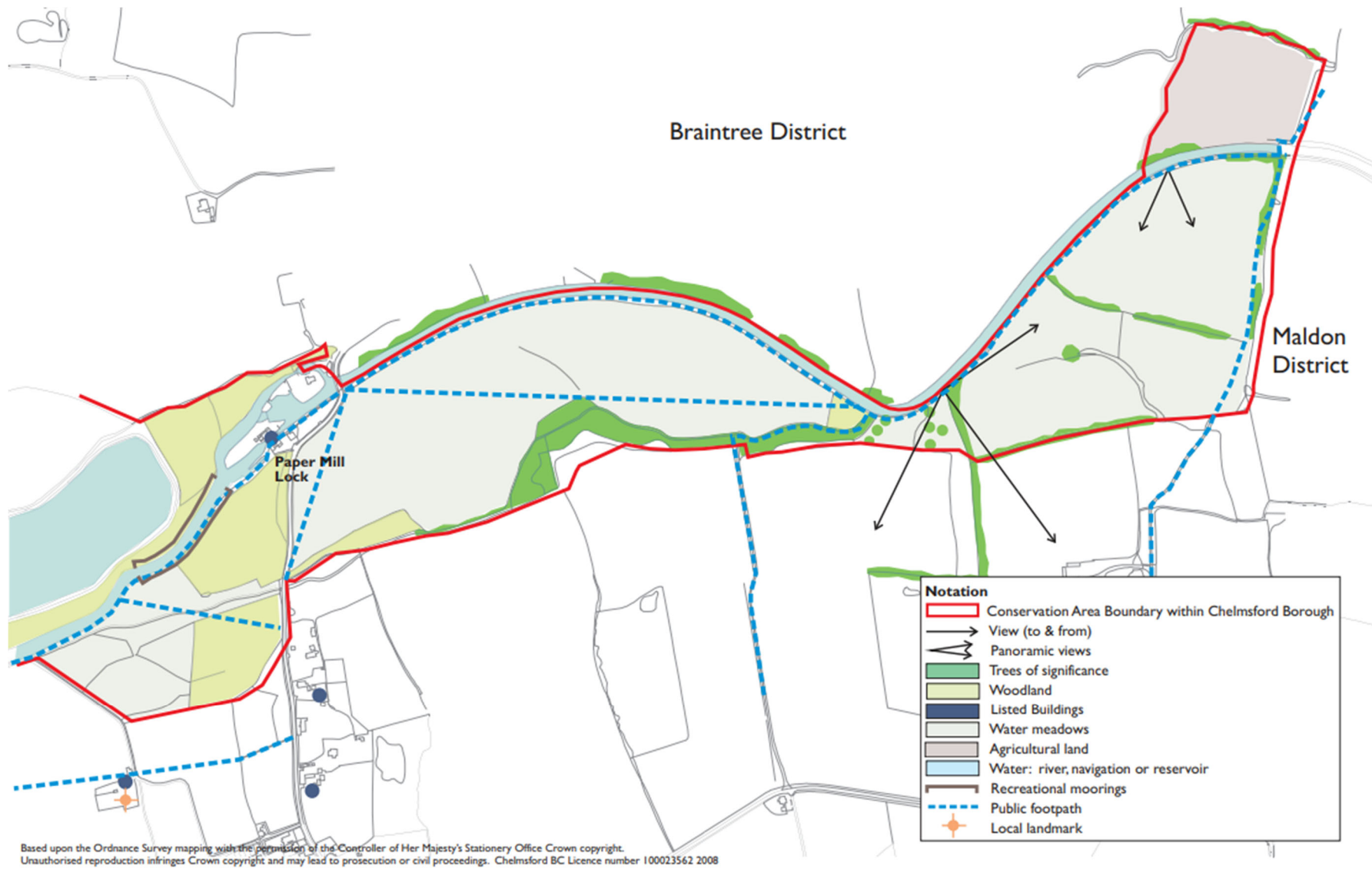


Figure 6. Zone 5 (A12 to Paper Mill Lock) character zone (Sheet 2/3)

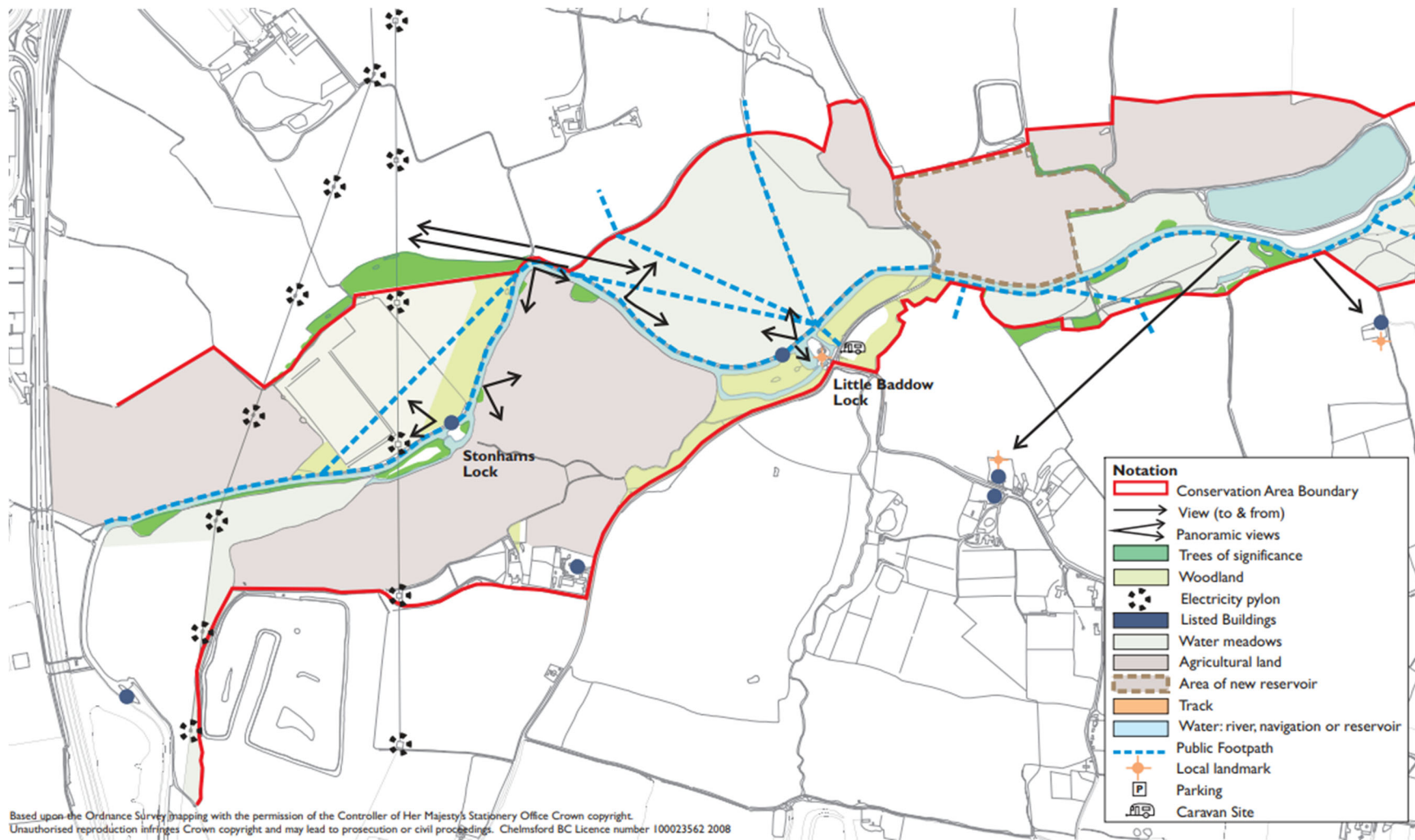


Figure 7. Zone 5 (A12 to Paper Mill Lock) character zone (Sheet 3/3)

The appraisal notes the importance of the riverside structures at Paper Mill Lock, which are utilised for the café and boat trips. The bridge and lock provide elevated positions to view the weir and give views along the navigation, as does the mid-twentieth century road bridge beyond. Paper Mill is generally recognised as the half-way point on the Navigation.

Panoramic views are also found at Stonhams Lock, Little Baddow Lock, Cuton Lock, as well as Brick Kiln corner which allows attractive unspoilt views towards Danbury and Little Baddow lock.

The rural area faces continuing pressure for urbanisation through building and industrialised agriculture in the form of incremental intrusions in the valley and intensification of existing buildings/ uses. The change of use or lack of management of land, erection of agricultural sheds and the introduction of agricultural reservoirs has in some cases undermined the character of the area.

The conservation area appraisal puts forward a set of recommendations which aim to protect and enhance the area in the future. Recommendations include:

- Improvements to tow path.
- Resist expansion of recreational moorings.
- Retain historic buildings and continue waterside functions.
- Instigate a phased programme of tree planting to screen the A12.
- Instigate a phased programme of tree planting to ensure continuity of mature trees.
- Provide screen planting to the new agricultural reservoir at Black Bridge.
- Improvements to parking areas at Black Bridge and Paper Mill Lock.
- Retain views to Boreham House, Boreham and Little Baddow churches

3.5. Neighbourhood Plan Character areas

Little Baddow comprises many sizes, styles and periods of property, the defined settlement areas being loosely based on the main North/South route through the village. Large plot sizes allowed the village to maintain open space between houses and to retain its rural character. Most houses are detached or semi-detached and the large number of trees creates a street scene in which it is the green spaces between properties which most strongly epitomize the character of the village. Some infilling has been permitted. Much of the more recent development is open plan and with wide verges at the entrances to access roads.

While there is great diversity of housing throughout the village there are a small number of areas which have similar architectural styles and materials with common visual aspects reflecting the growth of the village over time.

A series of character areas have been identified in the Neighbourhood Plan area, as mapped on Figure 8. The qualities of each are presented across the following pages. Proposals for development in each area is expected to reflect these design qualities.

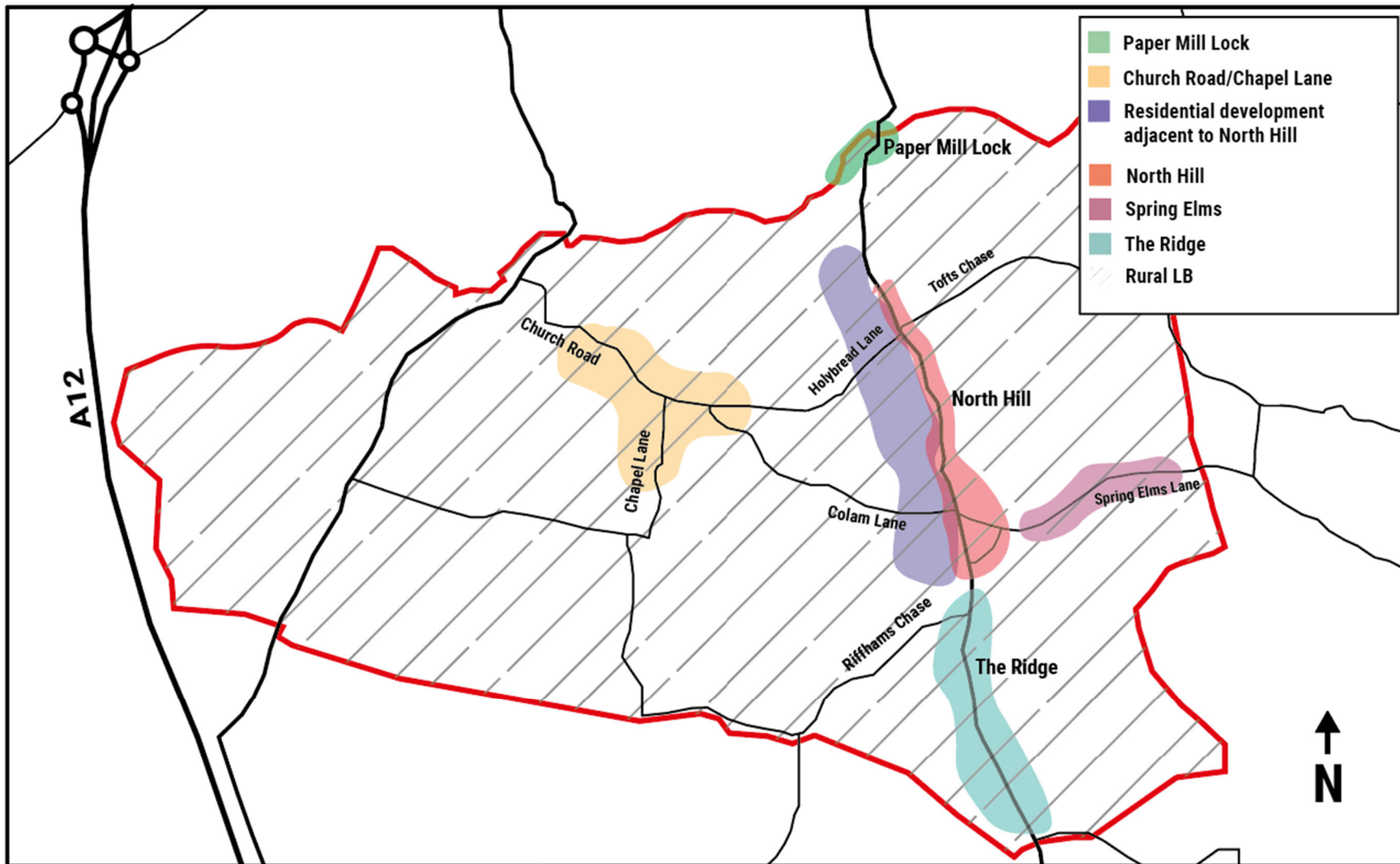


Figure 8. Little Baddow Character Areas

North Hill

The North Hill character area encompasses all properties located on North Hill. It features an interesting mix of residential properties, ranging from 17th century cottages to modern, but well integrated, detached homes. The area is also home to the 'Rodney Inn' pub, which is situated on top of a small hill and set back from the road behind an attractive greenspace. Further towards the boundary of the southern end of the character area lies the Little Baddow Memorial Hall.

Defining features of the area that should be reflected in any proposed design of new development

- Fairly low-density housing
- Green verges and green boundary treatment
- Homes are mostly detached, not set too far back from the road, but with varied set back distances
- While most roofs tend to be pitched, although they are not uniform, which makes for a more interesting visual experience. Roofs are often at various angles and include gable, A-frame, and dormer windows.
- Further south (towards The Ridge), the density of properties increases, but the overall characteristics remain the same, with buildings relatively close to the road, usually detached, and featuring an interesting mix of building line and roofscapes.



Figure 9. Green boundary treatment allows for pleasant views looking down North Hill

Church Road / Chapel Lane

Church Road / Chapel Lane is host to a collection of rural residential properties, as well as St. Mary's Church, Little Baddow URC Chapel, and the Little Baddow History Centre.

Defining features of the area that should be reflected in any proposed design of new development

- Church Road:
 - The row of quintessential brick cottages adjacent to St. Mary's Church feature small but well-maintained front gardens
 - Features primarily detached properties, with consistent use of building materials, mostly brick and render.
 - Varied architectural styles, with an interesting mix of roofscapes, including single storey bungalows, thatched cottages, and large Tudor pitched roofs.
 - Larger homes tend to be set back from the road, with unobtrusive entrances
 - The road features a handful of Tudor homes, with impressive half-timbered wooden frames.

- Chapel Lane
 - Provides a slightly more secluded environment than Church Road
 - Features a handful of large properties, not set too far back from the road, but which still maintain a sufficient gap between themselves and do not impose upon the street due to green boundary treatment.
 - Common building materials here are consistent with the general pattern of development in Little Baddow, mainly featuring brick, render, and wooden weatherboarding
 - The URC Chapel is situated on the Chapel Lane/Church Road junction



Figure 10. Trees overhang Chapel Lane, where the entrances to properties peek out through gaps in the vegetation.



Figure 11. Looking east at the junction of Church Road and Chapel Lane, homes are set close to the road



Figure 12. An example of a typical property on Chapel Lane, a large, detached home set behind a green boundary



Figure 13. A row of cottages adjacent to St. Mary's Church on Church Road, a fairly unique housing development in Little Baddow, featuring consistent roofline and design, with small but verdant front gardens.

Residential Development adjacent to North Hill

This character area represents the collection of residential developments – Spring Close, Jarvis Field, Rysley, High Pasture and The Rye Field - located off North Hill.

Spring Close and Jarvis Field are classic 60s/70s style housing developments and make up the area with the highest density in the Parish. Despite this, the rural character of the village is still maintained here.

The Rysley features a set of detached four-bedroom houses built on the east side of the street in the 1970s complementing the smaller homes in Jarvis Field and Spring Close and overlooking farmland. It is a quiet rural road at an important entry point to the Village, facing an open field.

High Pasture is small cul-de-sac featuring larger detached family homes on large plots. Each home here is unique.

The Rye Field is a low-density development of individual detached dwellings, some single storey, built in a single style in the 1970s set in large open plan gardens giving an arcadian feel.

Although it is recognised that all the residential developments (Spring Close, Jarvis Field, Rysley, High Pasture and The Rye Field) are unique, they tend to share common characteristics that can be combined for the purposes of the character assessment.

Defining features of the area that should be reflected in any proposed design of new development

- Consistent building materials used in development are brick, render and weatherboarding.
- These areas make up the highest density of housing in Little Baddow, but the open layout of development and gaps between houses allow for the rural and open character of Little Baddow to be maintained.
- Amenity greenspaces are common and contribute to the openness and arcadian feel of the character area. In particular the areas approaching and within the Rye Field, Rysley, Jarvis Field and Spring Close should be maintained without enclosures.
- Properties feature little to no boundary treatment, contributing towards the open layout found in this area.
- While properties tend to follow similar architectural styles in each development, the building line varies, creating a more interesting visual experience.
- Areas comprise mostly detached, 2 storey properties (although Spring Close and The Rye Field do feature bungalows)



Figure 14. Jarvis Field: houses are typically 2 storeys, feature large front gardens with greenspace and a paved area for off-street parking. Typical building materials are brick and weatherboarding



Figure 15. Amenity greenspace in Spring Close, where the gaps between properties allow for view into the surrounding countryside/woodland



Figure 16. The entrance to Rye Field



Figure 17. Housing development on Rye Field features an exceptionally open plan layout. This, in combination with the lack of any boundary treatment enhances the openness of the area.

The Ridge

The Ridge is the largest character area in Little Baddow and encompasses the most significant number of properties. The Ridge encapsulates the key characteristics of the Parish, featuring heavily wooded areas with 'hidden' properties at its north end, while at the southern end the open landscape allows for views of the surrounding landscape between and above properties. There are a number of private roads within this area, including Woodside, Chesnut Walk, and Litchborough Park.

Defining features of the area that should be reflected in any proposed design of new development

- At the northern end of the character area properties lie within a wooded area where trees enclose the plot and encroach onto the road. Homes are set back from the road and plots are generally secluded.
- Entrances to properties are inconspicuous, and usually combined with landscaped boundary treatments such as wide grass verges or hedges.
- Although the character does change slightly further south of Fir Tree Lane, being less rural in character, properties remain set back from the street, benefiting from smaller but verdant front gardens with soft boundary treatments. Plots remain generous in size.



Figure 16. Properties are set back far from the road, with inconspicuous entrances and large amounts of tree cover.



Figure 17. At the northern end of The Ridge, the road is swallowed by green verges, hedges, and over hanging trees on all sides



Figure 18. As you travel further south along the Ridge, the landscape opens up as woodland is visible between and above properties, density of properties tends to increase here but still remains generally low.

Spring Elms

The Spring Elms character area stretches the length of Spring Elms Lane, which extends off The Ridge/North Hill. While it possesses similar characteristics to The Ridge, it has a distinctly more rural feel to it.

Defining features of the area that should be reflected in any proposed design of new development

- Properties here are setback further from the road than those along The Ridge.
- Properties generally benefit from generous plot sizes and landscaped boundary treatments, often including mature trees.
- While properties tend to be visible from their entrance/driveway, the entire extent of the plot is not visible, often hidden by mature trees which line the road.



Figure 19. Some properties on Spring Elms Lane, especially in the wooded area closer to The Ridge, are set back from the street, hidden behind green boundary treatment and large mature trees.



Figure 20. Leaving the wooded area, properties on Spring Elms Lane become more visible to road users, but still maintain a distinctly rural feel, with large plots and gaps in between houses.

Paper Mill Lock

Paper Mill Lock is integral to the character of Little Baddow. It features an important group of riverside structures, which are mostly utilised for the café and boat hire facilities. The Paper Mill road bridge also provides an iconic landmark for the Parish.

Situated within the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation conservation area, its recreation and leisure facilities contribute significantly to the local economy. Meanwhile the historic and scenic value the Lock offers creates a unique pocket of tranquillity within the Parish.

However, the lack of parking out of season has resulted in eroded roadside verges and towpaths becoming muddy due to much use. The temporary use car park supports the summer activities in the locality, but it appears untidy after frequent use. These issues, combined with the threat of a new proposed road bridge development, have the potential to detract from the unique character of Paper Mill Lock.

Defining features of the area that should be reflected in any proposed design of new development:

- The bridge and lock provide elevated positions to view the weir and give views along the navigation, as does the mid-twentieth century road bridge beyond.
- The Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation, in particular Paper Mill Lock, contributes to an atmosphere of tranquillity enjoyed by those walking, riding, boating.
- Opportunities should be taken through any development that takes place to retain historic buildings and waterside functions and avoid urbanising features that undermine the rural character of the area.
- Opportunities should be taken to contribute towards and help implement improvements set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal, including new tree planting.



Figure 21 View of Paper Mill Lock from the road bridge



Figure 23 The Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation



Figure 22 Visitor parking at Paper Mill Lock causing congestion on North Hill

Rural Little Baddow

The Rural Little Baddow character area essentially covers everywhere in the parish that does not fall within any of the defined character areas listed above. In these areas, properties respond to and integrate well with the landscape, they function as part of the wider environment, and do not intrude on the character of the woodlands, leafy lanes, tree-lined roads, footpaths and bridleways.

Defining features of the area that should be reflected in any proposed design of new development:

- Where there is development, it is generally of a low density and sitting within large plots.
- Dwellings are well separated from each other and dispersed around the area, reflecting its rural nature.
- Buildings are generally set back from the road, enclosed by mature trees, hedges and boundary walls.
- There are undisturbed views of the surrounding countryside, particularly so in the western half of the Parish, where woodland areas make way for wide, open expanses of agricultural fields, such as on Hammonds Way
- Narrow lanes (several of which are tree-lined) wind down the hillsides, facilitating panoramic views across and into the Chelmer/Blackwater valley to the north and east.
- Intricate landscape pattern consisting of commons, pasture, heathland, and woodland habitats.

4. Summary

This report presents the key design qualities and features of the built and natural environment in Little Baddow and which should form the basis of proposals for any new development in the area.

Key points to be considered and reflected in proposals, both by applicants and decision makers, are:

- The position of Little Baddow's main settlement on a ridge allows for views across open farmland and the Chelmer Valley. Efforts should be made to conserve the open and framed nature of views into and across the Chelmer/Blackwater valley to the north and to wooded horizons to the south.
- The parish is also characterised by its relationship with the natural environment. Featuring numerous wildlife sites, woodlands, open spaces and the Chelmer and Blackwater conservation area, it is important that development does not over-impose itself onto its natural surroundings.
- It is therefore also important that the parish maintains its low density, which creates a consistent pattern throughout the village where gaps in properties allow for views of the surrounding countryside
- Boundary treatments are also important in maintaining the character of Little Baddow: they should be sensitive to the rural location and in keeping with the character of the street scene by using natural materials or vegetation. Within housing developments, boundary treatments should be minimal in order to maintain the open aspect layout and ensure gaps between properties are visible.
- Common building materials in the Parish include brick, render, weatherboarding. However, this is not to imply that all development can only use these materials, in any instance innovative design will be supported so long as it is suitable for the surrounding area and makes a positive contribution to the character of Little Baddow.
- There are a variety of architectural styles throughout Little Baddow, and all contribute towards its identity and sense of place. However, there are a handful of character areas, as listed in this report, which share common visual aspects and architectural qualities. Any new development should in the first instance respond to the defining features of the character area it is situated within, responding to key design cues including the building line, boundary treatment, building materials, roofline and storey height, as well as accounting for the general design qualities of the wider Parish. The principles established in the Village Design Statement and incorporated within this Design Guide are of particular importance and will need to be referred to by applicants.

It is expected that proposals for development are underpinned by a thorough site analysis and good practice design principles, demonstrating how the proposal responds to the local context. This should be set out in the Design and Access Statement accompanying the planning application.

LITTLE BADDOW NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: DESIGN GUIDE

DRAFT: FEBRUARY 2022