

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: Council	REPORT NUMBER: BC/26/14
FROM: Cllr Sallie Davies - Cabinet Member for Heritage, Planning & Infrastructure	DATE OF MEETING: 21 July 2026
OFFICER: Dee O' Rourke	KEY DECISION REF NO. N/A

DESIGNATING AN EXTENDED CONSERVATION AREA FOR PART OF EAST BERGHOLT AND ADOPTING A CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL ["CAA"] FOR THE UPDATED CONSERVATION AREA

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider:

- (i) The merits of '*Designating*' the Proposed Conservation Area for part of East Bergholt, the proposed boundary of which is described herein. *[Presently there is a conservation area within East Bergholt and the proposal is to expand the boundary]; and,*
- (ii) The merits of adopting the Proposed Conservation Area Appraisal ["CAA"] for the said Conservation Area as attached to this report; and,
- (iii) The process for agreeing a Conservation Area Management Plan for the said area in the event of Full Council Designating the said Proposed East Bergholt Conservation Area and Adopting the Proposed East Bergholt Conservation Area Appraisal.



figure 1: The Proposed East Bergholt, Constable Heartland and Flatford Conservation Area Appraisal 2026

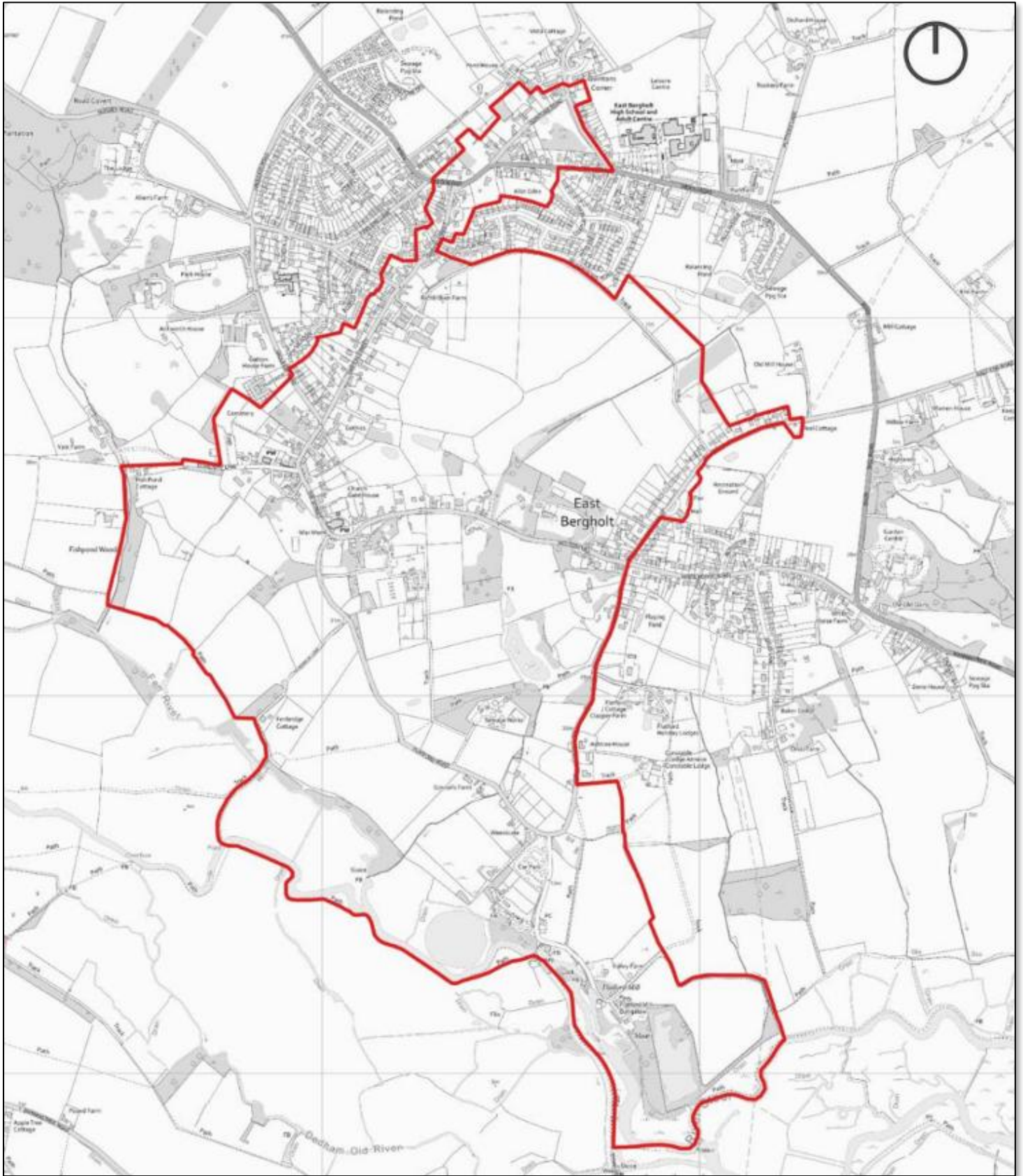


figure 2: The Proposed East Bergholt, Constable Heartland and Flatford Conservation Area 2026 boundary

2.0 OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 Option 1: Do nothing.

2.2 This would be inconsistent with the advice of Historic England in their Advice Note 1 (Second Edition, 2019). The designation of a conservation area is for the purpose of preserving and where appropriate, enhancing, an area of a demonstrable level of architectural or historic interest. The preparation of a CAA is a vehicle for the understanding of both the significance of the area and the effect of impacts of development, neglect and other threats bearing negatively on its significance. This approach is not recommended.

2.2 Members are advised that a modest sized conservation area was designated in **1968** for part of the village. The boundary of the existing conservation area focuses on St Mary's Church and the two principal village roads that stretch out from it. Namely, The Street/Gaston Road and Rectory Hill. (please see figure 3 below to view current conservation area boundary)

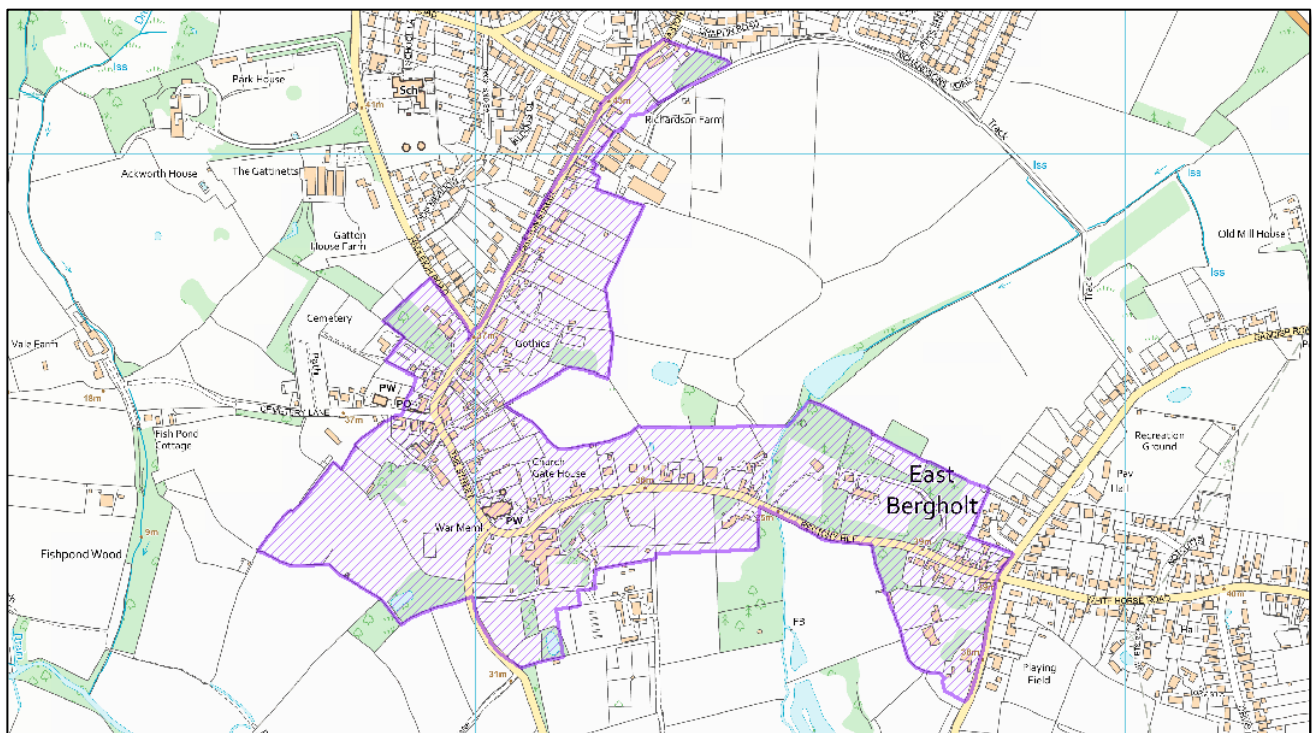


figure 3: **Current East Bergholt Conservation Area boundary**

2.3 Having studied the historic and architectural significance of areas within the Parish of East Bergholt as part of the current review it is clear that the existing conservation area does not incorporate areas that are now considered to be of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. *'Doing nothing'* in such circumstances would be a failure to act on the findings arising from the review taken in line with the *'Duty'* described in S69 (1) of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2.4 The current 1968 conservation area in East Bergholt is anomalous in that it is only one of two¹ existing conservation areas in the District of Babergh that is not accompanied

¹ The other being the tiny conservation area in Thorrington Street

by a Conservation Area Appraisal (and therefore no obvious facility to adopt a Management Plan). This situation should be remedied if the District Council is to effectively manage the historic environment through the application of LP19 – ‘*The Historic Environment*’ of the Babergh Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan 2023 and Part 16 – ‘*Conserving and Enhancing*’ the Historic Environment of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 [“NPPF”] (refreshed 2025). At the community level this work also helps to progress to a positive outcome Project EB8 “Review the Conservation Area” of the made East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan. Hence ‘*doing nothing*’ is not appropriate.

2.5 Option 2: Designate the proposed East Bergholt Conservation Area, with boundaries as described in this report and Appendix [A], and Adopt the proposed Final CAA as reproduced at Appendix [B].

2.6 The CAA identifies a strong case for extending the existing conservation area. Inexplicably, the area around Flatford Mill and Willy Lott’s Cottage is presently not within a conservation area. Whilst both properties and others close to them are ‘listed’ the wider area within which they sit and which form part of their historic significance are vulnerable due to not being protected by conservation area designation. Flatford Mill and Willy Lott’s Cottage have an historic significance that is global. Other areas included in the proposed conservation area have strong associations with John Constable and his now world-famous romantic depictions of traditional Suffolk rural life – the history of which can still be experienced in East Bergholt as he painted it some 230 years ago.

2.7 In terms of significance the Government recognises historic interest as being:

“An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation’s history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.”

NPPG paragraph 006 ref ID 18a-006-20190723

2.8 This set of circumstances certainly exists in the case of the proposed extended conservation area particularly mindful of the celebrations of “Constable 250” this year.

2.9 If adopted they will (i) form part of the planning authority’s Historic Environment Record, (ii) be part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and (iii) be a material consideration in planning applications. This is the option recommended.

2.10 Option 3: Defer a decision to amend the Proposed Boundary and/or the Proposed Conservation Area Appraisal to secure amendments deemed necessary by Full Council

2.11 The draft Conservation Area before Members is materially unchanged from that evidenced in the draft proposals presented at the Public meeting and open to public scrutiny during the consultation period. ²The only changes in the documents before the District Council are the inclusion of a dedication to the late Nigel Roberts, a cover

² Save for the inclusion of Yew Tree Cottage, Gandish Road as a non- designated heritage asset

change to follow the house style developed for CAA's adopted In Babergh from 2025 [Bentley and Sproughton] and an expanded foreword. No changes to the expanded conservation area boundary and/or altered main text are proposed as no objections were received through the public consultation phase. This is interpreted as widespread community support for the both the expanded conservation area and CAA.

- 2.12 Officers consider that no further changes are necessary or appropriate beyond those described above and included in the CAA included within the appendix to this report. This option is not therefore recommended.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Council Designates the Proposed Conservation Area for East Bergholt with boundaries as described in this report at Appendix [a]. **The conservation area is to be known as The East Bergholt, Constable Heartland and Flatford Conservation Area 2026 ["EBCHFCA 26"]**
- 3.2 That the Council Agrees and Adopts the Proposed Conservation Area Appraisal for the East Bergholt as attached to this report at Appendix [b].
- 3.3 That the Chief Planning Officer be authorised to make any minor consequential amendments³ necessary to publish the proposed designated area 3.1 above and to publish and adopt the EBCHFCA 26 Appraisal.
- 3.4 That the Chief Planning Officer be authorised
- (i) To prepare an appropriate Draft Management Plan for the EBCHFCA 26 in consultation with East Bergholt Parish Council and,
 - (ii) To consult the Cabinet Member for Heritage Infrastructure and Planning and the Ward Member for East Bergholt, in respect of the final draft of the East Bergholt, Constable Heartland and Flatford Conservation Area Management Plan and to have regard to their comments, subsequently making such amendments to the Draft Management Plan as the Chief Planning Officer feels appropriate.
 - (iii) Where the Cabinet Member for Heritage, Infrastructure and Planning has provided the Chief Planning Officer with written agreement to the amended text of Draft Conservation Area Management Plan or where no amendment has been necessary to the initially presented document [step (ii)] then the Chief Planning Officer is authorised to Adopt and publish the East Bergholt, Constable Heartland and Flatford Conservation Area 26 Management Plan; and,
- 3.5 To undertake such subsequent statutory notification/s, publicity and procedural steps as required, along with any additional notification/s, publicity and/or procedural steps as he deems appropriate to fulfil the above authorities.

³ To include errata

REASON FOR DECISION

The Council considers it is desirable to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the proposed Conservation Area [CA] for East Bergholt, Constable Heartland and Flatford together with an East Bergholt, Constable Heartland and Flatford Conservation Area Appraisal [“CAA”]. This will be a vehicle for the understanding of both the significance of the area and the effect of impacts of development, neglect and other threats bearing negatively on its significance. The designation of the CA and CAA is expected to form part of the planning authority’s Historic Environment Record, be part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, to engage statutory duties and a material consideration in planning decisions.

4.0 KEY INFORMATION

4.1 This heritage-led initiative has been developed in partnership between the Council’s Planning and Heritage Teams, the Community in East Bergholt under the aegis of Joan Miller, Nigel Roberts, John Lyall and Sallie Davies⁴, as well as Jody O’Reilly for HCUK. The Council’s Heritage Team has provided advice and recommendations on drafts produced by HCUK to help steer the final version of the CAA and boundary proposal currently before Members. This version reflects amendments to the boundary, changes and added content considered appropriate by the Heritage Team in the context of relevant Historic England Advice⁵. The document as presented represents the work and opinion of appropriately qualified officers of your Heritage Service.

4.2 The pioneering community-partnered approach taken in respect of this project is the third example of this collaborative way of working in Babergh in the context of conservation.

5.0 HISTORIC SUMMARY OF THE SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE PROPOSED EAST BERGHOLT, CONSTABLE HEARTLAND AND FLATFORD CONSERVATION AREA 2026. *[taken from the CAA]*

- An ancient village with several centres of habitation (polyfocal) which was well established by Saxon times—the conservation area covers the historic core of the village and two satellite settlements which developed on the edge of common ground in the medieval period.
- Flatford is similarly ancient in origin and features archaeological clues to both the location of a former chapel, supporting East Bergholt Church, and a moated site.
- Gaston End is distinctive for the triangular shape of former tracks on East Bergholt Common and retains a parcel of open land which has never been developed even though the common was enclosed and developed elsewhere—it remains an important archaeological clue to the former shape of the village.

⁴ Sallie Davies is also the Ward Member for East Bergholt and the Cabinet Member for Heritage, Planning & Infrastructure at Babergh District Council. Councillor Davies lives in a house that is within the proposed Conservation Area for East Bergholt.

⁵ Advice Note 1 (second edition) Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management

- The village and its satellite hamlets continue to have close relationships in terms of proximity and routes to surrounding land which has a high degree of continuity with a pattern of ancient field enclosures, medieval in origin. This enables a direct understanding of the way that small field parcels were created in the past to support the agrarian economy of the area.
- The village has a long history of religious nonconformity—a dissenters chapel being formally recorded in the 16th century though almost certainly building upon a much longer history.
- The two maps by Brasier compiled in the early 18th century offer unique documentary insight into the villages form at the start of the modern era, points of continuity between the maps and the village today enrich the historic values and special interest of the conservation area.
- The conservation area contains a high concentration of listed buildings which contribute to special historic interest in illustrating the progression of domestic history over time.
- The survival of a series of fine timber framed buildings with 15th century origins illustrate the wealth that had built up in the area when East Bergholt was an important centre for the wool and cloth trade. Field and place names continue to evoke this history.
- There are important ties to the Stour Navigation, an early navigable river route between Sudbury and Mistley Wharf. The majority of the distinctive double barges known as 'Stour Lighters' were constructed at dry docks at Flatford.
- The family of John Constable were important local farmers, millers, and merchants owning considerable areas of land, and from the early 18th century operating both wind and water mills and trading vessels along the Stour.
- John Constable's artistic output is of exceptional and international historic and artistic interest. The indelible connection between the images and the sense of place depicted, which remain appreciable to residents and visitors alike, offer a unique opportunity to connect to the past through this artist's pictures. His approach to art was to portray his world faithfully, moving away from the imaginative compositions which dominated the scene at the time. The ongoing opportunity to recognise in East Bergholt Conservation Area today the places and scenes as seen by John Constable is of exceptional importance and value. This extends beyond the interest of his individual works and into the wider appreciation for the Romantic period and stylistic movement which was hugely influential and remains so to this day.

6.0 LINKS TO OUR PLAN FOR BABERGH

- 6.1 This report closely links with our strategic priorities of revitalising and protecting our environment as well as enabling communities to influence decisions that provide a positive and lasting impact on the local area.

7.0 LINKS TO OUR STATUTORY DUTIES

- 7.1 The Council as local planning authority has a duty under S69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring that it

“(a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and

(b) shall designate those areas as conservation areas.”

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council has part-funded the work to produce the CAA involved in the designation of the proposed updated East Bergholt Conservation Area (now to be known as the East Bergholt, Constable Heartland and Flatford Conservation Area 2026). It is expected that the consideration of planning and related applications will give rise to some additional officer time and resource costs in having proper regard to the Conservation Area but these are within the range of “business as usual” that might be consequential from any change of planning policy including national policy. Other costs may arise were such a decision to be challenged by way of Judicial Review in the High Court⁶. However, the absence of a CAA for the 1968 area could itself potentially increase the risk of foreseeable cost associated with defending decisions at planning appeal. As such its adoption will help to mitigate that risk.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Appraisal has been produced in accordance with the requirements of s.69 -71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and in accordance with Historic England’s Advice Note no.1 Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management. Once *(if)* adopted, it will become a material planning consideration for the determination of relevant planning applications. A Conservation Area is a statutory designation that exists to protect the special architectural and historic interest of a place - in other words the features that make it unique and distinctive. Although conservation areas mean some extra planning controls and considerations, these exist to protect the historic and architectural elements which make the place special. They are most likely to affect owners who want to work on the outside of their building or any trees on their property.
- 9.2 The extended Conservation Area boundary as proposed and the CAA that accompanies it are considered robust and that appropriate procedures have been correctly followed in their preparation.

10.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 Key risks are set out below:

⁶ Such risks would include (i) the cost to the Council of mounting its defence in the High Court, including legal representation; and (ii) adverse costs were the challenge to be successful [the “loser pays” principle]

Key Risk Description	Likelihood 1-4	Impact 1-4	Key Mitigation Measures	Risk Register and Reference*
The potential for the significance of listed buildings, non-designated heritage assets or conservation areas to be harmed by inappropriate works.	2	3	The designation of the East Bergholt Conservation Area and the adoption of the East Bergholt Conservation Area Appraisal [CAA] will provide both control and guidance to help limit the potential for harm to these heritage assets occurring through inappropriate development. These outcomes will be further supplemented in due course by the adoption of a Management Plan for the East Bergholt Conservation Area [work upon which would start in the event of Full Council's designation of the East Bergholt Conservation Area and adoption of the East Bergholt Conservation Area Appraisal.] <i>[recommendations 3.1 - 3.5 in this report apply]</i>	ORR Heritage 022
Perceived poor quality of planning decision making adversely affects Council's reputation.	2	2	Provide clear communicated leadership, clarity about what the Council stands for, a clear sense of common purpose that embodies our values. Develop our ability to communicate strategically so we have the right skills to improve the reputation.	ORR Heritage 013

Ineffective or absent inter-service engagement on strategic corporate activities and projects.	2	3	Clear inter service two-way commitment to engage early and effectively is required with other services areas, with complete package of information to enable robust advice to be given and clarity of key timeline / milestones.	ORR Heritage 006
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11.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

- 11.1 The Statutory '*Public Meeting*' required by S71(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [PLBCAA] to enable public discussion in respect of a prospective conservation area, occurred in the Lambe School in East Bergholt, on 23 May 2026.



Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

71 Formulation and publication of proposals for preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

- (1) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.
- (2) Proposals under this section shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate.
- (3) The local planning authority shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.

This QR was included to give easy access to on-line questionnaire

figures 4: Public Meeting / Event day poster

- 11.2 A full suite of informative display material was presented at the Public Meeting and was also available on the Council's relevant 'East Bergholt Conservation Area Consultation' webpage. The material can be viewed at <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/east-bergholt-conservation-area-consultation>
- 11.3 The poster shown below (right) was displayed around the village to publicise the Public meeting and the public Consultation Period.



figure 5:
**Photograph from Public Meeting
Event at the Lambe School, Gaston Street**

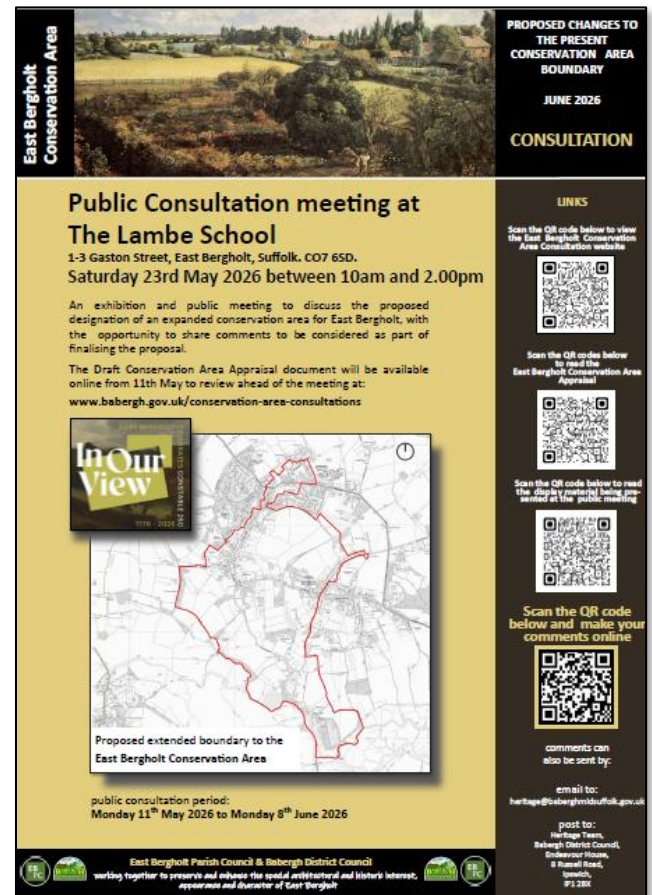
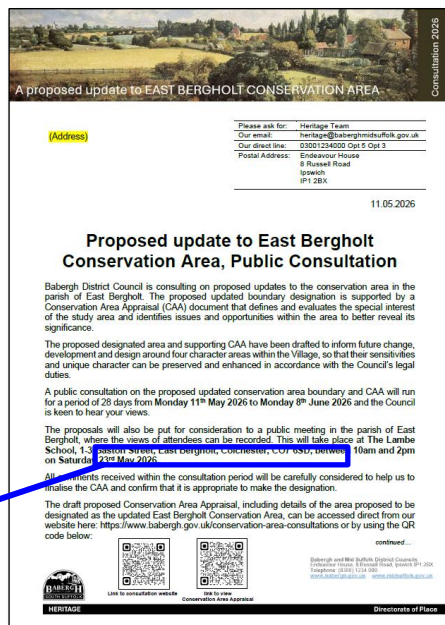


figure 6:
**Public Meeting advanced notice
and consultation period poster**

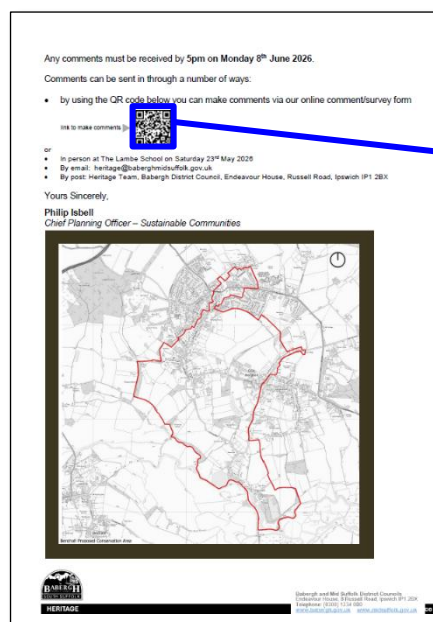
- 11.4 The Public Meeting was attended by East Bergholt Parish Councillors, Joan Miller, Sallie Davies⁷ and the now sadly late Nigel Roberts, John Lyall Chair of East Bergholt Society, Jody O'Reilly from HCUK (Heritage Consultant instructed by EBPC) along with, Philip Isbell, Vincent Pearce and Tegan Chinery from the Council's Planning/heritage Service. All were available to and did answer questions from and engage in discussion with the public.
- 11.5 Councillor John Ward [Deputy Leader of Babergh District Council] visited Lambe School during the Public Meeting to view the material on display and observe proceedings.
- 11.6 Consultation letter was sent to every address within the proposed East Bergholt Conservation Area advising occupiers therein of the Public Meeting, the Proposed Conservation Area Boundary, the Draft Proposed Conservation Area Appraisal, the Council's Consultation material, and the on-line Conservation Area consultation website address. That letter included QR codes to facilitate easy access to relevant electronic smart consultation response forms.

⁷ Sallie Davies is also Ward Member for the area on Babergh District Council and Cabinet Member for Heritage, Infrastructure and Planning

This weblink was included to give easy access to on-line supporting information



figures 5:
Sample Consultation letter



This QR was included to give easy access to on-line questionnaire

11.7 The on-line consultation period ran from Monday 11 May 2026 until Monday 8 June 2026.

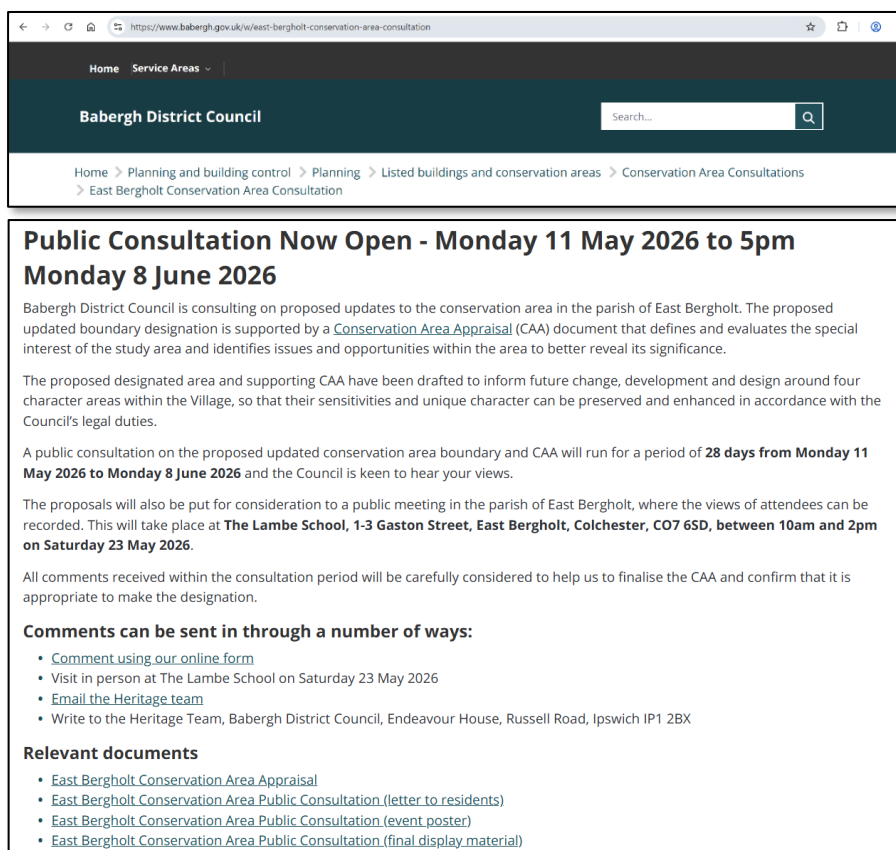


figure 6: Screen print extract from Babergh's East Bergholt Conservation Area Consultation page

11.8 The extracts that appear on the following page, provide a sample of some of the 29 boards of display material that were presented at the Public Meeting and available on-line on the Council's consultation page

continued overleaf....

11.9 FORMAL RESPONSE FROM HISTORIC ENGLAND

Summary of Comments:	BDC Response:
Historic England welcomes the preparation of the East Bergholt Conservation Area appraisal and management plan but cannot provide detailed feedback due to capacity constraints. Instead, they refer to their published guidance on conservation area appraisal and historic area assessment. They recommend that the appraisal includes a comprehensive management plan with clear, achievable objectives, priority actions, and long-term goals, including addressing heritage at risk. The plan should also guide appropriate future development, ensuring it respects the area's character, and may draw on examples such as the Wisbech Conservation Area Management Plan. Additional suggestions include: • Considering the use of CIL and Section 106 funding for enhancements • Using Article 4 Directions to control inappropriate changes (e.g. UPVC windows) • Carrying out audits and photographic records to monitor alterations • Including a glossary and relevant policy/legislative context Finally, Historic England notes that this response does not prevent them from providing further advice or objecting to future proposals that may harm the historic environment.	The fact that Historic England welcomes the preparation of the CAA is acknowledged. The capacity issues within Historic England that preclude detailed feedback are noted. If Members agree to designate the proposed conservation area extension and adopt the CAA it is intended then to produce a Conservation Area Management Plan in a timely manner to (as described in the recommendation to this report) support the CAA and thereby have a published Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan ["CAAMP"] The reference to Wisbech is noted and will be examined for guidance in terms of best practice and where appropriate This will be considered when preparing the Management Plan This will be considered when preparing the Management Plan This will be considered when preparing the Management Plan This is not considered necessary as legislation changes and the best source the Legislation.gov.uk website: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ Noted

12.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 12.1 The Council sent out over 600 notification letters to addresses within the proposed conservation area.
- 12.2 In total, including comments submitted in writing at the Public Meeting, 10 separate responses were received. [excluding the one from Historic England]
- 12.3 These responses are summarised below

Identifier	Reaction	Summary of Comments:	Preliminary BDC Response:
1	support	So much of the proposed designated territory has been celebrated by the paintings of John Constable and so much of the landscape, lanes, and buildings still have the character that he painted over 200 years ago. The area has special international significance and deserves heritage protection. Include Pubs	noted
2	support	Yew Tree Cottage in Gandish Road could be considered for listing	Listing a building falls outside of the scope of this review but it is accepted that Yew Cottage should be identified as a non-designated heritage asset: please see officer comment A after this table
3	support	In agreement with proposed conservation area	noted
4	support	In agreement with proposed conservation area	noted
5	support	In agreement with proposed conservation area	noted
6	support	In agreement with proposed conservation area	noted
7	support	In agreement with proposed conservation area	noted
8	support	In agreement with proposed conservation area	noted
9	support	Support no amendments	noted

10	support	Support but increase to include white horse road	Disagree: please see officer comment B after this table
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12.4 Officer comments in respect of 2 and 10 above

A: Yew Tree Cottage, Gandish Road

Yew Tree Cottage is a charming but simple workers cottage built in red brick with later casement windows with red brick arched lintels. It has a clay plain-tiled gambrel roof with two modest flat dormers to front to provide attic accommodation and a decorative timber pitched roof open porch with latticework sides. Whilst in need of some repair it certainly speaks to the historic character of this edge of village location and does have heritage value worthy of recognising albeit non statutorily. Inclusion within the CAA as a non-designated heritage will mean regard must be given preserving a community's unique identity, character, and collective memory encapsulated in this building, during planning and development decisions.



figures 8: **Yew Tree Cottage**, Gandish Road

Action: Yew Tree Cottage to be identified as a non-designated heritage asset

B: White Horse Road

Officers have considered the merits of including White Horse Road within the proposed East Bergholt, Constable Heartland and Flatford Conservation Area 2026 and do not consider it to be an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance

White Horse Road forms the eastern arm of the Gandish Road, Rectory Hill, Flatford Road and Whitehorse Road crossroads. It runs eastwards from the point of connection and eventually meets Mill Road.

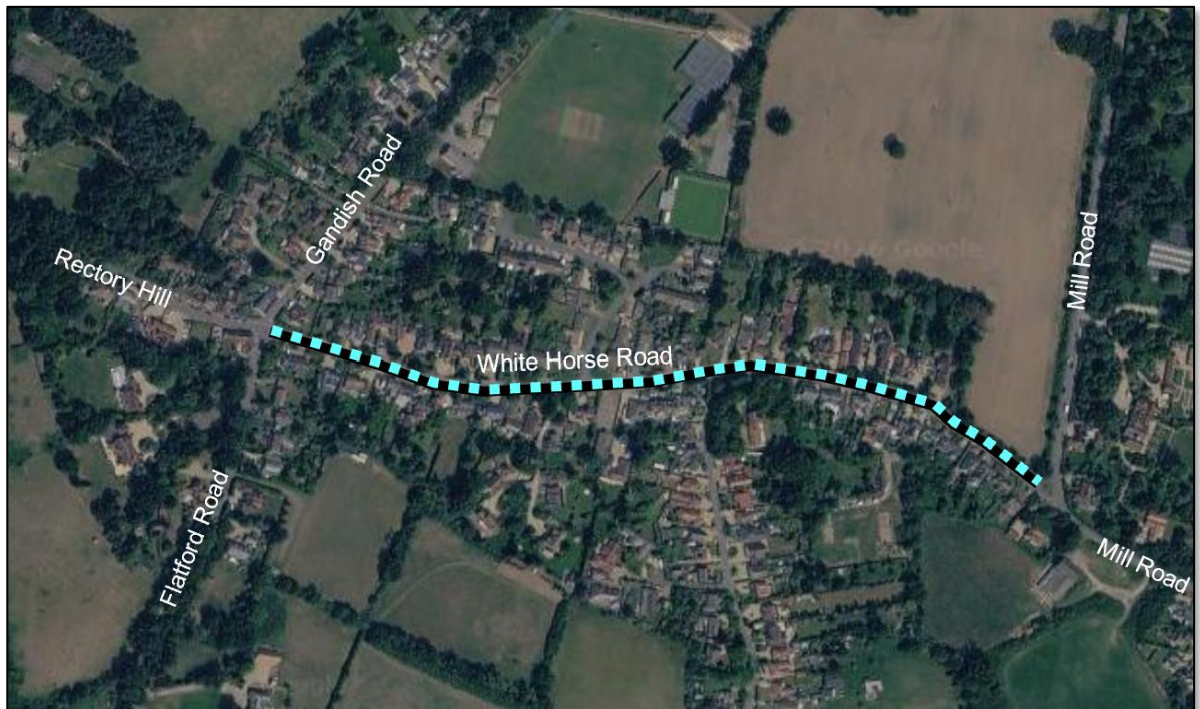


figure 9: **Location of White Horse Road**

Looking at an aerial photograph of the area taken in December 1945 it is clear that much of White Horse Road was developed in the second half of the 20th century. Much of the route is characterised by modern bungalows and modern two-storey dwellings which do not have the special interest to make the area of historic or architectural significance.



figure 10: **Aerial Photograph White Horse Road- December 1945 [Google Earth]**

Whilst there are some older dwellings along the route the significant intrusion of standard twentieth century house types would add an incoherence and indefensibility to the boundary currently proposed. Only two listed buildings exist in the vicinity of the route.

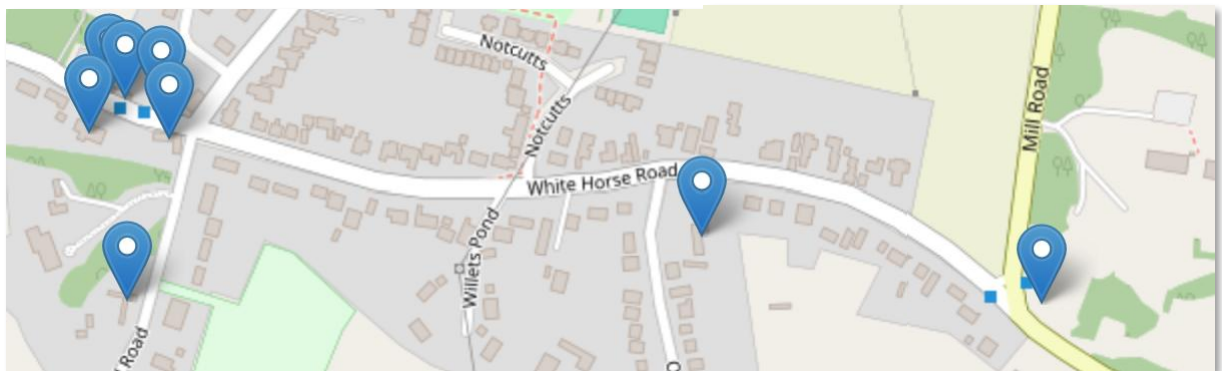


figure 11: Listed Buildings near White Horse Road <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/east-bergholt-babergh-suffolk>

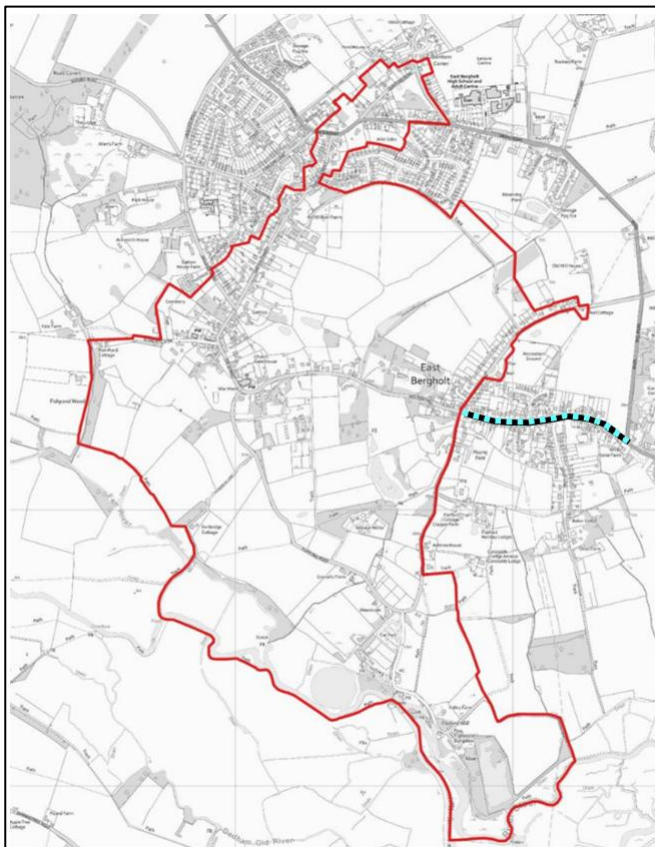


figure 12:
**White Horse Road in relation to the
Proposed EBCHFCA 26 boundary**

Whilst John Constable produced two sketches of the White House Pub House drawn from a Mill Road vantage point they do not represent a key location or part of his main body of work within and around East Bergholt.

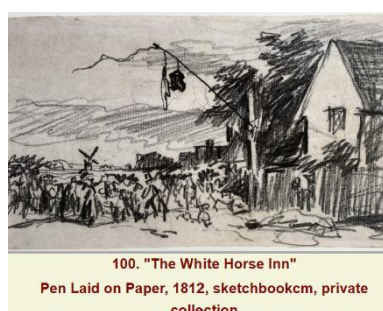
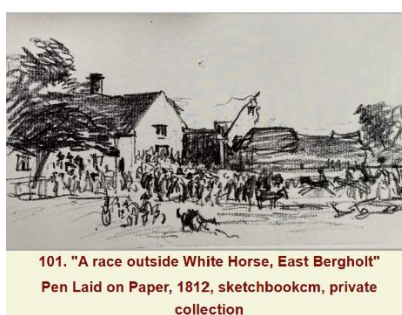


figure 13:
**The White Horse sketches
by John Constable**



figure 14: **Constable painting and sketch locations – East Bergholt Society**

ACTION: Do not include White Horse Road within the EBCHFCA 26

13.0 ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

- 13.1 **John Constable RA⁸ (11 June 1776 – 31 March 1837)** the renowned English Romantic landscape painter was born in East Bergholt. The rural landscapes of the Dedham Vale and River Stour in and around East Bergholt, including his father's mill at Flatford and windmill in East Bergholt [now lost] were his primary inspiration, shaping his lifelong dedication to painting his native countryside.
- 13.2 The prominent Constable family of East Bergholt was a wealthy milling and agricultural dynasty, ultimately best known for producing the famous landscape painter John Constable (1776–1837). The family built their fortunes by operating Flatford Mill on the River Stour. They lived at the grand East Bergholt House. The family patriarch, Golding Constable (1739–1816), was a successful businessman who owned multiple mills in Suffolk and Essex. His second wife, Ann Constable (1748–1815), was socially ambitious and provided her children with a strong

⁸ Royal Academy 1829

The Royal Academy of Arts (RA) is an art institution based in Burlington House in Piccadilly, London, England. Founded in 1768, it has a unique position as an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects. Its purpose is to promote the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the fine arts through exhibitions, education and debate.

education. The couple had six children, including John, who often used the surrounding East Bergholt and Flatford countryside as the subject for his paintings and sketches.



figure 15: **Golding Constables House by John Constable circa 1811** [Eat Bergholt House now lost]

V&A <https://www.vandaimages.com/2006AP2797-Golding-Constable's-House-East-Bergholt-by-John.html>

13.3 The Constable family's 104 year ownership of Flatford Mill⁹:

Abram Constable Snr (John's father's uncle)- Mill Owner 1742-1768 (acquired Mill in 1742 from Matthew Isaac who had owned it from 1731)

Golding Constable - Mill Owner 1768-1815 inherited Flatford Mill from his uncle Abram (Senior) Constable. Although Golding Constable continued to operate the mill very much as in his Uncle Abram Constable's time.

However, his business ambitions far exceeded those of his uncle. Golding Constable was an entrepreneur. He owned Flatford Mill and a windmill at East Bergholt and also ran two sea-going Thames barges (the Balloon and the Telegraph) running between Mistley Wharf and London carrying wheat, barley, malt, flour, bricks, chalk and lime. These barges were powered by sails and travelled round the coast to the London docks.

Abram Constable Junior's Mill Owner 1816-1846 (Golding's youngest son and John Constable's brother) took over Flatford Mill when his father died in 1816.

In 1846, Abram sold Flatford Mill for 2,000 guineas to William Rufus Bentall and Stephen Durrant Lott. This marked the end of Constables' ownership of Flatford Mill.

- 13.4 The Rectory at St Mary's Church played a central role in his life, as that this is where he met and courted his future wife Maria Bicknell. Maria's grandfather Dr Durand Rhudde who was the rector at St Mary's did not approve of John Constable as suitor¹⁰.

⁹ <https://www.flatfordandconstable.org.uk/flatford-mill/flatford-mill-under-the-constables>

¹⁰ When his grand-daughter Maria announced her intention to marry John Constable, Dr Rhudde strongly objected. He told the Bicknell family that unless they stopped the association between Maria and John

John and Maria's courtship lasted seven years. In 1816 John and Maria decided they would marry whatever the consequences and were married in London. Rev Dr Rhudde eventually accepted the inevitable and when he died in 1819 he left £4000 of Government Stock to Maria and to each of the Bicknell children.



figure 16:

**The Old Rectory
Today (now a private
residence)**

<https://content.knightfrank.com/property/cho012028194/brochures/en/cho012028194-en-brochure-9013ae7c-6a52-4487-bdb7-f1ab8f68addf-1.pdf>



figure 17: **Towards the Rectory by John Constable**

<https://www.ebsoc.org.uk/constable-painting/east-bergholt-rectory/#gallery>

Constable, he would disinherit the whole family. He is said to have objected to the match because Constable did not have sufficient money to keep Maria, but there were other reasons

- the fact that he had quarrelled with John's father, Golding Constable a few years previously and
- that the young John Constable was close friends with John Dunthorne, the local artist/glazier/handyman/atheist
- John was born the same year as Jane Austen and so the rural social scene was similar to that Jane describes in her novels. Maria's grandfather would have been 'gentry' while John Constable's father, although wealthy would have been disparaged as a miller and as being rich through 'trade'. Source East Bergholt Society

- 13.5 It is easy therefore to muse as to why so many of John's landscapes painted in East Bergholt feature the Rectory (which still stands). Furthermore romantics can imagine him sitting in the landscape hoping to catch a glimpse of Maria as he painted longing to be with her.

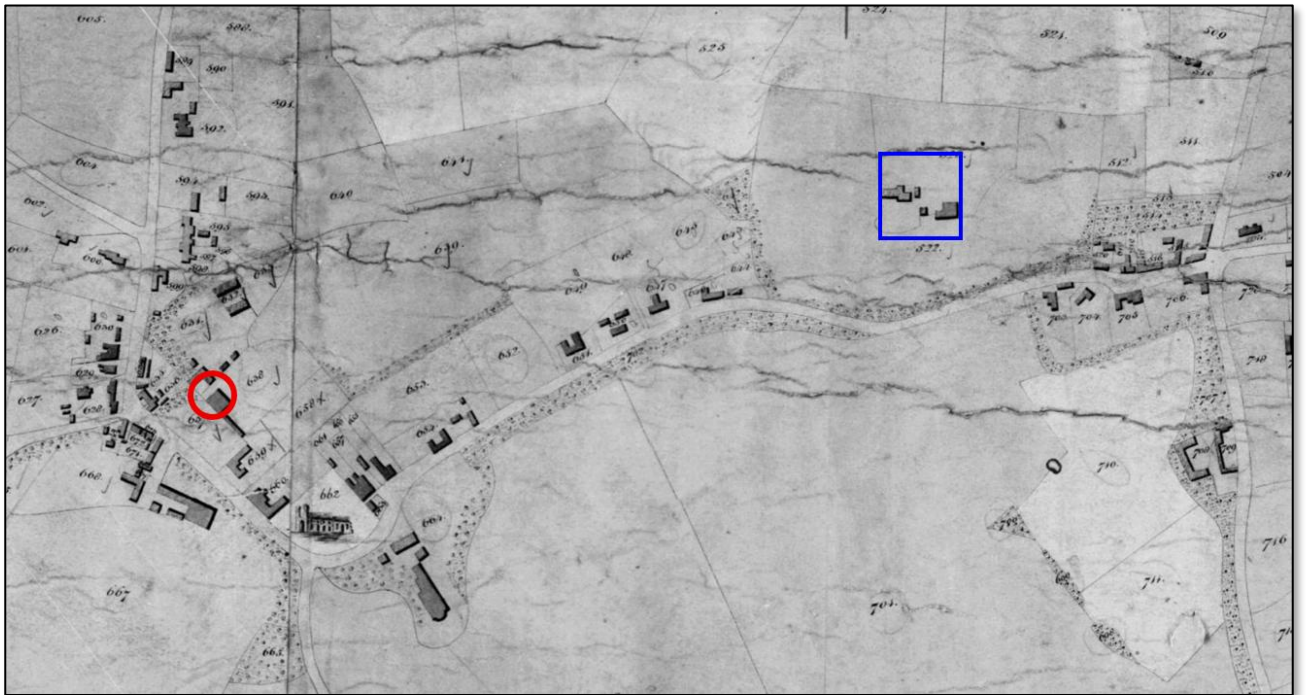


figure 18: Tithe Map 1838 showing proximity of East Bergholt House to the Rectory

- 13.6 2026 is being celebrated internationally as the 250th anniversary of John Constable's birth. It therefore seems fitting that a CAA should finally be adopted and that it happens this year, along with the expansion of the designated conservation area. Whilst some may argue it is overdue by some 58 years (from 1968), it is better late than never.



figure 19: East Bergholt Society Constable 250 celebrations

<https://www.ebsoc.org.uk/>

14.0 Raymond Erith RA¹¹ FRIBA (7 August 1904 – 30 November 1973) was a leading classical architect in England during the period dominated by the modern movement after the Second World War. His work demonstrates his continual interest in expanding the classical tradition to establish a progressive modern architecture, drawing on the past.

14.1 He was appointed architect for the reconstruction of Downing Street (1958), elected a Royal Academician (1959) and served on the Royal Fine Art Commission (1960–73). Since his death, exhibitions of his work have been held by the Royal Academy of Arts (1976), Gainsborough's House, Sudbury (1979), Niall Hobhouse (1986) and Sir John Soane's Museum (2004).^l

14.2 He was a founder member and founder Chair of the Dedham Vale Society formed in 1938.

14.3 With offices in Dedham High Street from , it is no wonder that Raymond Erith had a number of commissions for new houses and alterations in East Bergholt which figure in the CAA. In 2023 the Twentieth Century Society organised a sold out event - **'Raymond Erith in the Stour Valley and Beyond'** involving a tour leaving Liverpool Street by train at 09.02 to Manningtree and then a trip around locations in Essex and Suffolk with a stop at 14.30 to see "some interesting speculative small houses by Erith at East Bergholt".

15.0 EQUALITY ANALYSIS

15.1 The proposed adoption of this CAA does not have an impact on members of our community with protected characteristics.

16.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

16.1 The CAA aligns to the Councils package of positive strategies for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.

17.0 APPENDICES

Title	Location
(a) Proposed East Bergholt, Constable Heartland and Flatford Conservation Area Boundary Map. For consideration by FULL COUNCIL at the MEETING of 21 July 2026	Web link
(b) Proposed East Bergholt Constable Heartland and Flatford Conservation Area Appraisal ["CAA"] for consideration by FULL COUNCIL at the MEETING of 21 July 2026	Web link
(c) Consultation Responses	Web link

¹¹ Royal Academy 1969

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end of report

for Further research

A must for all lovers of John Constable's art and the Suffolk landscapes he painted in and around East Bergholt is the **East Bergholt Society's website**. It is an extensive compendium of all things East Bergholt and Constable. It represents an amazingly engaging gateway into learning more about East Bergholt and John Constable.

EAST BERGHOLT SOCIETY

<https://www.ebsoc.org.uk/>

