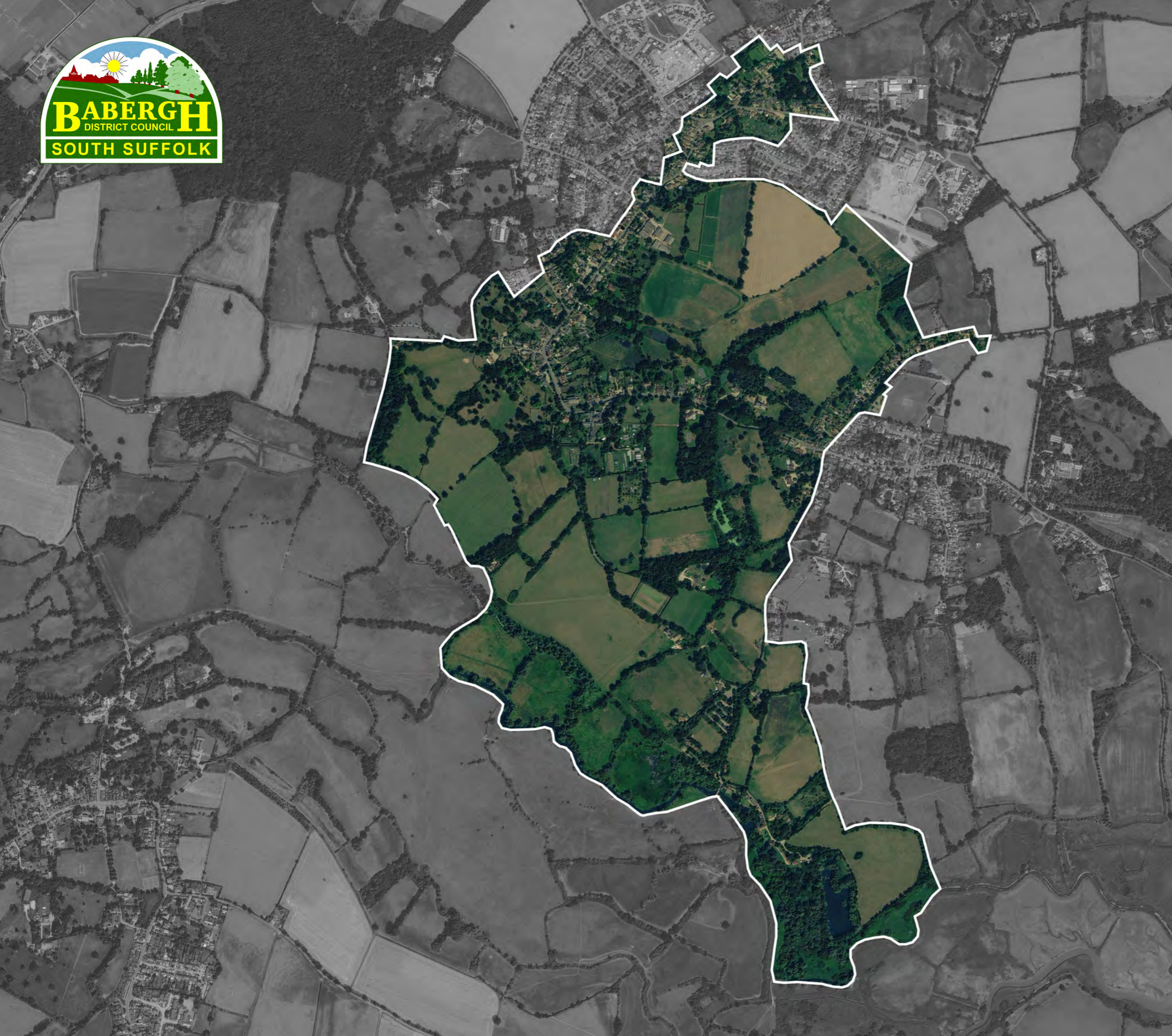


East Bergholt
Parish Council



Babergh District Council
East Bergholt, Constable Heartland and Flatford
Conservation Area Appraisal—21 July 2026



Dedication

This Conservation Area Appraisal is dedicated to the memory of Nigel Roberts

" Throughout the long process that has now resulted in the successful expansion of the East Bergholt Conservation Area and the adoption of its first ever and much needed conservation area appraisal, Nigel was an inspiring, expert contributor to the difficult process and gave us all the courage and confidence to keep going. He also was the most observant and detailed proof - reader of the Appraisal , which has been a vital part of the process."

(John Lyall, Member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Chair of the East Bergholt Society)



John Constable: 'A Hayfield in East Bergholt at Sunset'. 4 July 1812, V+A

Babergh District Council Acknowledgements

Babergh District Council gratefully acknowledges the valuable contributions made by so many in the preparation of this Conservation Area Appraisal ["CAA"].

The Council wishes to express particular gratitude to the following East Bergholt residents for their significant and much appreciated contributions towards the production of this Conservation Area Appraisal:

- Parish Councillor Joan Miller [Chair of East Bergholt Parish Council],
- Parish and Babergh District Councillor Sallie Davies,
- the late, Parish Councillor Nigel Roberts; and,
- John Lyall, Member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Chair of the East Bergholt Society

It wishes to thank Jody O'Reilly of the HCUK Group for her major contribution as the heritage consultant instructed by East Bergholt Parish Council to work on this document. The Council's Heritage Team gratefully acknowledges her tireless effort, expertise, passion for the subject and collaborative approach in helping it to produce, publish and adopt this Conservation Area Appraisal.

It thanks the Community for supporting the expansion of the East Bergholt Conservation Area and the adoption of this Conservation Area Appraisal.

In closing a very special mention needs to be given to Joyce Baker. Joyce moved into the Granary Barn at Flatford some 50 years ago, restoring this wooden building with great care and attention to its origin and its historic setting in this internationally renowned landscape. Over the years Joyce has researched the history of Flatford and assiduously collated literature and original historical documents relating to the immediate Flatford area and drawn on these to interpret the existing scenes and the secrets that they hide. Joyce's work and her wealth of information formed a most reliable basis for the CAA in respect of the Flatford area.

The next step is to produce and adopt a Conservation Area Management Plan ["MP"] whose purpose is to translate the findings of this CAA into actionable planning policies and enhancement projects to guide daily development and maintenance.

We hope that the extended conservation area and this CAA and the planned MP will prove to be a lasting legacy that will help to preserve and enhance the area's historic and architectural significance.



Babergh District Council

East Bergholt Parish Council

HCUK Group

East Bergholt,
Constable
Heartland and
Flatford
Conservation Area
Appraisal

21 July 2026

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Summary of Special Interest

East Bergholt is an internationally significant village as the birthplace and childhood home of English landscape painter John Constable whose art was 'intimately involved in the portrayal of his childhood world' (Vaughn, 1999, p.213).

Constable's artistic output, both large painted scenes and smaller intimate studies and sketches cover a broad swathe of the village, its buildings, surrounding fields, valleys, riverine and historic heathland landscapes. The natural beauty of the area is reflected in its recognition as Dedham Vale National Landscape. The conservation area designation provides additional protections specifically to the unique built character as well as strengthening specific links between Constable's wider cultural contribution alongside other artists such as Gainsborough who worked in this area, and the specific locations in which he worked, many of which remain appreciable within East Bergholt and its immediate surroundings today.

There is a strong sense of continuity between the scenes he depicted and the area today, despite later changes it is eminently possible to recognise and experience Constable's home whilst walking the conservation area today. This offers a unique insight and connection to the past and the world of this internationally renowned artist. The internationally important artistic interest of East Bergholt is directly appreciable today through places where the viewer is afforded a remarkable consistent 'picture' of what Constable saw and experienced, remaining in today's village.

Beyond the artistic and historic value associated with Constable's work the settlement as a whole is of special historic interest in illustrating the evolution of a Suffolk village over time. Detailed historic maps from the early 18th century offer unique insight at East Bergholt to the ancient enclosure systems which have remained within the modern landscape. With retained routes, paths, field boundaries and patterns of settlement there are still means of seeing beyond the more recent additions of houses to the earlier pattern of settlement and the way that the ancient elements have continued to shape today's village. The conservation area spans the historic core of the village and two separate 'ends' or hamlets that reflect the influence of the ancient commons and heathland located to the north and north east of the current village. The conservation area retains opportunities for further understanding of archaeological potential relating to the earliest history of this village.

The importance of agriculture, milling, and the wool trade and industry and the wealth generated by these industries is reflected in a series of fine timber framed buildings of the 15th and 16th centuries, the substantial church, early school building endowed with wealth generated by this trade, and the longstanding presence of a mill at Flatford, though the mill building has been replaced over time.

Well preserved buildings of all periods contribute to distinct architectural and historic values, with the differing functions reflecting the breadth of human activity in the past and over time.

A high number of statutorily listed buildings reflect the architectural and historic special interest within the conservation area, and well preserved unlisted buildings, many of which are contemporary with the listed buildings augment and enrich the character of the conservation area overall.

The architectural character of the conservation area exhibits a high degree of variety—a distinctive part of its special interest. This area is not of special interest because it exhibits a very singular pattern of building forms or material palette but because the variety and well preserved examples from multiple periods reflects a rich diversity of human tastes and investment in their built environment and homes.

The settlement at Flatford represents an outstanding collection of highly graded listed buildings, archaeological remains and riverine structures important in their own right as well as being a group with key historic links to the Constable family and the subject of many of John Constable's most well known paintings including several of the monumentally scaled 'six footers' which are intimate explorations of rural life and the working life on the Stour.

The Stour Navigation was one of the first statutorily improved riverine trade routes in the modern era and Flatford was a centre of boatbuilding for the Navigation producing most of the two-boat Stour Lighters in its dry dock, recently restored by the National Trust.

Individual character areas within the designated area reflect distinct differences in settlement pattern, type, and periods of settlement expansion with the golden thread of Constable's artwork and his family's influence over the village running throughout.

1.0

Introduction

1.1 Introduction to East Bergholt

This Conservation Area Appraisal has been written by HCUK Group on behalf of the East Bergholt Parish Council and in conjunction with the Historic Environment team at Babergh District Council. It follows the guidance and structure set out within Historic England's 2019 'Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Second Edition, Historic England Advice Note 1.'

A Conservation Area is defined as an "area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance." The core of the conservation area was designated in 1968 with an extension in 1975. Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to review from time to time past designations and determine whether any parts or further parts of the area should be designated as conservation areas and, if they so determine, to designate those areas.

This appraisal is neither prescriptive nor overly descriptive, but seeks to establish and summarise the unique 'quality of place', sufficient to inform the Planning Officer and others considering changes or assessing proposed works there. Historic England guidelines point out, that an appraisal is to be read as a general overview, rather than as a comprehensive listing, and the omission of any particular building, feature or space does not imply that it is of no interest in conservation or heritage terms.

East Bergholt is located to the east of the A12 approximately half way between Colchester and Ipswich in south Suffolk.

The southwestern half of the parish, and much of the conservation area, falls within the Dedham Vale National Landscape designated in 1970. The north eastern edge of the parish falls within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The landscape character is described more fully in Section 2.2 of this report. National Landscapes are designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) protected under the 1949 National Parks and Access to Countryside Act. The cultural significance of this landscape lies in the longevity of it as evidence of early human agricultural practice, and in the contributions and artistic legacy of painters like John Constable and Thomas Gainsborough, both of whom painted in this area. Though historic human activities are reflected the purposes of the national landscapes is to protect the 'natural' beauty and distinctiveness of these areas—the landscape patterns and different characters and biodiversity richness.



Figure 1: East Bergholt and Flatford in their wider context

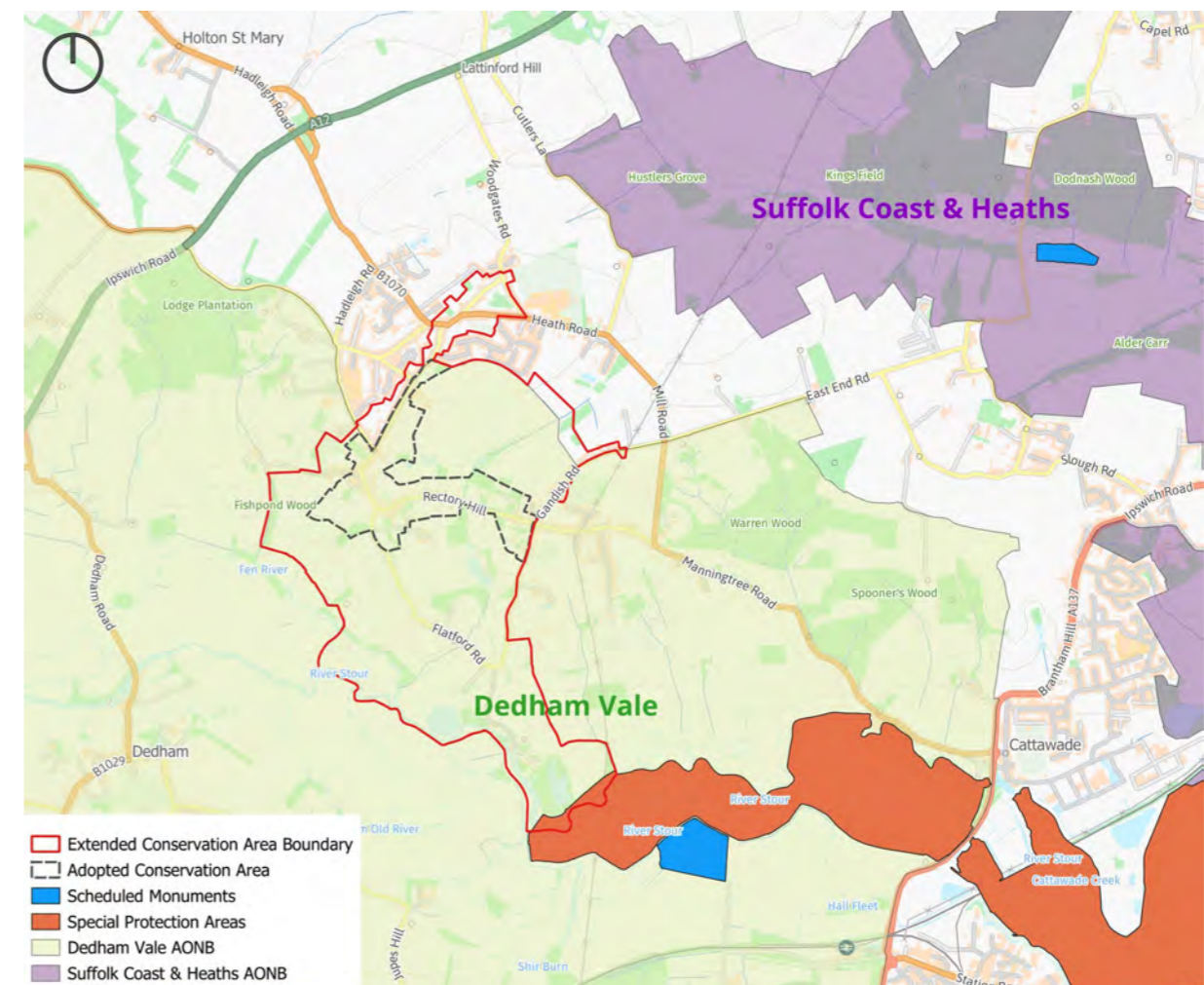


Figure 2: East Bergholt conservation area within wider landscape designations

1.2 Designation and Boundary Review

The original designation of East Bergholt Conservation Area was undertaken in 1968. It was extended slightly in 1975 but the extant designated area still only covers the very core of the historic settlement running from Gaston Street, The Street and Rectory Hill. It is tightly drawn to include what might be considered the historic core of the settlement running from Burnt Oak at the junction between Rectory Hill and Gandish Road in the east along Rectory Hill, The Street and up the eastern side of Gaston Road.

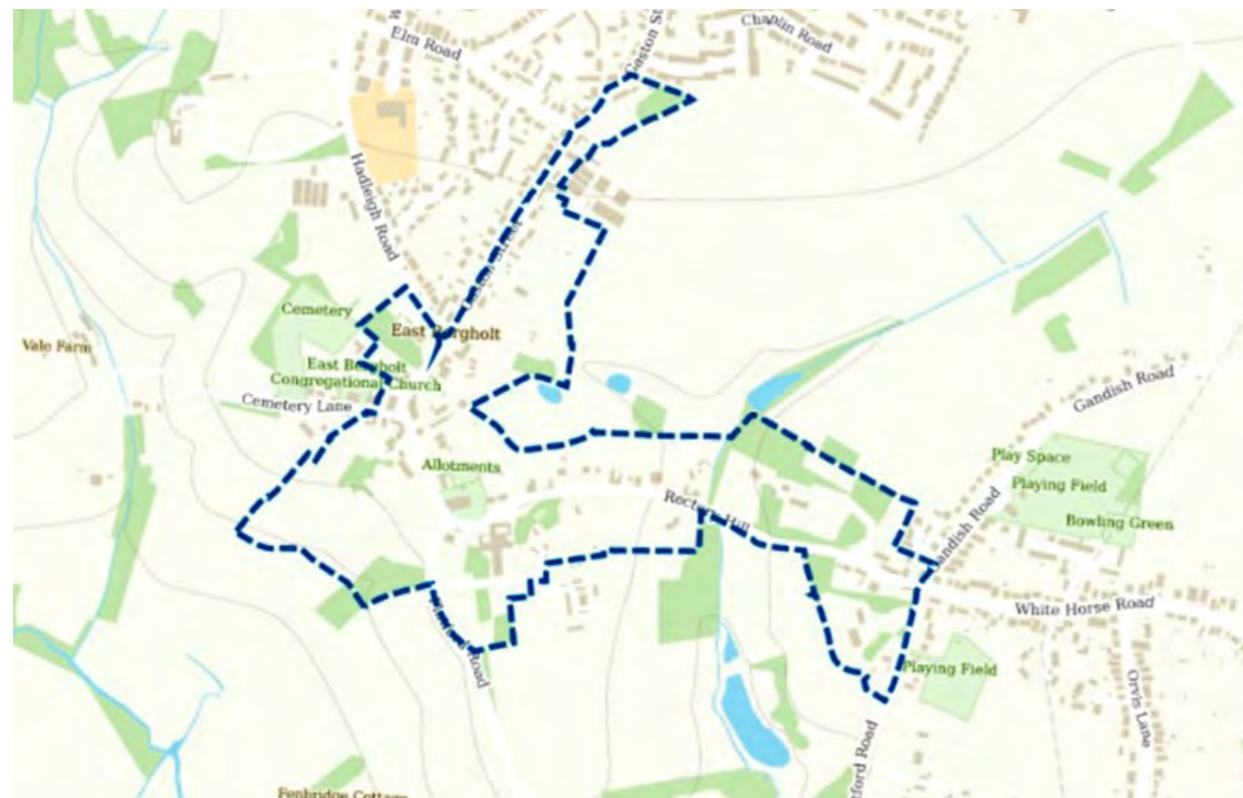


Figure 3: The existing designated conservation area boundary. (Base layer map from Babergh Mid Suffolk Local Plan Policies Map)

The East Bergholt Neighbourhood Development Plan (EBNP) was adopted in September 2016. Within the current plan at Section 5.3.2 on 'Our Historic Environment' there are two recommended 'projects' which were not to form part of the Neighbourhood Plan, but which could eventually contribute to subsequent reviews and to form part of the Local Plan more widely. The Parish has embarked on a formal review of the EBNP with material policy amendments, new residential site allocations, a stand alone design guide and greater emphasis on the natural environment within the plan area. The aimed for adoption date in 2027 and the Conservation Area Appraisal will be a core point of reference. Project EB7 was to update the Village Local List, cementing a carefully considered and criteria based list of

local non-designated assets. Project EB8 was to review the conservation area the text of the project reads:

"Work with the East Bergholt Society and other relevant statutory authorities to review and, if appropriate, extend or modify the boundaries of the East Bergholt Conservation Area (Map 18) ensuring the identified views and open spaces are protected" (EB Neighbourhood Plan, 2016)

HCUK Group were instructed by East Bergholt Parish Council to provide an appraisal document to address project EB8 and for public consultation. This appraisal will form part of the wider Babergh Mid Suffolk Local Plan but have core areas of overlap with the EBNP—particularly in respect to the new Design Guide. The appraisal of the conservation area was initially started following the completion of a detailed Historic Landscape Appraisal in 2020. In 2021 the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan Group in conjunction with the East Bergholt Society (EBS) began to look at the built fabric and landscape character across the Neighbourhood Plan area. From an initial consideration of 8 discrete areas, five were eventually put forward to Babergh and Mid Suffolk Council as recommendations for an extension to the East Bergholt Conservation Area.

Further assessment in liaison with Babergh Mid Suffolk Council has refined the areas to be included within the proposed designated area (see figures on next page). It has sought to prioritise areas of truly 'special' character and appearance, has maintained logical and robust boundaries and landscape divisions, avoiding boundaries cutting across open land parcels in all but one area (north eastern edge). Comparison between the initially proposed areas against the new conservation area outline put forward for designation are shown on the following page at figures 4 and 5 and the final boundary is described below.

The proposed conservation area has an irregular shape where the southern boundary follows the line of the River Stour from Fen Bridge to a point just east of Flatford. Fishpond Wood forms the westernmost boundary and it extends up Cemetery Lane turning north east to include the cemetery and historic property The Gables, before running to the rear property lines on the western side of Gaston Street and on to Quinton Street taking. Blocks of later 20th century mass housing are generally excluded, though more recent infill housing between older properties are included particularly where they perpetuate the individualised design, plot pattern and spacing of older development.

A projecting section to the north follows Quinton, Heath and Woodgates Roads. The Chaplin's allotment gardens are within the boundary but the modern housing estates beyond them are excluded with the northern boundary enclosing retained open land to the north of The Donkey Track, a popular public right of way. This area is the only one where the proposed boundary crosses open land not extant boundaries to provide a buffer to the

1.2 Designation and Boundary Review

historic route. To the east the proposed boundary includes housing along the western side of Gandish Road, including the village hall on the east, and passing down the route of Flatford Road before cutting eastwards to the south of Clapper Farm extending southwards to the river and the southern boundary.

It is noted that the southern boundary is very close to the Dedham Conservation Area in neighbouring Colchester District Council. It was designated in 1968. There are many points of historic and associative interest in common between the two areas including links to the Constable Family who owned and operated Dedham Mill as well as East Bergholt's

This Conservation Area Appraisal was presented for public consultation as required by S71 (2) of the Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990. The meeting was held between 10am and 2pm on Saturday 23 May 2026 at the Lambe School, Gaston Street. Necessary revisions followed before being resented for formal adoption by Babergh Council as a Supplementary Planning Document. There are 30 conservation areas in Babergh District, 28 of them have adopted appraisal documents. Bentley Conservation area appraisal was approved and adopted in May 2025. East Bergholt's suggested appraisal is presented here, Thorington Street will be the last without such an appraisal.

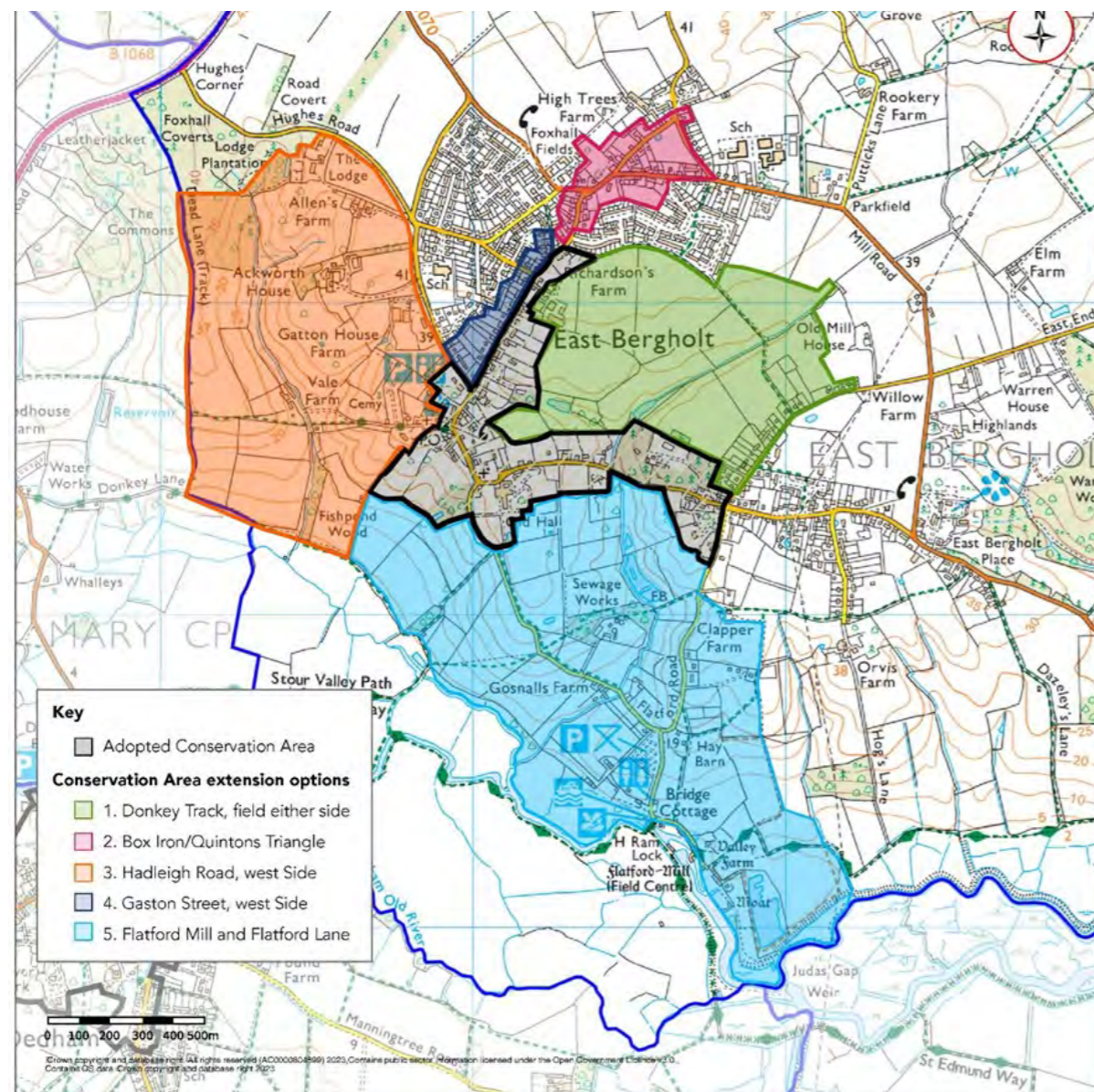


Figure 4: Areas initially proposed by EBPC for consideration. The blue line represents the Parish boundary shown in part.

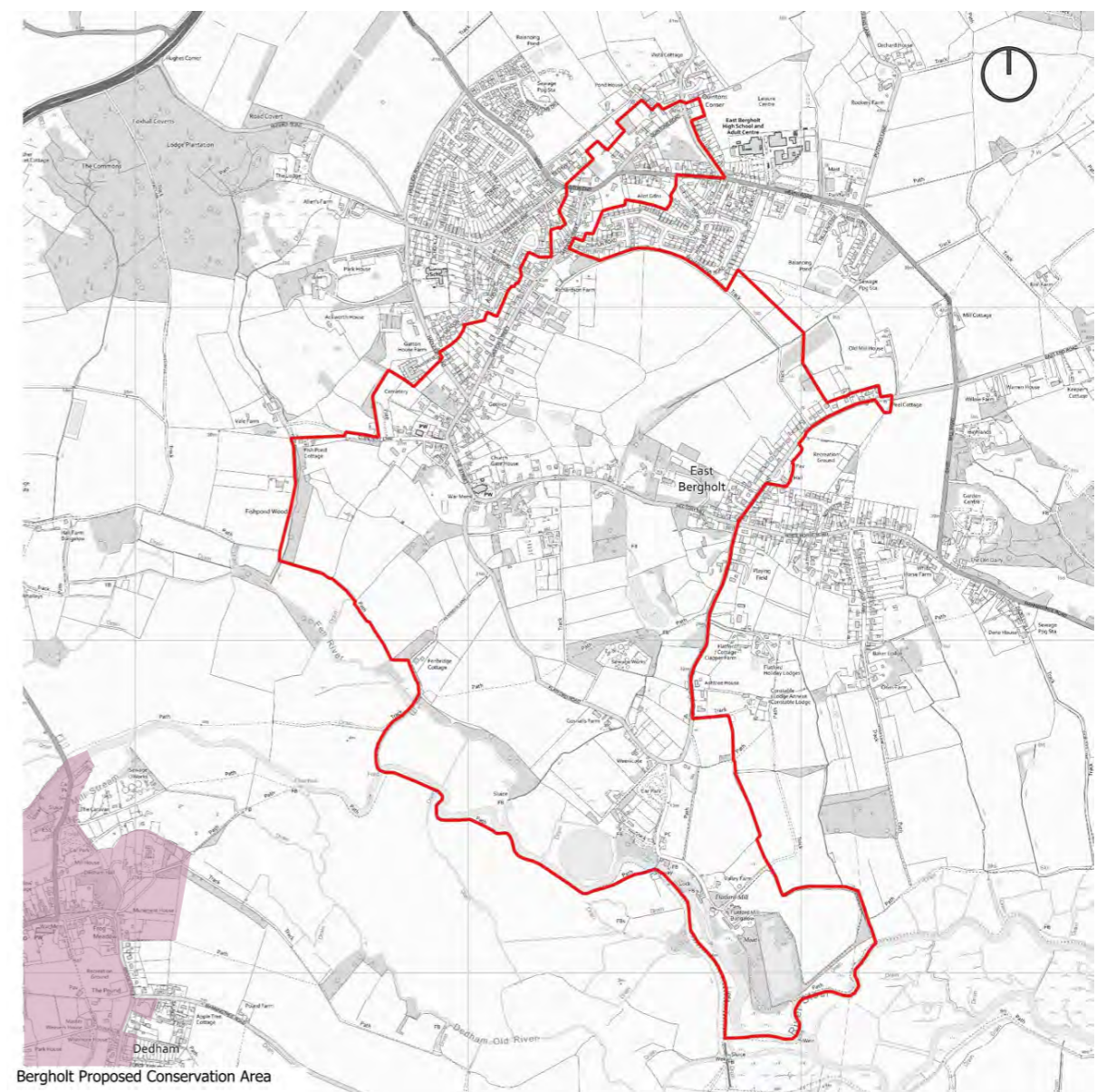


Figure 5: Proposed Conservation Area Boundary. NB: the next nearest conservation area, Dedham, is shaded in the bottom left corner.

1.3 Policy Background

The legislative framework relating to conservation areas and listed buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 69 of this Act imposes a continuing duty on Local Planning Authorities to designate areas which they consider to be of architectural and historic interest as Conservation Areas, and to review those designations with a view to additional areas or extending existing areas at appropriate points. Section 71 requires the Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas, in conjunction with public consultation and recognising any views expressed through such consultation. Section 72 requires that in exercising their planning functions within a conservation area, that local authorities give special attention to ensuring that the character and appearance of these areas is preserved or enhanced.

National planning policy in relation to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets is outlined in Part 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). This emphasises at section 186 that in consideration of new areas, or the extension of existing areas that care must be taken to ensure that an area does have sufficient special architectural or historic interest to warrant designation, so as not to devalue the concept of conservation

The proposed extended East Bergholt Conservation Area is located within the local government district of Babergh District Council. Local planning policy is set out in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 (November 2023).

Relevant Policies within the Local Plan are:

- SP09 –Enhancement and Management of the Environment
- LP15 - Environmental Protection and Conservation
- LP19 - The Historic Environment
- LP23 - Sustainable Construction and Design
- LP24 - Design and Residential Amenity

In addition to the Local Plan, the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan was adopted on 20 September 2016. It runs up to 2030, and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is currently in the process of reviewing and as necessary updating the plan. In the plan

Chapter 5 relates to Design, Character and Heritage. Policy EB9 relates to housing and Non-Residential Design; Policy EB10 covers the preservation of Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

Two 'projects' were also identified: Project EB7 relates to updating the village Local List, and of great significance to this document Project EB8 relates to a Review of the Conservation Area. The full text of Project EB8 reads:

In 2021 the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan Group, on behalf of the Parish Council, prepared a proposal for extending the conservation area. This was informed by an 'Historic Landscape Study of East Bergholt and the Cultural Legacy of John Constable' (Heritage

"Work with the East Bergholt Society and other relevant statutory authorities to review and, if appropriate, extend or modify the boundaries of the East Bergholt Conservation Area (Map 18) ensuring the identified views and open spaces are protected" (EB Neighbourhood Plan, 2016)

Collective, now HCUK Group, March 2021) which was prepared with the intention to become an important aspect of the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base.

This document is the result of further work to build upon the initial consideration of reviewing the conservation area boundaries, and extending the areas included within the designated area and as described above at paragraphs 1.9-1.14.

What does designation mean

Conservation Area designation undertaken by a local authority aims to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of an area which is of special architectural or historic interest. Therefore, changes within the Conservation Area may require planning permission from the Local Planning Authority. As certain permitted development rights are curtailed, demolition or substantial demolition of a building will require planning permission. Within the sphere of the natural environment within a conservation area planned work to a tree also requires notification to the Local Planning Authority. Sometimes there are further restrictions imposed through Article 4 directions, which remove certain permitted development rights.

1.4 Using this Document

This Conservation Area Appraisal is formed of three chapters following this introduction in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 contains summary information to assist in understanding the general characteristics of the conservation area in terms of its history, its spaces and spatial character, its built architectural character and the setting of the conservation area. Important views are considered at the last section of this chapter and summarises the work of John Constable as it relates to the conservation area.

Chapter 3 presents more detail about four individually defined sub-character areas into which the conservation area is divided. Each of these areas are defined to pick up on specific attributes which set them apart as discernible individually within the wider conservation area. Within each sub-character area the discussion follows a set series of subheadings:

- Summary of special interest
- Key historic points
- Street and plot patterns
- Boundaries and boundary treatments
- Building types and uses
- Building scale and massing
- Materials and details
- Public Realm, open spaces and greenery
- An audit of heritage assets
- Issues and opportunities specific to that area

As with the summary in Section 2, these character area points are not intended to be comprehensive descriptions of each building in the area, but to pick up and highlight the distinct aspects of the area as a signpost to occupants and applicants who may make proposals within the area, as well as decision makers who will assess such proposals.

Chapter 4 is the final section and presents the issues and opportunities identified within the conservation area. It describes and locates areas of poorer quality and summarises issues from use, activity or other factors that may pose a risk to the special character of the area. Opportunities to improve and better reveal the special character and appearance of the conservation area follow naturally from the 'issues'. This document cannot mandate any such changes but this chapter seeks to identify where if the opportunity arises through applications or through coordinated proposals from the Parish, improvements might be made. This section will be augmented in due course with the production of a Conservation Management Plan to provide the Council with additional tools to maximise such opportunities in future decision making.

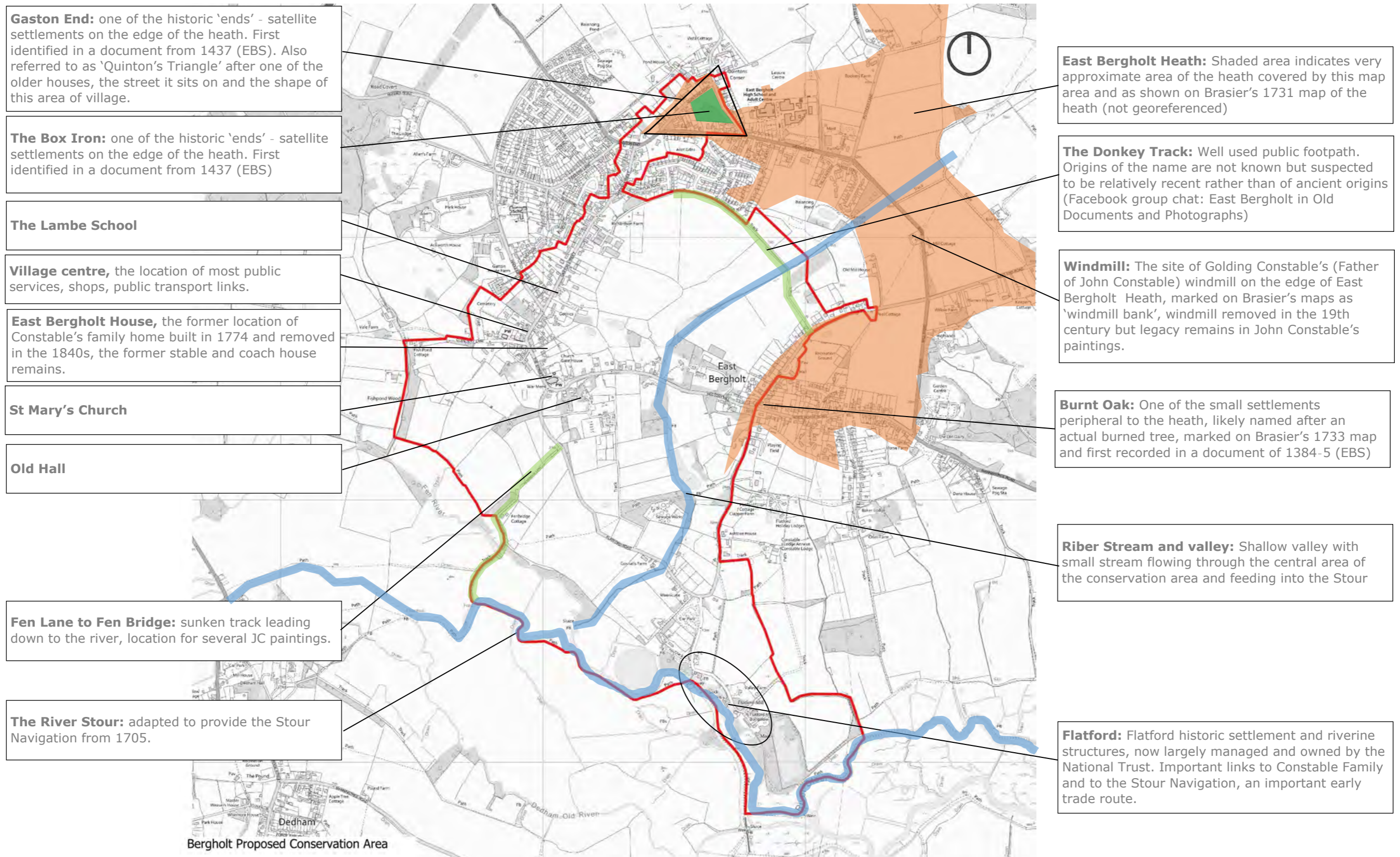
A series of Appendices are included presenting information relevant to the whole document for ease of reference.

- Appendix 1 includes the historic maps for the area illustrating the evolution of the area over time.
- Appendix 2 contains a table of the designated Heritage assets within the conservation area are listed, including their list entry number and list description text
- Appendix 3 includes a list of the main and best known paintings by John Constable within East Bergholt, including where they are held today, with a map illustrating the broad sweep of locations from which he painted. It is noted that this does not include reference to all of the works completed in this area, only the best known and most renowned. For a fuller summary readers are directed to the East Bergholt Society Website which includes information on the multiple smaller works, less well known paintings, studies, sketches and drawings.
- Appendix 4 includes the bibliography, references and acknowledgements.

The figure on the next page illustrates a series of place names and features which are referred to frequently within this report. Not every street or building name is given but the location of core features are provided to aid in understanding. The approximate location of East Bergholt Heath is shown overlying a modern OS base layer map and the remnant area which is included within the conservation area known as 'the Box Iron' is shown with its other common references 'Quintons Triangle' and 'Gaston End'. The Riber Stream and main part of the Stour are highlighted. The core pedestrian route known as 'the Donkey Track' is shown as well as the location of some of the main buildings within the village.

1.4 Using this Document

Figure 6: Place names and core areas referred to in this report



2.0

Understanding the Area

2.1 Historic Summary

The following section presents a brief summary of the historic development of East Bergholt. It is not intended to be a comprehensive history, and nor does it present detailed historic information on individual properties, sites or areas. Evidence within the wider setting of the Conservation Area for ancient habitation and early manorial history is referenced.

Archaeology and Ancient History

The Suffolk Historic Environment Record and excavation record shows limited evidence for pre-historic activity within the parish as a whole, not just the suggested conservation area. Flint implements have been discovered close to Flatford but are interpreted as redeposited artefacts through the action of the river. An earthwork just north of Flatford is a possible ringwork monument in association with other ancient boundaries and routes seen in the area north and east of the building group here. A flint scraper was recorded in the gardens of Old Hall and there have been isolated metal detecting finds from the Bronze Age and a single Iron Age coin.

Aerial Photographs provide some evidence for possible earlier field systems and enclosures perhaps evidence of roman activity and enclosure both sides of Hadleigh Road close to the A12, which follows the approximate line of the roman route known as 'The Pye Road' connecting Colchester to a settlement on the site of Baylham House some 30km to the northeast. A possible Roman cemetery was found in 1838 while excavating foundations for Ackworth House (HER: MSF5058) and earthwork banks still legible within the grounds are possibly associated with this cemetery (HER: MSF23170).

Medieval

The place name East Bergholt is Old English in origin: '*est bercholt*' meaning a birch copse or 'wood by a hill'. It is recorded in the Domesday Book the Norman taxation document, as '*Bercolt*' held by Earl Harold Godwin and comprising 13 carucates of land, a population of around 54 householders, 42 villagers, five small holders, one freeman and six slaves. There was a mill, likely the precursor to that at Flatford today, and extensive areas of arable land, woods, and meadows.

The Suffolk Historic Landscape Character project identifies much of this area as 'ancient enclosure' characterised by irregular parcels and fields defined by hedges of often coppiced timbers, and routes crossing them frequently now sunken lanes. The large open fields under strips of 'ridge and furrow' cultivation so widespread in the midlands are not prevalent at all



Figure 7: The Lambe School on Gaston Street

in this area. Much of the enclosure around East Bergholt and the wider Dedham Vale is considered to be medieval in origin. With so much early enclosure of land, population growth during this period led to people constructing new homes and small landholdings on the edge of otherwise common land, the heaths. Where these clustered together they became 'ends', still reflected in today's placenames, within the conservation area Gaston End is first mentioned in 1437, Burnt Oak is recorded as '*brendhok*' in 1384-5 (EBS).

Medieval manorial court rolls record four medieval manorial holdings in East Bergholt Parish. Old Hall was the principal manor – named as early as 1349—and the focus for the village of East Bergholt. Illaries is similarly ancient but there are very few documentary records. its manor house was on the site of Manor Farm, East End. At one time Edward Lambe was Lord of this manor. He founded Lambe school in 1594, still present on Gaston Street, with later additions.

In the mid 12th century two sub manors were created by Henry II: The manor of Spensers had its manor house originally located on the site of a Tudor Cottage, Mission Lane, East End and the Manor of St Johns also known as the Commandery was situated close to the site of White Horse Farm at the bottom of Mill Road, an area known on the old heath as 'Bakers End'. Both of these sites fall outside of today's conservation area boundary

2.1 Historic Summary



Figure 8: The Bell Cage



Figure 9: The Nave and chancel of the Parish Church of St Mary

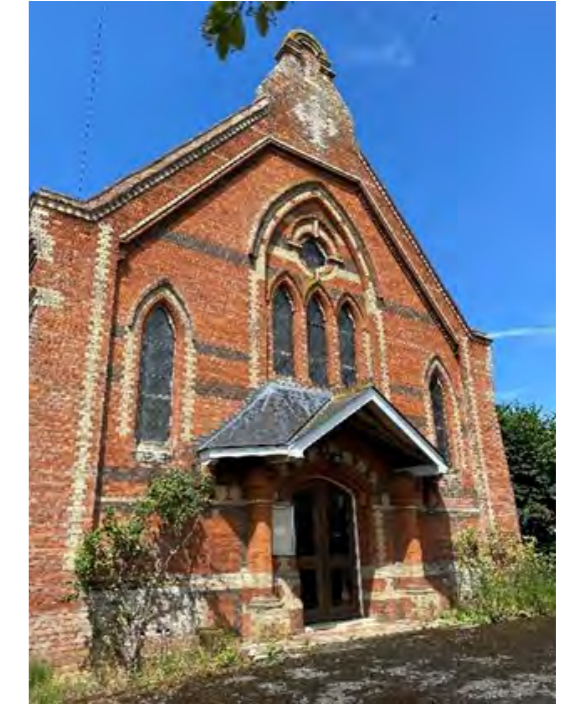


Figure 10: The Congregational Chapel

The earliest phases of St Mary's Church date from the mid 14th century with fabric of this date focussed in the crossing and chancel arch. The exterior is generally late perpendicular in style from the mid to later 15th century. Renowned for its incomplete tower begun in the early 16th century reputedly with money from Cardinal Wolsey which ceased to flow at his death in 1530. Whilst lack of funds is likely the reason the tower was not completed, links to Wolsey are not so firm and it likely reflects general decline in donations and investment from local wealthy individuals. The tower remained incomplete and the bells remain housed in the contemporary bell cage dating to 1531 in the grounds of the church yard.

Early non-conformist religious practice is well known in East Bergholt. In 1644 at the height of the Civil War, the Puritans of the village declared their rector to be 'malignant' and replaced him, eventually leading East Bergholt to have a licence for a 'dissenters' chapel after which a non-conformist and Independent Church was formed in 1672. Though dissenting positions continued to be persecuted for many years so people worshiped in houses and in secret. The current congregational chapel, originally called 'independent meeting house' was constructed in 1856, but almost certainly replaced an earlier building on this site.

The land at Flatford fell into two manors, partly in Old Hall and partly Illaries. As the lowest crossing point on the Stour unaffected by the tides it was almost certainly an important

crossing point throughout history. A mill is recorded there in the Domesday survey of 1086. It appears that there was a small subsidiary 'chapel' located close to Flatford in 1446 (Will of John Gryth, Suffolk Record Office, also HER ref: MSF5066). It presumably served a swelled population during the height of the wool trade and dwindled with it leaving only echoes in field names, archaeology and documentary records. The Parsonage, and associated glebe fields stood at the top of Flatford Mill Lane, just north of Flatford until the 'New rectory' (now Old Rectory) was constructed on Rectory Hill in 1714. The moated site at Gibbonsgate Farm (HER ref: MSF5050) is indicative of a high status dwelling further contributing to debate over whether in the medieval period Flatford may have been a much more considerable settlement through the 12th and 13th centuries. By the 15th century however there were for certain two high status wealthy farmsteads at Flatford, Valley Farm and Gibbons or Gibbonsgate Farm where early fabric within Willy Lott's House may represent a move away from the earlier moated site.

Post Medieval

East Bergholt was fundamentally a farming and agricultural village but, as with many other settlements from the medieval period on through to the middle of the 16th century East Bergholt generated considerable wealth from the wool and woollen cloth industry. The

2.1 Historic Summary

industry was a cottage industry with spinners and weavers working from home, and field names recorded on later maps referencing the industry and aspects such as drying or dying. English wool and woollen cloth was highly prized and Suffolk was the centre of the industry by the end of the 15th century with more wool worked here than in any other county. It is probable that East Bergholt Mill may have been converted to contribute to this industry, at least in part, though by the time that it was bought by the Constable family it was again a corn mill.

The river provided power for fulling (water driven process to clean and thicken and felt) as well as transport links. The wealth generated by this industry was poured back into the settlement and the comparatively well preserved 15th and 16th century houses remaining in the village reflect this. This industry began to decline in the later 16th century but slowly, with clothiers, spinsters and clothworkers continuing to be recorded within the village at the end of the 17th century.

18th Century

Though there was longstanding use of the river Stour for trade, and various early attempts to improve it for more intense use, such efforts came to little until in 1705 when Queen Anne passed an Act to allow the merchants of Sudbury to improve the river, build locks, bridges, weirs and wharves to enable consistent passage of trade along the river using the Stour Lighters. The navigation's peak period of prosperity and activity was between 1770-

1848, a period when John Constable's paintings capture many aspects of the Navigation's every day working life.

The one element which was never established, even after later Acts enabled other improvements, was a consistent tow path. This meant that there was a constant process of negotiation with landowners along the length of the Navigation. The horses used to pull the barges frequently had to cross the river, sometimes on bridges, but sometimes by stepping on to the barges themselves, and by jumping fences or hedges demarcating land ownership. The feats of gang runners and the towing horses to navigate this restriction lead to some of the most renowned of Constable's works a century later (see following page): 'The White Horse' (horse being ferried across the river in a barge), 'The Leaping Horse' (jumping over one of the riverside fences or hedges), 'Flatford Mill, scene on a navigable river' (horses being unhitched from the barges to navigate the bridge).

In 1731-3 William Brasier was commissioned by the then Lord of the Old Hall Manor, Henry Hankey to survey the first large-scale maps of the Parish showing field names and landowners (see figure 18). As well as field names and landowners it identifies manorial copyholds, key buildings, boundaries, paths and stiles, and natural landscapes trees hedges, ponds many of which can still be traced and identified today. The Brasier Map captures the ongoing importance of the Stour Navigation established some 20 years earlier and shows at least three pairs of classic Stour Lighter gangs—pairs of tethered boats pulled by a horse along the banks.

The map offers a unique insight into this early landscape within and around the conservation area enabling contemporary understanding of the time depth of this place. In contrast to many areas elsewhere in the country it shows a lack of common fields, and the early

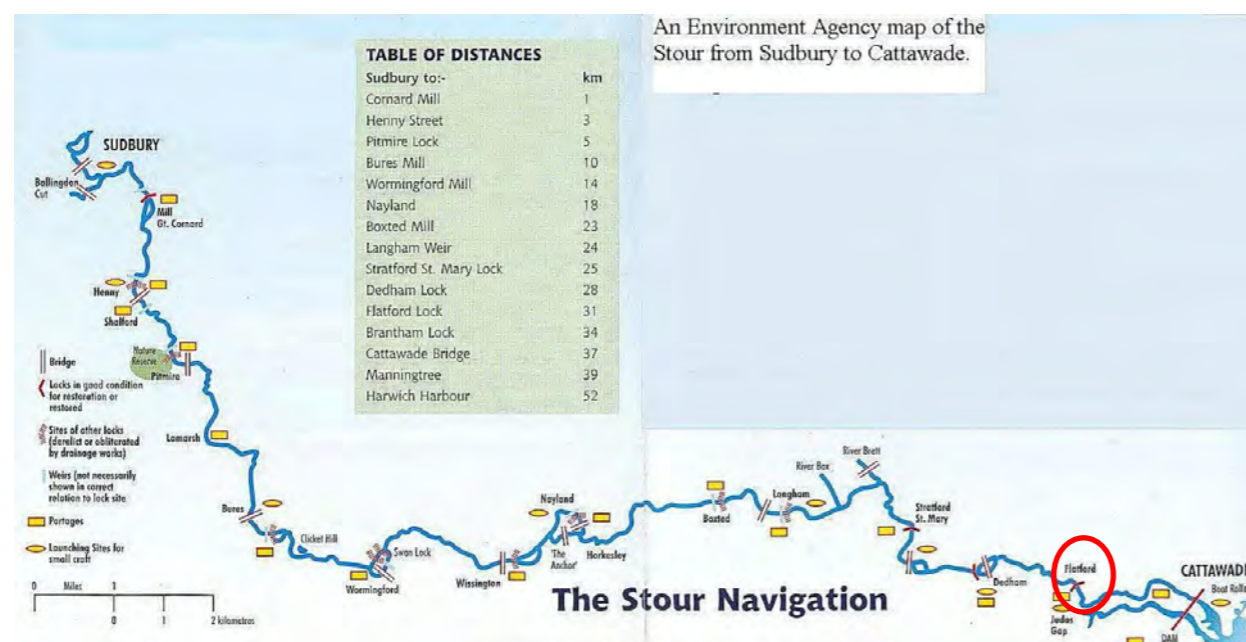


Figure 11: The Stour Navigation, Flatford circled (<https://www.flatfordandconstable.org.uk/history-of-the-stour/the-navigation-1705-1914/>)

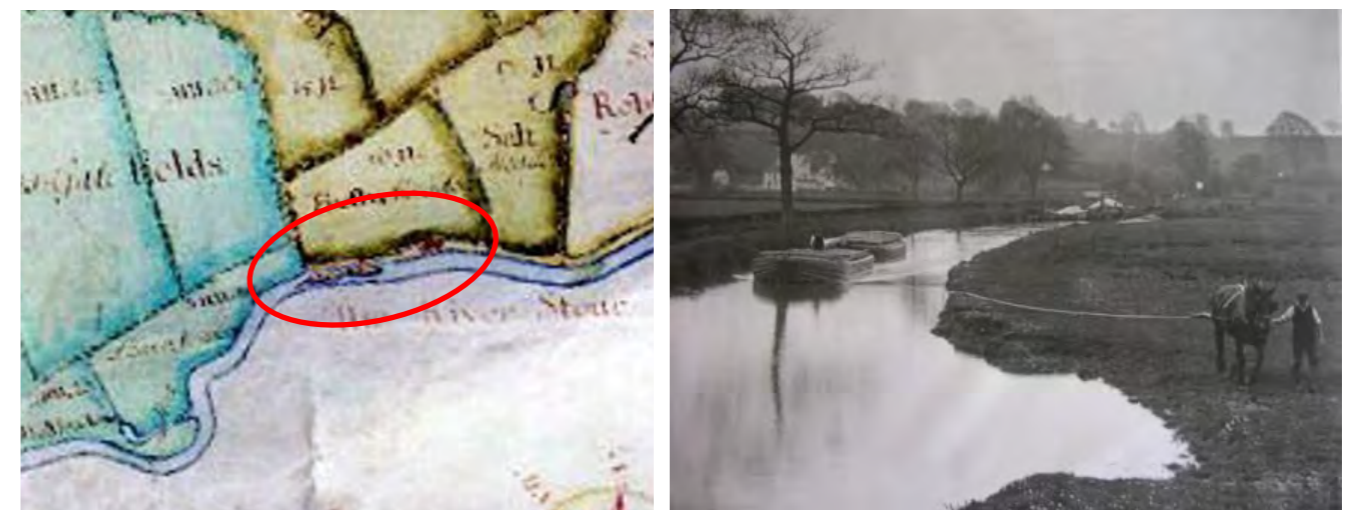


Figure 12-13: Extract from Brasier's map of 1733 showing a tiny pair of Stour Lighters pulled by a horse slightly ahead on the north bank south east of Flatford, at least three such gangs are shown on the Brasier Map. On the right an image of a gang in work in the 19th century (River Stour Trust)

2.1 Historic Summary

Constable paintings depicting the life of a Stour Lighter horse



Figure 14: 'The Leaping Horse', 1825 (Royal Academy) Stour barge hose leaping a riverside impediment



Figure 15: 'The White Horse', 1819 (The Frick Gallery) one of the renowned 'six footers' showing a horse being ferried across the river in one of the barges



Figures 16-17: 'Flatford Mill; scene on a navigable river', 1816-17, (Tate) and below, the view along this tow path today, from this position, Horses were unhitched to allow the barges to traverse bridges.



2.1 Historic Summary

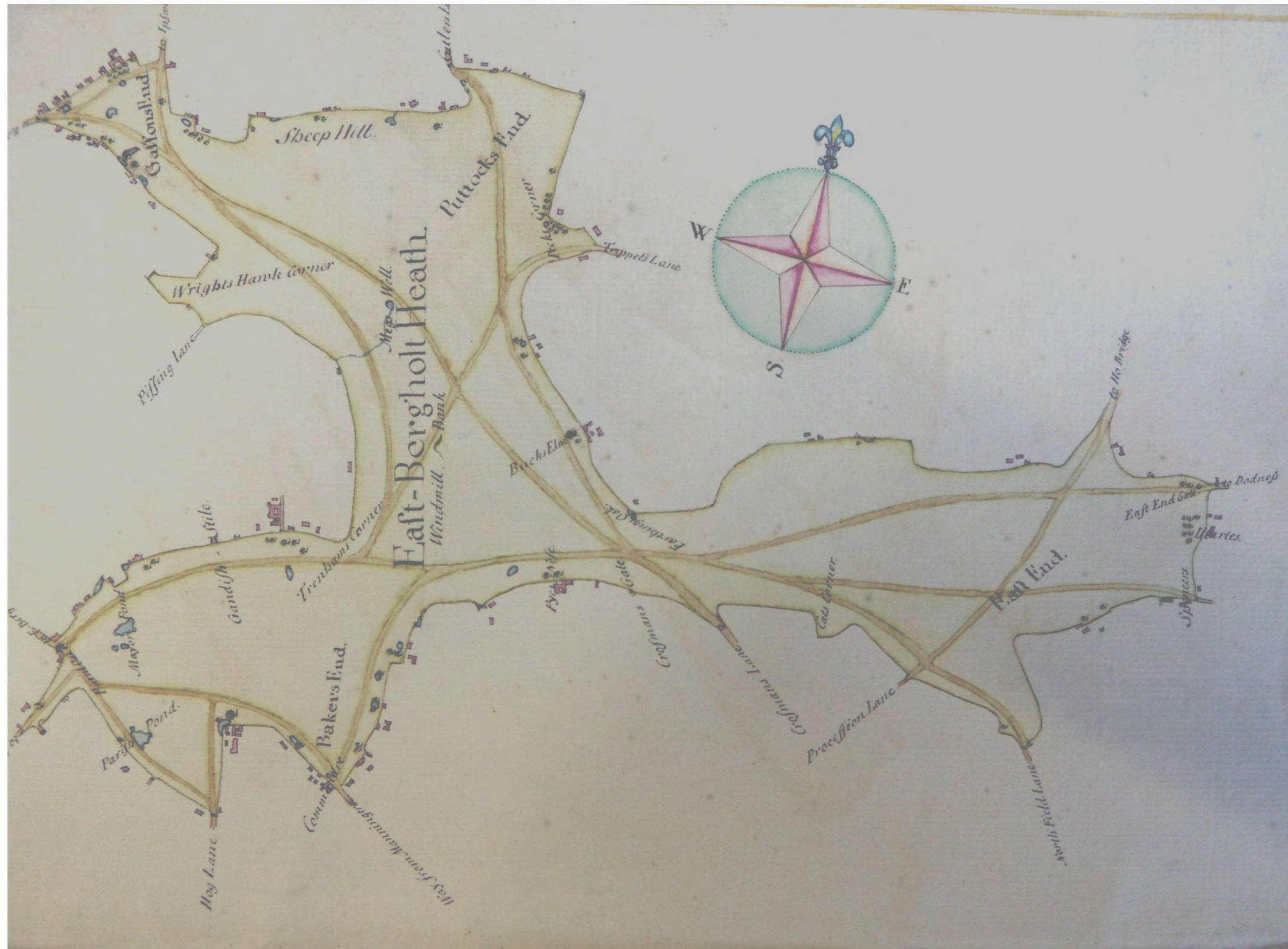
Figure 18: 1733 William Brasier 1731 Map "Shewing of What Mannor and Holding every Particular Field & in this Survey Holds of, Also, Whose is the Boundary Fence of each Proprietor" . A slightly larger than life reproduction of this map is now mounted on the wall of Constable Hall.

(Reproduced with the permission of the East Bergholt Parochial Church Council)



2.1 Historic Summary

Figure 19: 1733 William Brasier Map "East Bergholt Heath" rotated to present north to the top. (Reproduced with the permission of the East Bergholt Parochial Church Council)



2.1 Historic Summary



Figure 20-21: (left) extract from the 1731 Brasier Map showing formal avenues south of Old Hall but functional field names to the east, 'old hop yard', 'wheat field', (below) 1886 six inches to one mile map illustrating parkland extended to the east.



patterns of enclosure into small irregular parcels of land which are so distinctive in this part of Suffolk. The open heaths which allowed for common grazing areas and areas from which to gather fuel are also shown and a separate map was compiled of East Bergholt Heath itself in 1733. The heath is criss-crossed by tracks and ribbons and clusters of settlement are shown on the perimeter of the common land which as shown covers c.140 hectares. The north western corner of the heath falls within today's conservation area with its early satellite settlement 'Gaston's End'.

New high status mansions were built in the early 18th century on the site of the old manor house at Old Hall for Joseph Chaplin, and West Lodge (now Stour House), both near to the church.

What is now the Old Rectory was constructed in 1714 by the then rector Edward Alston, previously the parsonage had been located towards the lower section of Flatford Lane, marked as 'Old Parsonage' on Brasier's map.

Towards the end of the 18th century, 1782, the rectory was appointed to the Rev Dr Durand Rhudde. He was grandfather to Maria Bicknell (see inset box on p.23), eventual wife to John Constable though their courtship and marriage was long resisted by Rhudde who threatened to disinherit the Bicknell family members if they did not put a stop to any engagement or association. The quantity of paintings and sketches of the Old Rectory, and views across the fields between the Constable family home and the Donkey Track to the Old Rectory gain poignancy when considering the long courtship and thwarted romance between the two divided by this stretch of land.

Flatford Mill at this time featured four dry docks and two principal farms, Valley Farm and Gibbonsgate Farm, Willy Lott's Cottage being the farmhouse. In 1742 the merchant Abram Constable purchased the wharfs, basin and docks, Flatford Mill, a kiln for drying grain and a granary. In 1765 Abram left the mill and dock facilities to his nephew, Golding Constable – John Constable's father – and it remained in the Constable family until 1846.

John Constable was born at East Bergholt House in 1776, his father Golding Constable had recently built the mansion reflecting the growth of his wealth based on the land, milling and commerce. The extent of his considerable wealth and influence is summarised as follows:

"He had inherited Flatford Mill and the flour milling business in 1764 from his uncle Abram Constable (who died childless); he operated Dedham Mill (which he initially co-owned with solicitor Peter Firman before buying him out); he owned the windmill at East Bergholt to the north east of the settlement on the heath; he held 93 acres of agricultural land in East Bergholt which he farmed; and he owned two sail driven Thames vessels (called sloops) operating from Mistley to London. From 1780 he was one of the commissioners of the Stour Navigation" (<https://www.flatfordandconstable.org.uk/>)

2.1 Historic Summary

19th Century

John Constable's small studio (today known as Moss Cottage on Cemetery Lane), was bought by his father in 1802. Though Golding had tried to persuade his second son to continue in the family business eventually he conceded that he could pursue a career as an artist. In 1799 John Constable was accepted at the Royal Academy Schools.

The manorial seat Old Hall was purchased by Peter Godfrey in 1811 and he proceeded to create Old Hall Park, clearing the former fields, hop yards and orchards between Rectory Lane and Flatford Lane extending parkland character. Formal avenues shown on the Brasier Map are not shown on subsequent maps reflecting a shift to more naturalised landscape style. Godfrey befriended Constable and his family, commissioning him to paint the hall. Several of Constable's works include the hall or views from and within its parkland.

East Bergholt Common was enclosed in 1817. Larger landowners rationalised their landholdings and straightened roads around the former common, this pattern is evident on the north and eastern edge of the conservation area in Gandish Road, Heath Road and Mill Road all of which were formalised versions of tracks once crossing the heath. The pattern of other enclosures or land acquisition in the parish was irregular as so much of the parish was already enclosed, as reflected in the Brasier Map (Figure 18). The previous common land was subdivided and put under agricultural use. The village green in front of the former West Lodge (now Stour House) was walled off giving greater privacy to the front façade of Stour House, and leaving only a small fragment of the former village green. Other larger houses were added to the north west of the village, Gatton House in c.1825 and Ackworth House in c.1840 and these houses relatively substantial parcels of land now form important areas of the conservation area's setting.



Figure 22: (Historic railings set into a low brick wall, one of the few remaining elements of the Constable family home



Figure 23: (left) a young John Constable painted in 1796 by David Gardener (V+A) and a detail of a painting of his future Bride, Maria Bicknell painted by Constable in 1816 (Tate)

"To Miss Bicknell,

... This charming season, as you will guess, occupies me entirely in the fields ... I can hardly tell you what I feel at the sight, from the window at which I am writing, of the fields we have so often walked. A calm autumnal setting sun is glowing on the gardens of the rectory, and on those fields where some of the happiest hours of my life have been passed."

(John Constable, East Bergholt, September 18th 1814)



Figure 24: Maria Bicknell and two of her children' c.1820

2.1 Historic Summary

John Constable and Maria Bicknell eventually married in 1816, adding to Constable's own growing successful career as a painter. Their marriage was just after John Constable's father had died in 1815 leaving John in a far more sound financial position and meant they could marry irrespective of her grandfather's ongoing objection. Despite the strenuous early objections her grandfather Rev. Rhudde eventually accepted their marriage and left her a considerable bequest of Government bonds in his will. They remained happily married for twelve years, Maria bearing seven children before dying in 1828 of tuberculosis.

Golding Constable's estate was divided between the four children and provided ongoing income to them over the subsequent years. John's younger brother Abram took over the family business to secure that income, but the family home in the centre of East Bergholt was sold to a family friend, Walter Clerk. He pulled it down a short while afterwards finding it in poor condition. After their father's death John purchased land with his 'favourite' sister Mary, though she managed and ran the land, paying him a rent as additional income (<https://www.flatfordandconstable.org.uk/the-constable-family/sisters-ann-martha-mary/>). John Constable lived through his later years in London, and died in 1837. He is buried in Hampstead.

Maria Bicknell was born into a wealthy family. Her father Charles Bicknell was a London lawyer, solicitor to the Prince Regent and the admiralty. He fathered seven children by two wives – Maria's mother was his second wife. Maria was due to inherit a substantial sum of money from her grandfather, Rev Dr Durand Rhudde – the father of Charles' second wife.

Rev Dr Durand Rhudde was Maria's wealthy grandfather who had been a *Chaplain-in-Ordinary to George III, but who had then become rector of East Bergholt Church. He had inherited all his money from his sister who married a rich man, died childless and left everything to him and his daughter (Maria's mother).

Maria met John Constable while visiting her grandfather, the Rev Dr Durand Rhudde in East Bergholt when she was twelve and John Constable was in his early twenties. When Maria was in her twenties, the pair met again, fell in love and wanted to marry but were thwarted by Maria's grandfather, who threatened to disinherit Maria if she went ahead and married John.

At the time (1809) John Constable was a struggling artist, living on only £100 a year (an allowance from his parents) plus a little money earned from selling portraits. This was not enough money to support himself, never mind a wife and children. John and Maria married on October 2nd, 1816, after a seven-year courtship.



Figure 25: Extract from the 1817 Enclosure Map with detail of the village centre at the bottom. The Old enclosures are also shown with their land owners. (East Bergholt Parish Council)

2.1 Historic Summary

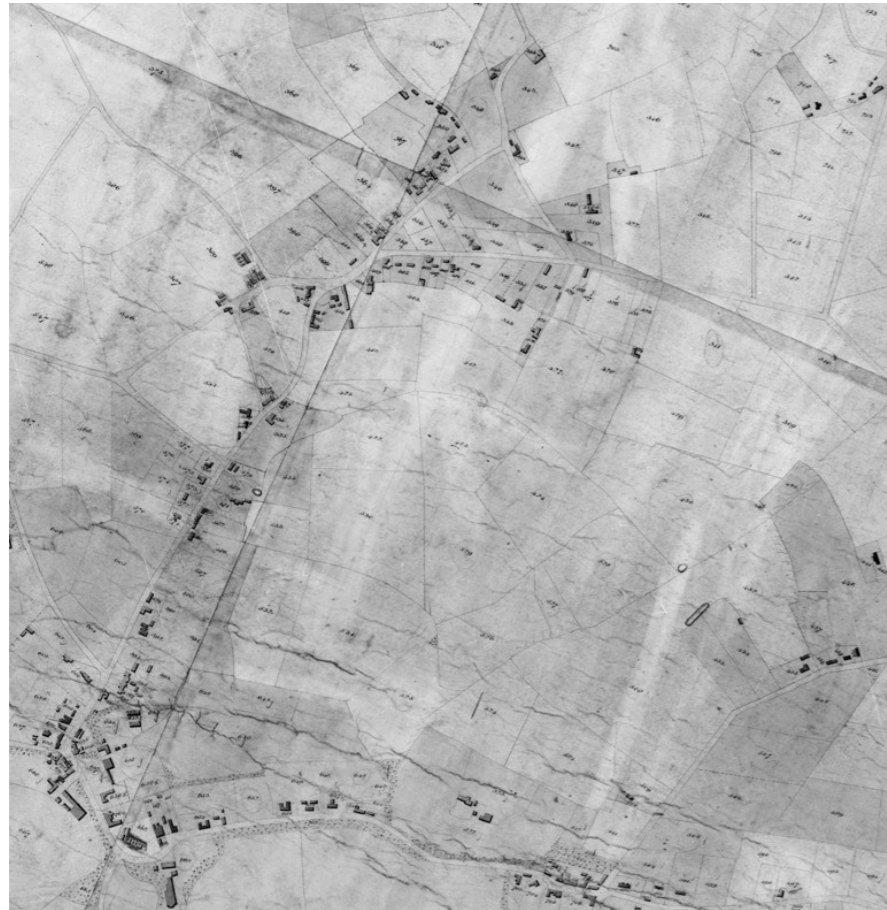


Figure 26: 1837 Tithe Map, some 20 years after enclosure of the common heath in 1817, new buildings are focussed on the former heath to the north and east.

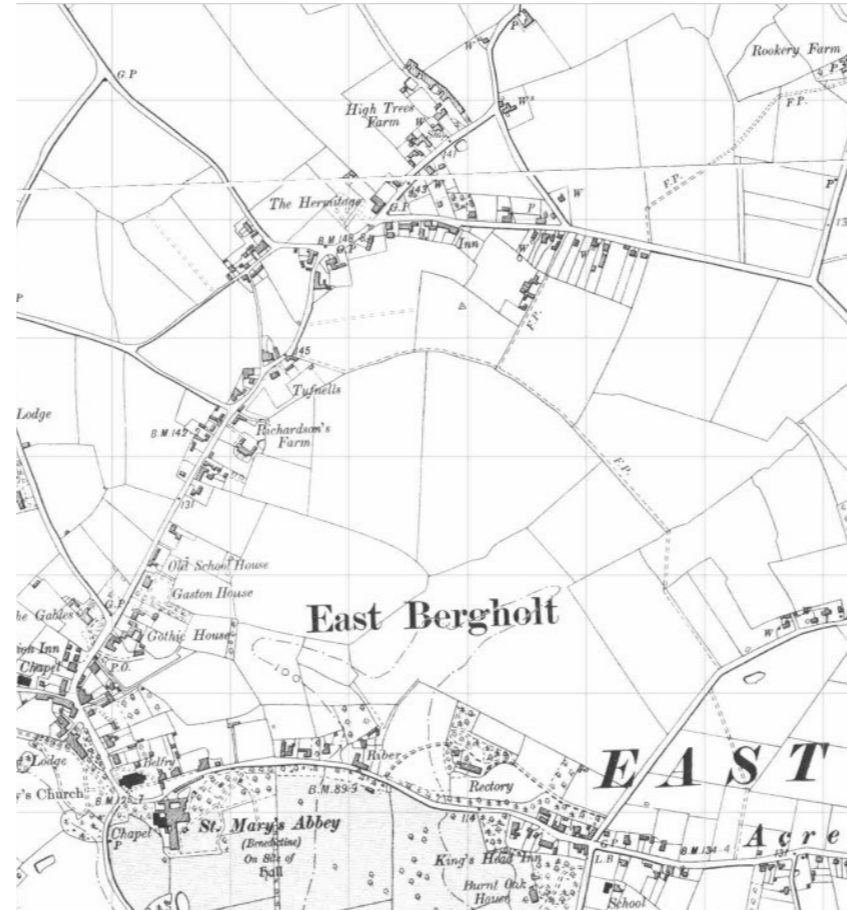


Figure 27: 1905 1:10560 Ordnance Survey extract illustrating the comparatively steady situation, with little overt intensification over the latter 19th century.

Stylistically, buildings in the village centre and Gaston Street were probably added, but they are as isolated buildings rather than major programmes of housebuilding.

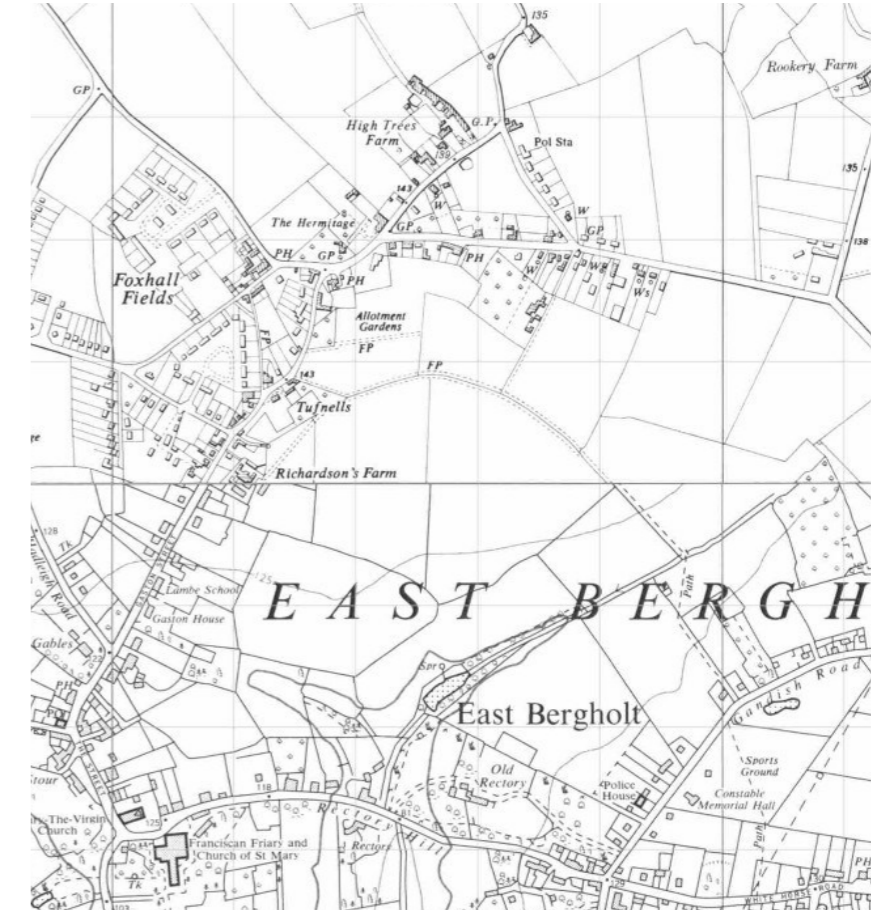


Figure 28: 1966-67 1: 10560 OS extract showing a far more considerable phase of housebuilding in the post war period, houses laid out further at Gaston End, along Gandish Road and in larger planned developments to the north west of Gaston Street as well as with isolated houses in the village centre.

2.1 Historic Summary

More widely during this period dairy and cereal farming started to replace sheep farming. The windmill on East Bergholt Common continues to be shown on maps through to the end of the 19th century though it is generally thought that its use declined before this. The river trade at Flatford and along the Stour Navigation also began a relatively rapid decline in the second half of the 19th century after the arrival of the railway in the area in 1849. Though various efforts were made to keep the Navigation competitive the greater labour required to run goods by lighter saw its eventual demise. The first financial loss was recorded in 1892



Figure 29-30: The restored dry dock at Flatford, summer 2025 with Constable's 1815 work 'Boat building at Flatford Mill' (V+A)



Figure 31: 1945 aerial photograph with the village centre and Hadleigh Road to the bottom and Quintons Triangle to the top right. New housing being constructed west of Gaston Street

and although there remained a good degree of agricultural traffic leading to toll revenue, maintenance and labour costs continued to rise. In 1914 the commissioners agreed to voluntary liquidation. Though the lower stretches of the Navigation continued to run barges up as far as Dedham until 1930.

In the 1851 census only 16 houses are recorded between Tuffnalls at the north end of Gaston Street and 'Gothics', the majority being near Richardson's Farm. There was little change in the overarching settlement pattern and density between 1817 and 1837. Through additional land became available after enclosure, new housebuilding was relatively slow as charted on the historic maps on the following page (and in Appendix 1) clusters appear at

"This is Constable's picture of 'Cottage in the Cornfield' which he painted quite near where I live... there were hundreds of cottages like this. ... it provided an almost perfect balance between the necessary comfort, convenience, simplicity, economy and durability that was wanted for a two bedroom cottage. But these cottages were not standardised in the modern sense of the word - they all had individuality: you could recognise a cottage just as easily as you could recognise a face. ... I am sure that what you see in this cottage is the basis of all architecture, which is an art of arrangement and mainly consists in finding a sound and accurate balance between comfort and convenience on the one hand and sound and economical building on the other. " (Erith quoted in Archer, L, 2006)



Figure 32: 'Cottage in a cornfield' 1817(V+A) depicting a cottage at the lower end of Fen Lane, pulled down at the end of the 19th century.

2.1 Historic Summary

20th century to present day

Gaston End and Burnt Oak and from assessment of building character various houses on Gaston Street were replaced or perhaps re-fronted but there does not appear to have been a huge burst of new building over the course of the 19th century.

In 1856 Old Hall was purchased by a group of Benedictine Nuns from Winchester becoming a religious community, they were succeeded later by Franciscan Friars in the first half of the 20th century. From 1973 the Community has been secular, continuing to this day.

The Flatford Mill Estate was bought in 1927 by Thomas Parkington of Ipswich to save it from dereliction and was acquired by the National Trust in 1943. The National Trust have restored the lock gate and bridges in their holdings over the years with the dry dock restored in 1988. The River Stour Trust have restored four of the 13 original locks on the Navigation

From the mid-century housing began to be developed along the western side of Gaston Street between the widely spaced more ancient buildings with further infilling between the late medieval houses on the east side. Along Rectory Hill and Gandish Road the new additions were usually individually designed relatively large domestic properties with

substantial gardens. On Gandish Road is an important collection designed by architect Raymond Erith (1904-1973). Erith was a leading classical architect in the post war period, in noted contrast to the more widespread shift to modernism in this period. The below abbreviated extract shows his own approach to architecture in relation to buildings depicted by Constable:

Erith lived and worked in the Dedham and East Bergholt area from 1936 and developed a close working relationship with the firm W T Wheelers, a firm of builders and joiners who are still located in East Bergholt north of Heath Road/Mill Road. They were responsible for constructing the staircases and doors for No. 10 Downing Street when Erith oversaw its



Figure 33: Google Earth image from 2025 showing new development continues to be built out north of the conservation area (shaded).



Figure 34: View from the Donkey Track towards new housing, in summer of 2025



Figure 35: View into Chaplain's Road, late 20th century housing development east of Gaston Street



Figure 36: the most recent housing development on the northern edge of the village, south of Heath Road and north of The Donkey Track

2.1 Historic Summary of special interest

- 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.
- 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.

2.2

Spatial Character

2.2 Spatial Character

Geology and Topography

The parish spans from the low riverine Stour valley on the south west up the undulating valley side that runs north west to south east across the centre of the parish, with the village on the upper slope where it transitions into a plateau at approximately 40m above sea level occupying the north eastern part of the parish. The plateau extends beyond the parish boundary towards Holton St. Mary to the north west and Brantham to the south east. The very north eastern edge of the parish drops again towards the Capel brook and the adjacent parish of Capel St. Mary.

The major solid geology of the parish is chalky boulder clay on the plateau. Superficial geology shows underlying Lowestoft Formations comprising sand and gravel with alluvium in the Stour River valley. The upper soils on the plateau and valley sides are loamy and deep, ideal for arable farming.

Current Uses and Functions

The primary use of the majority of buildings within the village is residential. Commercial uses are focussed within the village centre: shops (as of summer 2025 the Co-op in the village centre had closed and relocated to a new building on Heath Road), public house, chemists, cafes, smaller businesses. There is also a good sized public car park and bus stops. Two further public houses are located at Gaston End (The Carriers Arms and The Hare



Figure 37: The village centre, spring 2025



Figure 38: Museum displays on rural life in Bridge Cottage, Flatford, NT

and Hounds with a former public house at Burnt Oak now a private house, café and shop. An autorepair and MOT garage falls just outside the conservation area at Gaston End.

A cluster of businesses is also found just outside the conservation area on Hadleigh Road at The Gattinets, a small industrial estate on former farm site. The group of buildings is well screened and aside from signage at the entry very tucked away and inconspicuous.

Religious buildings are focused close to the centre with the substantial Parish Church of St Mary. A Congregational chapel, constructed in the late 1850s, is on Cemetery Lane, not actively in use at present. Further commemorative and communal areas are located in the centre as well with the War Memorial opposite St Mary's Church at the end of Flatford Lane, and the cemetery just west of the village centre.

Secular communal buildings are found at the Constable Memorial Hall on the east side of Gandish Road, with large playing fields, a children's playground and public open air gym area and other club houses are associated. There is good parking here to facilitate regular use. Though the historic Lambe School is located on Gaston Street, the current primary and secondary schools are just outside the conservation area boundary on Hadleigh Road and east of Quintons Triangle.

2.2 Spatial Character

Flatford Mill is run by the National Trust and is the most overt 'visitor attraction' within the area with a substantial car park, café, and small museum with interpretation boards dedicated to Constable's life and work. Various bed and breakfasts, Airbnb properties and other accommodation options are available within the village and surrounding area. The National Trust also let several of the buildings at Flatford to the Field Studies Council, an environmental educational charity.

The Stour Valley Path and St Edmund Way are national walking routes along the river valley, both of which skirt the southern edge of the conservation area. The substantial car park, and public toilets within the village centre also provide important visitor access to the facilities here.

Routes and Street Patterns

The A12 is the nearest major road, following the former Roman Route to Ipswich. The noise of the A12 is occasionally apparent within the village. Hughes Road leading to Hadleigh Roads, Heath Road which continues on to Gaston Street, the Street, Rectory Hill and Gandish Road are all two lane routes which provide the main vehicular routes through the conservation area.

Flatford Lane is a small single width lane which loops from Burnt Oak down towards Flatford and back up towards the Church. Cemetery Lane, Fen Lane and Flatford Mill Lane are dead end routes leading either out from the village towards the valley and from Flatford Lane down the slopes to the south and south west of the village. At least some of these lanes leading out of the village towards the river are likely to have ancient origins reflected in their mature hedges and sunken character with high earth banks for stretches. The character of these sunken ways is recognised in wider landscape studies as an important characteristic of areas of 'ancient enclosure' (before the 18th century) prevalent in this part of Southern Suffolk (Suffolk Historic Landscape Character Appraisal and HCUK 2023).

Most of the main roads through the village have pedestrian paths on at least one side for the majority of their length. An exception is the northern end of Gaston Street which, though still frequently used by traffic, has no pedestrian walkway for its last c.150m

Beyond the road network pedestrians are well served by a system of footpaths, leading out and through the village, as well as routes maintained and established within the National Trust Land at Flatford and in the valley. The Donkey Track is particularly well used running between Gandish Road and the new housing east of Gaston Street—the origins of its name are not known but appear likely to be modern rather than ancient. The quieter Flatford Lane and Cemetery Lane are also heavily used by pedestrians along with vehicles, connecting

through to the rural surroundings and footpath networks. Two National Walking Routes run briefly through the area along the river and at Flatford, the Stour Valley Path and St Edmund Way.



Figure 39-40: Sunken tracks leading from Flatford Lane downwards towards the river, above - Flatford Mill Lane; below—Fen Lane



2.2 Spatial Character

Pedestrians move through the conservation area on relatively standard tarmacadam pavements, in the town centre small square paving slabs are used with areas of brick as contrast. Curbs are a mixture of concrete with some stretches of smaller granite sets. No historic paving finishes or road surfaces are present. On roads and lanes without pavements, the road edge is informal with grassy verges where buildings do not rise from the street direct.

Public Realm and Street Furniture

In general, street furniture (bins, signage etc) are standardised and unremarkable. Public toilets are available within the village's car park off The Street. This car park is pleasant with many trees and green surroundings to a good quantity of spaces. A period style lamp post is located close to the WCs. The public houses feature signage advertising their presence.

Utility furniture and security fencing is also entirely utilitarian. Recent work at the head of Fen Lane has seen the rather blunt insertion of a gas or water marker, the standard lap timber fencing around electricity sub stations at Quinton Triangle and adjacent to the War



Figures 42-43: Utilities markers, fencing and furniture, entirely unremarkable features within the street scape.



Figure 41: The small remains of the former village green, curtailed in 1817 when Stour House (off to the left) enclosed the space.



Figure 44: public realm in village centre, standard black bins, a bench and K6 phone box, square concrete paving.

2.2 Spatial Character

Memorial are distinctly unremarkable, and at the War Memorial used as ad hoc advertising space by local groups.

A K6 telephone box, now housing a community defibrillator, stands in the centre, between the village shop and the Red Lion public house.

There are some signs which highlight and commemorate two connections to John Constable. The first is a plaque on the railings of his family's former home, East Bergholt house, the second is on Moss Cottage, John Constable's studio purchased in the early 19th century.

Adjacent to Stour House on what remains of one of the former village Green the village Sign depicts the Bell House and was crafted by a local blacksmith.

Open Spaces

There are no public 'parks' as such within the conservation area, and little open space freely available to public access beyond the playing fields and sports pitches off Gandish Road. The Neighbourhood Plan does identify important 'green spaces' though including cemeteries, allotments, the Box Iron, school playgrounds and the playing fields. The network of public footpaths gives good public access to the surrounding countryside alongside permitted access to the land at Flatford and on the valley sides provided by the National Trust.

Commemorative spaces (see next page) include the cemetery and church yard around the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin. The church yard has well maintained paths and several benches to encourage dwelling within this pleasant space. The Constable family tombs are located in the corner of the space, somewhat tucked away and not overtly obvious. The bell chamber features an information board giving a history of its use and creation. An information board provides historic information about the Bell Cage, an important and unique historic feature in the village. John Constable's parents are buried here in the northern corner of the graveyard. The cemetery is accessed both by paths from the town centre car park and from Cemetery Lane. It is a quiet green pleasant space and its red brick boundary wall and mature yew trees are attractive features in Cemetery Lane. The War Memorial is located on a small grassy triangle at the entry to Flatford Lane opposite the Church of St Mary the Virgin.

Private gardens, whilst not fully visible, and of course not publicly accessible nonetheless make a contribution to character particularly where greenery and various mature trees are perceived throughout the area, softening the built forms. On streets with prevalence of front gardens, they create a distinct sense of openness, even where houses are relatively closely spaced (Gaston Street). Where trees are visible between and behind buildings they add to a

sense of rural surroundings hinting and indicating the linear nature of development along street lines, rather than at depth. This is particularly true on the western side of Gaston Street where the substantial gardens and mature planting to the rear limits the degree to which the later 20th century housing sitting behind the houses here being perceived. Generally gardens are well tended and in good condition. A mix of walls, railings, and fences provide enclosure but the variety, and frequent use of hedges, secures a sense of greenness.



Figure 45: the lush 'tree tunnel' on Hadleigh Road, entering the conservation area.



Figure 46: Looking south along Gaston Street where gardens and set back building lines so that front gardens contribute to a sense of greenery even in one of the more closely developed areas of the village.

2.2 Spatial Character



Figure 47: A place to dwell in St Mary's Church Yard and below,
Figure 48: The Constable family tomb stones.



Figure 49: The War memorial at the head of Flatford Lane



Figure 50: Looking into the cemetery from Cemetery Lane.

2.2 Spatial Character

A similar sense of lush greenness is provided by mature trees which line several of the entrances into the Conservation Area core, and contribute pleasing contrast to the various areas within the conservation area. This is particularly true at Hadleigh Road and on Gandish Road adjacent to the memorial hall and playing fields.

Inside the area the verdant wooded character of Rectory Hill is notable, as is the central stretch of Gaston Street, north of Richardson's Farm. Constable's favourite tree was the Black Poplar, currently seeing something of a revival in the area after a period of decline.

While there are no formally designated registered parks within the area, Old Hall had a parkland set out after 1817, and the Brasier map indicates that previously there were formal avenues extending in a radial pattern south of the hall. With large areas of grassland and

Park and Woodland

mature specimen trees still visible within the surroundings of the building, there remains a sense of parkland. Estate railings around land at Old Hall perpetuate this sense.

There are no extensive areas of woodland within the conservation area, and no areas of identified ancient woodland but trees are frequent in the area and important elements of



Figure 51: 'Parkland' shaded grey at Old Hall and to the north around Ackworth house on the later 19th century Ordnance Survey Map .



Figure 52: View into the parkland south of Rectory Hill looking towards Old Hall/St Mary's Abbey. Specimen trees, grazing stock, pasture all retain a sense of arcadian English parkland.



Figure 53: Woodland to the south east of Old Hall, close to and screening the sewage treatment plant in this area.

2.2 Spatial Character

character. There is a reasonably large area of coppiced woodland outside the conservation area at Lodge Plantation and Foxhall coverts north of The Lodge and Allens Farm but within the conservation area trees are predominantly features of hedgerows and gardens.

Smaller areas of woodland surround the sewage works within the former parkland of Old Hall and in the millennium woods planted some 25 years ago east of the Donkey Track. Within the village centre mature trees in larger gardens add distinct arboreal interest those along Rectory Hill give this an almost wooded feel. As described above the frequent trees in gardens along Rectory Hill, the Street and Gaston Street mean that the village buildings are sometimes barely perceived. Contrast between ornamental mature conifers and native deciduous species add to visual contrast and provide visual clues to the contrast between boundary trees and planted specimens within the larger properties..



Figure 54: Elm Trees in Old Hall Park, John Constable 1817, pencil with washes (V&A Museum)

The river banks also feature frequent trees, particularly willows providing distinct contrast to the more deciduous hedgerows on the higher ground. Trees within the hedgerow boundaries are also frequent and contribute to a sense of continuity with the rural scenes painted by Constable, though the ravages of Dutch Elm disease in the later 20th century have removed one species studied by Constable in exceptional detail, though interestingly the subject of the below drawing actually blew down in storms only a few years later.

Despite the absence of extensive woodland the conservation area and its setting has a very verdant character where trees and arboreal cover are important to the quality and appearance of the conservation area.



Figure 55-56: (Top) 'Dedham Vale Morning' 1811 (Private Collection) trees both distant and close framing and giving scale in the landscape and (below) the view over Dedham Vale from Flatford Lane in 2025, shaded vantage point over the valley

2.2 Spatial Character

Rural Landscape

Agricultural uses are apparent in the rural nature of much of the surrounding fields and landscape both within the conservation area and forming its setting. There is pasture and arable crops in evidence. There remain several active farms within the area, including close in to the village at Richardson’s Farm on Gaston Street, and Mill and Willow farm on Gandish Road. Allens Farm, Vale Farm, Gosnall's Farm and Clapper Farm all fall within the setting of the conservation area and are clearly distinct from the village core. Mill and Willow Farms was similarly distinct on the edge of the heath until 20th century expansion along Gandish Road.

The conservation area spans three areas of Landscape Character as defined by the Suffolk Landscape Character Project, they are described as follows:

*"The **plateau farmlands** lie on elevated land between the two valleys of the Stour to the south and Stamford to the north and north east. The enclosed heath and commons and regular landscape pattern associated with 19th century enclosure makes this landscape type locally distinctive. Away from transport corridors this is a tranquil landscape, with a strong sense of isolation and network of tall hedges and quiet lanes. Long views across the heath are an important characteristic of the village setting, particularly across larger scale landscape to the north of the village. The southern part of this landscape character type, including the former heath immediately east of the village centre is lies within the Dedham Vale AONB designation.*

*The **rolling valley farmlands** encompasses the gentle valley sides and some more complex and steep slopes and sunken lanes are characteristic. The Stour valley slopes afford extensive views across the Dedham Vale made iconic in Constable’s work and lie within the Dedham Vale AONB. The Samford Valley lies within the recently extended Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB designation.*

*The **valley meadowlands** landscape character type is generally unsettled with exception of the Flatford Mill Complex and comprises pasture divided by wet ditches, with occasional wet woodland. It has a tranquil picturesque character, protected by the Dedham Vale AONB designation."*

The conservation area covers aspects of all three of the above areas, a narrow strip of the valley meadowlands on the eastern bank of the Stour, the rolling valley farmlands rising up towards the village heart on the plateau farmlands. The views over Dedham Vale and the Stour are an important characteristic of the conservation area with significant links to Constable’s work (see the section on setting and views).

A more granular approach to historic landscape characterisation was first undertaken in 1998-99 by Matthew Ford as the first part of a wider East of England HLC Project

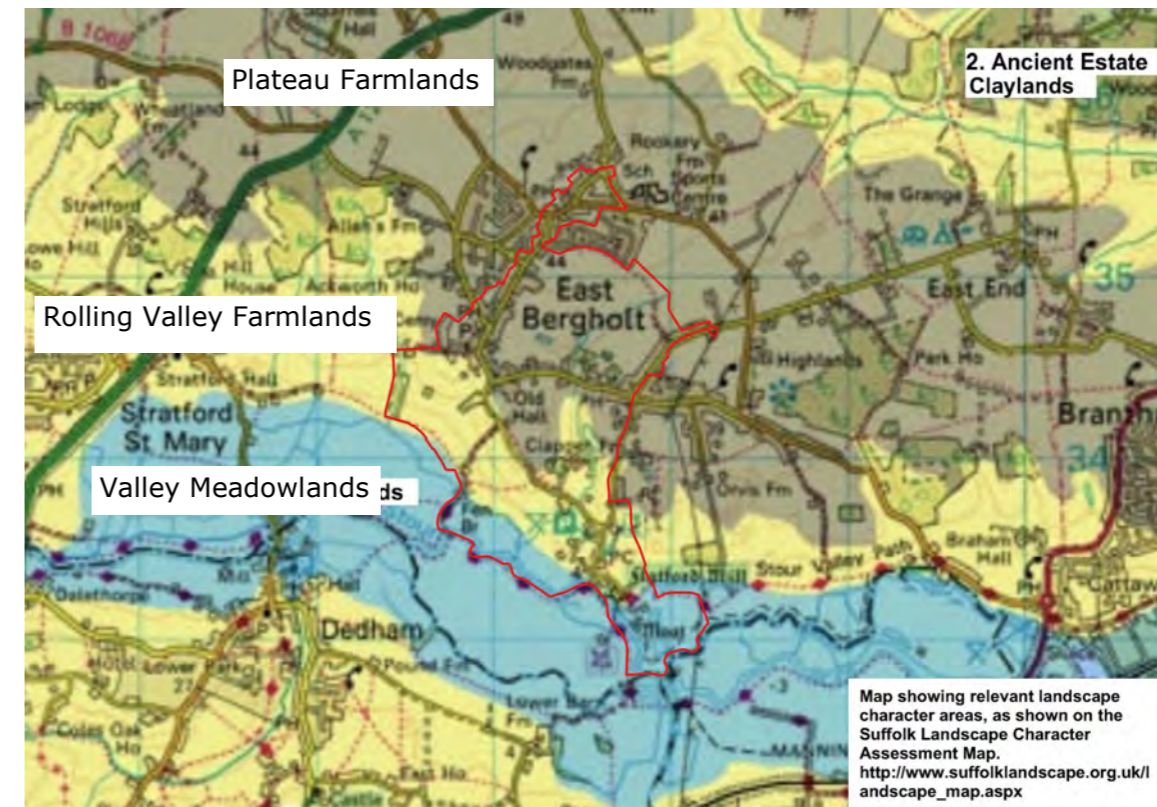
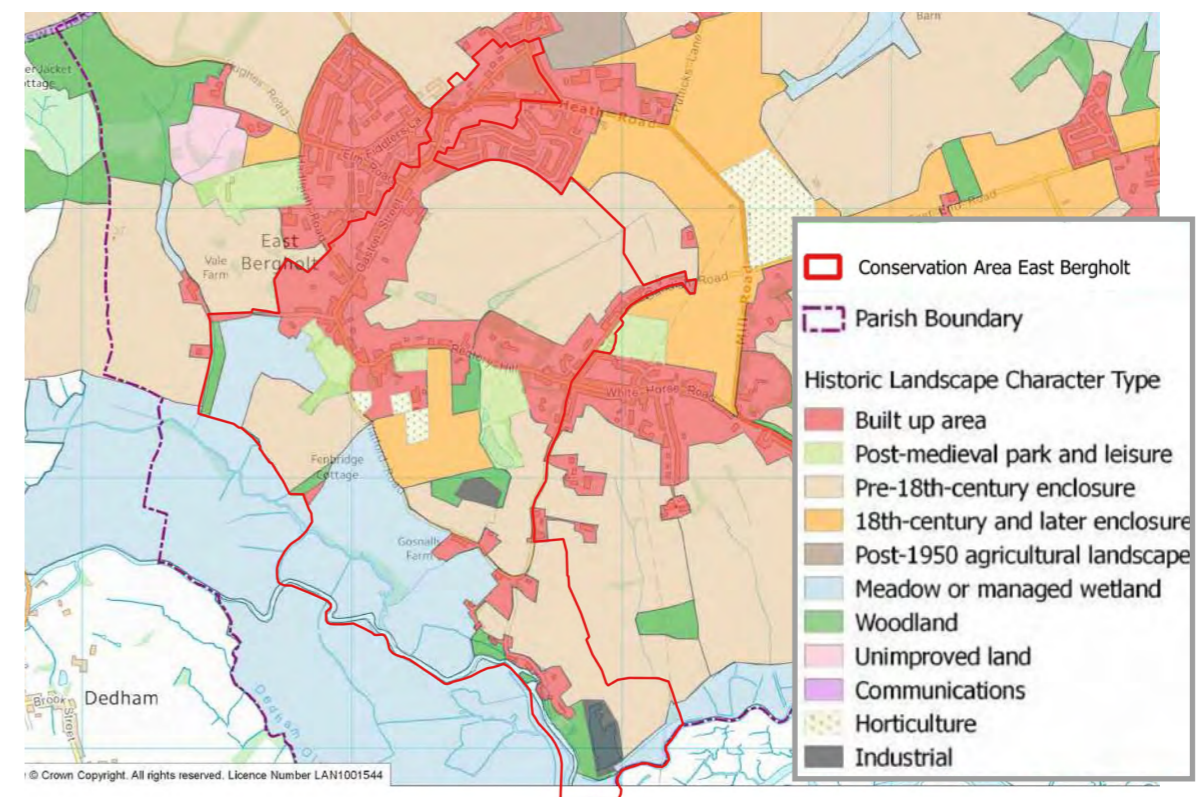


Figure 57: Above, the broad landscape character areas covering the conservation area and parish;

Figure 58: below, the granular historic landscape characterisation areas.



2.2 Spatial Character

covering Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk. The work was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service and funded by English Heritage (now known as Historic England).

The irregular patchwork pattern of fields around East Bergholt is a distinct landscape character reflecting an early pattern of enclosure prior to the 18th century, and in some instances likely to be medieval in origin. The technical sub type of landscape character which is found within the Conservation Area and extending is described in the Suffolk Historic Landscape Character (HLC) Project as:

"Type 1.0 Pre-18th Century Enclosure—Sub type 1.1 Random Fields

In many of the areas of 'ancient enclosure' in Suffolk there is little evidence for a medieval phase of common-field farming: some areas had limited areas of common fields (as in north Suffolk) but in others there were none (as is often the case in south Suffolk). The identification of these earlier landscapes, which date back to medieval and in some cases even earlier, was a priority behind the development of the HLC mapping. These earlier landscapes are of great historic significance and have different management needs to later field systems."

This sub-type description suits much of the landscape within and around East Bergholt particularly when comparing existing boundaries to the early 1731 Brasier Map illustrating continuity with this past pattern of land use: *"landscapes made up of fields that have an irregular pattern (i.e. without any dominant axis). Many were in existence by the medieval period, but could be earlier. Boundaries are usually take the form of species-rich hedges (normally coppiced not laid) with associated ditches and banks"* (Suffolk HLC). The ability to see and appreciate the time depth of this landscape is a distinct strand of interest leading to the designation of the Dedham Vale National Landscape (DVNL formerly Area of Outstanding National Beauty), the continuity of the landscape today with that seen and painted by John Constable, and others like Thomas Gainsborough, contributes directly to the cultural interest of these landscapes (Statement of Significance for the DVNL 2016-2021 Management Plan).

The broad Stour Valley runs south and west of the village with the land within the conservation area for the most part on the valley slope, flat riverine meadows are principally on the western side of the Stour rather than on the East Bergholt side.

The East Bergholt Heath sat to the north and north east of the village core, this was an area of open land for the communal use of the commoners within the feudal manorial system



Figure 59-60: Aerial view of the southern part of East Bergholt Village Cemetery Lane at top left, Flatford Mill at bottom right compared with the same portion on the Brasier Map. Many of the early boundaries remain legible in today's pattern of fields



Figure 61: View over the valley landscape of the DVNL from Rectory Lane towards Dedham, early 2025

2.2 Spatial Character

which came to its peak between 850 and 1150 (<https://acraew.org.uk/history-common-land-and-village-greens>). Though the land was owned as part of the manors they nonetheless provided land for all to use, frequent rights would be to gather timber or coppice wood for construction or fuel, to graze livestock and provide 'pannage' for pigs, to fish, to cut turf for fuel. The only remaining open area of the former heath in the conservation area is at Gaston End—the Box Iron. The Heath was formally enclosed in 1817, its lands divided up to the major landowners and no longer available for common grazing. However, many of the tracks which once ran across it were formalised to create today's street and road patterns and the landscape which runs along their routes but they remain important clues to the past trackways. Gandish Road was slightly straightened as was Heath Road. Research by the East Bergholt Society has revealed surprisingly frequent points of continuity between this ancient landscape area shown on the two Brasier maps and features that can be found in today's village layout.

The area of open land known as the Box Iron (because of its shape) is one area which has never been put to agricultural use, and which remains undeveloped, an echo of the former heath and common grazing land. This portion once formed the village green to the hamlet at Gaston End. After enclosure it continued to be used for grazing by the farmer of Woodgates. The full extent of the former open land has been reduced through the encroachment of housing, but the pattern of streets forming Quinton Triangle remains an important echo of the early layout with the links along Heath Road and Gandish Road to Burnt Oak also points of continuity with the heath landscape tracks included within the Conservation area.



Figure 62: View into the area of land known as The Box Iron, an area of undeveloped former Heath and the village green to one of the historic 'ends' -Gaston's End



Figure 63-64: Extracts from the 1731 Brasier map of Gaston End (top) and the current Google Earth street view showing the retained open 'Box Iron' with housing now on all sides and moving further to the east over the former heath.

2.3 Summary of Spatial Special interest

- Important overlap with the nationally designated landscape of the Dedham Vale National Landscape.
- Conservation Area includes areas of 'ancient enclosure' which are directly appreciable today and which enable a direct connection between the village core and the landscape which served it from the medieval period and on.
- Comparatively constrained areas of modern expansion to mass housing preserves a close connection between evidence of human activity in the village, and human shaping of the landscape that served and supported its occupants.
- Archaeological legibility of common spaces and greens remain within the conservation area in the village centre and at Gaston End.
- Routes and differing patterns and periods of buildings give illustration of the period of enclosure from 1817 and subsequent development on enclosed heath.
- High degree of consistency between historic routes and today's village morphology. Later buildings have, in general, preserved the historic pattern and layout of buildings and houses creating a consistent 'character' even though each area encompasses buildings of multiple periods.
- There are important areas of surrounding setting which are similarly well preserved (to the north west, south, south east and east) which contribute positively to the conservation area's significance enabling understanding of rural character of settlement.
- Limited and few areas of compromised spatial or aesthetic quality contributing overall to the spatial quality and significance of the area as a well preserved historic settlement.

2.3

Architectural Character

2.3 Architectural Character

This chapter of the report summarises aspects of the architectural interest seen within the conservation area. Further detail on individual sub-areas is provided in later chapters and specific buildings of special architectural and historic interest which are included on the national statutory list are tabulate in Appendix 2.

A core characteristic of the architectural Character in East Bergholt is the variety of materials and details which can be found. This provides visual character and interest to the streets and experience as well as giving clues to the various periods of development and evolution of the settlement.

Walling Materials

Timber framing in a traditional East Anglian tradition is present in several buildings, not all visible externally. Wherever timber framing survives it represents important and usually early examples of traditional construction techniques. These buildings almost all belong at the upper levels of society where they do survive, the poorer quality of buildings though they may have been primarily timber do not generally survive though the potential for individual building investigations to reveal early retained cores of ancient historic framing is considered relatively high.

Timber framing continued to be used in later periods but were frequently rendered, and utilised smaller scale timbers and wider spacing, reflecting general scarcity of substantial timbers and also changing tastes and fashions.

Brick is the predominant solid mass construction material within the village. Historic records, maps and field names record the presence of brick making in the local area. In 2021 archaeological excavations by Colchester Archaeological Trust close to the current medical centre on Heath Road uncovered the remains of a brick kiln from the 1800s. It is highly likely that many of the brick buildings in East Bergholt are constructed of local brick. It is present in a variety of colours from pale white or buff, through to warm red-orange, multiple colours of brick could still be locally produced depending on the individual clay used. It is used decoratively with polychrome effects in some 19th century buildings including the Congregational Chapel and the later ranges at Old Hall, but buildings predominantly use a single colour. Flemish Bond, rising to popularity in the 17th century is frequently seen in all buildings pre-dating the 20th century.

There is very little stone within the village – reflecting its absence from the local geology. Its most prominent use is on St Mary’s Church where freestone dressings define corners, openings, pilasters and panels of classic East Anglian flint work in several styles. Early brick

perhaps from an older building, is seen in some areas in amongst the earlier areas of flint work. Stone detailing is also seen at Old Hall.



Figure 65 Fine dressed flintwork and stone at St Mary’s Church

Roofs

Historic roofs in the village are predominantly old plain tile, red in colour. They are seen on the steeper pitched roofs and mansard forms on the older low cottages. From the 18th and early 19th century periods, roof pitches become shallower and natural grey slate is seen, these roofs have a notably contrasting texture from the older tile. More recent roofs feature more standardised cement tiles including profiled pan tile.

There is limited use of thatch with only Bridge Cottage at Flatford (Grade II*) and the nearby Granary barn being finished with this material, the last thatched building within the main village having had its thatch replaced in the Spring of 2025 (Quintons at Gaston End). It is highly likely that many of the older and vernacular buildings were once thatched, but like the poorer quality of domestic timber framed houses, it would have been replaced over time leaving little trace.

Roof forms throughout the village are very varied with gabled, hipped, half hipped, and mansard forms all seen at various points within the conservation area and contributing to

2.3 Architectural Character

Figure 66: Walling Materials and roof examples



From left Richardson's Farmhouse, Valley Farmhouse at Flatford (ancient timber framing; Later 18th century timber framing on Red Lion cottage, formerly rendered; Georgian red brick in Flemish bond with splayed headers and a classical façade at The Old Rectory (EBS)



From left Vernacular brick in a cottage on Gandish Road; white brick at Chapel House, a refronting of an earlier house; polychrome brickwork on the later 19th century Jubilee House on Gaston Street; and, white brick with stone and brick detailing at Old Hall



From left: Variety in roof forms, gabled and pan tiles, half hipped and gambrel, shallow hipped, steep slope of thatch at Flatford, the only location where thatch roofing survives within the conservation area.

2.3 Architectural Character

visual architectural variety. Different roof pitches and alignments in combination with a variety in building position in relation to the street and property boundaries all add to a sense of variety in the village roofscape. For the most part roofs are fully visible with eaves overhanging facades. Three of the larger classically styled houses (The Old Rectory, Old Chapel House and Little Court) feature parapets but even here the roofs remains visible above.

More recent roofs utilise various different materials, including pantiles though mass produced rather than hand made. Other mass produced concrete tile is present as are some instances of asbestos or corrugated sheet material, mainly on outbuildings or agricultural structures.



Figures 67-68: More recent dwellings within the area utilising a red clay pantile.

Windows and doors

Windows in the conservation area reflect multiple styles and periods and though some buildings have clearly seen fenestration replaced or updated, there remains a good sense of period survivals that enable an understanding of different periods of window technology. Modern uPVC or plastic windows do exist and are generally poor quality. Doors are similarly varied but where more decorative porches or surrounds survive, they add to architectural interest, particularly reflecting prevailing fashion for classically styled architecture and in comparative levels of ornament or complexity also reflect social standing and status.

Casement windows are seen on many buildings. Alongside timber casements of various arrangements, they include traditional leaded lights in metal opening casements on 'Hatters' or at Red Lion cottage, where they are attractively pointed. Those at Richardson's Farm look to be sensitive modern renewals following a traditional pattern. The Gables features impressive long runs of leaded lights set into the close studding of the timber frame.

Vertical sliding sashes are present on many buildings. They range in number of panes and arrangements with 2/2 3/6, 6/6, 4/8, 8/8 pattern glazing all seen. Where historic 2/2 sashes survive they reflect later 19th century advances in glass technology. Multi pane sashes are appropriate to earlier buildings but also may reflect restoration or replacement to evoke what might be seen as a more 'traditional' aesthetic.

External shutters are not much in evidence though those which remain on Hatters and the Old House in the village centre are important visual clues to what was probably much more frequent feature. Brackets and hinges to fix open external shutters are visible on the walls of The Old Chapel House on Rectory Hill.

Horizontal sliding sashes, often called 'Yorkshire sashes' reflecting their frequency in the north east, are seen at Burnt Oak and also on a property close to Quinton Triangle. This type of window does not require the complex system of counter weights found in a traditional sash and can be found in considerably older properties before the vertical sash became the predominant type.

Several buildings in the conservation area retain much larger windows which hint at former uses as shops, with the large windows used for display now an architectural clue to lost former uses.

While the ornamental perpendicular style windows at the Parish Church of St Mary are of clear high architectural interest, there are several buildings which feature more ornamental styled windows, particularly with pointed heads or frames.

Doors within the conservation area are similarly varied with examples of old traditional plank and batten doors to more classically styled doors with a good selection of more ornamental surrounds on Georgian and Victorian buildings. There are porches and simpler hoods over entry ways. Some of the Victorian houses at Gaston's end retain what appear to be historic porches, though the doors themselves have been replaced.

Boundaries

Boundaries of note and historic interest are represented by fine brick walls, particularly around the larger properties, or by historic iron railings. Hedges and timber fences are of lesser note though ecological or biodiversity studies of hedges within the countryside combined with historic map analysis suggest that many of the hedgerows are ancient boundaries of historic value.

2.3 Architectural Character

Figure 69: Windows and doors



From left 8/8 sashes at Lambe School, window hierarchy in different sashes between ground and first floor; large 2/2 later 19th century sashes Jubilee House; horizontal sliding sashes at Gaston End; 19th century leaded bay window; modern leaded casements installed at Richardson's farm.



From left Former shop window, settled dramatically with age at 'the Hatters' in the village centre also with external shutters surviving; a series of classically styled doors from ornate to much simpler and (right) later paired doors in 19th century cottages with shared hood porch canopy.



2.3 Architectural Character

Scale and Massing

Houses and domestic properties are present at all scales – from the very diminutive small cottages to much larger properties of the gentry class with accompanying outbuildings, stables, service ranges and substantial grounds. Stour House and Old Hall include a full second storey but all other properties, even the larger, are of two storeys with perhaps attic rooms served by dormer windows.

The congregational Chapel and Church of St Mary alongside the village hall on Gandish Road are the larger non domestic properties. The Lambe School remains on a very domestic scale. Barns behind Richardson’s Farm are modern large scale buildings and reflect their ongoing agricultural uses but are very concealed from the street.

At Flatford the mill building has a considerable footprint and reflects its industrial functions through its proximity to the water and features such as the overhead loading hoist. The current brick building is the product of investment and rebuilding by the Constable family after Abraham Constable (Grandfather to John) purchased the mill in 1742. Rebuilding by Golding Constable, including the cottages proceeded at the same time as constructing a new house in the village centre, East Bergholt House.



Figure 70: Flatford Mill



Figure 71: Stour House a large gentry house in the village core.



Figure 72: Smaller vernacular cottages at Burnt Oak

2.3 Architectural Character

Listed buildings

East Bergholt contains a substantial number of listed buildings which are, in their statutory designation, recognised as being of national significance. They are listed in Appendix 2 with their corresponding locations indicated.

The provisions of Section 1.5 of the Planning (listed buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990 means that other buildings or structures within the curtilage of listed buildings may also be considered as part of the listed building. This report does not formally quantify the extent of listing for any of the designated assets within the conservation area, that role is ultimately for the local authority who determine what type of application may be required.

Positive Contributor buildings

The following represents a list of buildings and structures which, though not statutorily designated, are deemed to be positive to the character and appearance of the conservation area, the location of individual buildings are highlighted on the individual Character area maps in Chapter 3. In determining what constitutes a 'positive contributor' reference has been made to the check list set out in Historic England's Guidance on Conservation Area Designation, this list is:

1. *Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?*
2. *Does it have landmark quality?*
3. *Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?*
4. *Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?*
5. *Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?*
6. *Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces within a complex of public buildings?*
7. *Is it associated with a designed landscape, e.g. a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?*
8. *Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?*
9. *Does it have significant historic associations with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?*
10. *Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?*
11. *Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?*
12. *Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?*

The guidance acknowledges that most of the buildings within a conservation area help to shape its character. The extent to which any building or group of buildings might be considered to be more positive than any others depends on a series of factors, including historic integrity, particular local associations, and how the building may contribute in three dimensions within the area as a whole. East Bergholt is a very well maintained village in terms of the general condition of its structures and spaces whether that be public areas or private gardens. The following non exhaustive list highlights the buildings, or type of buildings, which address a greater number of the points in the checklist and which are considered to make a particularly positive contribution to the area.



Figure 73: The eastern end of the Congregational Chapel, unlisted but a positive building within the conservation area. Pertaining to its communal value and striking architectural character

2.3 Architectural Character

Village Sign—1, 8, 9, 12

Village sign on the Street. This is a local landmark constructed by the last of the village Blacksmiths Rodney Moss. It depicts the unique Bell Cage but has historic significance in commemorating and marking the small remnant of the historic village green, which was removed at enclosure in 1817. Though with a similarly enlarged area to the north it was once the location for fairs, markets, trade, village gatherings and celebrations its spatial extent is now captured only in historic maps and some of Constable's works which captured events taking place on it, right outside his childhood home, now also lost.

East Bergholt Congregational Chapel—2, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12

East Bergholt Congregational Chapel, image on the previous page, was constructed in 1856/7. The only non conformist religious structure within the conservation area and an imposing village building of polychromatic brickwork. It is experienced alongside the shops and businesses in the village centre, contributing to the sense of activity here though it is currently closed and without use. Historically of interest in reflecting non-conformist worship within the area and community which was formalised in East Bergholt from 1672. It is likely to have replaced an earlier chapel on this location, prior to that worship likely took place in members homes to avoid and minimise risk of persecution. The decorative gable is visible and comparatively prominent from within the village centre, and certainly from Cemetery Lane where it has imposing scale and character.

18th/19th century houses—3, 4, 8, 11

Unlisted historic houses at the north end of Gandish Road, at Burnt Oak and at Gaston End illustrate the presence of early houses on the edge of the heath in satellite settlements away from the village core, encroaching on the common heath lands. From 1817 onwards, further houses were added on land enclosed from the former heath. Those historic buildings which are well preserved and retain historic features such as their original period windows or doors are identified as positive contributors enabling an ongoing understanding of the clusters of historic settlement around the heath prior to the larger drives for housing in the 20th century. Where they survive well their period features, and frequently their proximity to other contemporary dwellings (including some which are statutorily designated) are of direct illustrative historic value pertaining to this important phase of the village's evolution. 1-3 Gandish Road is a good example of this type, with surviving period features and comparatively focal role at this entry to the conservation area, particularly from White Horse Road. They are not really 'landmark' in their quality, but are experienced as part of a close group at Burnt Oak reflecting this early settlement area.



Figure 74: The former village green and sign



Figure 75: Nos 1-3 Gandish Road, traditional red brick with gently 'polite details' archaeological evidence of former doorways reflecting likely two or three smaller dwellings

2.3 Architectural Character

Buildings by Raymond Erith—1, 2, 3, 4, 8 9, 10, 11, 12

East Bergholt features a series of six houses and the village's 'Constable Hall' all designed by Raymond Erith in the middle years of the 19th century. There are five houses located on Gandish Road, four making up a group opposite the village hall, and a fifth called 'Kells' located just around the corner on Rectory Hill. A further house, 'Pound House' was constructed in the village centre and Erith is also recorded as having worked on the interior remodelling of High Trees Farmhouse, a grade II listed building in Gaston End. These buildings are an important group reflecting the work of this prominent 20th century classical architect. He lived in Dedham rather than East Bergholt but had a professional relationship with East Bergholt firm of builders and joiners W T Wheelers, located to the north on Puttick's Lane near Heath Road. The houses on Gandish Road sit well back from the street with mature front gardens and a relatively consistent build line, they are symmetrical and gently classical, round or arch headed windows are a particular feature. Photographs of the individual houses by Erith are included at section 3.3.

Flatford riverine structures—4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Flatford lock, dry dock and bridge are not individually listed. They have all been rebuilt or restored by the National Trust since they acquired the site in the later 20th century. They are clearly an important part of the group here but because of the degree of restoration and reconstruction it is possible that they might not be considered to meet the tests of section 1.5(B) of the Act, and be considered as part of the various listed structures in this area. Nonetheless they are important positive features that assist in illustrating and telling the story of Flatford and the Stour Navigation as well as providing a sense of continuity with some of John Constable's most renowned paintings.



Figure 76: Constable Hall, Gandish Road



Figure 77: Flatford Lock looking towards Bridge Cottage the chimney of which is just visible. On the right, Constable's 1813 painting 'Boys Fishing', (National Trust)



2.3 Summary of Architectural Special interest

- A high concentration of listed buildings give direct illustration of differing traditional and vernacular building traditions over several centuries.
- The architectural variety of domestic buildings in East Bergholt Village is rich and interesting and is a key aspect of the village's architectural character. This applies to period, materials, though brick is dominant, roof forms, scale. It leads to street scenes which are interesting and pleasant.
- The fine knapped flintwork and decorative stone of St Mary's Parish Church is an architectural, as well as communal, focal point within the village, its early Bell Cage is similarly important being an early example and the only one in the country where the bells are rung by direct pressure rather than through a rope system.
- Flatford Mill contributes to architectural special interest in being a large early 18th century industrial building which retains good evidence of its specific technological aspects within a well preserved historic building.
- Non designated buildings within the conservation area are also, in general, of good quality and well preserved with various buildings retaining period windows and doors through to the present day.
- There is an important group of unlisted 20th century buildings, including the village hall, by renowned 20th century classical architect Raymond Erith. Though they are not listed, they are an important collection reflecting the corpus of his work in the middle years of the 20th century and have important contextual links to his work elsewhere—which includes no. 10 Downing Street. His name results in 391 results on the statutory list reflecting the tenor of his importance as an architect.

2.4

Setting

2.4 Setting of the Conservation Area

The setting of heritage assets is defined with the National Planning Policy Framework as:

"The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance, or may be neutral" (NPPF, Annex 2, Glossary)

As with many conservation areas, which frequently encompass large areas, an 'experience' of it as a whole designated asset is not afforded from any single point, its setting encompasses the landscape, fields, routes and other areas of housing around the designated boundary.

Dedham Vale lies to the south and south west, its own importance is reflected in its identification as a National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). This landscape area feeds seamlessly into the southern part of the conservation area across the Stour where the river flood meadows transition to the undulating hillsides and up into the village centre. This sense of continuity is a strongly positive element of setting. Not only is there the time depth of landscape features and natural beauty as protected in the national landscape, but the paintings of John Constable capture this transition from his home in East Bergholt, to the river, the mill where his Family worked, to Dedham where he went to school and the church towers that punctuated the landscape, and the location of the rural life he captured so poignantly.



Figure 78: View from Cemetery Lane towards Ackworth House.

A pastoral rural character also survives to the north west, though its character is slightly different. This area features a series of large individual houses and their associated land, there are three—Gatton House, Ackworth House and The Lodge—all are listed buildings and are grouped with associated structures like farm buildings, lodges and stables. This area has been identified as containing various elements of archaeological interest (during excavation at Ackworth House) and contributes to the possibility of understanding the fullest time span of human activity in this area. The A12 follows a Roman route. Ackworth House sits within a comparatively large estate which has an overtly parkland character, something like that around Old Hall. It reflects social status and manipulation of the landscape to provide verdant surroundings to large houses in the 18th and 19th centuries. This landscape character can be appreciated from Cemetery Lane where views north look towards the house with mature trees in well maintained pasture in the foreground.

Open landscape also survives to the north and north east of the conservation area where the flatter open fields of the plateau farmlands has larger squarer fields created from the former East Bergholt Heath extending from Gandish Road. The area immediately north east of the Donkey Track, behind and to the north of the Gandish Road Houses has some historic significance. It was part of the former heath and The Constable family windmill was located here on high ground above the village, several of Constable's paintings are in this area—particularly those that depict the windmill. Its continued lack of development remains positive and is important in reflecting some sense of the former openness of the Heath. However, this area has been compromised and eroded in the later part of the 20th century and in the past 20 years. This has arisen with the construction of new housing along Heath Road and down towards the Donkey Track; deposition of soil from this development has changed the form of the land along the Riber Valley; in 2000 a 'millennium wood' was planted in a block leading north east from The Donkey Track, while the trees are now mature and a pleasant place to walk, any openness of the former heath has been blocked along with opportunities to look towards the former location of the windmill. All of these factors limit the degree to which this area of setting is positive to the conservation area, though it offers opportunities for potential enhancement.

To the north of the conservation area, behind Gaston Road properties, and south of Gaston End, modern housing dating primarily from the post war period onwards is of an entirely predictable and unremarkable nature. Though it reflects the growth of the village and the pressure of growing populations, it has severed the connection between the historic properties in these areas and the countryside which once would have been immediately appreciable. This new development is most apparent on the northern side of the Donkey Track. This expansion of modern housing has directly eroded opportunities to continue to experience continuity between the historic core of the village and its supporting rural

2.4 Setting of the Conservation Area

landscape. Though the land off Donkey Track retains this wider connectivity to the east, past Gandish Road, on the north, it is curtailed by new housing.

The entrance on Gandish Road is green and verdant with links to open countryside and mature tree cover creating attractive green 'tunnels' of trees on entry into the conservation area, a similar tunnel is found on Hadleigh Road moving into the conservation area. They are important in understanding a continuity between the historic core and its rural surroundings. This impression is also clearly present on the south, where entrances on the into the conservation area are entirely pedestrian from the public footpath network along the Stour Valley and along the ancient lanes and tracks leading up from the river.

Beyond Burnt Oak multi phase development has built up on the former heath after enclosure in 1817 and through the 20th century, slowly connecting Burnt Oak at the edge of the conservation area with the former 'Bakers End' to the east. White Horse Road provides an approach into the conservation area. Built form here remains broadly linear following traditional patterns along the roads and on a smaller scale, there are fewer examples of 'mass' housebuilding over larger areas.

Where the setting of the conservation area retains a sense of continuity with the open historic landscape of the earlier periods of East Bergholt's development, prior to the mass housing growth of the 20th century, it continues to contribute positively to the historic values, character and appearance of the conservation area. Open land which retains ancient field boundaries, lanes, and isolated houses offers an opportunity to approach and experience the entry to the conservation area positively. Post enclosure, housing in some areas developed slowly on the former heath closely following the routes with more regular field subdivisions behind. These areas are generally neutral in terms of experience of entering and understanding the conservation area. Areas which have seen the creation of substantial blocks of mass housing separate the historic core of the conservation area from its historically open surroundings and change the degree of authenticity of approach, the ability to understand the rural surroundings of East Bergholt in these areas is disrupted by a completely different pattern of development and growth which is markedly in contrast to the

- North west of the CA; large houses, many individually listed, in semi parkland and woodland. Retained openness positive to the setting. Evidence of archaeological remains evocative of earliest human activity in the area. Positive element of setting
- New mass housing developments to the north of the CA, dividing historic core from open landscape. Limiting authenticity of approach into the CA. Negative element.
- Land north east of the Donkey Track retains openness but is altered with little authentic of experience, modern housing remains visible, woodland and eroded opportunity to recognise the landscape as captured by Constable. Neutral element—opportunity to enhance
- Landscape to east of Gandish Road and beyond the upper plateau farmlands, including linear development along White Horse Road, mix of post enclosure 19th and 20th century housing and other buildings, reflective of this later history. Neutral element
- Riverine landscape and adjacent sloping valley farmlands. Undeveloped, clearly legible elements of ancient enclosure landscape divisions. National routes offer public access. Conservation area's core distant but position of settlements within the valley understandable. Flatford's position on the river and its various buildings importantly experienced from the valley. Strongly positive elements of setting.

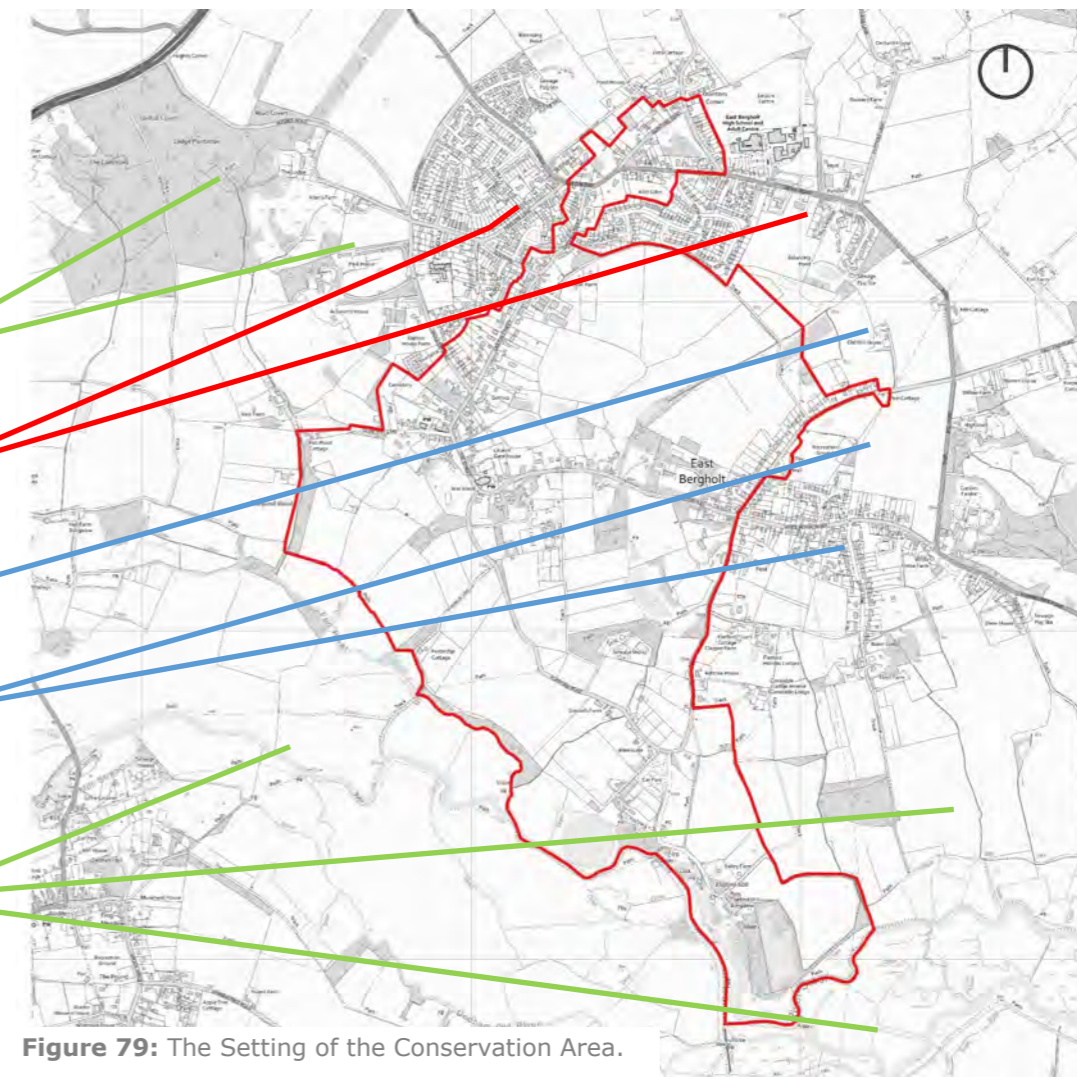


Figure 79: The Setting of the Conservation Area.

2.4 Setting of the Conservation Area



Figure 80: View across north western setting to Ackworth House



Figure 83: View towards Mill Farmhouse from Millennium Wood, altered former heath.



Figure 81: White Horse Road looking towards the Conservation Area



Figure 84: Post Enclosure fields east of Gandish Road.



Figure 82: Modern housing west of Gaston Street, entering towards Richardson's Farm



Figure 85: View across river valley from footpath west of the Conservation Area

2.4 Summary of the Contribution of Setting to special interest

historic form, views are filled with modern mass housing which are of limited innate architectural interest and pay little reference to the local vernacular or the historic variety present within the conservation area itself—these areas are negative in terms of the contribution made to the conservation area. To the north east, and north of the Donkey Track, the opportunity to ‘see’ views immortalised in Constable’s works which are much reduced by new housing, removed features, and new tree blocks. This area might offer opportunity for enhancement to restore a greater sense of continuity with the past. At present this area is neutral.

- The Dedham Vale which lies to the south of the conservation area has high natural significance as reflected in its identification as a national landscape. It has similarly high cultural historic significance linked to the ancient land management patterns encapsulated here and running seamlessly into the southern edge of the conservation area.
- There is exceptional artistic and historic importance to the setting as captured by John Constable in his wide landscape views particularly over the Stour valley.
- The open rural landscape to the north west of the conservation area has a strong sense of historic continuity of land use, particularly in association with a collection of listed buildings and their settings which retain a strong sense of continuity with the past.
- The setting to the north west is the location of known archaeological potential, particularly associated with the Roman period and activity along the route of the A12 and is positive to the potential to gain greater understanding of human activity in the area outside the conservation area boundaries.
- The setting to the east, beyond Gandish Road and Burnt Oak represents land enclosed from the open Heath and which has been developed piecemeal since the 19th century along routes formalised at that time. Though the area is of lesser architectural interest it preserves a sense of the evolution of the area after that important event, retained open fields also contribute to an ongoing sense of the rural surroundings which supported the settlement. Both of these aspects contributes to historic values.
- Constable views over the open land to the north east, around Mill Farmhouse and towards the historic location of the Constable Family windmill are important but less able to be appreciated due to more recent changes to land use and including the encroachment of modern mass housing developments. The historic and artistic links to this area of setting remain important and striking, the current condition offers potential for enhancement should the opportunity arise though the continued openness and lack of development remains positive.

2.5

Views

2.4 Views

East Bergholt is an attractive and well maintained settlement. The experience of moving through the area is, in general, attractive and pleasant. It has developed over time and the public realm is based on ancient routes established since the medieval era at least. There is no indication that the village or its buildings have been laid out or positioned with the intent to create deliberate, specific or framed 'views' but incidental views afforded whilst moving through the area are aesthetically pleasing due to the combination of topography, attractive well maintained historic buildings, gardens and open spaces.

The positive views identified both in this section and in the following sub character area chapters are not considered an exhaustive or exclusive selection. Though single points of view are highlighted on the various maps, alternate positions may be similarly positive or enable a similar experience. Merely because a single vantage point is highlighted, does not mean other perspectives are not also positive.

It is important to note here that all vantage points which correlate to views which inspired specific paintings by John Constable are considered as 'key' to the character and appearance of the conservation area. They are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The other positive view points identified fall into the following types:

- Vantage points from which the distinctive and particular character of the individual sub-areas is particularly notable.
- Viewpoints as part of a moving experience through the character areas and conservation area as a whole, particularly at boundaries between the different character areas where contrast may be perceived.
- Vantage points where focal buildings are most strikingly or meaningfully experienced as part of the wider area or in a group context – these views are not necessarily related to the specific experience of any single building, but the experience of the buildings within the area and other groups.
- Vantage points where particular contrast between developed and open space is important to character, or where there is contrast between areas of more spacious or open character and areas of greater enclosure and intimacy within the built area. This may be opportunities to experience and understand the proximity of rural and agricultural land in context with former or extant farm buildings remains clear, or where parkland character associated with some of the larger buildings is a distinct element of an area's character and history.

The suggested conservation area is large. Opportunities to experience it as a whole are limited, though broad views from across the Dedham Vale enable an understanding, to a degree, of the settlement position. Wider landscape views of significance are described and discussed in full within the Heritage Landscape Appraisal (Heritage Collective 2021).



Figure 86-87: Positive views along Rectory Hill, they illustrate the particular nature of settlement running through the core of this sub area, the gentle slopes of the Riber Valley, large historic houses set comparatively close to the road with spacious gardens, open greenery and land of the Old Hall estate on one side. This type of view might be experienced at several points along Rectory Hill as one moves through the area.

2.4 Views

The Paintings of John Constable

Within East Bergholt, a critical element of its special and unique character relates to the landscape, buildings and village scenes which were painted by John Constable over the course of his life (1776- 1837). These provide a golden thread of internationally special artistic and historic interest focused on the areas proposed to fall within the conservation area. Now internationally renowned he is best known for his paintings representing the rural character of Dedham Vale surrounding East Bergholt. Constable was born in East Bergholt and it is here that he grew and developed from amateur to iconic artist. During his lifetime he struggled for recognition and his reputation was perhaps held in higher esteem in France, where his use of colour in his landscape paintings were considered quite radical for the time and is thought to have influenced the Impressionists.

In current times however, his work is the highest valued British Art on the international market, they are of international significance. His paintings Dedham Vale (1820) and The Haywain (1821), are perhaps the most popular and valuable works of British Art but examples of all forms of his work are held in prestigious international collections, highly valued, and highly visited. The painting Dedham Vale with the River Stour in Flood was rediscovered in a private collection and was valued by Sotheby's in 2017 with an estimate of £2-3 million. It was painted from the grounds of the Old Hall in East Bergholt with the view extending across the Stour towards Dedham. The cultural and artistic association of

Constable with the scenery of East Bergholt, Dedham Vale, the River Stour and Flatford Mill, is exceptional. The Haywain is one of the most iconic paintings in the history of British Art and is on permanent display at The National Gallery.

It is difficult to sufficiently emphasise how loved and valued Constable's work is as exemplifying this artist's emotive and skilful rendering of the English Countryside and pastoral life, his love for this place and landscape, skies, water and the people who occupied and worked within this area is palpable in his work and opportunities to connect to this are highly valued by visitors to this area.

The opportunities which remain today, within the conservation area and its surroundings, to stand at the points where Constable painted, frequently *'en plein air'* from life, and experience a landscape which has, in many cases, changed comparatively little offers a unique perspective and opportunity to gain a real connection to the past and the world as seen and recorded by one of the countries most beloved landscape artists. The desire to experience a landscape and perhaps find similar inspiration and emotive response remains a strong driver for visitors to East Bergholt.



Figure 88: 'The Haywain' 1821 (National Gallery)



Figure 89: Scene of the Haywain in summer 2025.

2.4 Views

Constable's biographer Charles Leslie wrote of Constable that:

"His nature was peculiarly social and could not feel satisfied with scenery, however grand in itself, that did not abound in human associations. He required villages, churches, farmhouses and cottages"

In this way the strand of artistic interest which links Constable to the conservation area is perhaps unique. He worked specifically to record and reflect the 'truth' of the area in which he lived. Even at that time, it was a place with ancient remains and customs, landscapes on the brink of change and buildings and occupations shifting through the seasons. Though the process of change has not stopped since Constable's time, his artistic output is fascinatingly linked to capturing the 'character and appearance' of his home as well as the day to day activities of its occupants. This is now part of the evolved character and appearance of the conservation area.

The East Bergholt Society has compiled a detailed database of the paintings and vantage points which is an invaluable resource to those interested in understanding the connection

between today's landscape and village, and Constable's work. The Historic Landscape Study undertaken in 2021 also provided a fuller appraisal of Constable's Paintings. This section acknowledges and summarises the conclusions of that work recognising the following areas which fall within the conservation area and where the landscape characteristics which inspired the artist in the past may still be studied and appreciated in the landscape today. Obviously, aspects have changed, Constable's family home, and his father's windmill on the Heath have been lost, landscape boundaries have changed and modern features of roads and houses have been introduced, but other areas retain a degree of verisimilitude which contributes a major aspect of historic, landscape and artistic value to the special character and appearance of the conservation area.

A series of key locations which were foci for the painter's prolific output are summarised in the remainder of this chapter and readers should refer to the more comprehensive survey undertaken by the East Bergholt Society. The figures on the following pages identifies these foci and concentrations—it does not identify all of Constable's paintings, or the sketches and studies.

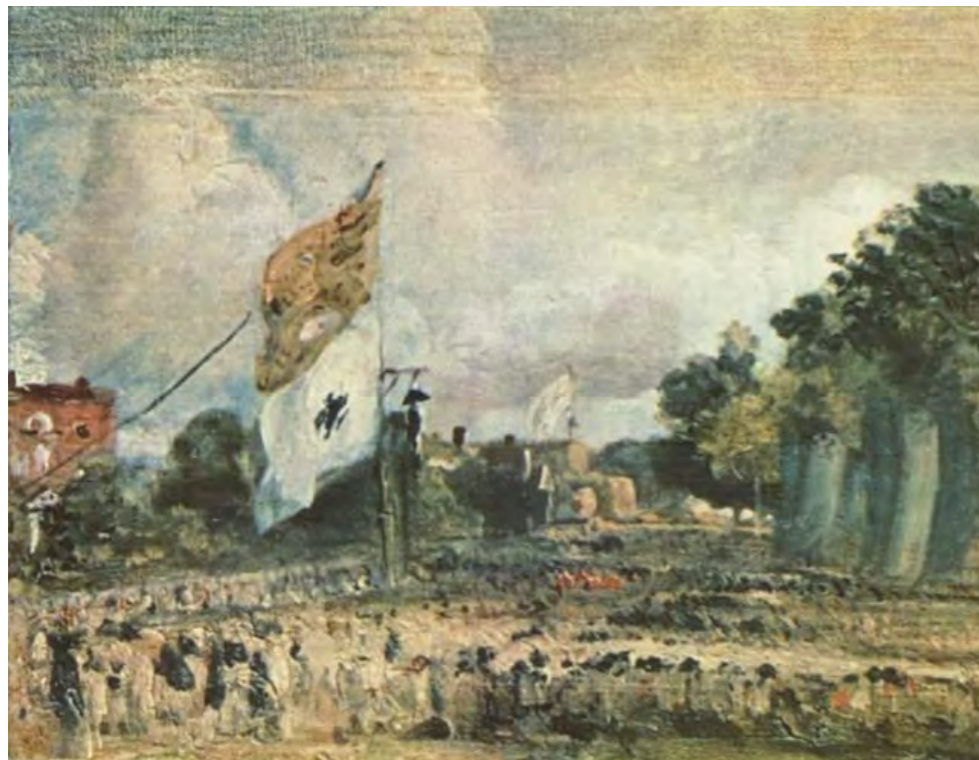


Figure 90: 'extract from "Celebration of the General" 1815, (Budapest Museum of Art). The villagers gather on the village green, populating this village scene now lost after Enclosure in 1817.



Figure 91-92: 'the Cornfield' 1826 (National Gallery) Constable populated his landscapes with ordinary folk, a shepherd boy drinking from a stream running down the edge of Fen Lane while his sheep dog waits, a farmer in the distance, a scythe on his shoulder. Fen lane is a popular walking route today leading down the slope to the river, with a ditch on the left and glimpses through the hedge out to the countryside beyond.



2.4 Views

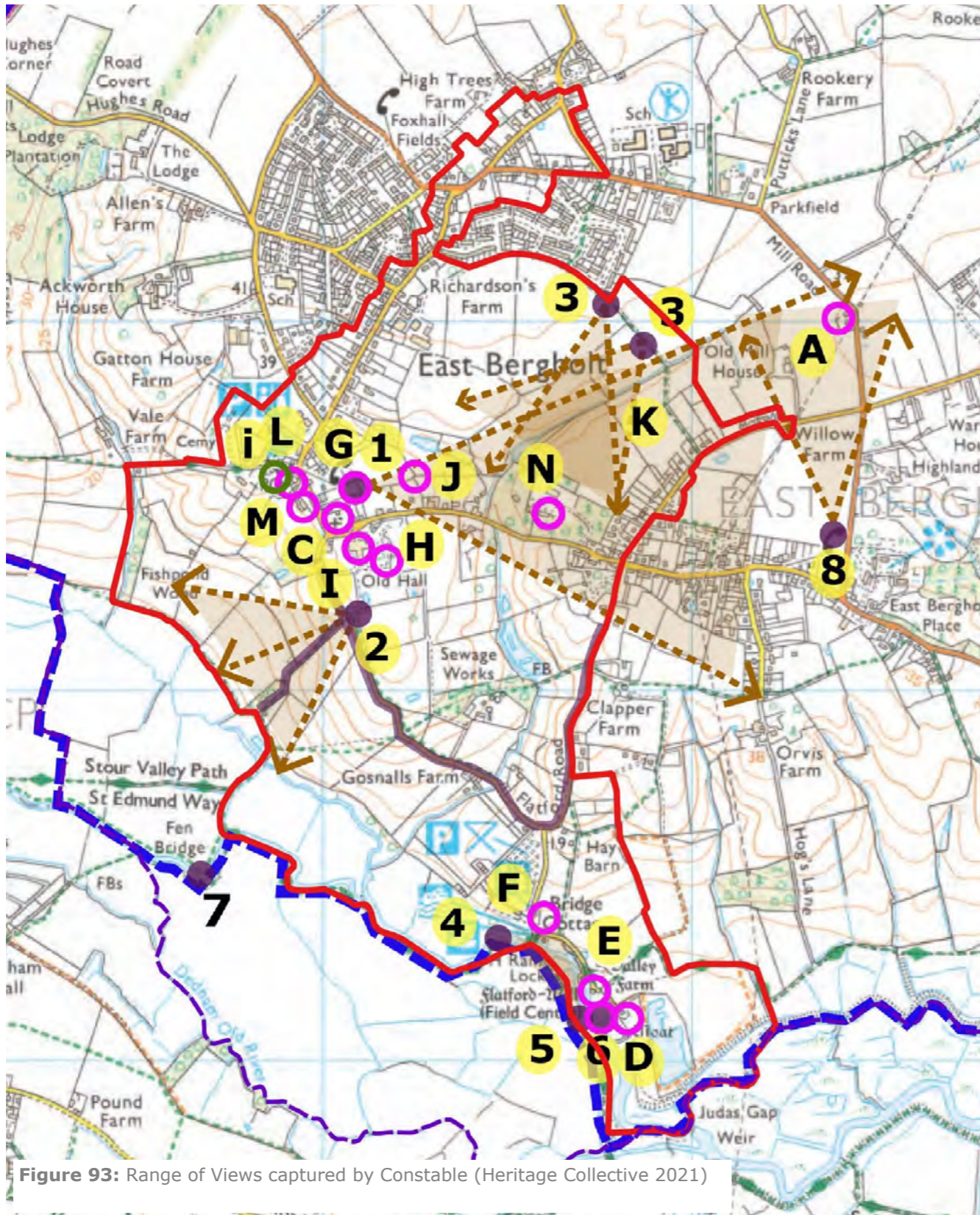


Figure 93: Range of Views captured by Constable (Heritage Collective 2021)

- Conservation Area East Bergholt
- Parish Boundary
- Artist's Location
- 1. Golding Constable's House
- 2. Fen Lane/ Flatford Lane
- 3. Donkey Path
- 4. South Bank of River Stour near Flatford Lock
- 5. South Bank of River Stour
- 6. North Bank of River Stour, Miller's House and Cottage
- 7. River Stour near
- 8. East Bergholt Heath

- Landmark/ building in John Constable's Painting
- A. Windmill
- B. Stratford St. Mary Church
- C. Church of St. Mary
- D. Willy Lot's Cottage
- E. Flatford Mill
- F. Bridge Cottage
- G. Golding Constable's House (East Bergholt House)
- H. Old Hall Park
- I. Old Hall
- J. East Bergholt Common
- K. East Bergholt Heath
- L. Beaufort Cottage
- M. Stour (house seen in East Bergholt Fair)
- N. The Old Rectory
- I. Coach house to the Old Rectory

- Other Constable Associations
- i. Moss Cottage (used as an artist's studio)

- Estimated view splay and direction of view from artist's location, inferred from John Constable paintings and images



Figure 94-95: Top, the new Fen Bridge. Below, 'A Bridge over the River Stour', 1802 V+A

Figure 96: Constable family locations



2.4 Setting and Views

East Bergholt Common and the Heath

East Bergholt Common and Heath was the location of the Constable family windmill, at which John Constable worked before persuading his father to allow him to pursue a career as an artist. His time there, regularly watching the wide skies for changes in the weather, is broadly accepted as having contributed to his skill in depicting the skies and clouds. Views to and from East Bergholt House, his father's windmill and towards the Old Rectory took in gardens, the field boundaries and labourers working the land, different seasons and weather conditions all of which reflect his deep connection to this area. The romantic undertones of the paintings and drawings looking over this landscape and towards the Old Rectory in particular are heightened with knowledge of the history of Constable and his long courtship to Maria Bicknell, granddaughter to the formidable rector of East Bergholt at that time, Rev. Rhudde. Paintings from the Donkey Track towards her home, completed while they were courting take on a particular poignance with knowledge of how long they were forced to stay apart by social and familial expectation.

There have been various changes which have intruded into and altered the historic landscape away from the character of the historic situation. Core changes are the loss of the Constable family windmill, the planting of a millennium wood which has reduced the open field character north east of the Donkey Track, and the introduction of modern housing and overhead cabling between the Donkey Track and Heath Road. These have altered the land to the north of the Donkey Track more considerably than the land to the south, leading to its exclusion from the current conservation area, there remains an exceptionally strong sense of continuity between the core compositional elements of Constable's works in this area and

the landscape today. This is particularly true when walking The Donkey Track and looking back towards the Rectory and village, away from the modern housing (see comparison images on the next page).



Figure 103: 'Spring on East Bergholt Common' 1813, V+A. The Constable family windmill set on high open common land north and east of the village. Was removed in the mid 19th century

Figure 104-105: top—'Cottages and Windmill' 1832 (British Museum collection) and below, the area of this view in early 2025. enclosed fields retain some sense of the planting around Mill Farm House in the distance, but the windmill is lost.

2.4 Setting and Views

East Bergholt Common and the Heath

In contrast to the area north of the Donkey Track, there remains a far greater sense of veracity in views looking to the south. Here the gently undulating Riber Valley, mature oaks, and the belt of trees which encloses the buildings along Rectory Hill—including the Old Rectory—can all be experienced in ways which remain meaningful in respect of what Constable saw and sought to capture.



Figure 106: View across the land and Riber Valley from The Donkey Track, large skies, mature trees and the gently undulating landscape.



Figure 107-108: top—view down the Riber Valley towards the Old Rectory, winter 2025; right—‘Eat Bergholt Common, View towards the rectory’ 1813, (The Clerk Art Institute)

East Bergholt House

East Bergholt House was constructed by Golding Constable and was John Constable’s childhood home and point of continuity throughout his life to the death of his parents. It was then vacated by the Constable family in 1819 after it had been sold to a family friend, Walter Clerk. It was not maintained and was eventually pulled down some 20 years later. Boundary walls, the stables and the front railings remain but it is Constable’s paintings and drawings of his family home which provide some of the best indications of the artist’s love for his home and its strong role in his artistic career and inspiration, he declared himself that ‘This place was the origin of my fame’ (1832 inscription to ‘English Landscape’).



Figure 109: East Bergholt House. Oil on millboard. 1811 © V&A. The V&A description of this painting is as follows: “This panoramic view depicts Constable’s birthplace, with East Bergholt church to the left... Constable recalled with delight the scenes where his ‘ideas of Landscape were formed’ and ‘the retrospect of those happy days and years’

The Village Heart: Church, Old Hall, street scenes and cottages

Constable depicted not only his own family’s East Bergholt House or views to and from it, but the surrounding village as a whole. Friendships with local individuals gave him access into their gardens and grounds (West Lodge now Stour House and Old Hall), as well as the general village and its buildings. The depiction of all aspects of daily life in his home and nearby Suffolk countryside and river valleys were critical to his artistic development, in his own words these local scenes:

“...made me a painter, and I am grateful”; “the sound of water escaping from mill dams etc., willows, old rotten planks, slimy posts, and brickwork, I love such things”

2.4 Setting and Views

There are at least ten studies of the church held by the V+A collections in several different mediums exhibiting Constable's range and skill, as well as his practice. There is a high degree of continuity between the building as drawn and its situation today.

Old Hall was the subject of two commissioned paintings and other works, studies and sketches building on the collection of works focussed on the other buildings in the village centre particularly West Lodge (now Stour House) and the Church of St Mary. The park was also the location for wider views out over Dedham Vale.

There are a number of studies and sketches within the village of the cottages, streets and spaces as well as specific events ('Celebration of the General' 1815; 'A Village Fair' 1811). Though not all of these can be firmly located, they provide invaluable insight into the character of the village and its buildings at this time. While there are some striking points of similarity (see 'East Bergholt Street', pen and ink sketch 1796-1799, illustrated in section 3.1), in other cases Constable's paintings are now some of the only records to buildings and areas lost or significantly altered – not least his depictions of his father's house, or the Village Green, eroded at enclosure.

Village Lanes

Fen Lane, leading down from Flatford Lane, was a regular walking route for Constable on his way to school in Dedham but also between his family's properties at Flatford and in the village. They include a pleasing combination of intimate secluded country lanes, and the broader landscape beyond. 'Fen Lane', now in the Tate's collection reflects a landscape still recognisable today though hedgerows have grown up, and possibly Constable amended his backgrounds, it is known that he adjusted landscapes, trees, field boundaries in some of his paintings. The same is true of views along Flatford Lane.

Landscape and Agricultural fields

In moving between the buildings and spaces of the village heart out to the countryside the conservation area has great continuity with what is depicted in Constable's works.

Views painted looking across the Stour valley both towards Stratford St. Mary, or Dedham, and back from the valley towards East Bergholt provide insight into the wider landscape during Constable's time, similarity between the paintings and today's landscapes enables connection to his vision with core landmarks such as the church towers in neighbouring villages providing important fixed landmarks, though it is noted that in several of Constable's paintings he appears to have played with these fixed points for the sake of composition.

Flatford Mill

The mill was operated by the Constable family for nearly a century. The buildings and river, locks, boats and workers are common subjects in Constable's work.

Flatford Mill (scene on a navigable River) is Constable's largest exhibition canvas, dating to 1816 it was the forerunner to the series of 'six footers', all focussing on the River Stour and exhibited from 1819. There is a strong sense of continuity available today between the riverine landscape and the collection of buildings at Flatford and Constable's paintings. There is good public accessibility to lands in the National Trust's stewardship, and aspects of interpretation and explanation, enabling an important and meaningful level of access to this strand of artistic value and character within the conservation area.



Figure 110-111: 'Flatford Mill from the lock' 1811, Royal Academy and, below, looking to the mill, across the pond above Flatford Lock.

2.4 Views



Figure 1: 'Old Hall Park' 1801 private collection.



Figure 112: 'Porch of East Bergholt Church' 1811, V+A with the same view today.



Figure 113: 'Fen Lane, East Bergholt' 1817, Tate and the view today, hedgerows have grown up to a greater degree.



Figure 114: 'East Bergholt Church the archway of the ruined tower' 1806, pen and watercolour, V+A



Figure 115: 'A view on the Stour' 1810, John G Johnson, Philadelphia . And a similar view in the winter of 2025, shallow banks, undulating river, striking trees in silhouette.

2.4 Summary of the Contribution of Views to special interest

- The paintings of John Constable which are focused on the settlement of East Bergholt, Flatford Mill and the surrounding landscape of the Dedham vale are of **International significance and importance**. This area became known as Constable Country even during his lifetime and that sense has not diminished over time, in part because of the paintings' enduring popularity, and the enduring sense of continuity present in today's Dedham Vale and East Bergholt.
- The Victoria and Albert museum in their introduction to Constable's life and work state that *"...by combining the compositional ideas of the old masters of classical landscape with a naturalistic vision that was entirely his own, Constable would ultimately transform the genre of landscape painting – in the process shaping the enduring popular image of the English countryside"* (<https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/john-constable-an-introduction?>)

Much of that enduring popular image is focussed on areas within the proposed conservation area, where the ongoing parallels remain appreciable.
- There is a remarkable sense of continuity between the landscapes and rural scenes he portrayed and the areas within the conservation area, and parts of its immediate setting. This provides an unparalleled opportunity for connection between today's visitors and the paintings which have come to epitomise the romantic English landscape.
- The associative, historic and artistic values linked to John Constable form a golden thread that run throughout and across the conservation area
- Constables paintings also enrich opportunities to appreciate and experience other aspects of the conservation area's historic interest because they capture so much of 'ordinary' life. They illustrate, and thus enrich our opportunity to understand, aspects of agricultural livelihood at the turn of the 19th century. He depicts rural workers in fields, the wind and the water mills which processed crops, and the transportation of rural goods and the men and horses working along the Stour Navigation.

3.0

Character Areas

3.0 Introduction to the Character Areas

The subsequent sections of this report cover the four identified sub-character areas which make up the conservation area as a whole. These areas are drawn together by consistent characteristics either in terms of the spatial arrangements or building type, functions, use and activity, or by historic association and artistic values. The various areas are illustrated in detailed character area figures which also identify a series of specific characteristics:

- The position and grade of listed buildings
- Positive contributor buildings
- Opportunity areas
- Important tree lined roads
- Tree Protection Order (TPO) trees (Babergh Mid Suffolk Data)
- Prominent walls
- Key Views.

Key Constable views within each sub-area are highlighted as are the aspects of history, architecture and character and appearance which are considered to contribute to 'special interest'. The sub character areas are:

1—Village Centre to Gaston End

This sub area represents the commercial heart of the village and extension in a more domestic character up along Gaston Street and to include the development at Gaston End which wraps around a retained open area known locally as the Box Iron. Named because of its shape within Quintons Triangle formed by Quinton Road, Heath Road and Woodgates Road. Quintons Triangle is clearly shown on the early Brasier map of the heath with a triangle of tracks which remain legible to this day.

The southern part of this area contains a concentration of commercial, community, retail and other activity and then becomes predominantly domestic along the length of Gaston Street and towards Gaston End. The area around the junction between The Street and Cemetery Lane is where the perception of a village core is clearest. This part of the village is more dense and tightly developed both in the tightly spaced area. There is a consistent domestic character with relatively tightly spaced housing though all with gardens and greenery. Areas of wider spacing or glimpses out to more open ground are fewer.

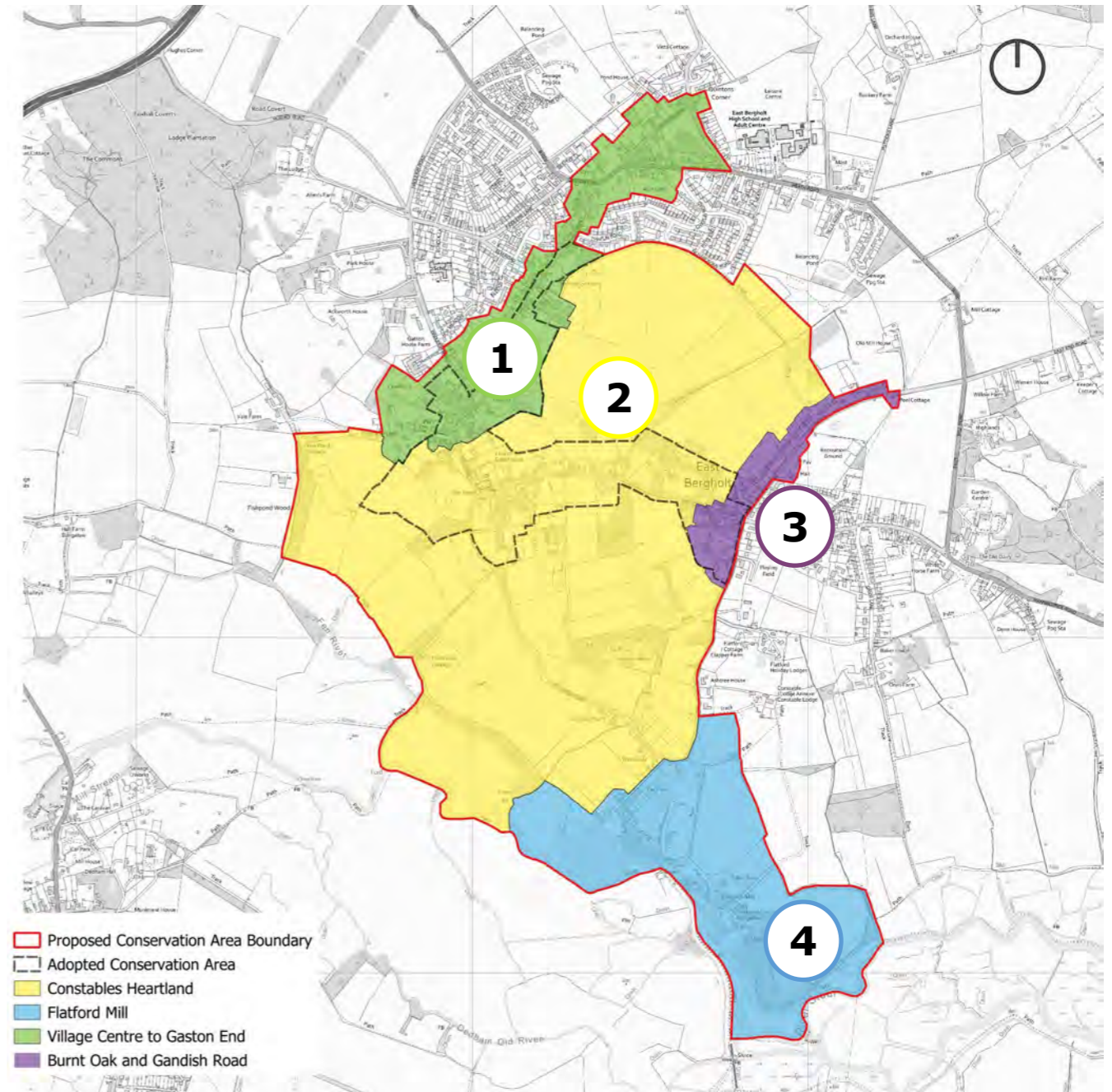


Figure 116: The Sub Character Areas

3.0 Introduction to the Character Areas

2—Constable’s Heartland

The largest sub area extends from the edge of the former heath to the north east, now marked by the Donkey Track down to the River Stour on the south west and is bisected by Rectory Hill. Flatford lane also falls within this sub-area. This area features a considerable amount of open landscape which is epitomised in a very large number of Constable’s paintings. It is this concentration which provides the impetus to include this considerable area of rural landscape as it indelibly links the landscape itself back to the internationally renowned artistic interest, and the history of Constable and his family. This area also includes a high proportion of the early ancient enclosed field boundaries, reflecting the ancient landscape’s form captured in Constable’s works and providing a further sense of connection between today’s conservation area, the area experienced and recorded by Constable, and the archaeological remnants of an ancient landscape.

The buildings within this area include the ancient manorial core of Old Hall and the medieval parish church of St Mary. Beyond that larger, spacious properties, with substantial wooded gardens are accessed from Rectory Hill and provide a notable contrast to the more tightly developed settlement areas in adjacent sub areas of the village core or Burnt Oak.

3—Burnt Oak

This area encompasses one of the historic peripheral settlements which grew up in the medieval era to address population pressure on the edge of the common heath land. ‘Burnt Oak’ features older houses clustered around the cross roads illustrating this ancient outlying settlement, a further cluster lies to the northern end of Gandish Road marking the entry into the conservation area.

The space between these outlying historic settlements is built up with a set of mid 20th century development which generally conform to a consistent character and appearance even if the individual buildings are not all of note. The houses are generally quite substantial in size, they are set well back from the roadside, they have mature gardens which contribute to a sense of verdant entry to the conservation area. This group includes a series of houses and the village hall all by renowned architect Raymond Erith .

4—Flatford Mill

Epitomised in Constable’s paintings with limited modern structural interventions or additions this area is a distinct hamlet with unique riverine character and core historic buildings that have a high degree of continuity with the past.

The area derives special interest from archaeological values in remnants of ancient settlement and a moated site, records and evidence in map and place names for the early location of a chapel as well as in retained early boundaries that can be recognised from the Brasier map and which also contribute to the national landscape characterisation.

The presence of the restored lock, bridge and dry dock are important aspects and means by which the Stour Navigation can be understood and experienced.

An important centre of tourism and visitor activity. Largely managed by National Trust. Significant links both visually and in public walking routes outwards across the valley into the rest of the Dedham Vale National Landscape.

3.1

Village Centre to Gaston End

3.1 Village Centre to Gaston End

Summary of Special Interest

The remnant of open land with the pond at 'The Box Iron' in Quintons Triangle at Gaston End is an important area of open land reflecting the early heath in its longstanding lack of arable cultivation. Fragments of undeveloped and uncultivated former heath are important echoes of past common land and contextual links between this small area and larger preserved areas along the Donkey Track are positive to historic and archaeological values even if not directly intervisible.

The village core reflects the deep longevity of human activity and settlement in the area within its wide variation of building materials, types and building function. This variety within this core area is an important aspect of its architectural interest and character. Remnants of various strands of historic interest are legible in this area from larger farm houses still associated with open land, through communal interest in public houses, shops, the historic village school, chapels and multiple houses – all of which enrich our ability to connect to the past human activity which has shaped the settlement.

Artistic interest in this area is, as with the entirety of the conservation area closely linked to John Constable and those which focus on the village heart and its buildings. A cluster of his works relate to the area at the southern end of this character area and just into the adjacent area from the Church eastwards, most importantly his sketch of his former workshop Rose Cottage (Grade II listed).



Figure 117: The Lambe School, founded in 1594 and remaining in public use. The portion on the right is probably the original with later red brick facades and with an early 19th century expansion to the left.

Historic Summary

The southern end of this sub area represents the central focus of early settlement and activity to the west and north west of the church and principal manorial site (Old Hall) which are located in the adjacent sub-area but which remain a focus for understanding the reason for early settlement here.

Another important early survival within this area is the triangular pattern of roads at Gaston End, which retains the open fragment of undeveloped heath land known as The Box Iron. The Street leading on to Gaston Street between the core and Gaston End features a collection of historic buildings dating back to the 15th (Commandree/Gothics/Little Gothics) and 16th century (The Gables, The Lambe School, Richardson's Farmhouse) which continue to enable an understanding of the antiquity of this route and the infill between them over subsequent centuries—this enables ongoing connection with the historic values of the conservation area as well as being a collection of very high quality listed buildings.

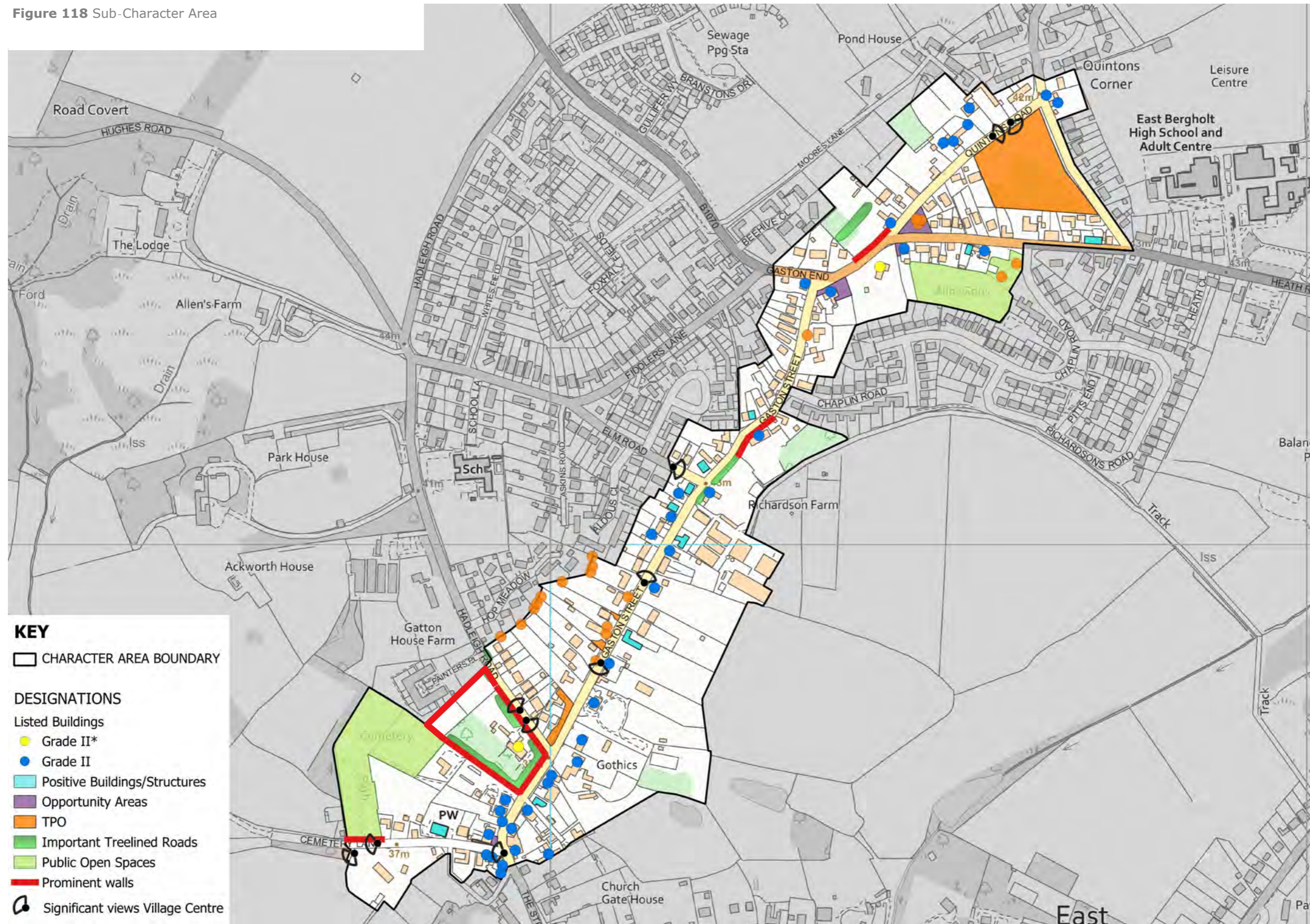
Development close to the church was comparatively tight knit from early periods with widening of the streets north west of the church, both including ponds, reflecting early medieval or post medieval communal 'village greens', now almost entirely gone, with only a small triangle of land bearing the village sign all that is left of the southern village green. That portion was enclosed in 1817 and taken into the property ownership of the Rev. W. Deane who constructed the white brick wall visible in the image below around his house West Lodge, now Stour House.

The road extending northwards, Gaston Street, is now one of the primary routes into and through the village. Even in the early 19th century this route featured houses, a school and police station illustrating the extension of village activity along the route.

The area contains the non-conformist chapel, another focus for communal values and evidence of the religious life of the community. There remains a concentration of shops, pubs, and other businesses in this area, though even over the course of compiling this appraisal there has been change and fluctuation.

3.1 Village Centre to Gaston End

Figure 118 Sub-Character Area



3.1 Village Centre to Gaston End

Street and Plot Patterns

This area follows an approximately linear route from the village centre and The Street, along the broadly straight line of Gaston Street and on until it joins Gaston End and then splits around Quinton Triangle. Other routes are captured in part where they join in to The Street or Gaston Street. The street pattern is historic, though with modern characteristics in terms of road surface and pavement materials and the ubiquitous presence of parked cars, particularly in the centre. Early widened areas which once formed village greens have been eroded through enclosure and through the formalisation and resurfacing of the spaces.



Figure 119: The wide road in the village centre incorporates one of the ancient historic 'greens', with a pond further to the north depicted outside The Gables on Brasier's Map.

There is a pleasing contrast on Gaston Street between the straight and relatively open southern portion, to a more enclosed, winding and intimate character at the northern end past Richardson's Farmhouse.

Plots generally extend back from the routes in comparatively regular rectangular layouts. Many of these appear to have long lived continuity when tracking back across historic maps. Higher density in the village core, and more irregular layouts with closely spaced buildings is distinctive in this concentrated area. A smaller scale of plot division is also notable at the northern end of Gaston Street, and around Quintons Triangle. The southern end of Gaston Street has a wider spacing and more spacious feel with distinct glimpses between houses to mature trees and greenery between and behind buildings.



Figure 120: Extract of Brasier's 1731 Map of East Bergholt, the heath at Gaston End is shown top right and the position of early houses and buildings marked between the centre and Gaston End.

Boundaries

Boundary definition is mixed. There are examples of timber fencing, metal railings, hedges and brick walling seen throughout the area. Where hedges or front garden planting combined with more open railings or fences are seen, these boundaries contribute to a sense of verdant greenery. Where taller boundary walls are present, particularly around larger properties they contribute to a sense of enclosure.

In the village centre, where Cemetery Lane meets The Street, there is a concentration of buildings which rise direct from the rear edge of the pavement, but even here Chapel house

3.1 Village Centre to Gaston End

and the Old Post Office on the west side of The Street and Fountain House to the east have mature front gardens which draw greenery into the centre.

Moving along Gaston Street to the north, aside from the boundary wall to The Gables, which defines the junction to Hadleigh Road, all properties begin to be set back from the road with front gardens. There is a broadly consistent building line but it is not rigid with some houses set further back, some closer to the road. The Lambe School is almost directly adjacent to the pavement edge, in contrast to buildings around it. With the combination of building styles and boundary treatments there is a pleasant variety which avoids monotony and speaks to the long period over which the road was filled in to its current level of development.



Figure 121: View along Gaston street passing Richardson's Farm where fences, walls, and hedges provide variety in boundary types and there is a pleasing amount of greenery.

Building Types and uses

Though this area contains a focus for the commercial and business uses within the conservation area, the majority of buildings are domestic with former shops also now in domestic use and with fewer hints at former uses overly visible within the buildings, though large windows do sometimes signal past commercial uses.

Houses are represented on a number of social scales, from smaller historic cottages and terraces as well as mid 20th century bungalows, through medium and substantial free standing or semi detached houses in relatively generous gardens. This area does not contain what might be considered 'gentry' houses which are instead found in sub areas 2 and 3



Figure 12123: Stuarts formerly known as 'Tarbin & Jessops' and above the bay window and northern elevation when in use as a shop from the mid 20th century above (History Group: East Bergholt Back in time group)



Figure 124: Hatters in the village centre, 16th century in origin with a likely 18th century phase. The phrase 'dealer in hats' is painted on the wall. Large shop window on the left, with surviving external shutters on two adjacent windows.

3.1 Village Centre to Gaston End

though the larger surviving timber framed buildings are at the upper end of social status for their period and Commandree is the location of one of the former manorial seats.

Public houses are located in both the village centre (The Red Lion currently closed) and further north in this area which served Gaston's End (The Carriers' Arms and The Hare and Hounds, all within listed buildings).

There is a small collection of shops, cafes and other functions in the village centre. They occupy both historic and modern properties continuing a sense of activity within the village core. Historic shops are occasionally recognisable through clues in their structure. Others have been identified through local accounts and references which provide access and enrich understanding (Stuarts, GII listed building formerly Tarbin Grocers and Suppliers).

Building Scale and Massing

The majority of buildings in this area are two storeys in height. Smaller buildings are present including the diminutive cottages of Hatters and the Old House in the centre pictured above, and a series of bungalows added in the post war period at the northern end of Gaston Street. Bungalows and single storey or storey and a half buildings are also more prevalent on the southern side of Quinton's triangle.

Buildings of both single or two storeys may have rooms in the roof indicated with dormer windows or skylights. Heights are varied, particularly where differing building traditions were governed by vernacular material characteristics and properties, or more standardised or modern materials. Contrasting heights between a smaller two storey Victorian Cottage, or a modern house governed by building regulations or guidance reflect differing periods of development as well as variety in the architectural styles present.

Materials and Details

This part of the village is particularly distinctive in the variety of materials which can be found making up its buildings. There are a series of striking timber framed buildings which retain externally expressed traditional timber framing (Chaplin's, Richardson's Farmhouse and Stuarts) within the area and many others are rendered but with distinct characteristics of a traditional timber frame. Several of the listed buildings are identified as having timber framed cores behind later facades.

Brick makes up the primary solid mass construction type but there is a huge range in colour variety from white, yellow or buff through to warmer red orange tones. Contrasting colour brickwork is sometimes used around openings or on corners. Flemish bond is the most frequent traditional bond, though more recent houses exhibit less variety and utilise



Figure 125: Commandree/Gothics/Little Gothics (Graham Reed, EBS) . One of the larger and earlier houses within the sub-area dating to the Fifteenth Century, now divided into three.



Figure 126: One of the larger modern houses constructed on Gaston Street, maintaining a good set back and well tended garden.

3.1 Village Centre to Gaston End

stretcher bond. Several houses are rendered, or have painted facades with white, cream or pinkish colours predominating.

Roof forms are similarly varied and there is little sense of a single dominant 'type' though throughout this character area roofs meet the facades with overhanging eaves, there are no incidences of houses with roofs concealed behind parapets. There are hipped forms and examples of half-hips, shallow Georgian slopes, and a wide variety of steeper pitches, gambrel roofs are seen on the old smaller cottages in the centre, and at Gaston's End. As previously mentioned attic accommodation is clear through dormer windows which might appear on all slopes, and be either pitched or flat. Roofing materials are generally a mix of local clay tile, or slate, particularly on the shallow roofed Georgian buildings. A single thatched building is found at Quintons by Gaston End and modern houses feature concrete tiles and some rippled pantiles.

Public Realm, open spaces, trees/green landscape

The Box Iron is an important open space, though in private ownership with no public access. It represents a core early stage in the village's evolution and contributes to historic and archaeological values within the area as well as being an important remnant of the ancient Heath.

The remnant of the rest of this open triangle of former heath land is also retained where Quinton Road splits from Heath Road, the quality of this space is comparatively poor and

overgrown with a set of damaged iron railings but it remains visually somewhat open and green. The tree cover screens the later houses which have been built up on the triangle of former heath land.

The cemetery represents a formal space with public pathways and some public access connected into the centre of the village via Cemetery Lane and across a meadow to the village public car park.

Further publicly accessible but private land like public house gardens and the allotment gardens south of the Hare and Hounds or north of the main church yard, create some sense of space and contribute to a sense of activity within the village. The allotment gardens were once much more extensive, they remain a positive public resource.

Private gardens, particularly of the larger houses, make an important contribution to the sense of greenery and openness even within the core of the village. Mature trees are predominantly within private gardens, but are very important to the character of this area softening built forms, providing variety in street scenes.

The following page illustrates some of the key views within this sub area. There are some areas captured by Constable but by and large, these views are important more for the way that they enable an experience of this part of the village which is rich in variety, building forms, materials and periods.



Figure 127: the southern corner of Quintons Triangle where trees and scrubby grass screen encroachment of this former area of Heath.



Figure 128: mature oak in the pub garden of the Hare and Hounds, the allotments behind add to the spaciousness here.



Figure 129: The contribution of private gardens along Gaston Street to a sense of openness within the area.

3.1 Village Centre to Gaston End

Positive Views

In the centre, there is a detailed sketch by Constable where several of the building forms remain appreciable today. At the end of Cemetery Lane a sunset view is reportedly cut from a larger painting, though this has not been identified (EBS), the character of this view is very close to what can be experienced today following the footpath on from Cemetery Lane and up above Vale Farm (see below).

Long views along the straight length of Gaston Street are attractive incorporating buildings of multiple periods, forms and materials. There are contrasting views where the shift between straight and open and more enclosed and winding is experienced in the centre of this street north of Richardson's Farm.

The view on entering the conservation area along Elm Road where the mature trees and striking timber framed building at Richardson's Farm signals arrival in the historic area of settlement.



Figure 131-132: Top: 'Autumnal Sunset' 1812 (V+A) A loose sketch said to possibly have been cut from a larger painting. Below: closely comparable view of the landscape above Vale Farm, west of Cemetery Lane where the above painting is located.

Views into and past the Box Iron, particularly from Quinton Street where a concentration of historic buildings, listed and unlisted in combination with this open land create a positive experience.

Views at Hadleigh Road where the tall enclosing wall around The Gables leads into a wooded tree tunnel just beyond the conservation area boundary, providing an attractive and rural entry even though modern housing is appreciable here as well.

There are 43 listed buildings within this sub-area, they are all included in appendix 2. The majority are listed Grade II; Chaplin's towards Gaston End and The Gables at the entry to Hadleigh Road are both Grade II*. The listed buildings are concentrated in the southern end

Audit of Heritage Assets

of the area around the village centre and at Gaston End, but with a regular distribution of listed buildings, all of which pre-date the 20th century, along Gaston Street and at Gaston End which indicates the historic nature of these routes. Though some properties have individually listed boundary walls or railings, it is noted that the provisions of Section 1.5(b)



Figure 133: Pound House, designed by Raymond Erith and with the group of contemporary buildings at Gandish Road an important set of positive contributors within the wider area

3.1 Village Centre to Gaston End

Positive Views



Figure 134-135: 'East Bergholt Street', Pen and Watercolour, 1796-1799, V&A and contemporary view today. The gambrel roof on the left remains, as does the gabled



Figure 136: enclosed entry to Cemetery Lane with the striking gable of the Congregational Church, close building lines provide contrast to openness beyond.



Figure 137: Enclosed view along Cemetery Lane.



Figure 138: At the end of Cemetery lane a striking view out over the vale towards Dedham Church tower.



Figure 139: Long views along the straight section of Gandish Road are positive in both directions.



Figure 140: View along Quinton Street past the Box Iron to Quintons House and Cottage which terminate the view.



Figure 142: View from centre out along Hadleigh Road, tall wall of The Gables a striking feature on the left.



Figure 143: Entry to the conservation area towards Richardson's Farm from Elm Road

3.1 Village Centre to Gaston End

of the Act may well extend the protection of the main listed building to associated ancillary structures in the curtilage of the listed buildings.

Many of un-listed buildings within this area certainly contribute positively to the area where their exteriors retain a strong degree of period integrity, irrespective of what age they are, and a good degree of survival with limited alteration. Other buildings which have particular links to local notable personages or specific East Bergholt events or functions are also considered of local interest.

Pound House in the centre is one of a collection of houses by architect Raymond Erith, the majority are focussed to the east in the Burnt Oak Character Area. This sub area also has links to two other illustrators and authors who lived here in the early 20th century. Edward Ardizzone 1900-1979, cartoonist, official war artist 1940-1946 and illustrator of more than 170 books spent some of his childhood in the house called 'Gothics' (EBS). The neighbouring



Figure 1: The Hermitage, Quintons Road.



Figure 144-145: Mural in the garage of Short Acre by John Ryan, creator of the cheerful childhood character Captain Pugwash.

house, Short Acre, was the home to Lady Ryan the grandmother of John Ryan author of the Captain Pugwash series.

The Congregational Church and Red Lion Public House are large buildings in the village centre, the steep gable of the Congregational Church, though back a little way from the main road offers a visual focal point. Richardson's Farm House with its striking evergreens outside and alignment make it focal on entering the village from Elm Lane. At Gaston End The Hermitage faces across the relatively open junction between Quintons Road and Heath Road and with its gables is a notable feature at this end of the character area. Quintons



Figure 146: Jubilee House, one of the later 19th century additions on the western side of Gandish Road, unlisted but with surviving period sash windows and ornamental brickwork rendering it a positive contributor to the area.



Figure 147: Victorian houses on the southern edge of Quinton Triangle, late 19th century additions retaining some period features including windows.

3.1 Village Centre to Gaston End

Issues and opportunities

House and Cottage terminate the view moving north along Quintons Road and with peripheral views to older properties to the west offers an historic focal structure in conjunction with the open area of the Box Iron.

There is a lack of fully public open space within the village core. This renders the 'borrowed' sense of space which is provided by large gardens or open land in private ownership which might be experienced from the public domain as sensitive to further change. Further development and encroachment, particularly the loss of front gardens, or removal of mature trees, would erode the sense of rural character which remains in this area despite the relative density of historic development.

There are few truly detracting buildings or features in this area. The empty and boarded up Chaplains/Gascoigne cottage is ostensibly in decline and in need of investment. Loss of garden space and paving over of front gardens for parking to the post war houses on Woodgate Road has slightly lessened the sense of rural village character leading to the immediate setting of the conservation area here becoming more suburban. Removal of front

boundaries to facilitate on site parking within properties should be considered very carefully and avoided where this would erode the sense of village and green character along streets both within and immediately outside the conservation area.

The car parking area at The Carriers Arms is non descript, extensive and in comparison to the rest of the area distinctly unattractive. Historic maps show clearly the erosion of historic boundaries, potentially walls or hedges. The building is listed, its current setting is poor quality both in terms of its immediate surroundings and the wider contribution to the conservation area.

Encouragement and education should be given to all residents in order to secure sensitive adaptation or improvement to private dwellings in keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area and the specific period of any individual dwelling. Making the design code familiar to all will avoid the introduction of poor quality materials or fixtures (uPVC windows, low quality boundary treatments).



Figure 148: Chaplains and Gascoignes Cottage, a listed building in poor condition, summer 2025



Figure 149: Non descript car parking at the Carriers Arms, historic boundaries shown on historic maps have been eroded leaving this listed building in a poor quality setting



Figure 150: The loss of front gardens to provide additional car parking, as here on Woodgates Road on the boundary of the conservation area, may remove cars from the streets themselves but risks loss of greenery and screening, which are generally positive features.

3.2

Constable's Heartland

3.2 Constable's Heartland

Summary of Special Interest

This area is of particular, indeed international, historic and artistic value because of the connection to John Constable, his artwork and family life. This central area holds a concentration of viewpoints painted and sketched by Constable extending from the high point of the heath through the core of the village around Old Hall and the Church, down to the intimate sunken lanes of Flatford and Fen Lane and wider views over the Dedham Vale. Despite new housing intruding into the setting of the area to the north this area holds a remarkable sense of continuity between the views available today, and those captured in Constable's work. Though two key buildings linked to Constable have been lost (his own family home and his father's windmill on the heath) there remains a strong sense of historic integrity and opportunity to connect with the landscape and buildings which inspired Constable's unique approach to landscape painting and more widely the Romantic period as a whole.

The Parish Church and its unique bell chamber are significant buildings reflecting the wealth of the Parish during the medieval period fuelled by the wool and woollen fabric trade. The Constable family memorial stones are within the graveyard.

Old Hall is the focus of the principal medieval manor within the Parish, though the building was rebuilt in the 18th and 19th centuries, it retains substantial areas of land which maintain a sense of parkland and secure its central role in illustrating the history of the settlement.

This area retains the small fragment of the former green just outside of Stour House as well as the widened area of road to the east of the Parish Church. These areas are remnant reflections of open spaces once used for communal gatherings, markets and fairs important to the settlements history. Though their character has changed the building alignments around these spaces enables ongoing understanding of the more ancient village layout and form archaeological clues in the settlement morphology to earlier times prior to enclosure.

The limited degree of change or modern introductions along Rectory Hill provide a characterful and historically rich opportunity to gain a sense of this sub-area in the past.

Summary History

This sub area includes substantial swathes of largely undeveloped land to either side of a sequence of large properties which line Rectory Hill. In the western edge it includes the early core of settlement focus in the former principal manorial site of Old Hall, which went from ancient manor, through 18th century country house with expanded parkland at the point of enclosure, through to a religious then secular community in the later 19th and 20th centuries. Its prominent built form in the village centre, with large associated grounds and gardens is a significant focus for the history of the village.



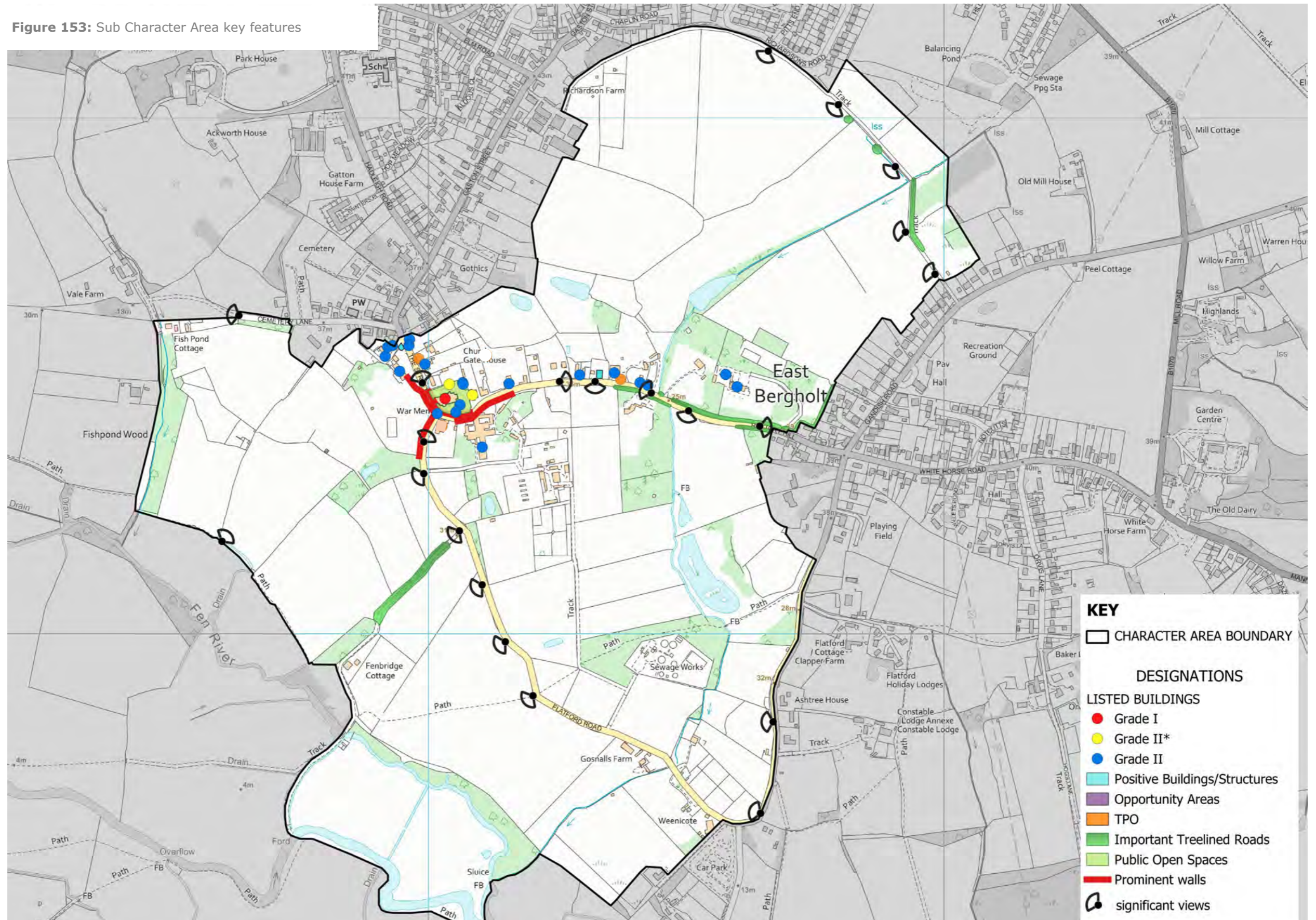
Figure 151: The Donkey Track at the northern edge of this area



Figure 152: 'Clouds' 1821 Ferens Art Gallery, the large skies and mobile active cloud scenes are thought to have been inspired by Constables time on the heath and area of the Donkey Track where the skies remain wide, open and dynamic in today's views.

3.2 Constable's Heartland

Figure 153: Sub Character Area key features



3.2 Constable's Heartland

This area also contains the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, another focus of community activity and spirit since the 14th century. This focus of historic settlement blends closely with the village heart in the previous sub-character area

Rectory Hill is the main route through this area and is depicted on the Brasier Map linking the village centre to the satellite hamlet of Burnt Oak, much as Gaston Street extended from the village core to Gaston's End. This route has remained consistent with little change since then with large free standing houses which maintain a sense of spaciousness. The open land on either side of Rectory Hill had already been enclosed in more ancient times and the remnants of the historic ancient enclosures still legible in field boundaries is an important



Figure 154: Looking towards Stour House where the red brick wall along the drive represents the older alignment and the newer white brick wall and hedge reflects land claimed after 1817.

connection to past human activities and overlapping links to the Dedham Vale National Landscape. At enclosure the most notable effect in this area was the reduction in the village green, giving greater privacy and front garden to Stour House, which once directly fronted on to the green.

This area contained the family home of the Constable family from the later 18th century and John Constable spent much of his time painting this area, and the views across the northern half of this area towards the Old Rectory as this is where he cemented his relationship with Maria Bicknell, granddaughter of Dr Rhudde who owned the Old Rectory during this period.

There has been little change in this central area through the 20th century, aside from the addition of a few individual houses. The setting of this area to the north has seen more recent expansions of housing to the north but elsewhere there are remarkably few newer houses and the historic nature of the landscape, routes, and main historic buildings are clearly appreciable to this day.



Figure 155: 'Golding Constable's Garden' 1815, Ipswich Museum. The elevated viewpoint suggests the artist is on an upper floor of his family home, a view not possible today as the house was removed.



Figure 156: 'Looking east across the land behind Constable's former home, the trees on the far right are at the Old Rectory.

3.2 Constable's Heartland



Figure 157-159: Top: 'Dedham Vale morning' 1811, Private Collection. Middle : view from just off Flatford lane looking towards Dedham. Bottom: View along Flatford Lane looking towards Dedham, the hedges are more dense with only glimpses out.

Street and plot patterns

This area features Rectory Hill as the primary road through the area, Flatford Lane, Fen Lane and Flatford Mill Lane as secondary much smaller rural routes and which form important elements of the ancient enclosed landscape, Fen Lane and Flatford Mill Lane in particular being partly sunken in their nature.

The residential plot patterns vary quite considerably but include the larger properties within the conservation area that take in substantial amounts of land, and contain mature trees and areas of parkland character (Old Hall, Stour House and at The Old Rectory). On the western side of the area, towards the village core, houses are set more closely together, some rising directly from the street and here this greater density transitions smoothly into the adjacent village centre sub character area.

The church yard is a core communal area with places to rest, an important collection of monuments and buildings including the Bell Cage and the burial memorial to Golding and Ann Constable.

Boundaries

Boundaries within the rural parts of the area are generally hedges. Within the built up area along Rectory Hill hedges become distinctly more formalised in contrast with the rural boundaries seen in the countryside areas. Areas of estate fencing or railings are found within Old Hall and along some parts of Rectory Hill.



Figure 160: Constable Family memorial stones in the far corner of the church yard, the roof of the bell chamber visible on the right.

3.2 Constable's Heartland

Boundary walls in brick become more frequent towards the village core, the white brick wall with recessed panels defining the boundary to Stour House from Flatford Lane is particularly prominent and lengthy. The church yard is raised up behind a low brick wall much aged with a round tile coping and railings, other properties along Rectory Hill feature individual stretches – the walls are interspersed with hedges so the character is varied. The low wall and 18th century railings to Constable's family home are listed in their own right.



Figure 161: Looking east over the shallow Riber Valley from the footpath following adjacent to Flatford Lane, hedges and rural fencing characterise the boundaries.



Figure 162: Low church wall with historic railings.



Figure 163-164: Top East Bergholt Church and war memorial from the head of Flatford Lane. Below: 'East Bergholt Church, the exterior from the South west' 1797. Pen and watercolour. V+A

Building Types and Uses

The Church of St Mary the Virgin is the primary non residential structure, and a focal point for the whole conservation area.

Elsewhere in the area the buildings are almost exclusively residential at the upper social scale, though some smaller houses are present. Old Hall, is still fundamentally residential albeit for a community rather than an individual family. It and other larger properties also come with associated outbuildings and ancillary structures within individual properties, several of which are visible from the road, particularly at Old Hall where the rear of ancillary ranges back onto the street providing a sense of enclosure.

3.2 Constable's Heartland



Figure 165: Old Hall from the area east of the church



Figure 166: Stour House, formerly West Lodge in Constable's time.



Figure 167: Smaller cottages west of the church, dated 1896 above door.

Building Scale and Massing

This sub area contains the larger properties in the area including the church, Stour House and Old Hall as the largest. Despite larger footprints and scale of these specific buildings, two storeys remains the predominant building height.

The general character of this area is of comparatively large buildings in widely spaced surroundings. There are smaller properties set in terraces, or small more closely spaced groups on Church Plain, at Rectory Hill Cottage and St Mary's Cottage, and Gissings and Dairy Farm Cottage.

Materials and details

Brick is the core building material and features in buildings of all periods as well as in boundary walls. Render or painted brick is also relatively regular. Several of the listed buildings in this area are described as timber framed at their core but this is not a visual characteristic of the architecture in this area, it is present in the 15th century Bell Cage in the church yard.

The church's flint walls and stone detailing is highly significant and a prominent contrast to the prevailing brick and render.

Sash windows predominate, reflecting the 18th century period of many of these buildings as well as the comparatively higher status of the dwellings, casements are found in the smaller

cottages and houses. Similarly the 18th and 19th century larger houses feature a selection of classically styled door cases and generally symmetrical formal facades.

Aside from the highly ornamental decorative style of the church, the 19th century conventual ranges of Old Hall exhibit some polychrome decorative façade treatment a statue and iron cross above the entrances reflecting the religious history of the building. Decorative barge boards ornament the gables of Robertsons Cottages.

Public Realm, open spaces, and trees/green landscape

This area includes both open countryside and areas of housing and settlement along Rectory Hill. Because of the mature planting within private gardens and grounds of the Rectory Hill properties there is a notably rural feel with many of the buildings well screened such that from the Donkey Track, there is no real view to individual buildings in this area and there is a sense of continuous countryside unless you are directly on Rectory Hill where the buildings are visible and accessed.

The public realm is relatively standard in terms of spaces on the highway. Two areas of parking are present either side of the Church of St Mary the Virgin, both on areas of former village green, now much reduced in area and altered with modern finish and strong visual presence of cars. The area to the east, known as Church Plain has seen the loss of trees, and a former house on the western end so that today the church yard is more open to this approach from the east

3.2 Constable's Heartland

Materials and details



Figure 168: One of three modern houses on Rectory Hill, neutral in many ways but perpetuating the general pattern of development in this area



Figure 169: The area known as Church Plain, once featuring more trees, and an additional house behind the photographer.



Figure 170: Smaller houses looking over the former village green and marking the entry into the adjacent sub-area the village core transitioning to a generally smaller building scale



Figure 171: Classical detailing on The Old Chapel House which includes remnant hooks for once external shutters, a fine door case and 6/6 sash windows with splayed window heads



Figure 172: Material richness in the area from brick of various dates and colours through to the striking stone and flintwork of the Church.

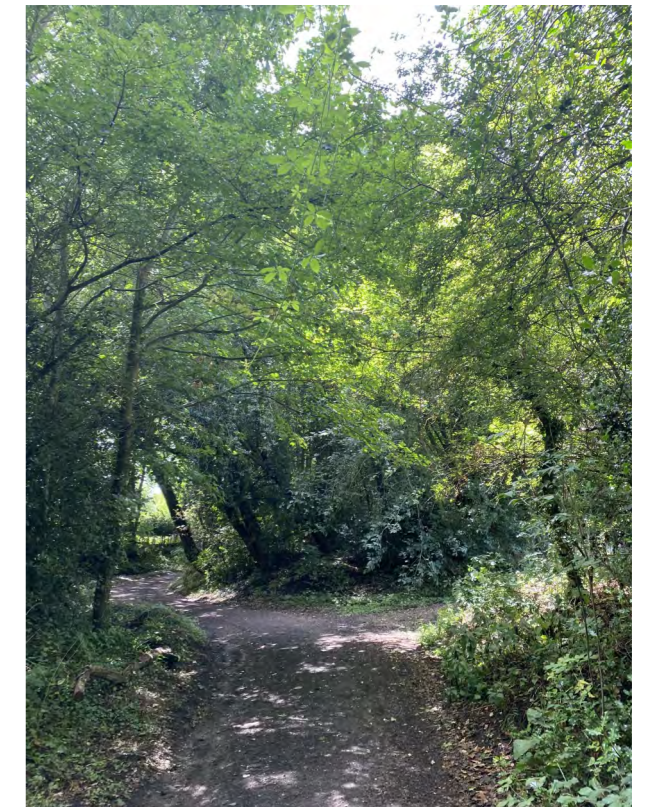


Figure 173: Public access to the countryside via the network of public footpaths, here through dappled shade of mature boundaries to sunken trackway at the lower end of Fen Lane

3.2 Constable's Heartland

The church yard of St Mary the Virgin is the most significant open space within the core other than the countryside itself where access via the network of public footpaths is well used.

The rural landscape which retains ancient boundaries and a strong sense of continuity with that painted by John Constable is the most important aspect of open space in this area. It is accessed by way of public footpaths and lanes. This sub area encompasses all three of the landscape character areas identified in the Historic Landscape Appraisal from River meadowlands, up the rolling valley farmlands and onto the plateau farmlands. What draws them together in this character area is the artistic works of John Constable which spans all three and which, with the comparatively small degree of more recent change, remain clearly understandable.

Key Views

This area contains a core concentration of vantage points captured in the artistic output of John Constable (see Appendix 3 and Section 2.5). Each of the viewpoints which he drew or painted are considered key, particularly where their continuity to the situation today remains recognisable and they are strongly positive aspects of the conservation area's character, historic and artistic values. View points within the public domain have good accessibility to a wide range of visitors, ensuring their legacy can be widely experienced.

The East Bergholt Society Website locates images on a base map enabling at a glance an understanding of the concentration of Constable's paintings within this area:

- 15 artworks are located on the higher ground around The Donkey Track, these include some in the setting of the conservation area around the Constable Family windmill, and some more closely located behind the Old Rectory as well as the broad views across the Riber Valley (see next page).
- 52 artworks are identified in a tight cluster at the north western end of Flatford Lane, around Old Hall, St Mary's Church, Stour House the village green and the location of Golding Constable's house.
- 18 artworks are located in the south western area on the valley slopes, along Flatford and Fen Lanes and along the Stour including a series of studies for the Six footer 'The Leaping Horse' (1819, Royal Academy)

These views extend throughout this character area and it is this concentration which forms such a strong aspect of the proposed conservation area's unique character, appearance and special interest. The cultural contribution of Constable's work is acknowledged in the National



Figure 174-175: East Bergholt Church from the south west' 1817 Durban Museum of Arts, South Africa



Figure 176-177: The Leaping Horse ' 1825, Royal Academy. One of the 'six footers' and, right, comparable scene on the Stour in winter, the flexible stems of riverside willows captured in both.

Landscape designation but the conservation area takes it beyond a focus on the natural features which remain (river, hedgerows, trees) and extends protection to elements which directly reflect and illustrate the historic interest embodied in structures and spaces captured in Constable's artistic output as well as the illustration of the functional historic livelihoods undertaken in these areas on both rural fields, lanes and the Stour Navigation.

3.2 Constable's Heartland

Constable views across the Riber Valley, then and now



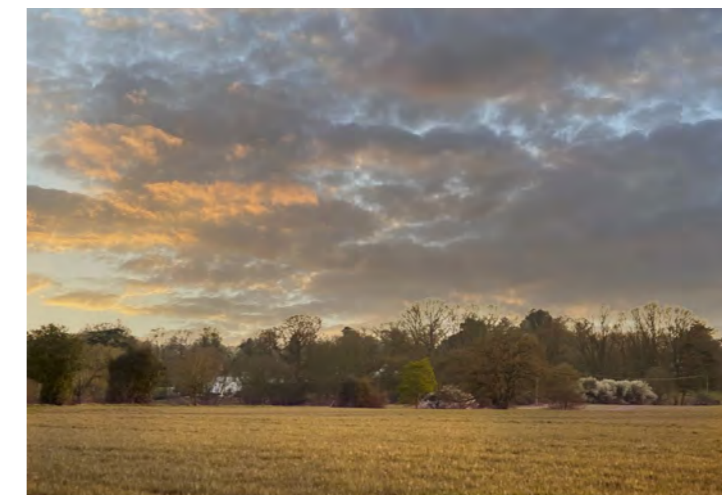
Figure 178: (left) 'East Bergholt' 1813, Yale
(right) The view today across the Riber valley. The view across the fields from the Donkey Track towards the dense trees around the Old Rectory were a subject much returned to by Constable, and one where the sense of connection to today's landscape remains strong.



Figure 179: (left) 'East Bergholt' 1808, Fitzwilliam Museum
(right) View from the Donkey Track today



Figure 180: (left) 'Evening Landscape' 1828, Yale.
(right) the view today at evening.



3.2 Constable's Heartland



Figure 181-182: Cottage at East Bergholt, a little known small painting with no firm date, believed to be looking east from around the church yard
View today from the churchyard toward 'Church Plain'.



Figure 183-184: 'The Lane from East Bergholt to Flatford' 1812, Museo Lazaro, Madrid
Flatford Lane today, close to Gosnall's Farm above Flatford, more enclosed with trees and hedges than as shown by Constable.



Figure 185-186: 'Stour Valley with the Church of Dedham' 1814, Boston Museum of Art
View towards Dedham over the valley, after harvest summer 2025, the church tower is visible in the right hand side in the trees

3.2 Constable's Heartland

Audit of Heritage Assets

The area contains 20 listed buildings but some of these are the among most significant structures in the village including the Grade I church of St Mary the Virgin and its Grade I listed Bell Cage. Church Gate House is listed Grade II* and all others are grade II. The importance of the listed buildings in statutory terms is reflected in their contribution to the conservation area, particularly the church as a focal communal building and core of the historic settlement alongside Old Hall.

Despite the lower grade assigned on the statutory list some of these structures have particularly important historic links to John Constable or the story of East Bergholt as a whole: Old Hall the ancient manorial focus of the settlement and Stour House were both much painted by Constable; The Old Rectory was home to Rev. Rhudde, Maria Bicknell's grandfather; railings to East Bergholt House (Constable's childhood home) and the former stable range now called 'The Court' represent the only structural survivals from the artist's childhood home. Constable's parents have their burial monument within the church yard.

The war memorial in conjunction with the church offers important communal and commemorative focus within the area.

Gissings and Dairy Farm Cottage are both listed, but are also particularly prominent when moving through the area on Rectory Hill as the first buildings seen on the street after passing through the striking green wooded character of the eastern end of this street.

The only unlisted building surviving to a good degree which pre-dates the 20th century is Hill House. This likely 19th century addition with inscribed lintels over the traditional sashes is a positive contributor to the area. It is also associated with author and journalist Paul Jennings who lived here for many years until his death in 1989 (EBS).



Figure 187: Positive contributor Hill house (EBS)

Issues and Opportunities

The recent encroachment of modern housing to the north of Donkey Track is visually and physically intrusive on this important area of landscape with core links to John Constable's work. All the areas within the conservation area boundary are considered of high landscape sensitivity (Historic Landscape Appraisal 2021, Fig 5.3). Ongoing housing development of this type and in this open area presents a distinct risk of further erosion of heritage values through detrimental effects in the setting of the conservation area, particularly artistic and historic values linked to the current sense of continuity between today's landscape and that which inspired Constable's work.

The former windmill site is used for general storage, there is little to no ability to understand or experience how it is important to the history of the village and Constable's work. Connection between the fields around the former windmill site, Mill Farm and the Donkey Track has been partly lessened with the planting of Millennium Wood which although undoubtedly ecologically valuable, has reduced the historic openness captured in Constable's paintings of this area. The loss of the windmill occurred many years ago. Further erosion of the legibility of the historic landscape character might arise through additional tree growth or potential further development of housing at present, it remains open and undeveloped and has potential for enhancement or greater opportunities to explain and set out its historic value.

The junction around the war memorial features some rather unassuming plain fencing around a sub-station, informally used for posters. In combination with necessary signage blocking entry to Flatford Lane from this direction, the view from the church yard is rather cluttered with the standardised modern utilities and highways fixtures contrasting with the highly significant heritage structures. A similarly blunt utility marker has recently been installed at the head of Fen Lane with seemingly little regard to restoration of the verge.

The sewage works are located in the land south of Rectory Hill, a public footpath runs close by. Though the nature of the site is necessary it is innately unattractive. It is, however, relatively well screened by woodland and is not prominent.

Flatford Lane is a narrow rural route—part of its charm and positive character but also one which comes with risks, particularly in the potential for conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. It has a one way system in place which assists in alleviating safety issues but ad hoc parking on the lane presents some small issue both in terms of potential road safety but also in the opportunities to experience this as a very unaltered route, where the past character can be disrupted with the visual presence of cars. Benches on the route form welcome dwelling points for pedestrians, but standardised bins for rubbish or dog waste are not visually attractive or subtle.

3.3

Burnt Oak and Gandish Road

3.3 Burnt Oak and Gandish Road

Summary of Special Interest

Burnt Oak is one of the satellite settlements which developed around and on the periphery of East Bergholt Heath. Clusters of historic buildings at Burnt Oak which can be experienced together enable an experience of this historic focus of human settlement reflecting the oldest layout and distribution of human habitation.

A similar cluster of buildings to the northern end of Gandish Road at the entry to the Conservation Area here is similarly reflective along with the route of Gandish Road itself which follows an early track across the Heath.

The entry point to the public right of way known as The Donkey Track is recorded on the Brasier map as 'Gandish Stile' it remains in the same location and reflects the longevity of this as a route.

Important architectural value derived from association with architect Raymond Erith and an important group of buildings designed by him including seven houses and the village hall. There are contextual links between this group and other buildings in East Bergholt and the wider area where he lived and worked as well as with internationally well know buildings such as No. 10 Downing Street, for which he was the architect.



Figure 188: Recent drone photograph of the Burnt Oak area with the curved route of Gandish Road up to the cluster of 19th century buildings on the far right and with the mature trees around Burnt Oak house in the bottom left. White horse Road extending to the east is identified.

Historic Summary

Burnt Oak represents a small cross roads hamlet historically on the western edge of the East Bergholt Heath and at the eastern end of Rectory Hill which connects it to the village centre. It is first recorded in historic documents in 1384 as 'brendhok' and retains at least two buildings dating back to the 16th century reflecting the antiquity of settlement here. The curving route of Gandish Road is also discernible on the early Brasier map of 1733 and was little altered at the point of enclosure (Figure). In 1754 the parish purchased The Town House to act as a poor house—commonly found on the outskirts of settlements as this area would have been in relation to the main village at this time.

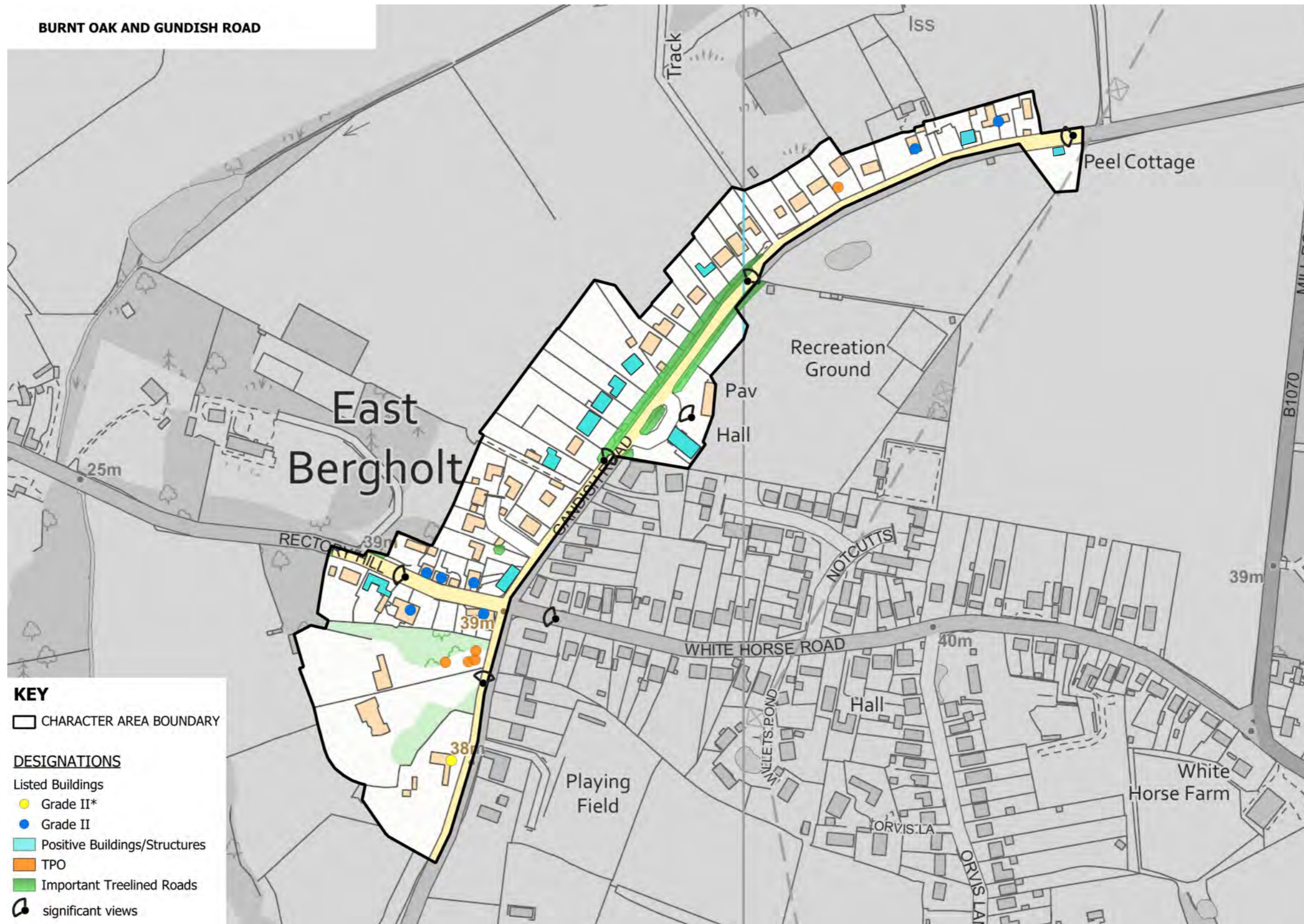
A cluster of buildings towards the northern end of the road reflect further early development on the edge of the heath and remained the only buildings in this area until the 20th century. The Town House was originally cottages but in 1654 was purchased by the Parish Overseers to house the poor, though this is not necessarily overt in its appearance this adds important historic interest and some communal value.

Gandish Road did not see infill or additional housing added over the course of the 19th century which instead developed along the eastern route, White Horse Road, now outside the conservation area.



Figure 189: Extract from the 1733 Brasier Map of the heath, Burnt Oak to the lower left, Gandish Stile marked half way along, and the collections of buildings on the edge of the heath indicated in pink, the curved route of today's Gandish road has moved closer to the houses, but remains eminently comparable

3.3 Burnt Oak and Gandish Road



3.3 Burnt Oak and Gandish Road

Gandish Road did however see development from the early 20th century and is the location of a collection of buildings by the architect Raymond Erith. Erith moved to nearby Dedham in 1936 and though he paused in architectural practice during the second world war he returned very shortly after and continued to live and work in the area even when his commissions took him further afield. He developed a regular working relationship with a local firm of builders and joiners W T Wheelers who had a workshop and timber yard north of Heath Road (still present and occupied by Suffolk Sheds). They constructed the new doors and staircase for No. 10 Downing Street when Erith was commissioned to design its reconstruction.

This sub area contains seven houses by Erith, six on Gandish Road and Kells around the corner on Rectory Hill. He also designed the Constable Memorial Hall, within the village recreation ground and playing fields. Elsewhere in the village he designed Pound House in the village centre, and provided internal alterations at High Trees House at Quintons Triangle as well as on houses in other nearby villages, certainly Dedham. Other houses where he worked may come to light over the course of time but this collection remains an important contribution to the early 20th century historic, associative, and architectural values of the conservation area.

Street and route patterns

The street pattern is simple, with a small crossroads comprising the eastern end of Rectory Hill, the north eastern entry to Flatford Lane and Gandish Road extending north which began as a track across the heath. Buildings in the conservation area west of the crossroads cluster close together in compact plots with several of the older houses and former shops rising direct from the pavement edge.

Gandish Road is a long curving road reflecting the historic edge of the Heath. For much of its length housing is only present to the west, with a fully rural character of grassy verge and hedgerow on the east.

Boundaries

Domestic boundaries around the cross roads are a mix of hedges and timber fences in varying styles, all modern, with several historic buildings close to the crossroads directly backing the pavement. There is a notable sense of closer knit and denser built form here which rapidly transitions to rural greenery along Rectory Hill and down Flatford Lane.

Gandish road swiftly develops a more spacious character after leaving the crossroads where hedges become the predominant boundary which in combination with well set back houses

and mature trees along the street given a very verdant quality. The plots become quite regular and widely spaced with a consistent back line, all indicative of the enclosure period where plots were set out more regularly and deliberately. Short sections of low wall or fence are seen alongside gate piers but solid brick walls are not a characteristic.

Building types and uses

Buildings in this area are mainly domestic with much of Gandish Road being 20th century in nature. Oranges and Lemons café occupies a former public house 'The Kings Head' and this previous use is still understandable in its character and substantial car parking area. Several of the smaller houses across the road from Oranges and Lemons were also once shops.



Figure 191: Oranges and Lemons, former Kings Head public house



Figure 192: former shops facing Oranges and Lemons

3.3 Burnt Oak and Gandish Road

The Village Hall and playing fields provide communal and leisure functions. They are served by good car parking provision.

Farming use is still suggested in the historic buildings at the eastern end of Gandish Road with Mill Farm.

Building Scale and Massing

Two storeys is the predominant height with few examples of attic conversions and dormers. Smaller storey heights typical of historic buildings and tighter spacing giving an impression of more intimate development particularly when compared to the later 20th century buildings with more generous floor to ceiling heights.

Gandish Road has relatively well sized yet modest houses all within good sized gardens and set well back from the road creating sense of general spaciousness.

The Village Hall, Constable Hall, represents a larger footprint signalling its community use alongside its location with the playing fields but is still a modest sized building. Later additions to this area are on a smaller scale and very diminutive.

Materials and Details

Rendered facades, or painted brick is prevalent, with brick being the principal underlying material and clear at chimneys. Claycott's is an ancient 16th century timber framed building dating to the but it is largely rendered with some sense of textured panels so that this construction type is not overt.

Gandish Road buildings utilise frequent brick but are very mixed, in keeping with individual plot development over the course of the 20th century. There is a relatively consistent building line and good accommodation for cars parked on properties, though some still present along the route.

Horizontal sliding sashes are a notable feature at Burnt Oak, present on both 1-3 Gandish Road and 'the Townhouse' a multi-phase building forming the corner between Rectory Hill and Flatford Lane.

The overhanging first floor and arched features between Oak Cottage and The Haywain and recessed arch detail and round windows on Kells (date stone on front 1832) are unique individual features adding visual interest and character.



Figure 193: Claycotts and its associated outbuilding on the left. Rendered timber framing and the highest grade listed building in this sub area at II* (image: EBS)



Figure 194f: Rendered walls and horizontal sliding sashes on



Figure 195: Overhanging first floors to allow access between cottages to the rear areas.

3.3 Burnt Oak and Gandish Road

Public Realm, Open Spaces, trees/green landscape

The Village Hall and associated playing fields and sports pitches are the most substantial area of public realm and an important community resource.

Mature trees present on Gandish Road are important to this area's verdant quality and screening of houses contributing to sense of spaciousness.

Trees on Rectory Hill and Flatford Land serve to enclose the settlement at the crossroads and there is a marked contrast on leaving Burnt Oak and moving down along Rectory Hill as well as in the opposite direction.

Positive views

This area is not a focus for Constable works. As with the area along Gaston Street and around Gaston End this appears to reflect Constable's focus in the area of his family's ownership, work and society life. Though John Constable features ordinary folk in many of his paintings, his focus is quite clearly on the central part of the village and at Flatford in terms of his subject matter.

The view on entry into the conservation area from White Horse Road is positive offering a clear ability to appreciate arrival at this historic focus of settlement particularly through the contrast in building types and styles between those found at the crossroads and those on White Horse Road.

Long views along Gandish Road in both directions present a spacious verdant character with important series of mature oak trees and the buildings set well back and screened. Though Gandish Road is developed for almost all of its length the houses are peripheral to the experience when moving along Gandish Road.

The view on leaving this area towards Rectory Hill presents a distinct contrast between the relatively closely developed hamlet at the crossroads and a transition to verdant almost wooded greenery of eastern end of Rectory Hill, there is a marked change in character here that reflects and reinforces the sense of separateness between the village core and this satellite settlement.



Figure 196: Wooded character of Gandish Road looking towards Burnt Oak, the buildings are well screened on this entry.



Figure 197: Emerging from Rectory Hill towards Burnt Oak where the Town House (former village poor house) is prominent.



Figure 198: One of the more ancient buildings at the northern end of Gandish Road, more open and closer to the road.

3.3 Burnt Oak and Gandish Road

Audit of Heritage Assets and Positive Contributors

This area contains nine listed buildings, of which only Claycott's is designated at a higher Grade II*. The listed buildings generally represent the best of the pre-20th century buildings in this area.

The row of red brick cottages at 1-3 Gandish Road (see over) retain period brickwork, horizontal sliding sash windows and evidence of former doorways. They occupy a traditional back of pavement edge position and are understood as part of the historic group at the crossroads, historically facing over the heath. The box like rear addition is not positive.

The group of houses by Raymond Erith, and including the Village Hall, are all of historic, architectural and high local interest with associative interest to the architect, who has several listed buildings to his name, including no's 10-12 Downing Street in London. There is also wider contextual links to other buildings he worked on both in East Bergholt itself (Pound House in the village centre, and High Trees Farmhouse at Gaston End).

The buildings by Erith in this area are:

- Kells, 1939 for Mr Stow. Erith was highly amused some years later to hear this house described as a '*fine example of early 19th century architecture*'.
- Box House, the southern most house on Gandish road, 1950 for Mr and Mrs Garnham.
- Newlands, The Red House, Grayling and Fairacre, a consecutive group of four opposite the Memorial Hall, constructed between 1952-57.
- White Lodge, slightly further north but of similar era, 1995-7.
- Constable Memorial Hall, 1957-59.



Figure 199: Constable Memorial Hall



Figure 200: Box house



Figure 201: Kells



Figure 202: Fairacre



Figure 203: Red house (Image: JL)



Figure 204: Grayling (Image: JL)



Figure 205: Newlands (Image: JL)

3.3 Burnt Oak and Gandish Road

Positive Contributors continued

At the northern end of this character area is a further cluster of historic buildings which reflect the typical pre-enclosure encroachment along the edge of the former Heath. Several are indicated on the Brasier Map (Figure 18 p.17). Two are listed, one being a semi-detached pair, ('Gandish House' and 'Cottages to the east of Yew Tree Cottage') but others retain historic brickwork, diminutive scale, traditional windows and construction typical of the area and indicative of their historic origins, probably in the 18th century. These are Yew Tree Cottage, on the northern side, and Peel Cottage, a lone dwelling on the south eastern side of Gandish Road. They retain red brick walling, traditional detailing at windows and doors and form an important and illustrative group in this sub-area.

Comparatively standard collection of street furniture, standard lap board fencing, utility boxes and markers in combination with telegraph poles and prominent overhead wires at the Burnt Oak crossroads presents a somewhat cluttered appearance at this entrance to the conservation area.

An opportunity to provide greater information about Raymond Erith and his contribution to the architectural interest of East Bergholt would enrich this sub character area's special character. It could usefully be focussed on the Constable Memorial Hall as a building by this architect with regular public access.

Issues and opportunities

Parking on streets can be quite visually prominent on Gandish Road and around Burnt Oak obscuring buildings and somewhat diminishing its rural character, particularly at the southern end though the number of cars varied considerably over the several visits during the assessment period so is not necessarily a constant feature.



Figure 206: The positive contributor cottages at 1-3 Gandish Road somewhat slighted by unsightly standardised utilities installations, and a somewhat over sized rear extension.



Figure 206a: The positive contributor 'Ivy Tree Cottage'.



Figure 206b: The positive contributor Peel Cottage

3.4

Flatford Mill

3.4 Flatford Mill

Summary of Special Interest

An ancient settlement represented by archaeological remains, a moated enclosure and a well preserved compact group of early buildings from the 14th and 15th centuries.

Church Field, Glebe Field and documentary records are testament to an early location of a chapel up to the 18th century. The field patterns in the valley base and on the valley slopes around Flatford are directly comparable to the arrangement depicted on the 1731 Brasier Map and reflecting well preserved medieval enclosures. The sunken Flatford Mill Lane add to the early field patterns illustrating longstanding routes to the river.

An important location on the Stour Navigation with features directly related to its working life between 1705-1909. The dry dock, recently restored, provides important means to understand a core location for boat building for the navigation—the majority of Stour Lighters were constructed in Flatford.

The Constable family shaped much of the character of the main mill buildings in the later 18th century, this reinforces the historic values and provides important contextual links to other properties and areas within the wider conservation area. Flatford was the site of a mill recorded in the Domesday Survey again speaking to the antiquity of this settlement.

Many of Constables most famous works use the buildings and landscape around Flatford as their subject, or the background to his scenes of rural workers both in the fields and on the Navigation. There is a high sense of continuity between scenes he painted and the experience afforded today. The East Bergholt Society identify Flatford as the focus for 39 works by Constable, with further locations along the river.

Many of these paintings are world renowned, and they include almost all from the series known as 'six footers' – referencing their size – all of which explore the landscape of the Stour River and five of which can be identified clearly within or close to Flatford. Lucian Freud declared the Leaping Horse to be '*the greatest painting in the world*'. The textural brushwork, the huge scale, the sense of light, movement and combination of water and skies and rural landscape, all render this collection of works exceptionally important, and opportunities to visit the sites that inspired them are unique and significant both artistically and historically.



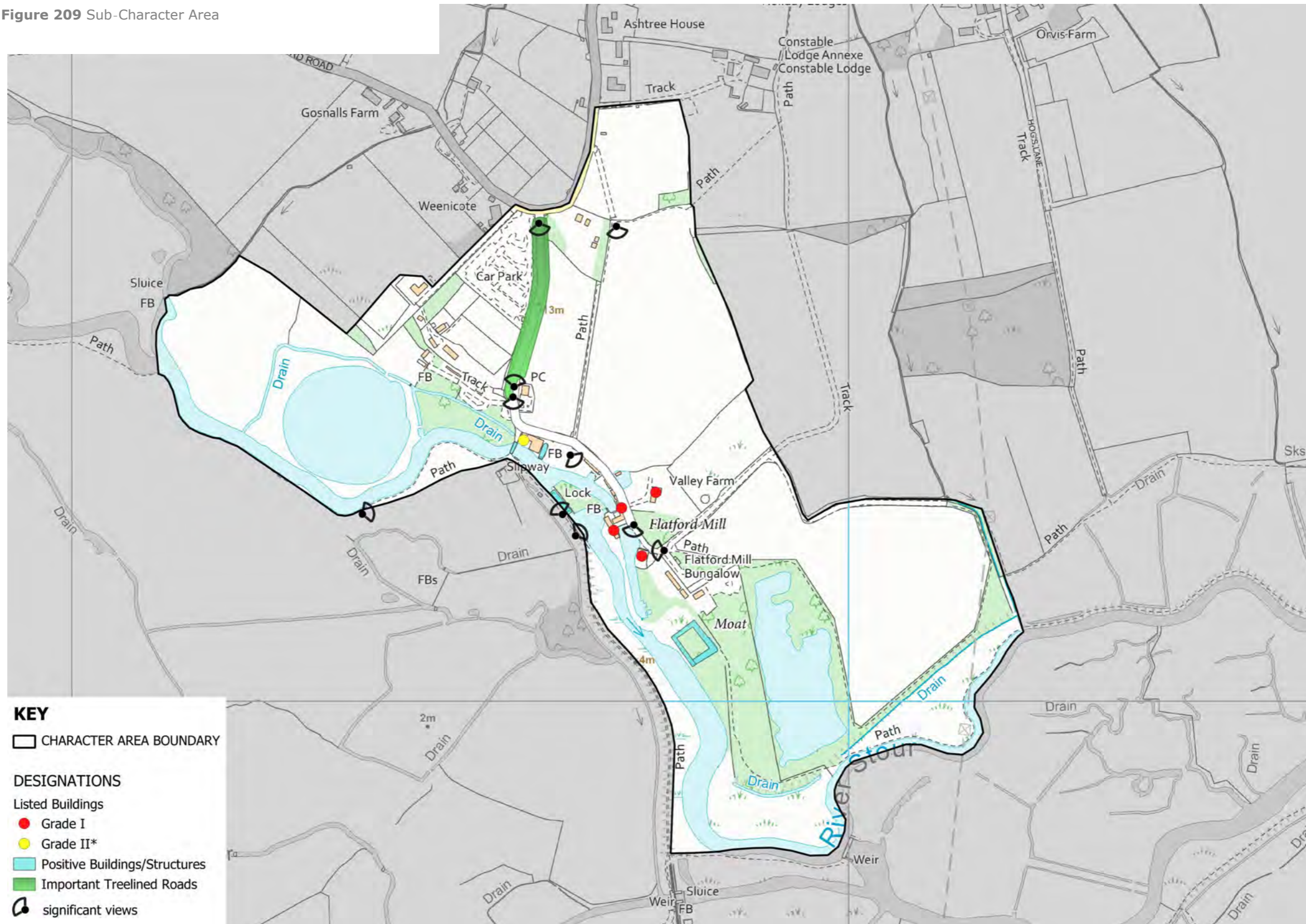
Figure 207: Constable's painting "Flatford Mill" Oil on Panel, 1810-1811, Yale



Figure 208: Flatford Mill looking past Willy Lott's Cottage

3.4 Flatford Mill

Figure 209 Sub-Character Area



3.4 Flatford Mill

Historic Summary

Flatford appears to have been an ancient centre of settlement possibly right back to the Saxon period and certainly firmly established by the 13th century when two large farmsteads are in place, one including a moated enclosure (HER ref: MSF5050) around which Gibbonsgate Farm evolved (Lake 2024, p.37). Evidence suggests the population of the wider parish supported a chapel in Flatford now reflected in long standing field names and supported in the historic location of a parsonage close to the top of Tunnel Lane prior to the early 18th century. In 1536 there are records of a fulling mill at Flatford, for the processing of cloth though the current mill is a much later structure for corn processing. The woollen cloth trade which had generated a huge amount of wealth in this area had declined by the early 16th century leaving agriculture the principal source of trade and support for the area.

In 1705 an act of Parliament made the Stour a navigable river, and 13 locks were installed down stream of Flatford, which represents the lowest crossing point not affected by tides. These locks allowed horse drawn barges, known as lighters, to travel up and down the river to ports at Mistley where goods were transferred to Thames barges and ships for transport on to London and elsewhere. The locks allowed a steady increase in prosperity for those in East Bergholt, not least the Constable family who acquired the Flatford Mill property in 1742. By this time the milling was for corn rather than fulling reflecting the decline in the wool trade.

The decline in the river for navigation occurred in the mid 19th century with the arrival of the railway. The Stour had never seen the creation of formal towpaths, because of land owner objections and the complexity of sorting out rights of way, which meant horses pulling the lighters had to cross multiple times subject to individual arrangements with local landowners.

By the early 20th century Flatford Mill and many of the other buildings were at a point near dereliction. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) were consulted, but restoration of the properties was not undertaken because of associated costs. Thomas Parkington, an Ipswich builder and philanthropist heard about the site and after a visit with his wife promptly bought the Flatford estate and began undertaking repairs in line with SPABs guidance.

When Parkington died, despite his intention to pass the estate to the National Trust, financial constraints meant that the National Trust initially had to purchase the site, later being paid back by the estate of Thomas Parkington, honouring his original intention to bequeath the site to the nation. A stone memorialising Parkington's involvement in the saving of the Flatford Mill buildings was discovered in a field in 2021, proposals are underway to see it formally reinstated within the site.

The National Trust lease many of the buildings out to the Field Studies Council, opening this landscape and environment to school groups and visitors.



Figure 210: Flatford Mill and Mill House and cottage on the left.



Figure 211: the Parkington Stone, now on display close to the activity barn at Flatford

3.4 Flatford Mill

Street and Plot Patterns

The area is accessed down a narrow hollow way, Flatford Mill Lane, leading off the lowest point of Flatford Lane. These routes have not changed for centuries and retain a high degree of historic authenticity, particularly with their high banks and tree cover.

There is no formal or defined 'plot pattern', the collection of historic buildings has evolved over time to serve the river and its functionality, and to provide accommodation for the farms in this area. Buildings are irregularly grouped. Willy Lots Cottage, Valley Farmhouse and Bridge Cottage provide differing scales of accommodation each with some sense of domestic curtilage. The relationship between the buildings and the river remains of critical importance.

At the western edge of this sub area a series of more modern houses has been constructed off the lane running on the western side of the National Trust car park. They are very well screened and visually unobtrusive so their more standard forms and materials do not overtly detract from the area.

Boundaries

The boundaries within the area are mainly hedges reflecting the rural character. The historic buildings do not generally fall within individual plots contributing to their interconnected historic nature and shared functions, though there is some sense of domestic curtilage, again defined by hedges, at Valley Farmhouse and to a small area around Willy Lots Cottage.

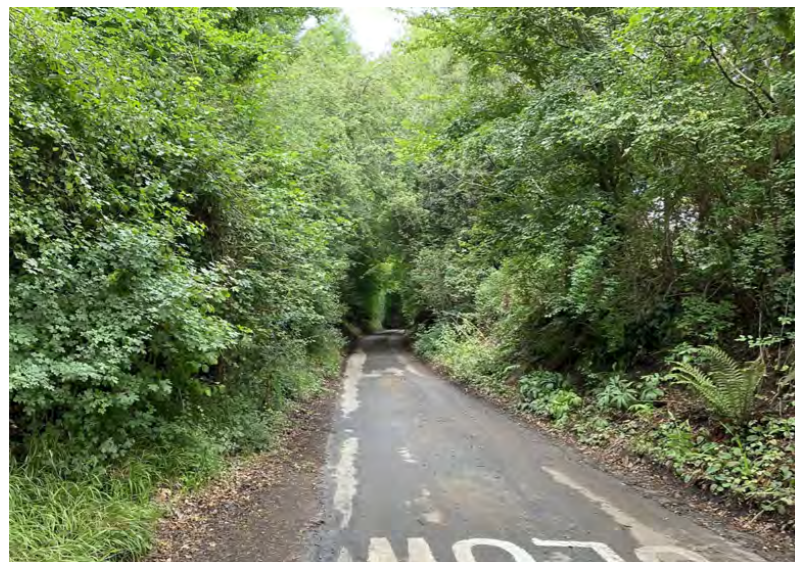


Figure 212: Flatford Mill Lane, sunken track leading from Flatford Lane down to the riverside group



Figure 213: The track running through Flatford with open fields on the right and agricultural and industrial buildings on the left.



Figure 214: Modern WCs and stores with disabled parking areas introduced at the lower end of Flatford Mill Lane.

The modern dwellings are within individual plots, with car parking and individual drives, they are generally very well screened from the wider landscape by mature tall hedges and trees.

Building types and uses

Flatford comprises a close group of historic buildings covering industrial milling purposes, agricultural uses and domestic traditions. Alongside the buildings there are also the important Flatford Locks, which illustrate the history of the River as a navigable transport link, bridges reflecting long term connection across the banks, and a dry dock, recently reconstructed, illustrating boat building and repair functions.

Modern structures have also been added to facilitate public access to the group and include ticket and information kiosks, public toilets, a café and shop.

Building scale and massing

Comparatively varied ranging from the large mass of the mill building (see image on previous page) right down to the very diminutive Bridge Cottage.

Buildings are two storeys or one and a half, but scales vary widely reflecting the contrast between industrial, agricultural and domestic uses. The differing alignments of buildings provide visual contrast and the roof forms are also relatively varied adding visual interest.

3.4 Flatford Mill

Materials and Detailing

Valley Farmhouse represents an important and well preserved example of traditional timber framing from the 14th century. Willy Lott's Cottage is also timber framed, but rendered though its early characteristics are recognisable in its architectural forms and details and it has remained relatively unaltered since depicted frequently by Constable.

The 18th century red brick construction of Flatford Mill and the adjacent Millers House and cottage are striking buildings with close relationship to the river. Perpendicular ranges include weather boarding as well and this material is seen on some of the more recent additions into the site as well.

Thatch is featured at Bridge Cottage and on the restored barn range adjacent to the Mill.

Details of industrial and functional features of the Stour Navigation are important to the special interest here with the dry dock, lock and bridges all closely appreciable from the paths along the river.

Public Realm, open space and trees/green landscape

Much of the land at Flatford is under the stewardship of the National Trust and public access is facilitated not only by the public footpaths but additional permitted routes. Picnic benches around the café and shop close to the restored dry dock enable moments to dwell and experience the buildings.

The large car park just off of Flatford Lane enables considerable visitor numbers. It is a relatively prominent feature but car parking spaces are divided by trees which soften the visual impact. Pedestrian routes from the car park have now shifted the experience away from the hollow way of Tunnel Lane changing the way that the historic collection of buildings is approached.

The open landscape is rural and focussed on the river with the rising landscape that leads into the rolling valley slopes leading up to the hill. Permitted routes and public rights of way give access to a wide portion of this land.



Figure 215-216: Thatch remains as a roofing material in Flatford, though is now absent from the rest of East Bergholt Village



Figure 217-218: Detail of Flemish bond brickwork and arched window in the mill and, right, the lock gates

3.4 Flatford Mill

Key Views

The truly key views within Flatford are those represented and reproduced in John Constable's multiple paintings and sketches around the mill, the lock and surrounding river bank, flood meadows and fields. There is almost no perspective he did not capture to some degree (see Section 2.5). For clarity these key views are not all individually illustrated on the Sub character area Map, there are at least 40 vantage points reliably identified in Flatford captured in Constable's works, both the major works but also sketches and studies which exhibit a vitality and freshness which are as interesting as the finished works.

Opportunities to 'recreate' the famous vantage points of "*The Haywain*", or "*View on the Stour*" are well accessed. Views from the higher ground south of Flatford Lane are accentuated by National Trust 'view point' feature – with an invitation to share to a group social medial hashtag.

Paths from the higher ground directly north of Flatford gives glimpses of the landscape and the buildings at Flatford at the valley base.

Audit of Heritage Assets

The Flatford character area includes only five listed buildings but four of them are included at Grade I (Flatford Mill, Millers House and Cottage, Willy Lots Cottage and Valley Farmhouse) and the final one, Bridge Cottage is Grade II*. The high grades of these buildings reflect the international significance and importance of this group. The links and association with the Constable family, and Constable's paintings is reflected in the list descriptions of all of the listed buildings.

Unlisted structures around the river including the lock and various bridges as well as the dry dock are all of historic interest, though many are modern restorations. They contribute positively to the character and appearance of this area and allow understanding of important historic features.



Figure 1: Valley farmhouse and Willy Lott's Cottage, Grade I



Figure 221-222: Bridge Cottage, Grade II* and, right: dry dock positive contributor, flooded in winter 2025



Figure 219-220: Millers House and Cottage and Flatford Mill, Grade I



Figure 223-224: Flatford Lock and (below) bridge, restored features but remaining positive contributors

3.4 Flatford Mill

Comparative scenes



Figure 225-226: 'Flatford old Bridge and Bridge Cottage on the Stour' 1835, pencil, pen, ink and wash, V+A, below the scene today.

Figure 227-228: 'View on the Stour near Dedham' 1822, Huntingdon Museum of Art, California. Below today's pleasure boards replace the Stour lighters.

3.4 Flatford Mill



Figure 229-230: Dedham Vale with Brantham Mill' 1809-10, Private collection and, below, view from the hillside above Flatford with buildings nestled in trees in the centre, not an exact vantage point but shared character



Figure 231: The National Trust Carpark



Figure 232: National Trust signage for paths and highlighting of views as a means to enrich the experience of the landscape



Figure 233: National Trust café across the Stour adjacent to Bridge Cottage

3.4 Flatford Mill

Issues and opportunities

The moat is not publicly accessible at present, it is not a scheduled monument but it remains an important archaeological feature contributing to the earliest history of human activity in this area. Opportunities to increase means of imparting understanding of its presence and nature might be made through additional information in the area if physical access cannot be granted, even if paths are re-opened this particular type of archaeological feature benefits from clear explanation and interpretation to secure the widest level of 'access' to understanding.

There is some erosion of historic continuity with the landscape through the growth of trees and hedges which change the sense of openness and continuity with Constable views. In particular a series of paintings from the western bank of the Stour looking back towards the buildings of Willy Lott's Cottage and the area of the former Swans Nest Farm (and the moat) are now obscured by tree growth, this includes the scene of the White Horse—one of the famous 'six footers'. The banks that formed the backdrop for the Haywain are also somewhat more enclosed and overgrown than is depicted in the painting. Should the opportunity arise and in conjunction with the National Trust, consideration should be given to the potential opportunity to manage riverine trees in selected locations to enhance the experience of these key vantage points in respect of the principal John Constable paintings.



Figure 236: left: Study for 'The White Horse' identifiable as being located on the south bank of the Stour looking across the Stour towards the white gable of Willy Lott's Cottage with the now vanished Swans Nest farm beyond. On the right, this is the general area of this view today, reed beds are considerable and trees beyond limit any visibility of the buildings at the height of summer, the river itself is somewhat difficult to discern at this point..

Visitor pressure in terms of traffic on the very rural Flatford Lane, including coaches and busses which barely fit down the narrow lane, and potential ad hoc parking for those who do not wish to use the National Trust or village car parks. There is a substantial quantity of signs both upstanding and painted on the road around the entry to the visitor carpark. While understandably necessary to prevent travel in the wrong direction, or mistaken car movements the character at this point of the lane becomes far more utilitarian.

Visitor pressure around historic buildings and to historic riverbanks and other structures.

Alternative visitor pedestrian route from the car park to the river has taken foot traffic away from the hollow lane, leaving it rather peripheral to the way this part of the of the conservation area is experienced, though there is no firm restriction to pedestrians using it.

The introduction of additional new structures, buildings, kiosks which although constrained and supporting public access, may cumulatively start to detract from the historic group if additional structures are added without careful consideration.



Figure 237: A coach passing along Flatford Lane, conflict between pedestrians and such vehicles is an ongoing risk

4.0

Issues and Opportunities

4.0 Issues and Opportunities

Introduction

The Historic England guidance on the designation and appraisal of conservation areas identifies at paras 65-67 that appraisals should consider the condition of any conservation area's historic buildings, spaces, public domain, general vitality and activity. The section identifies a series of possible issues surrounding 'condition' and moves on to consider specific types of 'issue' which may lead into more specific controls at local authority levels, the section is worth citing before moving on to specific consideration of the condition, issues and potential opportunities within East Bergholt:

- *"buildings at risk or in a serious state of disrepair*
- *buildings where in rare cases matters of deliberate neglect may arise*
- *front gardens lost to hard-standing for cars*
- *lost architectural features and fenestration*
- *gap sites eroding special character*
- *areas of degraded public realm or poorly maintained green space areas*
- *where traffic, noise or odour impacts affect the ability to use or appreciate the historic or architectural interest of the area*

Generic issues that underlie obvious problems will provide evidence and identify the need for additional controls, particularly Article 4 directions, to prevent further erosion of the area's special interest and support its potential capacity for beneficial change. Such problems include:

- *the effects of heavy traffic*
- *a low economic base resulting in vacancy and disrepair of buildings*
- *pressure for a particular type of change or development as well as*
- *specific examples (such as buildings at risk, uncontrolled, inappropriate advertising or areas subject to vandalism or antisocial behaviour due to lack of more positive activity)"*

(Historic England (2021) HEAN 1, p.25)

East Bergholt condition, issues and opportunities.

The condition and quality of the East Bergholt Conservation Area and the vast majority of its buildings, spaces and public realm are generally very good. There are very few areas that might be considered to detract from the overarching sense of a well preserved historic settlement. The reason why the extended area is considered to have sufficient quality for designation in part is because of that well preserved condition and sense of historic integrity making up the conservation area as a whole.

The figure on the next page summarises the areas which have been identified that resonate with the list here and are assessed as 'issues'. Each such issue presents a reciprocal 'opportunity' whereby should the opportunity arise through planning applications, liaison with owners, the local district and county authorities solutions might be found to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area in the future. Understanding where the current character and appearance of the conservation area is perhaps not at its best, or where risks from uses, lack of uses or other activities are found is the first stage to securing future enhancements.

The preparation of a Conservation Management Plan in due course following the adoption of this appraisal and the extended area will further strengthen decision making that prioritises the desired enhancement of the area, and removal of the 'risks' identified here.

The following section looks briefly at the areas identified and considers how they present a risk to the special interest of the area and what opportunities might be available to address them.

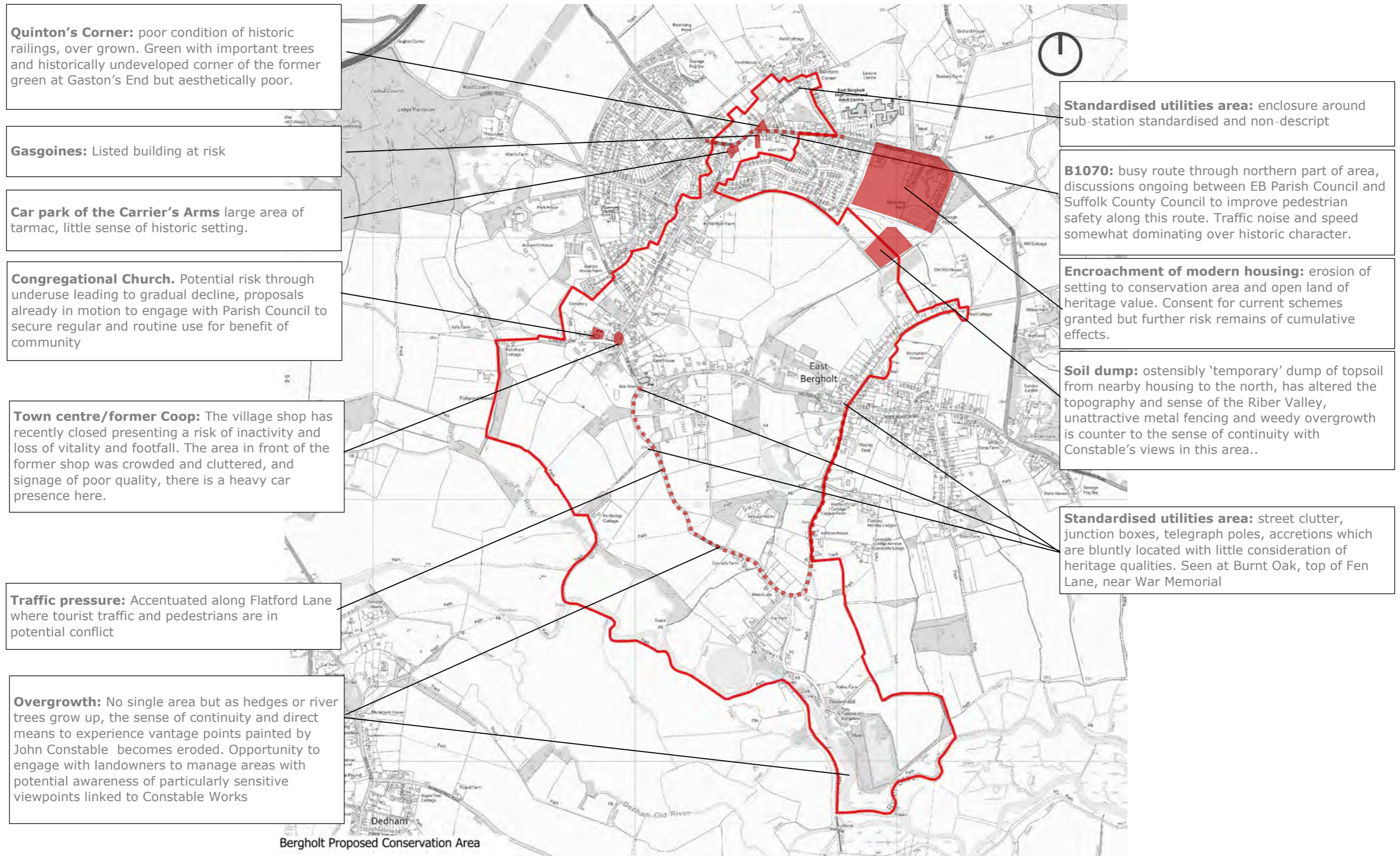
Pressure of new development

New development pressure is a primary issue of concern where it might encroach on the setting of the conservation area, particularly the pressure of high volume mass housebuilding. This has been recently seen to the north where encroachment on the open land of the former heath north of the Donkey Track visually encroaches on this important area of the conservation area. In this northern area the land is sensitive as it is outside of historic core of settlement, adjacent to existing mass housing but is outside the designated landscapes which have previously offered some constraint and places the future character and appearance of the area at further risk from cumulative development of this nature.

Poorly considered mass housing schemes that do not accurately reflect a local palette of materials or details risk diluting the uniqueness of the settlement, the introduction of large numbers of houses all with a very similar aesthetic, scale, material palette is directly counter to the unique variety of East Bergholt's built environment.

4.0 Issues and Opportunities

Figure 238: Areas of issue, eroded character or Opportunity



4.0 Issues and Opportunities

- The opportunity should be taken to encourage all applications for new housing to carefully consider the specific characteristics of the conservation area and its sub character areas, as well as the contribution made by the setting to frame any new application and its design.
- Opportunities to ensure careful reference to Local policies, including this document and specific Neighbourhood Plan policies on housing need, design and suitable location for new development should be made.
- The forthcoming Neighbourhood Design Guide should be a required reference for any future housing proposals at any scale within the conservation area or its setting.

Preservation or loss of period features and details

The removal from individual properties of historic features and architectural characteristics through a variety of means (loss of historic windows, doors, roof finishes) risks a slow and incremental erosion of heritage quality and materials on unlisted buildings within the conservation area. This is particularly true on traditionally constructed dwellings or building which are not listed but which still make positive contribution to the architectural evidence of historic building techniques and practices. The continued and preserved use of Suffolk vernacular materials and building constructional details within the conservation area's building stock should be encouraged.

There is potential conflict or issue between the pressing need to adapt our traditional housing stock to address climate change and the need to retain period character and features. Solar panels, double glazing, the addition of ASHP units, external wall insulation all might alter the character of buildings and over time whole streets. All measures may be achievable if carefully considered but, particularly on unlisted buildings there is a risk of uncontrolled visual intrusion and loss of traditional character and aesthetic.

- There is an opportunity, which might be addressed through enhanced public awareness of Local and Neighbourhood Plan documents, including this appraisal, of the value in heritage character, particularly on unlisted but still historic buildings, and on ways that that might be preserved while still securing possible upgrades, particularly to thermal performance of traditional buildings.
- Local plan guidance for owners of listed buildings in the sensitive way to retrofit and adapt their properties might also be encouraged as best practice for owners of traditional houses within the conservation area which are not individually designated.



Figure 239-240: Examples of poorly detailed modern replacement windows. Flush to the surrounding walls instead of recessed, applied or 'stuck on' glazing bars' heavy opening casements overlapping 'storm window' style instead of flush with the surrounding frames, material uPVC.

Parking pressure and car dominance

Many houses have provision for parking, but there is a risk where houses have more limited space or where households include multiple car ownership, that front boundaries may be removed to provide increased on-property parking. Parking along streets is already partly controlled through the presence of double yellow lines and innately narrow routes but ad hoc parking is a potential issue.

The widespread use of double yellow lines or standardised signage presents its own risk of suburbanising the character of the older routes and streets and adding visual clutter.

The B1070 passes through the northern part of the conservation area and is a busy through route. Traffic volume and speed present a risk to pedestrian safety. Cars intensively parked in the village centre dominate views within the former wider open greens on either side of the Church and at the end of Cemetery Lane.

- Any opportunity to liaise with Highways and the relevant authorities to secure an approach to such features which take into account the historic nature of the settlements should be encouraged, will require liaison with wider public bodies.

4.0 Issues and Opportunities

Areas of eroded character and opportunities for enhancement

There are a few areas within the conservation area which might be considered as being of lower aesthetic quality whether by the presence of non-descript surfaces, fixtures or structures, or neglected condition. It is important to note that the aesthetic qualities of some of these areas does not negate their contribution to the activity and vibrancy of the working settlement and community, particularly where they are associated with businesses. The following areas might offer distinct opportunity for work, should the right conditions arise, to enhance and better reveal elements that contribute to the historic character of the area, and introduce means to enhance the experience of these areas.

The setting to the north east including the former windmill site. This land remains open but is currently eroded and presents a less clear 'connection' to the better preserved areas of landscape within the conservation area. The visual presence of recent housing to the north is a clear detractor, limiting opportunities to directly understand the rural setting and former heathland that was present in this part of the area.

- Creation of additional means for visitors or residents to understand this area's links to Constable's family and paintings, may enable a greater understanding even with this area's more altered character.

Junction between Heath Road and Quintons Road. A small area of the former heath, over grown and with limited maintenance and damaged railings. Though providing a valuable green screen to some of the housing beyond, this is a rather rough patch of



Figure 241: The southern apex of Quintons Corner, damaged railings, somewhat cluttered collection of signs, the background greenery is a positive screen to post enclosure development but the condition of this area is poor. The listed building 'Gascoigne's' is visible in the background and is on the Heritage at Risk Register.

greenery that might be better managed at this important historic remnant of the heath. It should not become overly manicured, but avoidance of bramble growth would keep its legibility as a defined corner to this historically important triangle of land (Figure 79)

Former Village Shop. At the time of initial assessment this was a valuable community resource in the centre of the village, there was easy access to parking however, the frontage was rather non-descript in terms of signage and the entrance area was cluttered by a plethora of bollards, bike rings, stored crates, a standard waste bin. In late 2025 the shop closed, the Coop relocating to a newer building on the northern edge of the village. This presents ongoing risk to the vitality of the centre.

- It also offers opportunity for encouraged new retail or commercial spaces, rejuvenated aesthetic and continued activity within the village core.



Figure 242: The area outside the village shop when in use early in 2025.

Surroundings of the Carriers Arms, this listed public house sits in a sea of standard tarmac. Whilst it enables the building to be seen quite clearly, and provides invaluable parking for customers, it is a blank and comparatively unwelcoming area which, when reviewing historic maps, has seen the considerable erosion of historic boundaries (see Figure 81).

4.0 Issues and Opportunities

Congregational Chapel. This historic building is still functioning to provide active worship space for its small congregation alongside various other uses by clubs or societies. Though this use remains important, the relatively low levels of activity have likely led to a slight sense of neglect in its grounds.

The Deacons are in the process of transferring the church and its associated land to the Parish Council to ensure it remains a focal building providing much needed community facilities as well as an ongoing place of worship. Taking opportunities to encourage a wide range of uses within such buildings is the best way of securing their longevity and preservation.

Chaplains Cottage, Gasgoines. This is a listed building at risk. At the time of writing it remains, derelict and boarded/bricked up and is the subject of ongoing enforcement actions.

Topsoil Mound north of the Donkey Track. This mound is ostensibly a temporary feature but it is a detrimental feature which has altered the topography of a significant stretch along the Riber Stream and north of the Donkey Track. The metal fencing which currently encloses it is similarly negative within this important area of the conservation area.

General highways features. The road and pavement surfaces, hard curbs and general utilities furniture within the area are by and large entirely standard and unremarkable. This applies to other elements such as telephone boxes, the fencing around substations and markers for utilities. Whilst these features are regular parts of the modern public domain it may be possible to find options for such installations to be more carefully considered in the future.

Hedgerows and overgrowth in relation to Constable Views. This identified 'risk' is ephemeral and perhaps somewhat in conflict with a desire to maintain and encourage wildlife and biodiversity. When comparing views painted by Constable to the vantage points today, it is a frequent case that the increase in hedgerows, trees, and other greenery has today closed off some of the views depicted by Constable, this is notable on Flatford Lane and in some senses around Flatford itself. The National Landscape's emphasis on natural beauty also recognises that the shape of this landscape is ultimately one created by mankind, not unrestrained nature.

- Consideration could be given to working with landowners to manage hedgerows or other over growth in such a way that might maintain a degree of openness or certain views immortalised in Constable's paintings to emphasise and better reveal this unique strand of heritage and artistic value within the conservation area.

Management Plan. A Management Plan for the expanded East Bergholt Conservation Area represents a significant opportunity to proactively manage development in ways designed to better preserve and enhance character appearance and significance. Within four months of the designation of the expanded conservation and adoption of the CAA it is intended to have prepared and adopted an appropriate Management Plan which can build on the characteristics identified within this report, and the issues identified here.



Figure 243: The car parking and setting of the Carriers Arms and junction between Gaston End and Gaston Street,



Figure 244: Gasgoines/Chaplains Cottage—listed building at risk.



Figure 245: Unremarkable utilities fencing close to the Box Iron.

